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MONTESSORI IN INDIA
A STUDY OF THE APPLICATION OF HER METHOD
IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY

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ABSTRACT

In India the Montessori Method has survived in various forms for a continuous period longer than virtually anywhere else in the world. Its adoption coincided with a crucial period in the nation’s history when a growing nationalist movement was seeking to rid the country of foreign domination and dependency.

Although the Method was foreign, the emphasis on liberty and the development of individuals capable of independent thought and action appealed to élite groups and to elements of the nationalist movement. The Method was believed to be modern and scientific and was greeted with enthusiasm by those who sought modernization and progress in a traditional society.

Late in life Maria Montessori, accompanied by her son Mario, visited India, and her presence over a period of almost nine years from 1939-46 and 1947-49 gave a boost to the growing Montessori movement. Whilst in India, Montessori gave full voice to the spiritualism inherent in her work. In the West she was considered eccentric and her Method out of date, but in India, where religion exerted a powerful and pervasive influence, she was consistent with an ancient tradition of religious educators. A sprinkling of Indians had always attended her international training courses abroad, and in India they flocked to hear her message of human regeneration through the child.

The Montessori Method was largely patronized by a relatively affluent, Westernized and urbanized élite who could afford the expensive apparatus. Gandhi, however, had urged Montessori to devise materials in accordance with the economic and social conditions prevailing in India's
villages. Although she found much time during the years in India to develop her Method further to cover the period from birth to three years and from six to twelve years, she appears to have given little thought to its application among the country's largely illiterate poor who comprised the bulk of the population.

However, an "Indianized" Montessori movement emerged in Western India, allied to the Gandhian nationalist movement, which became concerned with "adapting" the Method according to Gandhian principles, and applying it in the villages. The resultant hybrid pre-primary education enjoyed widespread application in post-Independence India and received recognition at the national level by government and non-government agencies. Recently it has been afforded a crucial role in a major human resources development programme designed to alleviate the effects of poverty amongst women and young children.

The present study has drawn on a wide range of primary and secondary sources including archival material, newspapers, journals, published and unpublished correspondence, and personal interviews to trace the history of the Montessori movement in India from the time of early interest in the Method in 1912. The early chapters provide an introduction to Montessori's life and work and an historical background to the adoption of the Method. The application of the Method and the expansion of the Montessori movement is explored in subsequent chapters and, finally, in chapters six and seven, the study discusses directions in the movement after the departure of Madame Montessori and her son in 1949.
Many individuals and institutions have provided assistance during the course of this study. In India valued help was received from the staff of the National Archives of India; Maharashtra State Archives; Tamil Nadu State Archives; University of Bombay; S.N.D.T. Women's University, Bombay; Blavatsky Lodge, Bombay; Theosophical Society Headquarters, Library and Archives, Adyar, Madras; University of Madras; Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad; Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmedabad; Shreyas, Ahmedabad; Indian Council for Child Welfare, New Delhi; National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi; Indian Institute of Education, Pune. I am also grateful to the many Montessorians and other educators who provided valuable information and often, generous hospitality, and who permitted me to observe the application of the Method in their various schools, Children's Houses and balwadis. Special thanks are due to Derek Baldwin and Mr Krishnamurthi at the Australian High Commission, New Delhi; Associate Professor Ken Sinclair and Rod Nason of SUMEC who introduced me to the wonders of word processing; and to Colin and Ruby Newall who provided unlimited access to their computer enabling me to complete much of the writing in Mauritius during 1986.

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SELECT GLOSSARY OF INDIAN WORDS

Adivasi: A general name for India's aboriginal tribes.

Adivasi Seva Mandal: A tribal service organization or centre.

Ahimsa: Non-violence.

Anganwadi: A courtyard pre-school centre.

Arya Samaj: A reformist Hindu sect founded in the nineteenth century by Dayananda Saraswati.

Ashram: A spiritual retreat.

Bal Adhyapan Mandir: A pre-primary teachers training college.

Bal Mandir: Literally, a children's temple. Usually refers to an urban pre-school.

Bal Sevika: A child care worker.

Bal Shikshan Nagar: Literally, a child education town. Usually a child education exhibition.

Bania: A caste of merchants or traders.

Bhagavad Gita: The song of the Lord; a Hindu poem forming part of the epical Mahabharata, embodying the doctrine declaimed by the semi-divine Lord Krishna.

Bhajans: Devotional songs.

Brahmacharya: The first stage of life, denoting self-discipline including celibacy.

Brahman: Divine reality, the absolute, God.

Brahmin: Priest caste.

Brahmo Samaj: A Hindu reform organization founded in Bengal in the nineteenth century.

Chela: Student or disciple of a guru.

Darshan: The sight of the guru which may initiate spiritual awakening.

Dewan: A Prime Minister.

Guru: A spiritual teacher, master.

Gurukul: A residential hermitage for guru and disciples.

Karma Yoga: The path of activity; a Karma-yogin is one who follows the path of activity or action as a spiritual discipline.

Kayasthas: Scribe caste.

Khadi: home-spun cloth.

Khurta: A long collarless shirt.

Kshatrya: Warrior caste.

Mahatma: Great soul.

Mahila Mandal: A women's organization.

Mataji: Honorific of mother.

Mukti: Salvation.

Nasta: A light meal, snack.

Raj: Rule

Rishi: Ancient seer or sage.

Pada: A tribal hamlet.

Prarthana Samaj: Nineteenth Century Hindu reform organization founded in Bombay.

Sati: Widow burning.

Sannyasi: A religious meditator.

Satyagraha: Soul or Truth-force. The application of moral pressure for the realization of political objectives.

Shishu Vihar: A Children's House or pre-school, usually following the Montessori Method.

Swadeshi: Literally, indigenous. Produced in one's own country.

Swaraj: Self-rule

Tapas: The act of prayer.

Taluka: Local government division.

Tapovan: An ancient forest community for youth and their teachers.

Upanayana: Initiation. Thread-ceremony.

Upanishads: A class of works embodying the mystical and esoteric doctrines of ancient Hindu philosophy.

Vaishya: Merchant caste.
Varnas: The four divisions of classical Hindu society.

Vedas: Literally, knowledge; general term for the sacred Sanskrit texts of early Brahmanical Hinduism.

Vidya Mandir: A high school.

Vikaswadi: Composite education centre comprising a crèche, pre-primary and a primary school.

ABBREVIATIONS

AMI: Association Montessori Internationale.
GBSK: Gram Bal Shiksha Kendra: Centre for the Education of Rural Children.
IAPE: Indian Association for Pre-school Education.
IMTCs: Indian Montessori Training Courses.
NBSS: Nutan Bal Shikshan Sangh: New Association for Child Education.
TNSA: Tamil Nadu State Archives.
Mr Cowasjee Mahalaxmiwalla's Montessori School for Parsi children at Tardeo, Bombay, in 1930. Dinoo Dubash is in the background - Photograph, courtesy, Dinoo Dubash.
GBSK Balwadi at Kosbad Hill, Maharashtra, 1980.

Vikaswadi composite school, Dongripada Hamlet, Maharashtra, 1980

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the vast Indian sub-continent with its rich human and geographical diversity, from Nagaland bordering China in the far northeast to Tamil Nadu in the South, from the desert of Rajasthan in the West to Bengal in the East, in sprawling cities such as Bombay and Calcutta, towns like Jodhpur, Indore and Gwalior, little villages like Chittor in the padi fields of the south, and tribal hamlets in forest locales, one finds "Montessori" schools. Some are housed in airy spacious mansions where elegant child sized furniture and superbly crafted didactic apparatus grace mosaic tiles and marble floors. Others are crowded into barely furnished rooms in city flats, or function in shifts, in the cramped classrooms of large schools. Some can be found in the courtyards of whitewashed village houses or in tribal huts where children sit on earthen floors.

Although they might carry the Montessori "tag", and utilize items of the didactic apparatus, not all of these schools follow the Method strictly. In many instances there has been an attempt to "adapt" the Method according to economic and social circumstances. Locally made approximations of the materials have been introduced but often without any appreciation of their appropriate presentation to the child. The influence of Montessori education thus takes many forms in India.

The widespread proliferation of such schools does not reflect any renewed interest in Montessori education, as in the United States since the 1960s and, more recently, in Australia. The Montessori movement in India is remarkable in that it has survived there from the time of early interest in the Method in 1912, over a continuous and longer period than virtually anywhere else in the world. Despite the significance
of this phenomenon, there has been no substantial historical account of
the application of Montessori inspired education in India. The work done
in this area has primarily concerned the visit of Maria Montessori and her
son, Mario, to India during 1939-1946 and 1947-1949. The panegyrical
biography of Montessori by E.M. Standing devotes the equivalent of a page
to it. 2 The more comprehensive work by Rita Kramer provides a chapter,
however, she appears to have relied on undated newspaper clippings from
Montessori's Indian years at the Headquarters of the Association Montessori
Internationale (AMI) in Amsterdam, and personal communications from former
students and associates of Montessori. 3 Her account provides a brief
discussion of the impact of India's millenial culture on Montessori's work.

Two theses have made a particular contribution in this area.
Lawson's examination of education and the Theosophical Movement contains
a chapter which explores the mystical content of Montessori's speeches
and writings during her later years, focusing on those produced during her
stay in India. He notes that Montessori was the "favourite educator" 4 of
Theosophists who readily adopted her Method in their schools, and examines
the strong similarity between Montessori's speeches and writings, with
Theosophical ideas on education. His account is well supported and has
provided an important source for this thesis.

A dissertation by Trudeau focuses on the development of the "Cosmic
Curriculum" by Montessori during her stay in India, and its contribution
to the evolution of Montessori's educational thought. 5 She also attempts
to explore the early years of the movement in India and the period of
Montessori's visit but, although she visited India, she apparently did not
examine newspapers and journals, relying primarily upon personal interviews.

This thesis is largely concerned with Indian responses to the
Montessori Method and to its founder. It is an historical study of the
application of the Method on the Indian sub-continent, and in post-Independence
India. To date there has been no significant attempt to undertake such a
work. While Montessori education in principle extends from birth to adulthood, apart from some notable exceptions, its application in India was mainly amongst the pre-school age group. In a country where primary education in the form of infant schools, kindergartens, nursery schools and Montessori schools has existed over a long period, coterminous with such education in the West, there has also been no comprehensive history of such education. Nurullah and Naik's monumental history of education in India during the British period, which largely relies on official sources, contains no section on pre-schools. This is possibly because the organized education of very young children was primarily in private hands and there is little reference to it in official sources prior to the 1940s when the Central Advisory Board of Education made provision for pre-primary education in its Post-War Plan of Educational Reconstruction which became known as the Sargent Report (1944).

In the late 1970s and, particularly, to coincide with the celebration of the International Year of the Child, a number of publications appeared concerning the provision of services for the early childhood years. The major focus of these works was the provision of welfare programmes. Although, after Independence, various Five Year Plans of national development allocated funds for early childhood services, these were relatively meagre and they were primarily welfare oriented. After the publication of the Kothari Commission Report in 1966, giving increased recognition to the importance of early childhood care and education, Government involvement in this field expanded substantially. Most books concerning pre-school age children in India make some reference to the impact of the Montessori movement on early childhood education and to the visit of Montessori to India, but such references are generally brief at best and provide no detailed historical analysis. A.M. Joosten contributed an historical outline of the Montessori movement in India in a Montessori Centenary Anthology published in India in 1970.
This study is thus the first attempt to undertake an extensive examination of the history of the Montessori Method in India. It aims to trace the development of the movement there over a period of seventy years and will attempt to explain the apparent paradox of the favourable reception of a Western educational method during a period when key figures of a growing nationalist movement were struggling to divest the country of increasing dependence on Western education and its concomitant colonial domination.

In examining the expansion of the Montessori movement, the thesis will survey the establishment of Montessori schools; the visit of Dr Maria Montessori and Mario Montessori and its impact on the movement in India; teacher training and the production of the Montessori apparatus; the publication of literature about the Method including Montessori's writings. The thesis will also examine the contribution of various personalities and groups involved with the Montessori Method in India and the establishment of Montessori organizations. In discussing the latter the thesis will examine the emergence of an "Indianized" Montessori movement allied to the nationalist and Gandhian social reform movements, but which remained committed to the principles of Montessori education. In the mid 1940s, prominent members of this movement became concerned with the possibility of "adapting" the Montessori Method in terms of Gandhian principles and applying it in the villages wherein the bulk of the country's vast poverty stricken, and largely illiterate, population resided.

The latter part of the study will discuss directions in the Montessori movement in the context of India's emergence in the aftermath of World War II as a newly independent developing country. For the purposes of this thesis, the term "development" refers not merely to economic growth, but to what Adam Curle calls, "a quality of human living which is part material (or economic) part cultural and part social (or
Recognition of the importance of the human dimension and qualitative as well as quantitative outcomes in development processes, has recently replaced the traditional or "neo-classical" view which associated development with the growth of GNP (Gross National Product) and emphasised linear stages of growth through which all countries were expected to pass. The reduction or elimination of poverty and the satisfaction of basic human needs, including health and education, form part of a new multi-dimensional approach to the problem of development.

Any study of education must give some consideration to the nature of the society in which it occurs. The application of the Montessori Method in India is significant, not only for its longevity but, also, because nowhere else has the Method been so successfully applied in such a pluralistic society. India is known for its vast, heterogeneous population. There is immense cultural variety as each region has distinct customs including food habits, dress, and language. There are some fourteen official languages, with Hindi as the national language. In India religion is pervasive and can be viewed as a form of social organization which distinguishes one group from another. There are eight major religions of which Hinduism is predominant.

In exploring the history of the Montessori Method and, in particular, those individuals and groups to whom the Method appealed, it is also important to consider the nature of the social structure. Indian society is remarkable for its hierarchical stratification embodied in the caste system, which derives from Hinduism and impinges upon all aspects of daily life, including education. The caste system is highly complex but, in general terms, there are two notions or aspects of caste. One is the more rigid varna system which concerns broad occupational categories with ritual power and status, and which is replicated throughout India. Within this system there are four varnas, the highest being that of the Brahmin, or priest, followed by the Kshatriya, or warrior, the
Vaishya, or merchant, and the Shudra, or farmer. The Harijans, or "Children of God", the name given by Gandhi to the "Untouchables", are viewed as being outside the caste system.

Relations between caste groups are governed generally by the concepts of pollution and purity. Members of the other four varnas are polluted by contact with Harijans. In the varna system the position of the various castes is immutable. The caste system is complicated, however, by the notion of jati in which the system is more fluid and is broken up into numerous localized sub-castes. "Jati norms and culture shaped character and prescribed ritual, occupational, commensal, marital and social conduct, and jati organization and authority enforced them."  

The British presence in India over a period of 150 years did not undermine the caste system, but it did have a profound effect upon Indian society. The process of change which it wrought has been termed "Westernization" and its influence was both far-reaching and complex, impacting on technology, institutions, ideology, and values. Only a minute proportion of the Indian population had contact with Europeans in India and those few who received Western education formed an élite. There was some continuity between the traditional élite and the new Westernized élite, in that Hindu members of the latter came from the high caste, traditionally literate groups, Brahmins, Kayasthas and Banias. It is important to note that, while many of those who belonged to the Westernized élite lived in the cities, not all were urban dwellers, so that it is necessary also to distinguish those who were "urbanized". The emergence of these élites was crucial to the initial reception of the Montessori Method.

In exploring the application of the Montessori Method in India, the thesis has drawn upon a wide range of primary and secondary sources, both published and unpublished. These comprised newspapers, journals, official and unofficial reports, unpublished lectures, speeches and
correspondence, personal communications, books, and various miscellaneous items including pamphlets and mimeographs. The writer also visited numerous schools and teacher training institutions which purported to utilize the Method. (See Appendix I.) Much of the primary source material was in private hands. Apart from several files concerning the visit of Madame and Mario Montessori to India, the writer found scant reference to the Montessori Method in the archival repositories visited in India. Gandhian and Theosophical literature and works concerning the Indian nationalist movement proved useful sources, particularly in fleshing out details of the major protagonists in the Montessori movement and in gaining some insight into the social and political dynamics of the period.

The first chapter provides an introduction to the life and work of Maria Montessori and discusses various influences on Montessori, particularly her long association with Theosophy which was uncovered during the course of research for this study and which conceivably influenced the direction of her life and work, particularly during the years she spent in India. As well, it may have had an important bearing on the early reception of her Method in India.

An historical background to the introduction of the Montessori Method in India is provided in the second chapter. The intention is to focus on certain themes in order to explain the favourable reception and expansion of the Montessori movement in India. The Montessori Method was adopted during a significant period of political and social change in India. The chapter will examine the emergence of certain forces for change which may have affected the Montessori movement. The chapter will also introduce various organizations and individuals in the forefront of reformist activity and will focus on the evolution of Gandhi's educational thought and practice, because of the profound influence of his ideas and programmes on the period of the Method's adoption.
In subsequent chapters the thesis will trace the history of the application of the Method. It appears to comprise three phases. The first phase from 1912 to 1939 is explored in Chapter Three which will attempt to account for the initial appeal of the Method through an examination of the various individuals and groups who played a significant role in its adoption. The period from 1939-1949 in which Montessori and her son visited India is surveyed in Chapters Four and Five, which will also examine the impact of their presence on the expansion of the movement.

The period after the departure of the Montessoris in 1949 is discussed in Chapter Six which surveys directions in the application of the Montessori Method in post-Independence India. The chapter will discuss the various Montessori organizations, the nature of the training courses and the proliferation of Montessori schools. The contribution to the movement made by A.M. Joosten as Director of the Indian Montessori Training Courses (IMTCs) and Personal Representative of the Montessoris and the AMI, will also be examined. The final chapter describes an experiment in the adaptation of the Montessori Method to suit the needs of India's rural poor, and discusses its significance.
NOTES


15. M.N. Srinivas, Caste in Modern India and Other Essays, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962, p. 3.


18. For a thorough analysis of this process see Srinivas, op. cit., pp. 46-88.

19. See ibid., pp. 64 & 69.

20. Ibid., p. 48.
CHAPTER I

"THE SEED WE SOW IS THE SEED OF HOPE"
MARIA MONTESSORI'S LIFE AND WORK: AN INTRODUCTION

- Introduction
- The Formative Years
- The Experiment Begins
- Montessori was a Theosophist
- The Casa Dei Bambini and the Birth of the Method
- The Montessori Movement
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to trace the history of the Montessori movement in India and to attempt to account for its adoption and survival there over a period longer than virtually anywhere else in the world. Late in life, Maria Montessori visited India and remained for a number of years. To give some understanding of the impact of her presence there and the continued appeal of her Method, this chapter will briefly discuss the formative period of her life, the emergence of her pedagogical method, and the expansion of the educational movement which bears her name.

While there have been several biographies of Montessori and numerous articles and chapters in histories of education concerning her life and contribution to education, none can be considered definitive. To chronicle accurately the life and work of this extraordinary and complex person would indeed prove difficult, particularly because of the deliberate secrecy which obscures many aspects of her life. The chapter will, therefore, focus on one hitherto little known influence which may have played a role in the shaping of her educational thought and practice, and which appears to have had an important bearing on the Indian application of her Method.

THE FORMATIVE YEARS

Details of the early years of Maria Montessori's life remain sketchy. The biography by E.M. Standing and the memoir of Anna Maccheroni - as well as the more comprehensive work by Kramer - contain much anecdotal material supplied by Montessori from memories of childhood, and stories she told to her devotees and to family members after she had become famous.¹
The image that does emerge is of a confident, strong willed, and somewhat bossy child. Kramer writes:

There was a certain note of authority to her personality. In games with other children she was usually the leader. Playmates sometimes objected to the contem tuous way she could treat them. She had a strong, sometimes flippant way about her. Those she disapproved of she dismissed with a phrase like "You! You aren't even born yet", or "Please remind me that I've made up my mind never to speak to you again."2

As a child she seems to have already had a sense of self importance and the germ of that powerful ego necessary to sustain a belief in her own capabilities in a society in which women were not expected to be assertive.3 Kramer also notes that she had "the sense of duty that sometimes makes for intolerance of others. In short, a born social reformer."4

Montessori was born into a middle class family in Chiaravalle, a town near Ancona, on the 31st August, 1870, the same year that Italy was united as one nation. Her father, Alessandro, was a civil servant, and was a financial manager in the state run tobacco industry. Her mother, Renilde, belonged to the landowning Stoppani family in Chiaravalle, and was unusually well-educated for a woman at the time.5 Both were fiercely patriotic and supported the ideals of Italian liberation and unification. Alessandro had been decorated in 1849 for his efforts as a soldier in one of the early battles which eventually resulted in a unified country. When Maria was five,6 the family moved to Rome where there were better schools, a university, libraries and museums. The child was thus able to grow up in a more sophisticated and intellectually stimulating cultural and social environment than that of provincial Chiaravalle. The post-unification period of Montessori's youth was one of great optimism amongst the wealthier classes. The achievement of liberation had engendered a spirit of hope for economic and social progress. There was a demand for educational improvement, including the increased provision of education
for girls outside the traditional cloistered environment of the convent. But there was also immense poverty and social upheaval as peasants flocked to the cities in search of work. Renilde Montessori was a devout Catholic and encouraged in her daughter a concern for the less fortunate. Maria thus developed a strong social conscience at an early age and this influenced the later direction of her life. But it was a social concern which seems to have been motivated strongly by a belief in her own superiority and the consequent desire to improve the lives of others.

Her middle class background and the forward thinking views of her mother ensured that Maria would receive a good education. Although she was apparently not precocious at school, she performed sufficiently well to gain confidence in her own ability and to begin studying in earnest. By the age of twelve she had dispensed with her childhood fantasy of becoming an actress and, with her mother's encouragement, entered a technical school. It was an unusual choice for a girl at the time and one her father apparently disapproved. However, with her characteristic determination and her mother's support, she persisted. Maria's strong personality caused her some difficulty within the rigid and highly conformist classroom structure then prevailing, but she survived and graduated with high marks in all subjects in 1886.

From 1886-1890 she attended a technical institute, the Regio Istituto Tecnico Leonardo da Vinci, where she excelled in mathematics and, despite her father's opposition, decided to become an engineer. In 1890 she graduated from the institute and enrolled at the University of Rome, not in engineering, but in subjects designed to lead to a degree in medicine. She had ostensibly become interested in the biological sciences, but Montessori later claimed her decision had been motivated by a strange mystical experience of which her friend Anna Maccheroni wrote:

She herself cannot explain how it came about. It happened all in a moment. She was walking in a street when she passed a woman with a baby holding a long, narrow, red
strip of paper. I have heard Dr. Montessori describe this little street scene and the decision that then came to her. At such times there was in her eyes a long deep look, as if she were searching out things which were far beyond words. Then she would say, 'Why?' and with a little expressive movement of her hand indicate that there are strange things happening within us guiding us toward an end we do not know.10

To enrol in that course was a momentous and radical decision, whatever its impetus, as no woman in Italy had ever studied medicine. She was opposed, not only by members of her family, particularly her father, but also by the professor of clinical medicine at the University of Rome, Guido Baccelli. Montessori was determined, however, and in 1892 she was able to begin her studies. Her acceptance was unprecedented and it is not clear how she was able to persuade the authorities to allow her to enrol in clinical medicine. Montessori later claimed she had obtained the assistance of the Pope, but this has not been corroborated.11

Once she had gained admittance, the task proved difficult for several reasons. She had to be escorted to and from the university as it was uncommon for women of her class to move about in the street unaccompanied. She was also required, because of her sex, to take her seat in the lecture theatre after all the men were seated, and to attend the dissecting hall alone in the evenings. The sights and smells of the anatomy hall were repugnant to her and remained so throughout her life, but by force of will she was able to cope with her revulsion sufficiently to continue the work. Montessori also managed to overcome her father's continued opposition to her career choice and to tolerate the hostility of her fellow students who not only resented the invasion by a woman of their all-male preserve but also the apparent ease with which she handled her studies. She was a diligent and talented student and in June 1984, at the end of her second year in medicine and surgery, she won the coveted Rolli Prize which included a scholarship. She was able to pay much of the cost of her studies by giving private tuition and through continuing
Montessori's powerful inner strength of will was not always sufficient to cope with the obstacles, however, and on one occasion she left the University feeling depressed and with the intention of finding an alternative career. Standing records that it was while walking home that she was confronted by a ragged beggar woman accompanied by a child of about two years. The child was playing with a small piece of coloured paper. Montessori was so moved by the happiness of the child who was totally absorbed with the "toy" that she determined to return to her medical work, convinced she had found her vocation. Kramer points to the similarity between this and Maccheroni's tale of a baby with a red slip of paper which inspired Montessori's initial decision to study medicine. Both Standing and Maccheroni were reporting incidents which Montessori told them later in life and both indicated Montessori's concern with her own destiny. Anna Maccheroni observed that,

When she spoke of the sudden change in her life plans
I could feel the inner certitude which made her persevere against her father's strong opposition and all the other difficulties that beset her path.

Standing also wrote of "that mysterious affinity which exists, deep down in the soul of the genius, towards that work which she is destined to perform", and of his belief that she was "sent into the world to shed new light on the unfathomed depths of the child's soul." But, as Kramer rightly points out, the above memoirs were part of the mythologizing which Montessori's later devotees indulged in and of "her own gradually deepening mysticism as she grew older." Kramer argues that there probably was some relationship between Montessori's experience of seeing the beggar child and her determination to study medicine, and that she made a conscious choice on the basis of an intuitive response to that experience. The decision to undertake and persevere with a career in
medicine was, however, also motivated by considerations other than the noble cause of serving humanity. In a letter to a friend describing her first experience in the anatomy hall, Montessori wrote:

How had it even occurred to me to study anatomy? But then, oh come on now, what about the future? The goal, what a splendid goal. It seemed to me that up on top, the goal seemed luminous... I was perspiring all over, panting. The desired object of my life was eluding me. I who believed in life saw its uselessness. I won't be able to do anybody any good, I will be a useless thing, like so many others! I will work hard to earn a pittance like so many teachers. But it does not matter. Better to be a dress-maker, a servant.... But not that, not that. 19

The letter indicates that Montessori was concerned with making her mark upon the world rather than being "a useless thing." A medical career afforded social status and prestige, but the fact that she would be the first woman doctor in Italy provided the kind of notoriety which set her apart from other women. Her childhood fantasy of becoming an actress suggests a desire for public attention and fame.

Montessori appears in this early stage of her life to have also been motivated by pecuniary concerns. She was not prepared to merely earn a "pittance" as a teacher or dressmaker. A doctor's income would make her financially secure and independent of her father, from whom she was apparently becoming more estranged. 20

In July 1896, Maria Montessori achieved her goal and graduated from the medical school of the University of Rome, the first woman doctor in Italy. Apart from this personal triumph she was also attracting attention because of her outspoken views on various social questions, including the status of women. She was invited to represent her country at a women's congress to be held in Berlin in September that year. But she was not a "blue stocking" and defied the current stereotyping of feminists as manly in appearance and dress, by appearing in public as a
typical, attractively groomed, young woman of the day. In fact, she seems to have been quite vain, and always dressed with care and great style. At the conference she caused a sensation among the journalists who found it incongruous that a young woman could be so intellectually talented yet retain such feminine beauty and charm. In one article the author exclaimed:

It astounds one to read her card Medico-Chirurgo! This physician-surgeon graces the speaker's podium as if it were a box at the theater, and all the large questions she talks about - the emancipation of the peasant and factory women, the economic and legal rights of married women are discussed in a Roman accent that sounds like music. Suddenly one wishes there were a hundred thousand such physician-surgeons.

In response to the fanfare from the press, Montessori claimed after the conference that she was only interested in "serious work", but it was her graceful femininity and eloquence which drew attention in Berlin, not her concern for equal pay and improved conditions for women. Throughout her life she would receive such accolades and attract people because of her powerful charisma. The fact that she continued to lecture in her flowery and demonstrative Italian outside Italy, although she spoke English, and to dress with great elegance and style, indicates she was fully aware of her personal impact on others.

Although she continued to express views in support of the women's movement, advocating equal opportunities for women in the belief that their possible contribution to society was not being realized, Montessori did not intend to devote her life exclusively to the crusade for women's rights. Medicine was her chosen vocation. As well as obtaining positions as assistant at various hospitals after her graduation, she also established her own practice.

Montessori's clients were not, however, restricted to those who could afford fees and she followed the traditional practice of also
attending the less fortunate. She thus continued to demonstrate that social conscience which had been instilled in her as a child. Though she held feminist views, Montessori did not consider domestic work demeaning and would often assist her poorer patients by providing expert nursing care and domestic help, including bathing patients and preparing their meals. She never belittled household tasks and enjoyed performing them herself. 25 Montessori later came to believe that such activities with the hands, which she called the Exercises of Practical Life and were an important feature of the Montessori Method, were essential for intellectual and personality development and should be performed by boys as well as girls. Her appreciation of the value of domestic work stemmed, initially, from early childhood experience when her mother encouraged her to undertake such tasks. 26

THE EXPERIMENT BEGINS

In 1897, Montessori became a voluntary assistant at the Psychiatric Clinic at the University of Rome, where she had continued to undertake research following her graduation. It was the beginning of a new path which would eventually lead her away from her chosen discipline of medicine toward that of child education in which she would achieve world renown as one of the great educators. Part of her work at the clinic involved visiting mental asylums in Rome to select patients for treatment and she was thus confronted with the appalling conditions which then prevailed for mentally deficient children for whom no special facilities were provided. They were locked up beside adults who suffered a variety of mental diseases and included the criminally insane.

On one such visit Montessori was informed that, upon completion of their meal, the children, many of whom might be classified today as slow learners, would throw themselves onto the ground in search of stray
breadcrumbs. As part of her medical training, Montessori had developed acute powers of observation. It was a skill for which she seems to have had a special genius and which later became the basis of her educational methodology. She saw that the children did not eat hungrily but rather mouthed and fondled the dirty bread; and, noting the bare surroundings, she concluded that these morsels of food provided the only means of relieving the boredom of their existence. Montessori became fascinated with the problem and took some of them to the clinic for further examination, noting their responses to the various stimulating activities she presented. She also searched for literature on special education and consequently came upon references to the works of the French physician, Jean-Marc-Gaspard Itard, and his disciple, Edouard Séguin. Montessori later referred to their writings as the chief inspiration for the formulation of her pedagogy.

Itard had achieved fame because of his work with the "wild boy of Aveyron", a mentally handicapped child of about eleven who had been found in 1800, running wild in the woods. He was taken to the National Institution for the Deaf and Dumb in Paris which Itard had joined that year. The boy was thought by many to be ineducable but Itard contended that the problem was a lack of appropriate stimulation and training, rather than congenital idiocy. He thus proceeded to try to educate him using methods designed to teach language to deaf mutes. The existing techniques proved unsuccessful, however, and he was forced to devise a new approach. Although he ultimately failed in his goal of teaching the boy, he developed new techniques with which to educate deaf-mutes.

Montessori was fascinated by Itard's writings and claimed his efforts were the first attempts in experimental psychology. She later acknowledged her debt to him stating that he was "the first educator to practise the observation of the pupil, in the way in which the sick are observed in hospitals, especially those suffering from diseases of the nervous system."
Itard was a pioneer in his method of combining a pedagogic approach to what was believed to be essentially a medical problem and it proved to have a profound influence upon Montessori. Robert Fynne summarized his contribution to education thus:

In his realisation of the great educational role of the child's organic needs - those that are mental and moral, social and aesthetic, as well as those that are physical: in his idea of creating new needs and of making them permanent and operative for further development: in his employment of the factor of use or function as an educational means: in his encouragement and utilisation of the feeble spontaneity of his pupil and of pleasure, interest, and imitation: in his method of proceeding from large to small in objects and movements, and from wide to narrow differences: in all these Itard anticipated the principles and practice of twentieth century education.29

The first systematic approach to the development of education for mentally retarded children was devised, however, by Séguin. Montessori read his first book, Traitement Moral, Hygiène et Education des Idiots, published in 1846, with great interest. It describes the method he developed over a period of some ten years working in a small school he established with children from insane asylums in Paris. He followed Itard's biological approach to learning and perceived the child as an organic unity, believing that education must be directed towards both psychological and physiological development. He thought that the educator must,

... begin with the thorough scientific and detailed training and development of the power of muscular movement, to proceed then to the similarly thorough training of the senses, and finally to direct his special attention to intellectual and moral education.30

He was also concerned with the peculiar capabilities and needs of the individual child, and what he called the scientific education of the hand, believing that "its efficient functioning leads to the highest physical, intellectual, and moral development."31 Séguin perceived the sense of
touch to be the most fundamental of all the senses and considered that it should be trained first. In this and other aspects of his method, he drew his inspiration from the work of a Sephardic Jew, Jacob Rodriguez Pereira, who is credited with being the first teacher of deaf-mutes in France. Significantly, Itard had no knowledge of Pereira's work, and, while she knew of him, Montessori makes no mention of having studied his achievements. Her only contact with Pereira's ideas seems to have been through Séguin whom she claimed was her chief inspirer. During all the time she worked with mentally retarded children, however, she had access only to Séguin's first book on the teaching of such children.

Séguin had migrated to the United States in 1850 and, later, he published a second book entitled *Idiocy and its Treatment by the Physiological Method*, in New York in 1866. The book described the application of what he termed the "Physiological Method", in the treatment of the mentally retarded. For Montessori, it promised a significant departure from his previous work because he no longer wrote in specific terms of the "education of idiots" but of a general method, which could also be utilized for the education of "normal" children. Despite searching in England, France and Germany, she was not able to obtain a copy of this work. It was still unknown in England despite having been published in the English language. When she travelled to France, Montessori found Séguin's didactic apparatus in use, and although physicians there were familiar with his first book she observed they were somewhat mechanical in their application of his approach. Special apparatuses for retarded children were available in Germany but they were not physiologically based. Educators there had adapted materials in use with normal children. She noted a general disillusionment in France and England with Séguin's methods which had met with little success. She became convinced that there was a lack of understanding of his approach and was thus encouraged to experiment with the apparatus herself. Over a two year period between
1898 and 1900 she had a variety of didactic apparatus manufactured and, guided by the work of both Itard and Séguin, she used it with mentally deficient children. 36

Montessori also began to study systematic pedagogy for the first time. During 1897-1898 she attended courses at the University of Rome as an auditor. She read the works and absorbed the ideas of all the major educational theorists and practitioners of the previous two hundred years. 37 Chief among there were the Swiss educator Pestalozzi, and the German, Froebel. But, according to both Fynne 38 and Standing, 39 Montessori was not influenced by any of the major educators. She certainly only acknowledged her indebtedness to both Itard and Séguin, and believed she was furthering the potential which already existed in their work, particularly that of Séguin. 40 Like them, she had come to education from the field of medical science. Her purpose was to devise educational materials which would assist the treatment of the retarded. Her approach was that of the clinician and reflected nineteenth century positivism in responding to observations and devising a theory on the basis of practical experience with individual subjects. 41 The great educators, however, had begun their educational practice in response to an extant theoretical approach. Their pedagogy was based upon their ideas about how children should learn.

Both Pestalozzi and Froebel had been influenced by the writings of Rousseau, 42 who placed particular emphasis upon sense experience and believed that the child should learn through close physical contact with objects in the natural environment utilizing the senses of touch, sight, sound and smell. Significantly, whilst Montessori makes no direct reference to Rousseau's ideas in her chapter on the "History of the Method", she apparently later claimed that the philosopher was himself influenced by the work of Pereira who was his neighbour and friend. 43 Rousseau visited Pereira's school frequently and in developing his own educational theories he "extended Pereira's idea of training the sense of touch in
deaf-mutes to the training of all the senses in the education of normal children." Montessori was thus justifying her own approach by suggesting that some of the ideas of the great educators had their origins in medical science, in an understanding of the developmental physiology of the child. Unlike her medical colleagues, however, she was forming the view, through the influence of Séguin, and probably as a result of her studies in education, that "mental deficiency presented chiefly a pedagogical, rather than mainly a medical problem." She gave full expression to this view in a paper entitled "Social Miseries and New Scientific Discoveries", published in Roma, a political review, in 1898.

In September 1898, she attended a national Pedagogical Congress in Turin, and delivered essentially the same paper in an address entitled "Moral Education". Montessori advocated the separation of the "deficients", which probably comprised "both the organically impaired and the victims of severe poverty and cultural deprivation", from mental asylums, and the establishment of special educational institutions designed for their mental and moral rehabilitation. She suggested the introduction of special courses in pedagogical methods for teachers of the retarded. These methods had been developed, she claimed, by the scientific observation of such children. In the kind of medical and pedagogic institution staffed by both doctors and teachers which she was advocating:

The children should be occupied from morning to evening without being over-tired and without being isolated. First we have to teach the simplest things - walking in a straight line toward a goal, use of the toilet, use of the spoon - and then we try to fix their attention on their sense perceptions, taking them for walks in a garden, for example, to stimulate their senses of sight and smell by means of flowers of different sizes, colors and perfumes, Gymnastics for the training of their muscles. For the training of their tactile senses, a variety of objects of various textures, capable of attracting their attention and holding their interest.

Once the education of the senses is underway, along with the arousal of interest, we can begin real instruction. We can introduce the alphabet, not in a book, but on a
little table on which are raised letters painted
different colours, that can be touched and traced
with the fingers. We gradually follow with manual
instruction and eventually moral education, the
final goal of the scientist as well as the
philanthropist.49

It was the beginnings of what would become the "Scientific Method of
Pedagogy". Much of the programme had been extrapolated from Séguin.
It emphasized the development of motor and sensory functions prior to
the introduction of more intellectually oriented tasks, and this important
principle was later adopted in her work with normal children. Significantly
she added that to achieve success with such children, "the physician must
love not only science but the individual. Here religious feeling becomes
an indispensible auxiliary of science."50 Kramer states that this religious
sensibility was "characteristic of her thinking and would become more so",51
but makes no attempt to explain its emergence. Montessori, however,
acknowledged the influence of Séguin in this direction. She wrote that,

Séguin, too, expressed himself in the same way on this subject. Reading his patient attempts, I understand
clearly that the first didactic material used by him was spiritual. Indeed, at the close of the French volume,
the author, giving a resume of his work, concludes by saying rather sadly, that all he has established will be
lost or useless, if the teachers are not prepared for their work. He holds rather original views concerning
the preparation of teachers of deficients. He would have them good to look upon, pleasant-voiced, careful in
every detail of their personal appearance, doing everything possible to make themselves attractive. They must,
he says, render themselves attractive in voice and manner, since it is their task to awaken souls which are frail and
weary, and to lead them forth to lay hold upon the beauty and strength of life.52

Kramer seems to have ignored this important evidence. Rather,
she goes on to discuss other aspects of Montessori's address at Turin
focussing on her suggestions for combining the discoveries of positive
science with socialist ideals to improve society. Montessori believed that
the establishment of special institutions for mentally "deficient" children
in which they were provided with an education appropriate to their specific
needs, would remove a major social problem and enable such children to make a useful contribution to society. Her positive approach was given a standing ovation and the Congress unanimously passed a resolution urging the establishment of separate classes and medical-pedagogical institutions for "deficient" children and special courses for teachers.53

In this context it is also important to note that, at the Turin Congress, there was a demonstration, witnessed by Montessori, of a new infant education method, presented by a little known Italian school teacher, Rosa Agazzi. She and her sister had been experimenting with new methods of education in infant schools in Brescia since 1892. It is interesting to note the strong similarities between their work and what later became known as the Montessori Method, particularly in the adoption of "exercises of practical life" and the idea of a "children's house" to resemble the home.54 Montessori made no mention of the work of the Agazzi sisters, and Kramer seems unaware of their existence and possible influence on Montessori.

Towards the end of 1898 a committee was formed to raise funds for the establishment of a national medical-pedagogical institution. Montessori was amongst the most active members. She wrote articles to popularize the aims of the organization and, in February 1899, she undertook a two-week lecture tour to Milan, Padua, Venice and Genoa to raise funds.55

In 1899 she was also appointed lecturer in hygiene and anthropology at the Regio Istituto Superiore di Magistero Femminile in Rome, a post she continued to hold until 1906. It was one of only two teacher training colleges for women in Italy and its diploma courses were a prerequisite for teaching in secondary schools and were recognized as equivalent to those of the University. Though she was appointed in her capacity as a medical specialist, Montessori was entering the field of education. In addition to her teaching responsibilities she was also a member of the examination committee and read student theses. She thus came into further contact with educational theory and practice.
Montessori's proposal for special training for teachers of retarded children came to fruition with the establishment in 1900 of the Scuola Magistrale Ortofrenica, the Orthophrenic School. She was appointed co-director with her friend and colleague, Dr Giuseppe Montesano, with whom she had worked at the Psychiatric Clinic. Besides a teacher training programme, the institution also had a demonstration school in which twenty-two children who had been unable to function in a normal way, were enrolled. Apprentice teachers under the supervision of Montessori and her colleagues, provided instruction.56

The school gave Montessori the opportunity to put Seguin's techniques, together with her own ideas about the teaching of "deficients", into practice in a systematic way. It enabled her to experiment further with new materials and to make close observations of their application in a classroom. At night she studiously recorded her observations. In the process, her professional status was beginning to evolve from physician to pedagogue because she began to involve herself in the actual teaching of the children. She later described the two years in the school as "my first and indeed my true degree in pedagogy."57 A complete set of materials, based on those of Itard and Seguin, were manufactured for the school and she later wrote that,

> These materials, which I have never seen complete in any institution, became in the hands of those who knew how to use them, a most remarkable and efficient means, but unless rightly presented, they failed to attract the attention of deficient.58

In the course of these experiments, Montessori came to understand the importance of preparatory exercises in the learning of a particular task or skill, a principle which became integral to her later method. She had been attempting to teach an eleven year old child to sew and when this failed, to darn, but her efforts were unsuccessful. She then tried a task which she considered to be analogous to darning, the Froebelian occupation
of mat weaving, in which the child threads strips of paper in and out of a mat containing cut out vertical strips joined at each end. The girl was able to master the weaving and Montessori found she was then able to accomplish the more refined task of darning. Consequently, sewing lessons at the school were preceded by mat weaving. This suggests that she was in fact influenced by Froebel's work, at least in the formative period of her Method.

Montessori then decided to generalize the principle to other learning tasks and to experiment with its application to the teaching of reading and writing. She had only taught the children to touch the contours of plane geometric insets so she encouraged them to practise tracing the contours of a set of three-dimensional wooden letters comprising an alphabet, with the vowels painted in red enamel and the consonants in blue. They were soon able to trace the shapes of the letters accurately and, finally, to reproduce them on a blackboard using chalk. Apart from the moveable alphabet, Montessori also had cards made on which the letters were painted in the same dimensions and colours as the wooden ones, and she had pictures prepared depicting various objects. The pupils were expected to match the appropriate letter commencing the name of the object.

Montessori had gone beyond Séguin, for with her moveable alphabet the child was both prepared for writing, through tracing the letters, and for reading, through learning to recognize them and associate them as symbols for meaningful objects. She then prepared lectures on this new method of teaching reading and writing for the teachers of the school.

The application of the material with the deficiencies was immediately successful and a number of the children learned to read and write. She therefore decided to test their ability by presenting some of the eight year olds for the state reading and writing examinations. The results were astounding, in that they not only all passed but some performed better than the "normal" children. But Montessori realized that this success was only
possible because the children described as "idiots", "had been helped in their psychic development, and the normal children had, instead, been suffocated, held back." She also knew that "The abyss between the inferior mentality of the idiot and that of the normal brain can never be bridged if the normal child has reached his full development." Montessori thus began to concern herself with ways of enabling the normal child to reach that full potential instead of remaining "on so low a plane that they could be equalled in tests of intelligence by my unfortunate pupils."

In 1901, despite her amazing success, Montessori made the extraordinary decision to leave the school to begin serious study in the field of education. Kramer argues, however, that she left the institution because, "At some point she had formed a close friendship with her colleague, Dr. Montesano, which grew into a love affair, and she had borne his child."

As with many aspects of Montessori's life their failure to marry remains unclear. According to her son Mario, who claimed he was born on the 31st March, 1898, Montesano's family opposed the marriage. Mario was told that at the insistence of the two families, he was sent to the country to be reared in secret and that his parents made a vow not only to hide his existence from all but their closest friends but also never to marry. Montesano, however, betrayed his promise and married and this was the supposed reason for Montessori's resignation from the school, to avoid contact with him.

As Kramer has suggested, it seems unlikely that Montessori could have carried and borne a child without arousing notice during a period when she was engrossed in her work at the Psychiatric Clinic, as well as maintaining her private practice and hospital commitments. It is, therefore, possible that she left the school, not just to escape the embarrassment of working with Montesano, but to give birth to his child and thus disappear from public view. Montessori admitted she was emotionally drained by her work with the children and stated that she
"felt the need of meditation". Her active involvement with mentally retarded children who required so much of her attention to make satisfactory progress was undoubtedly exhausting, but it is also probable that much of her emotional strain was due to her relationship with Montesano and the physiological and psychological demands of bearing his child. As Kramer writes, at that time in Roman Catholic Italy,

... the knowledge that she had had a child out of wedlock would have shattered any woman's career; it would have ended all Montessori's hopes for the future, all possibility for her to make the contribution she had come to see as the real purpose of her life.

Whatever the specific circumstances of his birth, the child appears to have been the catalyst which affirmed the direction in which her professional life had gradually become oriented and which began a new and vital chapter in the history of education. Although Mario Montessori was reared in isolation from his mother in the countryside and was sent to a boarding school near Florence from the age of seven, he harboured no animosity towards her. He recalled visits from a "beautiful lady", whom he later came to know as his mother and eventually went to live with her. Their relationship remained extremely close, and Mario was her most ardent admirer, devoting his entire life to her cause.

MONTESSORI WAS A THEOSOPHIST

The birth of her son was not the only event, however, during the period of her work with mentally retarded children, that Montessori chose to keep secret and which also appears to have had a significant impact on the future orientation of her life's work. Although she apparently never acknowledged it, Montessori once joined the Theosophical Society. This fact was not made public, perhaps in deference to the Dottoressa, as she became known, until after her death in 1952, when the President,
C. Jinarajadasa, informed Theosophists that Dr Maria Montessori had joined the Society on the 23rd May, 1899. Her original application had been found by the Recording Secretary’s Office at Adyar, the Society’s Headquarters near Madras. As there was no Italian Branch of the Society at that time, Montessori joined the European section and was admitted by the General Secretary, Mr Otway Cuffe. Her application for membership was supported by Captain O. Boggiani who became the first President of the Italian Section of the Society founded in 1902. Hidden within the pages of The Theosophist, knowledge of Montessori’s membership of the Society appears to have escaped the attention of historians of education.

The Theosophical Society had been founded in New York in September 1875 by a group of individuals drawn together through their common interest in spiritualism and the occult. In his account of the birth of the Society, Campbell writes that the,

... American social situation from which the Theosophical Society emerged was one of great upheaval—and the religious situation was one of challenge to orthodox Christianity. The forces that had surfaced in spiritualism included anticlericalism, social liberalism, and belief in progress and individual effort. Occultism, mediated to America in the form of mesmerism, Swedenborgianism, Free Masonry, and Rosicrucianism, was present. Recent developments in Science led by the 1870s to renewed interest in reconciling science and religion. There was present also a hope that Asian religious ideas could be integrated into a grand religious synthesis.

Prominent amongst those interested in occult phenomena and usually credited with founding the Society, was an extraordinary and controversial Russian emigre eccentric named Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, and an urbane American lawyer, Henry Steel Olcott. Together they forged an important religious movement which attracted a variety of famous and quite unusual personalities. It also played a significant role in the rise of nationalism in India and made a major contribution to educational and social reform there.
The new organization held its first regular meeting on the 17th November, 1875, and it is this date which is regarded by Theosophists as the founding day. From the outset, its members were primarily middle class and included people with professional and business interests. Olcott was elected Founder-President and in his inaugural address expressed the hope that the Society would "aid in freeing the public mind of theological superstition and a tame subservience to the arrogance of science."
Theosophy was to be distinguished from spiritualism in which, he said, people had found "a barrier of imposture, tricky mediums, lying spirits and revolting social theories." Instead, the new society was to concern itself with the study of ancient wisdom, with the "primeval source of all religions, the books of Hermes and the Vedas", and would make Christians aware of "the pagan origins of many of their most sacred idols and most cherished dogmas." The society was to be primarily concerned with the investigation of, and experimentation with, all manner of phenomena related to religion and science. Olcott proposed that the Society study Mesmerism, spiritualism, and the universal ether or astral light, and he envisaged the publication of the results of their researches and the reprinting of works by "the great masters of Theosophy of all times." 

Through Madame Blavatsky, or H.P.B. as she became known, Olcott had already had contact with one of these Masters, or "Adepts", who comprised a Universal Mystic Brotherhood. She claimed that she had been ordered by them to give him esoteric instruction. "She later explained to him that their work together was being supervised by a Committee of Adepts belonging to the Egyptian group of the Brotherhood. These Adepts were not disembodied spirits but 'living men'." They played a significant role in the history of Theosophy and are believed by Theosophists to have been the real founders of the Society. H.P.B. claimed the Masters inspired much Theosophical writing, including her own, through direct dictation or thought-transference and that all Theosophical truths were derived from them.
She also claimed to have studied with the Masters in Tibet during the "lost years", twenty five years of her life of which very little is known except that she led a wandering existence, and that it was they who sent her to America in 1873. The Masters, or Mahatmas, as they became known (Mahatma meaning great soul), only came to public prominence, however, after 1879 when Madame Blavatsky and Olcott moved to India. According to Theosophical belief, the Masters are highly evolved beings representing a more advanced stage of human development. H.P.B. described a Mahatma as,

... a personage who, by special training and education has evolved those higher faculties and has attained that spiritual knowledge which ordinary humanity will acquire after passing through numberless series of incarnations during the process of cosmic evolution.

Theosophists believe that many of the great religious teachers, including Buddha, Confucius and Jesus, are Adepts. All wisdom, the true doctrine, is thought to be stored and preserved by these Adepts. Significantly, later in India whilst staying at Theosophical Society Headquarters, Montessori used the term "Master" to describe the Child, her Master or Messiah.

In the manner that Madame Blavatsky claimed that the Mahatmas had been the inspiration for her famous works, Isis Unveiled (1877), The Secret Doctrine (1888), and The Key to Theosophy (1889), Montessori described Séguin's idea that the educator must appeal to the child's spirit, "as a sort of secret key", opening the way for her to comprehend the efficacy of Séguin's experiments with "idiot" children. Séguin's work had been a revelation to her and she seems to have viewed him to some extent as a spiritual mentor. The knowledge that Montessori had joined the Theosophical Society at the time of her early experiments with the mentally handicapped children, allows her statements from that period to be viewed in a new light.
When she withdrew from her work with the "idiot" children and began her intensive study of the work of Itard and Séguin, she translated their writings into Italian in order "to weigh the sense of each word, and to read in truth the spirit of the author." The emphasis on the word "spirit" suggests that it was a devotional exercise, providing the "meditation" which she sought, the means of absorbing the material which had proved such an inspiration to her. It was just after completing the translation of Séguin's first book that she received a copy of the English book which had previously eluded her. She translated it into Italian with the help of an English friend and found that, while it offered little in terms of new pedagogical experiments, it provided a philosophical structure for Séguin's experimental work. He conceived that his method could be applied to normal children. It was based on the study of the individual child's physiological and psychological development and he believed that its application to normal children would ultimately lead to a complete human regeneration. The idea had a profound impact on Montessori who wrote that,

The voice of Seguin seemed to be like the voice of the forerunner crying in the wilderness, and my thoughts were filled with the immensity and importance of a work which should be able to reform the school and education.

The arrival of Séguin's book at this juncture was indeed fortuitous and seemed to provide Montessori, the professed social reformer, with the answer she needed. She had felt intuitively that such methods "applied to normal children would develop or set free their personality in a marvellous and surprising way." The sudden appearance of Séguin's book confirmed it and she wrote:

A great faith animated me, and although I did not know that I should ever be able to test the truth of my idea, I gave up every other occupation to deepen and broaden its conception. It was almost as if I prepared myself for an unknown mission.
The above suggests that she began her systematic study of education with a religious conviction, a belief that her decision had been divinely inspired. The fact that she had recently joined the Theosophical Society provides firm evidence of her spiritual orientation.

As Montessori apparently later made no mention of joining the Society, her motivations for doing so remain unclear. She once recalled having seen at a railway station the woman whom she later came to know as prominent Theosophist, Annie Besant. For an instant their eyes met and Montessori felt that this woman would influence her destiny. When and where this event took place is also not known and, given Montessori's penchant for remembering significant events when it suited her purpose, it is probable the incident was recalled to impress her Theosophical hosts in India. It is also possible, however, that this chance encounter with a public figure who had feminist and reformist views similar to her own, may have encouraged Montessori to join the Society. Annie Besant's conversion in 1889 to Theosophy from Fabian Socialism and secular thought had caused a sensation at the time and Madame Blavatsky regarded it as a great coup for the Society. As Besant was a constant traveller and public speaker in Europe, she was probably known in the feminist and reformist circles in which Montessori moved. Montessori was still giving lectures on behalf of the women's movement at the time she joined the Society. She applied to join in Rome in May, after her successful lecture tour of Italy and before her visit to England in June to attend an international congress of women. Montessori also travelled to France during 1898-1900 to study the application of Séguin's methods to retarded children at the Bicetre, so a chance meeting with Mrs Besant was not impossible. Mario Montessori later claimed they met in London in 1900, at an International Women's Congress.

Like Annie Besant, although Montessori reportedly had
... begun her adult life as a free thinker she gradually became more religious. During the years following Mario's birth she made a spiritual retreat for two weeks every summer at a convent near Bologna, withdrawing to meditate among the nuns.96

Kramer links the period of the birth of her son with Montessori's increasing religious orientation, what she describes as that "peculiar tension in Montessori between scientist and mystic, between reason and intuition",97 but she makes no real attempt to account for it. She merely notes that it was present when Montessori completed her work with the so-called unteachable children and quotes Montessori who wrote of her success:

... we must know how to call to the man which lies dormant within the soul of the child. I felt this intuitively, and believed that not the didactic material, but my voice which called to them, awakened the children, and encouraged them to use the didactic material, and through it, to educate themselves. I was guided in my work by the deep respect which I felt for their misfortune, and by the love which these unhappy children know how to awaken in those who are near them.98

Given Montessori's scientific training and her obvious spiritual inclinations, it is possible that she was attracted to Theosophy because it "claimed to transcend the cleavage between science and religion by a return to the concerns of an ancient wisdom-tradition long forgotten."99

Scientific discoveries, particularly in Natural science, which culminated in Darwin's evolutionary theory, had challenged the traditional biblical view of the appearance of all forms of life on earth. Some believed that science and religion were irreconcilable but others, such as the Harvard professor, John Fiske, and Darwin's colleague, the English biologist, Alfred Russel Wallace, could not deny the significance of religion in attempting to account for man's "higher feelings of pure morality and refined emotion, and the power of abstract reasoning and ideal conception."100

The Spiritualists claimed to have reconciled science and religion by providing objective evidence, through their séances, of the existence
of life after death. More importantly:

Spiritualists rejected the idea of grace of redemptive sacrifice and felt that the responsibility for self-improvement rested on the shoulders of the individual himself. They believed in progressive development toward ultimate individual moral perfection. The soul was felt to be immortal, and it was held that it would progress gradually here and in the higher spheres beyond. 101

Theosophists espoused a similar view. They combined nineteenth century scientific thought with an eclectic selection of ancient religious beliefs, primarily derived from Buddhism and Hinduism. They believed in reincarnation but in a progressive evolutionary sense, that is, once an individual is incarnated as a human being, there is no reversion to animal states with successive reincarnation. Rather, there is continual improvement leading towards the ultimate emancipation of the soul. 102 Theosophy thus "'spiritualized' the theory of evolution by suggesting that all things develop over vast periods of time to a state of pure spirit." 103

It is therefore possible that Theosophy appealed to Montessori because, although it professed not to be a religion, it was concerned with the pursuit of religious study, and also with the examination of scientific phenomena. The term "theosophy" meant divine wisdom and the Society's motto became "There is no religion higher than truth". The three major objectives of the Society were:

1. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour.
2. To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.
3. To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man. 104

Such principles were not antithetical to Montessori's belief system as revealed later in her educational writings and her speeches. To what extent she was directly influenced by Theosophy and Theosophical ideas on
education is difficult to determine. There is some evidence that she read Theosophical literature before she undertook her work with normal children. In India, Mario Montessori claimed his mother introduced Theosophy to Italy, "by collaboration in the translation of the first theosophical books brought into Italy." 105 In The Key to Theosophy, Madame Blavatsky seemed almost to prophesy the future Montessori Children's Houses in the slums of Rome:

I quite agree that there is a great advantage to a small child bred in the slums, having the gutter for playground, and living amid continued coarseness of gesture and word, in being placed daily in a bright, clean school-room hung with pictures, and often gay with flowers. There it is taught to be clean, gentle, orderly; there it learns to sing and play; has toys that awaken its intelligence; learns to use its fingers deftly; is spoken to with a smile instead of a frown; is gently rebuked or coaxed instead of cursed. All this humanizes the children, arouses their brains, and renders them susceptible, to intellectual and moral influences. 106

The fact that she once joined the Society does not prove that Montessori's educational ideas derive from Theosophy. But it does suggest an early and possibly quite powerful influence on the development of her thought. 107 A thorough examination of Montessori's writings in order to trace her theosophical leanings, is beyond the limits of this thesis. The chapter on Montessori and Theosophy in Lawson's thesis has made an important contribution, although he was not aware that she had ever joined the Society and was more concerned with Theosophical influences on her later thought, particularly whilst she was in India. 108 This new evidence should stimulate further study of the writings of this most enigmatic educator. It is important here in attempting to account for the appeal of her Method in India and for the content of her speeches and writings in that country.
THE CASA DEI BAMBINI AND THE BIRTH OF THE METHOD

In 1906 Montessori was offered the opportunity to put her discoveries with the "idiots" of the mental asylum into practice with "normal" children. The experiment she began yielded a new approach to the teaching of young children which eventually became known as the Montessori Method. Significantly, for the purposes of this study, her initial experiments also had a wider social function.

The first school in which Montessori worked with normal children was established as part of what would today be described as an urban renewal programme in the San Lorenzo district of Rome. The scheme was undertaken by a group of bankers who had formed the Istituto Romano di Beni Stabili (The Roman Real Estate Institute). They refurbished apartments which had been left vacant following the failure of a building speculation boom, and which had been subsequently occupied by squatters. The new tenants were mainly working class couples whose young children were left to their own devices in the buildings, while their parents worked. The destructive behaviour of the children caused such concern to the Institute that its General Director, Edoardo Talamo sought a remedy. Although his sphere of activity was quite separate from that of Montessori,

... he knew of her existence and naturally enough asked her to undertake the organization and the management of the different groups of children in his tenement houses, collected, as far as he was concerned, for the purpose of keeping them from scratching the walls and fouling the stairways.110

For Montessori his suggestion was fortuitous. It provided the opportunity to test the efficacy of the methods she had developed, this time with normal children. The Institute owned a number of such tenements in Rome and intended opening a similar school in each building. The proposal thus seemed to Montessori "to offer tremendous opportunities for development."111 The new kind of "school within the house" was called the Casa dei Bambini.
or "The House of Children" by a mutual friend of Talamo and Montessori, Olga Lodi. The name was not original, however, as it had also been used to describe the infant school at Mompiano run by the Aggazzis.\textsuperscript{112}

The first Casa dei Bambini in San Lorenzo was opened without fanfare\textsuperscript{113} on the 6th January, 1907, the first day of the Christian Feast of the Epiphany which commemorates the visit to the infant Christ of the three Kings, and is traditionally an important festival for children in Italy.\textsuperscript{114} In the future the anniversary of that first opening would hold almost religious significance for devoted Montessorians, including those in India where it continues to be celebrated with great ceremony and reverence in Montessori schools.

Initially, Montessori left the children, who numbered approximately fifty, between the ages of two and seven, in the care of an untrained teacher, who was the porter's daughter. It was envisaged that in each Children's House the "teacher" would live in the tenement and thus belong to the community. As an untrained teacher she would work under the "guidance and direction" of Dr Montessori. As no equipment had been provided for the school, Montessori and her middle class friends had to collect the toys and materials themselves. Montessori also introduced some of the educational apparatus she had used with the intellectually impaired children.

She claimed that, at the outset, she had no preconceived plan of action. Her intention was to observe the responses of the children to the materials and the environment she had provided. Over subsequent weeks, Montessori witnessed a remarkable transformation among the children. She noted that they quickly discarded the toys and coloured pencils she had provided in favour of the didactic apparatus. Unlike the mentally impaired children who had to be coaxed in their efforts to learn, the San Lorenzo children needed no encouragement to "place wooden cylinders in the corresponding holes in a board, arrange cubes in descending order of size
to build a tower, put circles, squares and rectangles into spaces of the same shape in a wooden tray." Montessori was also both surprised and enthralled by the children's hitherto unsuspected powers of concentration and she was impressed by the general improvement in their health and social behaviour. "From timid and wild as they were before, the children became sociable and communicative. They showed different relationships with each other. Their personalities grew and they showed extraordinary understanding, activity, vivacity and confidence. They were happy and joyous."

On the basis of her observations, Montessori made changes both to the physical environment inside the Children's House and to the apparatus. In the process, she developed a set of pedagogical methods by which the apparatus ought to be presented to children. She also made penetrating judgements about the way young children learn. Although her work was contemporaneous with others working in the field of child psychology, including Thorndike and Binet, from the outset, her "intention was to keep in touch with the researches of others, but to make [herself] independent of them, proceeding to [her] work without preconceptions of any kind." It was later to prove an unfortunate stance because, in remaining aloof, she became possessive of her findings and increasingly dogmatic about their universality. She took Wundt's definition that, "all methods of experimental psychology may be reduced to one; namely, carefully recorded observation of the subject," as the basis of her own scientific approach, and also made it the foundation stone of her pedagogical method.

Within three months of the opening of the first Children's House, a second was established on the 7th April in another tenement of San Lorenzo. A third was started in Milan on the 18th October, 1908, by the Societa Umanitaria - the Humanitarian Society - and on the 4th November, a fourth was opened in a middle class area of Rome, the Prati di Castello. A Casi di Bambini was established in the British Embassy in Rome and by January 1909, Italian Switzerland had begun to use Montessori's materials
and her pedagogical approach in its orphanages and kindergartens in place of Froebelian methods.\textsuperscript{120}

The amazing progress of the slum children of the first two Children's Houses had, by April 1908, aroused considerable interest in Montessori's work and a succession of pilgrims began to make their way to the San Lorenzo Quarter to witness the miracle,\textsuperscript{121} although, at the time, what would achieve international renown as the Montessori Method was still being formulated in the mind of its creator. This interest, and the subsequent opening of more Children's Houses, necessitated the holding of a training course so that Montessori could impart her findings and the methods she was developing to others.

Montessori, however, did not have the funds for such an undertaking. In 1908 her work had attracted the interest of Baron Leopoldo Franchetti and his American-born wife. They invited Montessori and several of the young women who were gathering around her to study and assist with her work, including Anna Maccheroni and Anna Fedeli, to spend the summer of 1909 at their villa near Citta di Castello. There, with the encouragement and support of the Franchettis, Montessori gave her first training course for about one hundred students, most of whom were teachers. Throughout her life, including the years in India, Montessori and her Children's Houses would continue to attract the interest and patronage of the rich and powerful.

The Franchettis persuaded Montessori to remain at their villa after the training course and to prepare a manuscript setting down the ideas and methods she had developed based on her experiences in the Children's Houses. They also offered to help with its publication. Montessori was able to complete the work in less than a month and the book which emerged was given the long title, \textit{Il Metodo della Pedagogia Scientifica applicato all'educazione infantile nelle Case dei Bambini}. (The Method of Scientific Pedagogy Applied to the Education of Young Children in the Case dei Bambini.)\textsuperscript{122}
In 1912 it was translated into English and, unfortunately, the short title, *The Montessori Method* became applied to the set of practices she had devised.

The book contains an account of the historical antecedents to the development of Montessori's educational methods, as well as descriptions of the physical environment of the Children's Houses, and much anecdotal material about the daily activity of the children. It also presents her conclusions concerning the optimum learning environment for the child. However, there is no rigorous epistemological theory or philosophy of education. Nor is there any evidence of the thorough empirical research she claimed to have undertaken. Montessori had conceived the Children's House as an educational laboratory in which she could explore the full potential of normal children, using the materials she had devised. But she made no attempt to manipulate the variables in the environment she was observing, apart from a direction to her assistant to refrain from interfering with the children. As she made no attempt to select adequate samples nor to use controls with which to compare her slum children, her claims to a scientific approach to the study of pedagogy have been dismissed as pretence. In 1924, Robert Fynne, who was Professor of Pedagogy at Dublin University, wrote of Montessori:

> Here is a great enthusiast, ... here is a great reformer, ... here is a great woman who loves children of whom she has amazing intuitive ... knowledge; here too is a great teacher, but she is not a scientist, and does not think or write as one.124

In the eyes of Fynne and others, Montessori seems to have confused her clinical observation of the children with experimental science.125

*The Montessori Method* and much of Montessori's later writings contain an abundance of religious imagery, metaphor, and parable. Elsewhere it has been argued that, although Montessori regarded herself
as a scientist, she "thought and wrote as a religieuse. In her writings there is revealed the spirit of the disciple of Christ rather than the spirit of the scientist." But for Montessori, science was a spiritual discipline. The "scientist", she wrote, "is not the clever manipulator of instruments, he is the worshipper of nature and he bears the external symbols of his passion as does the follower of some religious order." The evidence that Montessori once joined the Theosophical Society enables the apparent irreconcilability of her professed scientific approach with her mysticism, to be viewed in a new light. As Titone writes: "She was a materialist in words, but was in fact devoted to spiritualism." Montessori found no conflict between scientific endeavour and the pursuit of religion. She met with a group of her female devotees in a small chapel in Rome on the 10th November, 1910, and together they vowed to dedicate their lives to "the Cause of the Child." She also went so far as to attempt to establish a religious order, a Montessori Order, to undertake an apostolic mission, on behalf of the-child, throughout the world. Although it alienated many, it was the spiritual orientation of her work which would ensure its lengthy appeal amongst Theosophists, and in India where, in the Hindu tradition, to be discussed more fully in a subsequent chapter, the spiritual was not divorced from the temporal and all aspects of life, including education, were immersed in religious activity.

At the same time it was not merely the religious imagery which appealed to those in India who read the English translation of Montessori's first book, but the actual Method. In the Children's Houses, Montessori was concerned with providing an environment in which children could develop and learn in freedom. Her "pedagogical method of observation has for its base the liberty of the child; and liberty is activity." She was reacting away from the repressive rigidity of the traditional primary school classroom which inhibited natural activity because "the children,
like butterflies mounted on pins, are fastened each to his place, the desk, spreading the useless wings of barren and meaningless knowledge which they have acquired." She believed that learning should involve a spontaneous act of discovery, free from the arbitrary interference of adults.

Freedom for Montessori, however, did not entail unfettered licence, particularly where the freedoms and rights of others were concerned. The children learned to distinguish between activity that was "good", that is purposeful work, and activity that was "bad", such as violent or destructive acts. Montessori's aim was the development of independence on the part of the child, for only then could he or she become truly free. Such independence was developed by enabling the child to work with the special apparatus she had devised, or at the Exercises of Practical Life, unaided and unhindered by the teacher. Montessori opposed the provision of prizes and punishments and believed that the achievement of independence and self-discipline through liberty, on the part of the child, obviated the need for external reinforcement.

Montessori thought of education as "the active help given to the normal expansion of the life of the child." She believed her Children's Houses provided the optimum environment for such physiological and "psychic" growth to occur. She followed Séguin in beginning with muscular and sensorial development and then proceeding to more complex intellectual tasks, including the acquisition of language and mathematical skills, and ultimately proceeding to the development of abstract thought. Much of this learning occurred through the use, by the individual child, of specially designed, sequentially graded, self-correcting materials, which Montessori called the "Didactic Apparatus". But the Montessori Method, as revealed in her first book, was not limited to auto-education through the materials and the Exercises of Practical Life. She also stressed the importance, for the child's physical and psychic development, of interaction
with nature, and advocated the care of animals, and manual labour in the form of gardening, pottery, and the manufacture of clay bricks with which the children could construct diminutive walls and houses.\textsuperscript{137}

Her book also makes it clear that the function of the first Children's Houses within the San Lorenzo tenements was not merely the provision of an appropriate learning environment wherein the young child could begin to develop his or her full potential. They had a wider social purpose in that Montessori saw the Children's Houses and the educational activities within them as a vehicle for moral and social reform. They were part of "a broad and comprehensive work directed toward the redemption of the entire community."\textsuperscript{138} She believed the Children's Houses provided a means of attacking poverty, by releasing women from the necessity of caring for young children and enabling them to make an economic contribution to the family.

Montessori also claimed the Children's Houses provided a means of introducing improved hygiene, nutrition, and general living standards, into the tenement community. This was to be achieved to some extent through the directress who, she said,

\begin{quote}
\ldots is always at the disposition of the mothers, and her life, as a cultured and educated person, is a constant example to the inhabitants of the house, for she is obliged to live in the tenement and to be therefore a co-habitant with the families of all her little pupils. This is a fact of immense importance. Among these almost savage people, into these houses where at night no one dared go about unarmed, there has come not only to teach, but to live the very life they live, a gentlewoman of culture, an educator by profession, who dedicates her time and her life to helping those about her! A true missionary, a moral queen among the people, she may, if she be possessed of sufficient tact and heart, reap an unheard-of harvest of good from her social work.\textsuperscript{139}
\end{quote}

Significantly, although the education provided was free, the parents were also made responsible for effecting change in their own lives and in the lives of their children. Montessori introduced a set of rules for the
Casa dei Bambini which stated:

The parents who wish to avail themselves of the advantages of the Casa dei Bambini pay nothing. They must, however, assume these binding obligations:

(a) To send their children to the Casa dei Bambini at the appointed time, clean in body and clothing, and provided with a suitable apron.

(b) To show the greatest respect and deference toward the Directress and toward all persons connected with the Casa dei Bambini and to cooperate with the Directress herself in the education of the children. Once a week, at least, the mothers may talk with the Directress, giving her information concerning the home life of the child, and receiving helpful advice from her.

There shall be expelled from the Casa dei Bambini:

(a) Those children who present themselves unwashed, or in soiled clothing.

(b) Those who show themselves to be incorrigible.

(c) Those whose parents fail in respect to the persons connected with the Casa dei Bambini or who destroy through bad conduct the educational work of the institution.140

Montessori considered that the children also provided a vehicle for social improvement because, through the Practical Life Exercises, they not only learned to bathe and groom themselves properly, but also to clean and care for their environment. She claimed that, for the first time, the school and the home had become linked. The lessons learned in the Children's House would pass into the home whilst the home would reinforce the new knowledge and habits acquired by the children. She wrote: "We have put the school within the house; and this is not all. We have placed it within the house as the property of the collectivity, leaving under the eyes of the parents the whole life of the teacher in the accomplishment of her high mission."141

Montessori's major concern was improving the lives of the children. In the Children's Houses they were provided with a nutritious meal and also helped to grow appropriate vegetables. A physician visited each
Children's House and records were kept of the children's growth and the history of any diseases. Montessori believed that with improved physical, intellectual and moral development through their experiences in the Casa Dei Bambini, her slum children would subsequently realise their full potential and made a useful contribution to society. Her ultimate goal was human progress through the creation of Nietzsche's "super man".  

Kramer observes that Montessori's vision of the Children's Houses as a means of social reform anticipated later compensatory education programmes for pre-school children from impoverished backgrounds in the United States during the 1960s. Montessori, however, seems to have been more firmly aware of the necessity for directly involving the home; a focus added more recently to such programmes. The utilization of Montessori pre-school education as part of a community development project at the village level was also undertaken in India, well before the commencement of the Head Start programme in the United States in 1965, and will be more fully explored in a subsequent chapter.

THE MONTESSORI MOVEMENT

Montessori's direct involvement with the poor children of the San Lorenzo tenements only lasted a few years, largely as a result of a disagreement with Edouardo Talamo. Late in life she claimed that after two years she had been denied entry because her work was "causing such a newspaper sensation that the businessmen who paid for the construction claimed that she was using the project as a personal advertising campaign." Whatever the cause of the dispute, Montessori ceased her association with the original Casa Dei Bambini.

However, the educational methodology she had developed there did not remain static, nor was it limited to children between the ages of three and six. From 1911, she began to consider the possibility of extending
her ideas to older children. In 1916 her first book on the application of "scientific pedagogy" to children between the ages of six and eleven years was published, entitled L'Autoeducazione nelle Scuole Elementari. It was published in English the following year as The Advanced Montessori Method, and in 1918 a second volume appeared providing details of the elementary materials and their appropriate presentation to the child. In 1914 she had also produced a companion to The Montessori Method, entitled Dr Montessori's Own Handbook, which described the Didactic Apparatus and its presentation to the child between the ages of three and six. This book was written in response to the appearance of an "unauthorized" work by the American, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, entitled The Montessori Manual for Teachers and Mothers. In an attempt to prevent other such encroachments, and the misinterpretation and misrepresentation of the Method, she wrote to the Times Educational Supplement:

I have taken the pains to prepare myself a handbook to fulfill exactly the task which Mrs. D. Canfield Fisher's book has the pretension of fulfilling. I should be very glad if you would give me the opportunity of saying that I have not deputed - and do not propose to depute - to others the work of a practical popular explanation of my method, as I have taken great pains to do this myself. I hope my system will not be held responsible for any want of success that may arise out of the use of other books than my own in connection with the Montessori apparatus.  

Montessori's work was attracting such widespread international interest that an educational movement soon developed bearing her name. She attempted to keep a firm control on the expansion of this movement through the preparation of teachers in her methods. In 1913 she held her first international training course. A Children's House had been established by Franciscan nuns in the Convento delle Suore Francescane Missionarie di Maria for the youngest of the children orphaned by an earthquake which had devastated Messina in Sicily in 1908, and Anna Maccheroni became the directress. Much of the furniture and equipment
was provided by Queen Margherita. The Children's House in the convent, with its spacious rooms and gardens, attracted numerous visitors including those who had begun to flock to Rome from all parts of the world, and it also became the demonstration school for the first international training course. The course attracted eighty-seven students from many countries, including England, the United States, which provided the largest number, and various parts of Europe. Significantly, among them was a lone student from India, the first of the sprinkling of enthusiasts who would frequent all her future international courses in London and Barcelona as well as Rome. Montessori continued to hold six-monthly international courses in London every two years from 1919-1938. She also held courses in Milan, Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam, Nice, San Francisco, Innsbruck, and in India, Ceylon and Pakistan.

At the first international course, although the majority of the students spoke English, Montessori delivered her lectures in her eloquent and musical Italian and, after each sentence, an interpreter gave the English version. It was an effective strategy which she would continue to utilize at subsequent international courses, including those she later gave in India. She rarely used notes and the pause for the translation enabled her to collect her thoughts. She also found it easier to lecture in her native tongue than in English with which she was less confident. Montessori was a demonstrative and charismatic speaker and many of her students found themselves inspired as much by her delivery as by its contents and became instant converts. The English journalist, Sheila Radice, described the first international course as "a pilgrimage from all parts of the earth, with all the accompaniments of a pilgrimage - faith, fervour." According to her English disciple, Claude Claremont, who also attended the first international course, each Montessori training course resembled a religious service in which Montessori delivered her message on behalf of the child "like a High Priestess surrounded by her neophytes."
Montessori regarded her training courses as a "spiritual preparation" in which the teacher learned to observe and to appreciate the child in the special Montessori way, that is, through a combination of the "self-sacrificing spirit of the scientist with the reverent love of the disciple of Christ." Only Montessori could provide such a preparation through the personal contact of her training course. She insisted that the Method could not be acquired from a study of her books; it could only be fully appreciated by attendance at one of the training courses under her personal direction. At the courses no other books or materials were introduced to the students, save those of Montessori, and the lectures concerned the principles and practices of her Method only. Claude Claremont later claimed that at the course, "We 'Montessori' the students."

The students were expected to observe the practice of the Method through visits to Montessori schools, but there was no practice teaching with children. At the completion of the course the trainees were required to prepare a "Book of the Materials" concerning the function of the apparatus and its presentation to the child, and pass written and oral examinations. Subsequently, they were awarded a Diploma signed by the Dottoressa. After working in a Montessori School, the Diploma was endorsed to that effect. This did not, however, entitle the holder to train others in the Method, thus ensuring that Montessori retained full control of the spread of her ideas, and that others could not exploit or adulterate her work. Montessori's rigid control of teacher training may have protected the Method but it probably also harmed the movement. It certainly made her vulnerable to charges of dogmatism and commercial mindedness.

In order to maintain contact with the many students she trained, international congresses were held at which Montessori presided until the Ninth in London in 1951, the year before she died. During the Congress held in Denmark in 1929, an organization called The Association Montessori
Internationale (AMI) was formed to supervise the training of teachers, and the activities of the schools and the Montessori societies that were being established in various countries. Montessori was the first President of the new organization which had its headquarters in Berlin until 1935 when it was moved to Amsterdam. Prominent among the early Patrons of the AMI were the psychologists Sigmund Freud and Jean Piaget, and the Nobel Prize winning Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore.

Apart from providing the international organizational structure for the Montessori movement, the AMI also functioned as a "firm", exercising control over the publication of Montessori's books, the manufacture and sale of the Didactic Apparatus, and the receipt of fees from the training courses. Montessori had refused to tie herself to one educational institution, or to the Education Ministry of any one country, so that she might travel and expand her Method throughout the world. The establishment of the AMI assured Montessori of a comfortable and regular income for herself and Mario. Internecine squabbling between Montessori and Montessorians in various countries, particularly England and the United States, and the fear that others wished to exploit the Method, may also have prompted the establishment of the organization.

Montessori encouraged her students to research and to experiment but their work had to be consistent with her principles and to remain under her direction. She would not tolerate adaptations or alterations without her approval. This dogmatism was divisive and had important implications for the application of her Method in India, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters. It also contributed greatly to the demise of her movement elsewhere, particularly in the United States and in England. The Montessori movement in England will be discussed in more detail here because of the special colonial relationship that existed between the British and India.

In England the Method was adopted with a rush of enthusiasm.
When news of the success of the Italian woman doctor in educating slum children in Rome reached the country, the Board of Education sent Edward F.A. Holmes, a school inspector soon to be retired, to Rome in 1911 to investigate and report on Montessori's work. In May that year Holmes had published *What Is and What Might Be*, which was an attack on conventional schooling and was to become a manifesto of English progressive education. This was followed by other educational tracts including *The Tragedy of Education* (1913), *In Defence of What Might Be* (1914), *In Quest of an Ideal* (1920). His writings contained much that bordered on the mystical and he had, in fact, been influenced by Eastern philosophy. After visiting a village school in Sussex, which he described as "utopia", he became converted to the "path of self-realization". In 1908 he published anonymously *The Creed of Buddha*. With his belief in the importance of learning in a free and joyous environment, and his acceptance that the child was "by nature a 'child of God' rather than a 'child of wrath'", who should be helped towards "the path of self-realization", it is not surprising that Holmes was deeply impressed by the Montessori Method. It was Montessori's belief that God had placed a unique soul in each child, and that education was a process enabling the unfolding of the soul; that belief would also appeal to many in India, particularly Theosophists and Hindus.

*What Is and What Might Be* had inspired many teachers interested in the new Education in England so that when Holmes' report praising the Montessori Method was published in 1912 it had a considerable impact. Holmes was impressed, not only with the emphasis on liberty in the Method, but also with the fact that the children were well behaved, despite such freedom and, more importantly, they learned to read and write without difficulty and at a much earlier age. The publication of *The Montessori Method* in English, in the same year, also caused a flurry of interest and resulted in the departure of a number of people to Rome to witness the Montessori miracle for themselves. Among them was the Reverend Cecil
Grant, Headmaster of St George's School, Harpenden, who believed that Montessori was a greater educator than Pestalozzi or Froebel, and that her Method "will prove the greatest new force in education, the brightest new hope for the children of the world ever associated with a single name." Others interested in the Method included progressive educators such as E.P. Culverhill, Professor of Education at the University of Dublin, Norman MacMunn, and Bertram Hawker who established the first Montessori school in England on his estate at East Runton in August, 1912. Together they and other enthusiasts organized, with Montessori's approval, a Montessori Society in London in the Spring of 1912. It quickly attracted a strong membership and among them were many prominent individuals, including the Earl of Lytton. In June, 1912, the Society guaranteed Montessori a substantial sum of money to train Montessori teachers, on its behalf, in Rome over a three year period. Ever careful, Montessori wrote to the Society,

I approve in substance your conditions regarding the training of teachers but I should like to have more exact information before replying to them. I should like also to know in which way the Society could prohibit the use of the name 'Montessori'.

This obsessiveness over the use of her name did not auger well for the future, particularly in the eclectic environment among the English progressives.

In 1914, a Montessori Conference was held at Hawker's estate in East Runton. Already there was a division amongst Montessorians in England which would be repeated elsewhere, including India. There were Montessori "cultists", like Cecil Grant, whose effusive book, English Education and Dr. Montessori published in 1913, caused concern to reviewers who saw, in his "excessive adulation", the danger "that her more fervent admirers may hinder instead of promoting ... by the extravagant terms which some among them are inclined to use in speaking or
writing of her personality and her work." There were also those, like Holmes, who were more pragmatic and saw the Montessori Method as a convenient banner under which to unite all those progressive educators concerned with individualized learning for self-development in an atmosphere of freedom. Holmes had earlier expressed the view that Montessori, "with her love of freedom would be the last person to contend that her method does not admit of modification." He was wrong. Montessori later told Sheila Radice that she objected to teachers introducing variations to the Method and then attributing the results to her, and that she insisted her standardized apparatus be used in the manner she had prescribed.

At the Montessori Conference, the staunch devotees, among them Claude Claremont, adhered to the gospel. He told the Conference that,

The Montessori method was a carefully worked out whole comprising many intricate details of technique, by which liberty in the school became practically possible. Freedom was the aim of both Rousseau and Tolstoy; Dr. Montessori had devised the means.

Views were expressed by others who had not been so indoctrinated, which demonstrated wider interests and ideas about education. Among them was the President of the Montessori Society, the Earl of Lytton, who stated, with reference to the Society, that "its pioneer work was done and it should now develop into a larger and wider organization, embracing Montessori and other kindred movements." This resolution was approved by a vast majority and resulted in the organisation of the Conference on New Ideals in Education which later merged into the New Education Fellowship.

The purists remained within a reorganized Montessori Society, but there were difficulties ahead concerning the lack of trained teachers, and the absence of an approved teacher training course. It was a problem also experienced elsewhere, including India, where few could afford to travel to Rome. When Belle Rennie and the Australian, Lillian de Lissa, announced
their intention, in 1917, of establishing a Montessori Training school in London which would also incorporate other methods of teaching, they incurred the wrath of the Dottoressa, who dissociated herself from them and from the proposal. 171 It was not until 1923 that Montessori authorized the establishment of a permanent training school at St Christopher's, Letchworth, the most prominent of the Theosophical schools, under the direction of Claude Claremont. The training course was for two years and Montessori was to come to England bi-annually to give the concluding lectures in her own four months course. 172

When Montessori finally visited England, in 1919, to deliver a series of lectures and to hold the first of her international training courses, her charismatic presence and the enthusiastic response to her lectures stimulated further interest in the Method, and the membership of the Montessori Society swelled to 1,000. 173 During the 1920s the Montessori Method flourished in England as part of the enthusiasm for innovative education generated by the progressives. Cohen notes:

The list of schools using the Montessori Method in the 'twenties reads like a Who's Who of English progressive education: Duncan House, Bedales, Mayfield School, St George's Chelsea, Little Orchards, Felcourt, Flint House, Dartington Hall, the Garden School, King Alfred's, and the schools of the Theosophical Trust; St. Christopher's, the King Arthur School, the Brakenhill Home School, and Frensham Heights, the demonstration school of the New Education Fellowship founded by Mrs. Ensor in 1925. 174

By the 1930s, however, the Montessori movement in England had begun to languish. There had been further splits within the Montessori Society, aggravated by Montessori's attempt to dominate the movement, as well as the Method, and which alienated many. 175 There were also criticisms of the Method by the Kindergarten movement which fought back in defence of its own Method, and by the proponents of the Nursery school developed by Margaret McMillan, who expressed vehement opposition to Montessori. 176
Critics opposed the absence of free play, toys, games and fairy tales, the neglect of creative expression, and the apparent casual disregard for the development of the imagination, in the Method. But, as Cohen has argued, much of that criticism could be answered. Indeed, Montessori had answered it by claiming that her Method was the means of adequately preparing young children for such activity, "How can anyone paint" she told Sheila Radice, "who cannot grade colours? How can anyone write poetry who had not learnt to hear and see?" Montessori certainly did not inhibit free play or the use of toys in her Children's Houses, rather she found that children were more interested in the Didactic Apparatus and the Exercises of Practical Life. Her children wanted to engage in purposeful work and not play.

But Montessori failed to take on her critics in open debate and defend the Method. In the United States, where there was initially great enthusiasm for the Method, and notable supporters included Thomas Edison and Alexander Graham Bell, she had also encountered criticisms from amongst the educational fraternity. Prominent amongst them was the attack by William Heard Kilpatrick, whose critique of the Method was published in 1914 in a book entitled The Montessori System Examined. Kilpatrick was a leading exponent of John Dewey's educational philosophy and was a popular and influential professor at Teacher's College, Columbia University. He based his criticism on a belief that the Method contained little that was really new and was founded on conceptions of learning that were outdated by some fifty years. He contended that she "still held to the doctrine of formal discipline discarded years previously in Germany, America and largely in England", and that "Madame Montessori's doctrine of sense-training is based on an out-worn and cast-off psychological theory." Montessori's emphasis upon the development of the individual was certainly at odds with the view propounded by Dewey and his supporters that the school should function to encourage social interaction and
co-operation, and which was then in vogue in the United States. Indeed, it was those aspects of the Method which Kilpatrick perceived to have a social purpose, the Exercises of Practical Life, and the day-care function of the Children's House, that found favour with him.\textsuperscript{185} His book had a powerful impact in the United States, and was probably more responsible than any other single influence for the eclipse of the Method in that country over the next forty years.

Montessori might have dispelled much of the criticism and misunderstandings of her Method had she been prepared to engage in a dialogue with Kilpatrick and others. Surrounded by neophytes whose aim was to shield her from the unconverted, she cut herself and her movement off from the mainstream of educators and retreated into an increasing dogmatism, insisting that the Method was scientific and that it could be universally applied. "Where others - Piaget, Claparede, Decroly - had colleagues, Montessori had disciples."\textsuperscript{186}

Although the demise of the Method in the United States was more sudden and more pronounced than elsewhere, by 1936 the Montessori movement was also in decline in much of the West, including Europe. This was due as much to the rise of Fascism, in Germany, Italy, Spain and Austria, as to the opposition of educators or the protective elitism of Montessori and her disciples. During the 1920s and early 1930s Montessori had collaborated with the Fascist Government of Benito Mussolini. Her motivations for doing so are not entirely clear but it appears that she was swayed by the great enthusiasm for the Method of Mussolini and important members of his Government, including the conservative philosopher, Giovanni Gentile. During the period Montessori schools were opened throughout Italy, the State deputed teachers to attend Montessori's training courses, and the Dottoressa was fêted as a national heroine. In 1926, she received official recognition from the Tessera Fascista, the Fascist women's organization, and was made an honorary member of the party.\textsuperscript{187} Montessori, however,
always denied political affiliations claiming, "I do not belong to any political party." The advancement of the cause of the child was her major concern. It was not until 1934, when children in Montessori schools were required to give the Fascist salute, that Montessori made a stand against further political interference and left Italy, whereupon her schools were immediately closed.

Montessori returned to Barcelona in Spain which had been her permanent home since 1916. However, the onset of the Spanish Civil War again interrupted her work and in 1936 she was forced to flee, aided by the British navy. Apart from Holland, where there was a strong and stable Montessori Society and where the Method had been officially adopted in the school system, one of the few locations where the Method continued to be applied, uninterrupted, over a considerable period was in the East, in India. The subsequent chapters will attempt to account for this phenomenon.
NOTES


2. Ibid., p. 28.


5. Ibid., p. 24.

6. Ibid., p. 25. Maccheroni claimed Maria was scarcely three years old. op. cit. Standing gives her age as twelve. op. cit., p. 5.


8. Ibid., pp. 24-25.

9. Ibid., pp. 26-33. For her school report during 1883-1884 see Anthology, p. 7.

10. Maccheroni, A True Romance, p. 12, cited in Kramer, op. cit., p. 34.


12. Ibid., pp. 40-47.


18. Ibid.
21. Ibid., p. 52.
23. Maria Montessori, after the Berlin Congress from a letter to her parents from Bologna, Anthology, op. cit., p. 14.
24. See Kramer, pp. 55-56.
25. Ibid., p. 57.
26. See Maccheroni, "Dr Maria Montessori", op. cit., p. 83.
31. Ibid., p. 159.
32. Ibid., p. 176.
33. Ibid., p. 13.
34. Fynne notes that had Itard come across the work of Pereira he may have had more success with Victor, "the wild boy of Aveyron". Ibid., p. 114.
40. Ibid., p. 41.
43. Standing, op. cit.
44. Kramer, op. cit., p. 62.
45. Montessori, op. cit., p. 31.
47. Ibid., p. 73.
48. Ibid., p. 74.
50. Ibid., p. 77.
51. Kramer, ibid.
54. For an account of their work and its similarity to that of Montessori, see Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice, Nursery Schools in Italy: The Problem of Infant Education, George Allen & Unwin, 1934, Part I. See also, Herman Röhrs, "Profiles: Maria Montessori", Prospects, 12, 4, 1982, p. 525.
56. Ibid., pp. 85-87.
57. Montessori, op. cit., p. 32.
58. Ibid., p. 36.
59. Ibid., pp. 260-261.
60. For a full description of Montessori's method of teaching reading and writing to the retarded children, see ibid., pp. 261-266.
61. Ibid., p. 264.
62. Ibid., p. 38.
64. Montessori, op. cit.
66. Ibid., p. 39.
67. Ibid., p. 41. Anthology, op. cit., p. 10 gives the date as 1900.
69. Ibid. This date was also given with the notice of Mario Montessori's death on 10 February, 1982, at the age of 83 years, in AMI Communications (Amsterdam), 1/2, 1982, p. 5.
70. Kramer, op. cit.
72. Ibid., p. 41.
73. Kramer, op. cit., p. 93.
74. Ibid.
79. For a fascinating account of her life and her association with Olcott, see Marian Meade, Madame Blavatsky: The Woman Behind the Myth, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1980.
80. The quotations are taken from H.S. Olcott, "Inaugural Address by H.S. Olcott:", The Theosophist, August, 1932, pp. 502-516, as cited in Campbell, op. cit., p. 29.
82. Ibid., p. 24.
83. Ibid., pp. 54-56.
86. Montessori, op. cit., p. 37.
87. Ibid., p. 41.
88. Ibid., p. 42.
89. Ibid., p. 33.
90. Ibid.
93. See Kramer, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-84.
94. Ibid., p. 89.
97. Ibid., p. 91.
100. Alfred Russel Wallace, as cited in *ibid.*, p. 18.
101. Campbell, *ibid*.
102. See *ibid.*, pp. 61-74.
105. Mario M. Montessori, *op. cit.*
116. Maria Montessori, "How It All Happened: Dr. Montessori Speaks", *AMI Communications*, 2/3, 1970, p. 5, cited in *ibid*.


149. Maria Montessori, Letter to the Editors, Times Educational Supplement (London), 1 September, 1914, as cited in Kramer, op. cit., p. 174. (Hereafter, TES.)


160. Selleck, ibid.


164. Maria Montessori, from a letter to Mr Holmes, dated 5 July, 1912, Anthology, op. cit., p. 17.
165. **TES, 3 February, 1914, cited in Kramer, op. cit., p. 242.**

166. Cohen, op. cit., p. 60.


170. **TES, 4 August, 1914, cited in Kramer, op. cit., p. 243. See also Montessori Conference, pp. 162-165.**


174. Ibid., p. 57.


181. For an examination of the reception of the Method and Montessori's visits to the United States, see Kramer, op. cit., chs. 10-14.


184. Ibid., p. 72.

185. See *ibid.*, pp. 53-59.


CHAPTER TWO

"TILLING THE SOIL"

NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

FORCES OF CHANGE IN INDIA

- Introduction
- English Education as "Cultural Imperialism"
- The Nineteenth Century Hindu Renascence
- Gandhi and the Revival of the Hindu Religious Tradition in Education
- Conclusion
INTRODUCTION

When the Montessori "seeds of hope" reached India they fell onto fertile soil and were able to take root and flourish. The first Montessori school in India appears to have been established in 1915, the same year that Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi returned to India to found an ashram community from which to launch a nationwide campaign of political action and social reconstruction that would culminate in the end of British rule on the Indian sub-continent. Both events were bound up with an evolving social and political consciousness in India at the time. The growth of this consciousness underpinned a social and religious renascence that had emerged the century before, in response to British imperialism and its attendant Westernizing processes. It was

... brought about by numerous movements relating to different aspects of our national life, that of religious and social reformation like the Arya Samaj movement in Northern India and Brahmo Samaj in Bengal, of (the) reinterpretation of Hinduism and Indian Philosophy inspired by Mystic Bhagats like Guru Nanak, Kabir, Shri Rama Krishna Paramahamsa and Swami Vivekananda and Dr. Radha Krishan, of literary and cultural revival aiming at the establishment of the greatness of Indian culture, art and literature, led by Rabindra Nath Tagore.¹

Gandhi galvanized such forces for social and political reform and forged a dynamic psychological weapon with which to oppose British rule by repairing "wounds in the nation's self-esteem inflicted by 150 years of imperialized existence."²

The history of the application of the Montessori Method in India prior to Independence, though seemingly inconsequential in terms of the wider social and political changes taking place during the period, was none the less greatly influenced by these changes, particularly those
wrought by the Gandhian movement. The enthusiasm with which some Indians adopted and continued to apply the Montessori Method, long after it had been eclipsed in the West, cannot be adequately explained, therefore, without some examination of the social, political and religious forces emerging in India during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The evolution of Gandhian thought and practice, particularly his national scheme of Basic Education, which J.B. Kripalani has described as "The coping stone of Gandhiji's socio-political edifice", is also significant in any attempt to account for the development of the Montessori movement in India. This chapter will thus attempt to place the application of the Montessori Method in India within a particular historical context.

ENGLISH EDUCATION AS "CULTURAL IMPERIALISM"

Gandhi believed from the outset of his campaign that true freedom could not be attained whilst Indians were dominated by a foreign culture which attempted to undermine their own. He saw the British system of education introduced in India as one of the major causes of acculturation and dependency. As early as 1909 he wrote:

To give millions a knowledge of English is to enslave them. The foundation that Macaulay laid of education has enslaved us. I do not suggest that he had any such intention, but that has been the result. Is it not a sad commentary that we should have to speak of Home Rule in a foreign tongue.4

In India, one consequence of English education was a cultural transformation amongst the upper classes which ensured loyalty to Britain and aided British control and economic exploitation of the sub-continent. The year 1835 is critical in the examination of this process as it marked the victory of the "Anglicists", who sought the "moral and social regeneration" of India through the introduction of English education, over the "Orientalists" who supported the study in educational institu-
tions of Indian classical languages and culture. The Governor-General at the time, Lord William Bentinck, had asked the President of the General Committee of Public Instruction, Thomas Babington Macaulay, to give his views on the controversy. The result was the famous and much quoted Minute of 2 February, 1835, "which was a sweeping condemnation of the entire orientalist policy." Macaulay declared that:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect.

As Carnoy has argued with reference to Macaulay's statement, English education was intended to ensure British domination of India by building "a cultural dependency among the education and ruling classes so that revolutionary overthrow would never be a likely alternative." It should be noted that the growth of a demand for self-government was seen as a possible outcome of education, indeed Macaulay supported such a possibility. Britain's commercial exploitation of India, however, was not thought to be threatened by such an eventuality, once English-educated Indians had developed a taste for the products of Sheffield and Lancashire. Macaulay preferred Indians to be ruled by their own kings "but wearing our broadcloth, and working with our cutlery", and that they should not be "too ignorant or too poor to value and buy English manufactures."

Macaulay dismissed the vernacular languages of India as "poor" and "rude" and "devoid of any literary or scientific knowledge." He did not entirely ignore vernacular education but left it up to that...
It was no fault of Macaulay's that subsequent administrators, wishing to economise, ignored his proposal for vernacular education. Responsibility for vernacular education was delegated to the English educated upper classes. This was the famous "downward filtration theory" of imparting education to the masses. It "was the acknowledged goal right up to 1853 and dominated official policy throughout the nineteenth century." The policy was doomed to failure due to the heterogeneous and highly stratified nature of Indian society. The educated elites were also more concerned with improving their own circumstances than sharing their learning with the masses.

Macaulay may have supported the development of popular education through the vernacular languages and eventual self-government for India, but his views were contemptuous of India's cultural heritage and reflected the prevailing belief in British superiority. While admitting that he was ignorant of both Sanskrit and Arabic, Macaulay claimed he had not found an Orientalist, "who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia." Bentinck accepted the advice in Macaulay's Minute on 7 March, 1835, ruling that "the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India; and that all the funds appropriated for the purposes of education would be best employed on English education alone." While Macaulay's rhetoric and the influence of officials such as Trevelyan and Metcalf undoubtedly influenced Bentick's decision, economic considerations appear to have played a major role in its determination. English education would create an elite class of consumers for English products. Moreover, the Charter Act of 1833 had enabled the employment of Indians in the civil service, and Bentinck saw this as a means of reducing the high expenditure resulting from the employment of British officers only. An English
education was necessary in order for Indians to function competently in the administration.20

Christian missionaries like Alexander Duff, who disparaged India's cultural traditions and wished to spread Christianity, also strongly influenced the decision to extend the provision of Western Education. Macaulay wrote:

No Hindu who has received an English education ever remains sincerely attached to his religion.... It is my firm belief that if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolater among the respectable classes thirty years hence. And this will be effected without any effort to proselytise; without the smallest interference in their religious liberty, merely by the natural operation of knowledge and reflection.21

British cultural imperialism could already claim successes among upper-caste Hindus in Bengal by the 1920s. A prominent convert was the beef-eating Brahmin, Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Roy was the leader of the Brahmo Samaj, a religious reform organization founded by Western educated elites in Calcutta. He sought the revitalization of India through the study of Western science and literature.22

Indian elites also wished their children to acquire Western education for utilitarian reasons. Many had become wealthy through collaboration with the British as traders, moneylenders and landlords. The acquisition of English education facilitated commercial and also social intercourse with their rulers. Amongst Hindus, the higher and traditionally literate castes, the Brahmins and Kayasthas were the first to take advantage of new educational opportunities. As Basu argues, English education was not initially imposed on India, but its adoption by Indian elites was none the less a consequence of imperialism.23 Subsequent policy decisions by the British reinforced the desire for Western learning through the English language.

In 1837 English replaced Persian as the official and Court lang-
uage. Its popularity received an even greater fillip in November 1844, when the Governor-General, Lord Hardinge, announced that "meritorious" Indians who had received an English education would be appointed to Government positions in Bengal. Hardinge had found the way to redress the hitherto slow growth of the imported education by making it attractive as a means of obtaining lucrative Government positions. The establishment in 1857 of universities in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, recommended by the Wood Despatch of 1854, further accelerated the demand for English education. A university degree became regarded by Indian elites as a "passport to the safe career of Government employment, and to the great lottery of the legal profession with its rich prizes." There were, however, insufficient positions in the Colonial Government to meet the demand of the growing number of English educated Indian youth.

In order to succeed his father as Dewan the young Mohandas Gandhi, a significant victim of British cultural imperialism, sailed for London in September 1888, to study English law. British rule had effected far reaching political and economic changes in the Kathiawar region of Western India where Gandhi grew up. The power of the small Princely States and their capitals was gradually undermined in favour of the larger administrative and trading centres of Rajkot, Ahmedabad and Bombay. Hunt writes that Gandhi's father,

... had acknowledged the changing structures of power by placing his sons in the English schools available in Rajkot. A new system of education was being introduced to bring to this backward region the 'blessings of civilization' and to train the future functionaries of the new order.

The seeds of Macaulay's 1835 Minute on Education were bearing fruit. As his elder brothers had not completed high school it was left to Mohandas to maintain the family's traditional status in the new social order.

The opportunity to study English law would provide Gandhi with a
competitive advantage in obtaining a position, an advantage recognized by several lawyers from the region who had taken their training in London.\textsuperscript{29} It was then an exciting prospect for a young Indian schooled in the English language and its civilization, to have the opportunity of visiting and studying within the metropolitan society.\textsuperscript{30} He enrolled at the prestigious Inner Temple and after passing the matriculation examination at London University on the second attempt, sat successfully for his bar finals in December 1890. Though not a brilliant student Gandhi had attained a very high standard of education at a time when few individuals completed high school.\textsuperscript{32}

During his stay in London Gandhi also markedly improved his English and slavishly adopted Western modes of dress, manners and etiquette. In his zeal to ape the "proper" English gentleman, he took lessons for a while in elocution, French dancing and the violin.\textsuperscript{33} At the time, Gandhi was the typical "colonized native", copying the ways of the metropole to become like the colonial masters and thereby acquire some of their strength and personal status. Rudolph writes that the belief by colonial people that they are morally and culturally inferior, "is probably the most degrading and tragic consequence of colonialism."\textsuperscript{34} English education created a class of loyal elites in India who felt respect for English culture and institutions. Many of these urbanized elites became alienated from indigenous culture and were also further distanced from the village dwelling masses, the education of whom remained sorely neglected.\textsuperscript{35}

Western education, however, had also given Indians access to Western philosophical and political ideas including theories of nationalism which engendered a desire for self-government. Some educated Indians opposed the economic exploitation of India under British rule and in order to give expression to the growing nationalist sentiment, a number of political organizations were formed in cities such as Calcutta and Bombay.
The culmination was the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885. Many of the intellectuals who chose the path of nationalism, for example, Gandhi's great mentor and founder of the Servants of India Society, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, remained impressed by Western ideology and institutions and sought political reform through the introduction of the Westminster model in India. Gandhi, however, later ridiculed the dependence of such intellectuals on the English language claiming that:

Of all the superstitions that affect India, none is so great as that a knowledge of the English language is necessary for imbibing ideas of liberty, and developing accuracy of thought.

Nor did he share their desire for industrialisation which he believed would create further unemployment rather than providing additional jobs for the millions who sought them. Gandhi eventually launched a crusade against Western culture and technology and, in particular, Western education with the intention of removing British cultural dominance and reviving Indian cultural traditions. Only then he believed could true freedom be achieved. He wrote in Hind Swaraj:

If the English become Indianized, we can accommodate them. If they wish to remain in India along with their civilisation there is no room for them. It lies with us to bring about such a state of things.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY HINDU RENASCENCE

A major stimulus to the growth of the Nationalist movement was the renascence in Hindu culture which occurred during the nineteenth century. English education and the proselitizing of Christian missionaries had brought Indians in contact with new values, attitudes, institutions and ideas. One consequence, referred to above, was the Westernization and
alienation of Indians from their own culture. Another response, however, was the attempt by some to re-value, to revitalize, or to reform, traditional beliefs and customs, in order to defend Hinduism against the missionary onslaught.

Just as the Muslim conquest had injected a fresh stream of religious thought into the veins of Hindu society, so the British conquest brought with it new views of the world, man, and God. Confronted with the message of Islam that all believers are equal in the sight of their Maker, religious leaders like Kabir and Nanak had come forth in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to translate this teaching into traditional Hindu terms. Similarly in the nineteenth century a series of creative individuals emerged from the ranks of Hindu society to respond to the combined challenge of Christian religious ideas and of modern Western rationalist and utilitarian thought.

Writers inclined to materialism such as Carnoy, do not discuss this renascence. However, social and cultural life in India was and continues to be dominated to a large extent by religious activity. The religious regeneration provided the fertile soil in which later Gandhi worked to bring about social and political change. The revitalization and reform of Hinduism during this period was also critical to the later application of the Montessori Method in India, because it also prepared the ground in which the first "seeds" of Montessori education could germinate and grow.

The first major organization concerned with the reform of Hinduism was the Brahmo Samaj, the Society of the Worshippers of God, formed by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1828. Its members were intent on purging Hinduism of all those practices which Christian missionaries derided as barbarous. They denounced the oppression of women through child-marriage, polygamy, and sati (widow-burning); and voiced opposition to the pernicious hegemony of the caste system, although Roy retained his sacred thread denoting high caste and supported caste observances. Roy was greatly influenced in his youth by Islamic and Christian teachings and from an early age opposed the idol worship practised by Hindus. He
returned to the ancient religious texts, the Upanishads, to demonstrate the monotheism he believed was inherent in Hinduism. In their reform of Hinduism the Brahmos adopted many Christian practices including the singing of hymns. To counteract the influence of the Christian missionaries they felt they must adopt many of their ways.

After the death of Ram Mohan Roy, the leadership of the Brahmo Samaj was eventually taken up by Debendranath Tagore who had joined in 1842. His father, the wealthy Brahmin entrepreneur Prince Dwarkanath Tagore, had been one of the founder members and a staunch supporter of Roy. Debendranath strengthened the monotheism and communal worship of the Samaj. A deeply religious man, he ultimately renounced wealth and sought spiritual enlightenment on pilgrimages to the Himalayas. In recognition of his spiritual way of life, Debendranath was given the honorific title of Maharshi, "the great sage". His religious devotion was a great source of inspiration for his famous son Rabindranath who, through his writings, continued his father's work towards the revitalization of India's great cultural heritage.

Debendranath Tagore had withdrawn from active leadership of the Samaj when a zealous young disciple, Keshub Chunder Sen, by insisting that the Brahmos cease to wear the Hindu sacred thread, split the movement. As a member of one of the most Westernized families in Bengal, Keshub was more fluent in English than Bengali during his youth. Of all the nineteenth century religious reformers, he probably came closest to Christian evangelism.

With unquenchable energy, Keshub threw himself into the activities of the Brahmo Samaj, founding discussion groups and schools, organizing famine relief, advocating remarriage for widows and education for young women, writing religious tracts, and giving sermons. His fiery oratory in fluent English stirred educated audiences in many parts of India, especially in Bombay, and branches of the Samaj sprang up in cities beyond the borders of Bengal.
Keshub, like many among the English educated elite of Bengal, supported British rule in the belief that India had much to gain from Western ideas and culture particularly in the uplift of the nation from what the British claimed to be the degredation, superstition and ignorance into which it had sunk. He also believed that India had much to offer the West, particularly through the wisdom of her ancient religious writings. This was a relatively new idea which achieved greater prominence through the efforts of the Theosophical Society, Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhi.46

Another important reform organization, the Prarthana Samaj (Prayer Society) emerged in Western India in 1867. Founded by early graduates of Bombay University, its members included Justice M.G. Ranade, the Orientalist R.G. Bhandarkar and Vanan Abgi Modak. The organization was often referred to as "the Brahmo Samaj of the Bombay Presidency" because of its concern with the abandonment of caste, the introduction of widow-remarriage, increased education for women and the abolition of child-marriage. Members of the Prarthana Samaj were also theists and opposed idolatory but unlike the Brahmo Samaj they did not make the abandonment of caste a condition of membership. They were thus closer to Hinduism than the Brahmo Samaj.47

Whilst organizations such as the Brahmo Samaj and its offshoots, and the Prarthana Samaj, were primarily concerned with the reform of Hinduism, other individuals and organizations emerged who were more orthodox and sought to revalue and espouse Hinduism. Prominent among them was the Arya Samaj (the Society of the Aryas or "noble men") founded by Dayananda Saraswati in Bombay in 1875. Hay writes that

While Keshub Chunder Sen was preaching an Indianized version of Christianity in Bengal, a stern ascetic arose in northern India who vigorously rejected Western ideas and undertook instead to revive the ancient religion of the Aryans. Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883) was even more ardent a reformer than Keshub,
yet he drew his strength from purely indigenous sources. Standing four square on the authority of the Vedas, he fearlessly denounced the evils of post-Vedic Hinduism.48

Like Ram Mohan Roy, Dayananda was born into a Brahmin family and rejected idol worship at an early age. The Princely State of Morvi in Kathiawar, where Dayananda was born, was, however, at the time, relatively untouched by British cultural influence. This absence of English acculturation - he apparently never learned English - undoubtedly influenced the direction of Dayananda's religious mission. To escape an arranged marriage, he had run away at the age of nineteen and spent the following fifteen years as a sannyasi (religious mendicant) wandering throughout northern India. Under the guidance of a blind guru (spiritual teacher), he developed a profound reverence for the Vedas, the ancient texts which became his bible. Dayananda subsequently held all later Hindu scriptures in disdain. With his aggressive oratory - he was referred to as the "Luther of India" by contemporaries - Dayananda aroused fierce opposition from orthodox Hindus but none were able to defeat him in religious debates. There were consequently many attempts on his life.49

Although he also opposed Christianity Dayananda espoused some progressive features of Western culture in his opposition to idol worship, "untouchability", child-marriage and arranged marriages, and in his rejection of Brahmin hegemony. He believed that a person's caste should not be hereditary but should be determined by merit, and that the sacred religious teachings of the Vedas should be available to everyone, not just high caste Hindus. Dayananda, unlike the Hindu reformers, did not attribute the source of these ideas to Christianity and English culture, but claimed they were all contained in the Vedas and were therefore not derivative.50 Hindus could therefore feel proud of their ancient heritage.

"Dayananda's energetic and sometimes acrimonious method of preach-
ing epitomized the change among Hindu religious leaders from a passive or
defensive attitude to an active and aggressive one.\textsuperscript{51}

The \textit{Arya Samaj} espoused Dayananda's militant Hinduism and became
firmly entrenched in the Punjab with Lahore as its main stronghold. The
Swami's fierce opposition to Christianity and Islam developed such
political overtones that it was suggested Dayananda was a political
schemer.\textsuperscript{52} Hindu nationalism can be traced to Dayananda, because implicit
in his demand for a revival of his version of the true Indian religion was
the desire for Indian sovereignty.\textsuperscript{53}

In contrast to Dayananda's aggressive Hinduism, a gentle saintly
ascetic, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa (1836-1886), who would also greatly
contribute to the regeneration of India's ancient religious tradition,
appeared in Bengal. Unlike his fellow Bengalis, Debendranath Tagore and
Keshub Chunder Sen, Ramakrishna was a simple mystic, without wealth or
English education. The son of a village priest, he received very little
formal education attaining merely the rudiments of literacy in Bengali.

Ramakrishna was a devotee of Kali, the Divine Mother, with whom
he sought ecstatic communion. The eighteenth century Songs of Ramprasad
had made Kali an object of popular worship and Ramakrishna had absorbed
this spirit during childhood. He was installed at the age of sixteen by
his older brother as an assisting priest in a new temple devoted to Kali,
on the banks of the Hoogily River outside Calcutta and spent the next
twelve years undergoing the most severe physical and spiritual discipline
in his search for enlightenment. As part of this process he is said to
have experienced God in a variety of manifestations including Muhammad
and Jesus as well as Rama and Krishna, consequently embarking upon an
exploration of the various major world religions. Ramakrishna ultimately
concluded there was truth in all religions and that they were merely
different paths leading to the one goal of personal union with God.\textsuperscript{54} He
was thus laying the foundations of the path towards Hindu-Muslim unity
which was later taken up by the Theosophists and by Gandhi who believed its attainment was essential in order to secure Indian independence. By contrast the militant Hindu ideology of the Arya Samaj served to aggravate communal tensions.

Ramakrishna's religious feats soon attracted the interest of Keshub Chunder Sen who became a great admirer. As a result of his support, numerous disciples from among the youthful Westernized elites of Calcutta flocked to absorb the wisdom of the simple ascetic. Among them was a Kayastha youth, Narendranath Dutt (1863-1902) who would become Ramakrishna's greatest disciple. After a mission college education, the young Naren had intended to study law but his meeting with Ramakrishna changed the direction of his life. Eventually he would acquire international renown as the Swami Vivekananda. The French savant Romain Rolland who spent many years in India wrote of their meeting:

Thus at the feet of the simple Ramakrishna the most intellectual, the most imperious, the most justly proud of all the great religious spirits of modern India humbled himself. He was the St. Paul of this Messiah of Bengal. He founded his church and his doctrine.

After a spiritual pilgrimage to the Himalayas for six years as a sannyasi, he caused a sensation in America when he attended the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in September 1893 and presented Ramakrishna's unorthodox view of Hinduism. The New York Herald reported the powerful impact of Vivekananda's oratory claiming that he was "undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned Nation."

Vivekananda toured America founding Vedanta Societies, giving lectures and attracting disciples, and then proceeded to England where he met one of his more prominent disciples, Miss Margaret Noble who later
joined him in India taking the name Sister Nivedita (the consecrated one). He also visited Europe. Vivekananda's success in the West was hailed as a great triumph in India and on his return he was fêted from Madras to Calcutta as the country's spiritual saviour. In Madras he urged his people to rediscover their spirituality, claiming that religion was the centre of life in India, and that the nation had lost its vitality and identity because its ancient faith had fallen into decay. He claimed that social and political reform could only come about through the revitalization of India's early religious traditions.

The Swamy's fiery oratory indeed succeeded in restoring confidence, self-esteem and an appreciation of the country's rich cultural heritage amongst the youth of Bengal. But, unlike Dayananda Saraswati, Vivekenanda was not a political ideologue although he did support Indian independence. Despite the efforts of various political groups to obtain his support for their activities, he remained aloof from politics which he despised. Vivekenanda embarked instead on a mission of social and religious service on behalf of India's poor. To carry out this work he established the Ramakrishna Mission at Calcutta in 1897. It was not intended as a retreat for spiritual devotion but rather a centre for the training of disciples for public service. Vivekenanda had chosen Karma Yoga, the way of action, proclaiming, "I will go into a thousand hells cheerfully, if I can rouse my countrymen immersed in Tamas, to stand on their own feet and be men inspired with the spirit of Karma Yoga...."

This was the path also chosen by Gandhi. With its spirit of selfless action, the Ramakrishna Mission foreshadowed Gandhi's own community development programmes. Vivekenanda's disciples mobilized against the plague that broke out in Calcutta in 1898, opened famine relief centres, ran orphanages and schools, and opposed social injustice and sectarian violence wherever it confronted them. As Hay has written,
His zeal to serve the downtrodden masses opened a new dimension of activity to Indian nationalist leaders, whose Western outlook had heretofore isolated them from the vast majority of their countrymen. Gandhi, the greatest to work in this new field, acknowledged his debt to the Swami in this respect.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy and others like him had sought to reform Hindu culture by borrowing from the West, claiming that Indians had much to learn from Western science and philosophy. Vivekenanda, inspired by Ramakrishna, took the opposite stance, claiming that the West had much to learn from India's glorious heritage and that Indians should take pride in their past. It was the position also adopted by Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhi. However, Indians were not alone in contributing to the regeneration of Hindu culture during the nineteenth century. Some Europeans also played a significant role in this process. Prominent among them was Margaret Noble, and the great Sanskrit scholar, Friedrich Max Müller, whom Vivekenanda had visited at Oxford.

The Hindu renascence saw the emergence in India of the Theosophical Society, an organization dominated by Westerners who sought to continue the work of the Orientalists in encouraging the study of Eastern philosophy and religion. However, they also became concerned with social and political reform in India and with their interest in educational reform, Theosophists played a significant role in the development of the Montessori movement in India.

It is important to note in this context, however, that immediately after its formation, the Society was not greatly concerned with Eastern religion. Initially its founders had little or no accurate understanding of the basic doctrines of either Hinduism or Buddhism, such as reincarnation and the transmigration of souls. It was only after they arrived in India in 1879 that Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott became firmly convinced of the value of exploring India's great religious traditions. Before their departure for India a Hindu acquaintance had put
them in contact by correspondence with Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and as a consequence the Theosophical Society and the Arya Samaj became, for a time, officially connected. 66

The Theosophical Society attracted many Westernized intellectuals who, impressed that Europeans had taken an interest in Hindu and Buddhist culture, were encouraged to rediscover their own traditions. The Bengali nationalist Bipin Chandra Pal wrote that:

... Olcott and Madame Blavatsky landed at Bombay with a new message and a new mission. And the Theosophical Society which they founded was perhaps the most powerful of the forces that brought in this movement of Hindu religious revival and social reaction. The Society told our people that instead of having any reason to be ashamed of their past or of the legacies left to them by it, they have every reason to feel justly proud of it because their ancient seers and saints had been spokesmen of the highest truths and their old books, so woefully misunderstood today, had been the repositories of the highest human illumination and wisdom. Our people had hitherto felt perpetually humiliated at the sense of their degradation. This new message, coming from the representatives of the most advanced peoples in the modern world, the inheritors of the most advanced culture and civilisation the world has as yet known, at once raised us in our own estimation and created a self-confidence in us that commenced to find easy expression in a new propaganda which, instead of apologizing for our current and mediaeval ideas and institutions and seeking to reform and reconstruct these after modern European ideals, boldly stood up in defence of them. 67

Theosophists were instrumental in bringing Gandhi in touch with India's rich cultural heritage. Most Theosophists were also vegetarians. Prior to his departure from India he had been saved from becoming the complete "colonized native" through a vow he had taken not to take meat, wine or women during his stay in London. 68 But in London Gandhi became a vegetarian by choice, ceasing to believe his childhood assertion that Indians should eat meat in order to gain the necessary strength to drive out the British. 69 In determining to remain a vegetarian Gandhi commenced the long road to self-realization which would enable him to cast off his
British cultural dependency.

In the company of vegetarians in London, Gandhi had become friendly with two Theosophists, Bertram and Archibald Keightley, who shared a house with Madame Blavatsky at 17 Lansdowne Road in the Notting Hill section of London from September 1887. The Keightleys sought Gandhi's assistance in helping them to read the Sanskrit original of the Bhagavad Gita. Gandhi later confessed: "I felt ashamed, as I had read the divine poem neither in Sanskrit nor in Gujarati."

The book made a deep impression on Gandhi as did Sir Edwin Arnold's The Light on Asia, also recommended by the Keightleys. They took him to meet Madame Blavatsky and Mrs Besant and tried to pursue Gandhi to join the Society. He declined, however, replying, "With my meagre knowledge of my own religion I do not want to belong to any religious body." Yet, like Montessori, Gandhi did join the Theosophical Society as an associate member. He probably refrained from mentioning this in his Autobiography because, as he later said, "Though the Society's rule respecting brotherhood appealed to me, I had no sympathy for its search for occult powers." Gandhi's interest in Theosophy arose from its concern with Eastern religion, particularly Hinduism. He read Madame Blavatsky's The Key to Theosophy, which aroused in him the "desire to read books on Hinduism, and disabused me of the notion fostered by the missionaries that Hinduism was rife with superstition." Gandhi also went to hear Mrs Annie Besant's address, "Why I Became a Theosophist", to have a close look at this notorious former atheist and because his friends had said she was the greatest living female orator in the world and Madame Blavatsky was overjoyed with her "capture". Gandhi soon became more interested in the content of Mrs Besant's speech, which drew entirely upon Hindu belief. She concluded with the claim that she would be happy if the epitaph on her tomb said she had lived and died for Truth. This statement deeply influenced Gandhi, forming the basis for the future direction of his own
Although Gandhi had leaned towards atheism in his youth, by the
time of his contact with Theosophy he had changed his beliefs and had
determined to learn more of the world's great religions. Later in South
Africa, he joined the Esoteric Christian Union, founded by vegetarians and
former Theosophists, Edward Maitland and Anna Kingsford, who had been
President and Vice-President of the British Theosophical Society (1883-
1884) but separated from it because of their greater concern with
Christianity. Maitland sent him his books *The Perfect Way* and *The New
Gospel of Interpretation* in which Gandhi found support for Hinduism. Gandhi was so impressed with the books that he decided to advertise them
in Durban newspapers. He attached the following letter to the editor
claiming:

The system of thought expounded by the books advertised
is not, by any means, a new system but a recovery of the
old, presented in a new form acceptable to the modern
mind. It is moreover, a system of religion which teaches
universality and is based on eternal verities and not on
phenomena or historical facts merely. In that system,
there is no reviling Mohamed or Buddha in order to prove
the superiority of Jesus. On the other hand, it
reconciles the other religions with Christianity which,
in the opinion of the authors, is nothing but one mode
(among many) of presentation of the same eternal truth.

The contents of the letter reveal the strong influence of Theosophy in the
formation of Gandhi's religious philosophy. Theosophy had brought him in
touch with his own religious tradition and it had also demonstrated to him
the necessity of reassessing and revitalizing his religion in humanist
terms.

The nineteenth century Western interest in Indian Vedantist
thought had found expression in the Transcendentalist movement in America.
Gandhi may also have been introduced to Transcendentalism during his stay
in London but he does not appear to have responded to its influence until
later in South Africa when he read the works of two leading Transcendalists,
Emerson and Thoreau. It was Theosophists who initially gave Gandhi the key to his cultural and religious heritage. His contact with Theosophy also confirmed his belief in the brotherhood of man and strengthened the religious tolerance implanted in him by his parents. Though he would later disagree with its leaders including Mrs Besant on issues concerning Indian independence, he did not hesitate to acknowledge his debt to the Society.

The enthusiasm of Theosophists for India's cultural and religious traditions, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism, had provided Gandhi and others with the means, ultimately, of resisting British rule in India. He drew upon the Hindu Jain precept of Ahimsa or non-violence, in the formulation of his psychological weapon of Satyagraha which he defined as, "the vindication of truth not by infliction of suffering on the opponent but on oneself." The British had been contemptuous of the non-violence espoused by the non-martial twice-born Indian castes, assuming that it indicated weakness. Gandhi's "self-suffering", however, provided the moral and physical courage necessary not only for himself, but for millions of Indians, to defy the British.

The nineteenth century renaissance of Hinduism played an important role in the rise of nationalism in India. "It was not through secular politics, but through quasi-religious societies, that educated Indians first fell into the habit of thinking and organizing on a national scale." Significant among these organizations were the Brahmo Samaj in Bengal, the Prarthana Samaj in Bombay, and the Theosophical Society, which, with its many branches throughout the country, provided an All-India focus, virtually for the first time. The revivalist ideology of the period encouraged the growth of nationalism because it provided the Westernized elite with a renewed sense of cultural identity and integrity, which British imperialism and its powerful weapon, English education, had sought to undermine. With renewed pride in their own traditions, educated Indians
began to resist the domination of the colonial power.

GANDHI AND THE REVIVAL OF THE HINDU RELIGIOUS TRADITION IN EDUCATION

In the latter part of the nineteenth and in the early twentieth centuries a national education movement emerged, which was dominated by disaffected members of the Western educated elite, particularly in Bengal. These intellectuals voiced grievances concerning Western education with its literary content and rote learning methods, similar to those later expressed by Gandhi. In 1898, for example, the leading luminary of the national education movement in Bengal, Satis Chandra Mukherjee, complained that:

Foreign education has failed to produce original men among us. Foreign education has not enabled us to be self-reliant, self-dependent, self-sacrificing, patriotic. The present system of mere examinations has failed to bring to the front the stamp of men who can hold their own in the great civilisations midst which we live. Must we still stand by with folded hands until the doom of extinction overtakes us?

When opposition to the Partition of Bengal by the British in 1905 erupted in the form of a "Boycott-Swadeshi" movement - swadeshi means literally "own country" - educated Bengali youth called for a widening of the ban on British goods and legal institutions, to include a boycott of the Government controlled University of Calcutta and later, schools and colleges:

The leadership of this revolt was soon assumed by Rabindra Nath Tagore who fostered it and kept up its fire by his great literary creation of national songs, a unique poetry of patriotism.... His close associate in this work was Hirendra Nath Datta, and behind them was Sister Nivedita, than whom a more passionate patriot the country has rarely seen.

As a result of this fervour National schools were established in Bengal and later elsewhere, the first being founded at Rangpur on 8 November,
A National Council of Education was organized in March 1906, and in August it established the Bengal National College and School in Calcutta. The fiery Bengali nationalist Aurobindo Ghose was chosen as the first Principal and Satis Chandra Mukherjee as the first executive head or Superintendent. In December, following a motion from Hirendra Nath Datta, the Indian National Congress recognized National Education as an integral part of its platform.

Many of those who supported the Swadeshi movement, however, opposed the boycott of modern science and culture from the West. The major concern of these Westernized progressives was to rid Indian education of British bureaucratic control and to introduce a system which would enable the study of both ancient culture and Western science and philosophy through the medium of the vernacular languages. English was to be retained as a compulsory second language. The National Council of Education aimed:

To impart education, literary and scientific, as well as technical and professional on national lines and exclusively under national control, designed to incorporate with the best oriental ideals of life and thought the best assimilable ideals of the West.

There were also some, particularly those individuals and organizations associated with the Hindu renascence, who valued the gurukula educational traditions of ancient India and wished to revive them. Traditionally, education was provided by a guru with whom students resided, usually in the quiet of a forest hermitage or gurukul. Learning was an organic process acquired through interaction between pupil and teacher in a harmonious natural environment. There was no division between the spiritual and the temporal; the moral, mental and physical aspects of development were viewed as a unity. Education, as with all aspects of life, was religious. It was pursued as part of the process of self-realization, the attainment of salvation through mukti or emancipation.
Learning was individualized within the context of a family group and pupils were required to contribute to the material well-being of the group. They collected wood for fuel from the forest, and cared for the cattle and home of the guru:

Tending the house was training the pupil in self-help, the dignity of labour, of menial service for his teacher and the student brotherhood. Tending the cattle was education through craft as part of the highest liberal education. The craft selected is the primary industry of India... The pupils received a valuable training in the love of the cow and the industry of rearing cattle and dairy-farming, with all the other advantages it gave of outdoor life and robust physical exercise.... Therefore, the highest education was quite consistent with manual and vocational training to give a practical turn to human nature, and training to deal with subjects and the physical environment.98

Such activities not only enabled healthy physical growth but provided a discipline which favoured the development of the inner self, of the pupil's character, "deemed as one of the essential objects of education."99 The students learned through serving the guru and contemplating his spiritual existence as an heuristic model. Ancient Indian education was thus primarily concerned with the inner spiritual world. It is not surprising, therefore, that the protagonists of the Hindu renascence found inspiration in the ancient gurukula model.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati was probably the first to attempt to revive indigenous education in India. Farquhar reports that the Swami organized the establishment of several schools in which the curriculum would focus entirely on early Sanskrit literature. The schools proved a failure, however, as the teachers apparently failed to follow his ideas.100 It was not until after his death that Dayananda's desire for an education based on the ancient traditions came to fruition. In 1902 the Arya Samaj established the Gurukula Kangri Vishwavidyalaya at Hardwar. In the Vedantic tradition, the students were called Brahmacharis.101 Hindi was the medium of instruction. The students lived in the Gurukul from the
ages of eight to seventeen years and led a simple ascetic existence, emphasis being placed upon the training of character as well as intellectual learning.102

The year before, Rabindranath Tagore, who is regarded as the "prophet" of the National Education movement, had established a similar gurukula style educational institution at Bholpur outside Calcutta. It was called Santiniketan, meaning the "Abode of Peace", and was patterned on the ideal of the ancient forest communities with their natural existence based upon simplicity, dignity and self-discipline.103 As early as 1892, at the age of 31 years, Tagore had written Shiksar Herpher - "Our Education and its Incongruities". It was his first critique of the prevailing education system which he regarded as antithetical to Indian culture and the Indian genius. He deplored the use of English as the medium of instruction claiming it stifled originality, and advocated the adoption of the mother-tongue. Tagore argued that education should provide for the all-round development of the individual in harmony with nature and stressed that children required a free and happy open air environment in which to learn.104

Like Gandhi, Tagore had spent part of his youth in England, and had been greatly influenced by Western culture. He consequently sought a synthesis of East and West in his educational theory and practice. Tagore was concerned with the total development of the human being, with the pursuit of bhuma or fullness, the pursuit of the whole man.105 "To obtain full manhood is the ultimate end of education, everything else is subordinate to it."106 He was primarily concerned with the child's inner spiritual existence which he did not separate from social, economic, intellectual and cultural life. As an artist, Tagore believed that aesthetic experience was particularly significant to the educative process. He believed that man is by nature an artist,107 and that both art and religion are integral to each other and to the whole of life. Tagore thus
placed great emphasis upon the education of the senses to enhance the child's perception of the world and to facilitate the creative experience and interpretation of the world.

Gandhi held many similar views to those espoused by the National Education movement but he was also greatly influenced by the *gurukul* model in the evolution of his educational philosophy. While his initial experiments in education have generally been traced back to the years he spent in South Africa, his *Autobiography* reveals that he had begun thinking about education earlier. Indeed, upon his return from London in 1891, he began taking an active interest in the rearing of his son, then four years of age, and the children of his brother. He states that, at the time he had already "planned reform in the education of children." His first intention was to make the children hardy and strong, a preoccupation in his own youth, so he began to teach them physical exercise and to guide their development personally. No doubt his experience in England with the vegetarians, among whom many were also "simple life" socialists, had affirmed his belief in the value of physical activity for personal growth and well being. Gandhi felt that he would have made a very good school teacher and when his attempts to practise at the Bar in Bombay following his return to India proved a dismal failure, he actually applied for a job as an English teacher in a prestigious high school for Rs.75 per month. He was unsuccessful, despite his excellent qualifications, because he was not an arts graduate.

When Gandhi was offered the opportunity of legal work in the British province of Natal, South Africa, he gratefully accepted the chance to prove himself in a new country, and set out in April 1893. Apart from brief visits to India and England, he spent the next twenty one years in South Africa. On becoming acquainted with the hardships endured by Indians there he determined to remain, and to fight social and political injustice on their behalf, utilizing his knowledge
of English law. In the process he developed a powerful technique for political action and for effecting social change. During this period Gandhi also underwent a radical personal transformation, abandoning Western affectations and gradually taking on a life of simplicity and asceticism. His interest in world religions continued bringing him in close contact with Christians including Quakers some of whom tried to convert him. But Gandhi could not accept the belief that Jesus was the only incarnation of God. He retained his belief in the essential unity of all religions and adhered to Hinduism.

It was through his correspondence with Edward Maitland that Gandhi was introduced to the ideas of the Russian Count Leo Tolstoy, who, with the English philosopher, John Ruskin, and a Jain poet named Rajchandra, Gandhi claimed had a significant impact upon his life. Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You* proved a great inspiration. Gandhi found a strong similarity between Tolstoy's Christian non-resistance and the Hindu Jain doctrine of Ahimsa. He read more of Tolstoy's writings on peace, religion, poverty and vegetarianism and eventually came to correspond with Tolstoy and to meet English Tolstoyans. While Tolstoy saw passive resistance and nationalism as contradictory, Gandhi, however, was able to harness them to form a new political weapon, Satyagraha, with which to oppose British oppression in South Africa and later in India. Gandhi's Satyagraha - "truth" or "soul force" - was conceived as a powerful moral and spiritual mode of non-violent action whereas passive-resistance in Tolstoy's terms, could imply weakness and not necessarily non-violence. For Gandhi Ahimsa was the means of human activity, a way of life, while Truth became the end.

In his search for Truth, Gandhi, like Vivekananda, had chosen *Karma Yoga* the way of action. He had been particularly inspired by the second and third chapters of the *Bhagavad Gita* which he saw as the core of Hinduism. In chapter three, for example, the Lord Krishna tells
Arjuna:

7. But great is the man who, free from attachments, and with a mind ruling its powers in harmony, works on the path of Karma Yoga, the path of consecrated action.

8. Action is greater than inaction: perform therefore they task in life. Even the life of the body could not be if there were no action.

19. In Liberty from the bonds of attachment, do therefore the work to be done: for the man whose work is pure attains indeed the Supreme.119

In the Gita there is no distinction between religious and everyday activity and Gandhi adopted this way of life himself. "You cannot divide social, economic, political and purely religious work into watertight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity" he wrote.120 Through self-less action the Karma Yogin achieved the goal of self-realization. According to Gandhi, "the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and therefore humanity."121

Gandhi's educational experiments formed part of this process of personal sacrifice and they embodied his belief in the value of non-violent action. His educational thought and practice evolved over a period of more than thirty years and was a synthesis of ideas inspired by both ancient Hindu texts and Western philosophy. Manual activity formed the crux of his educational principles and he later acknowledged the influence on him of Tolstoy.122 In this context it is important to note the similarity between Tolstoy's emphasis on manual activity and that of Montessori in her Children's Houses. Indeed Tolstoy's daughter, after meeting the Dottoressa, mentioned that her father's educational ideals had been realized in the Montessori schools.123

Gandhi's belief in the dignity of manual labour was also stimulated by reading John Ruskin's Unto This Last in 1904, which provided the inspiration for the founding of the Phoenix Settlement that year.124
Patel notes that Ruskin had been largely influenced by the ideas of the philosopher Rousseau who stressed the powerful supremacy of nature and claimed that the training of the senses and learning by doing should be afforded an important role in education. According to Rousseau, "Every youth should learn to do something thoroughly with his hands to know what touch means." 125

From the outset of his educational experiments in South Africa Gandhi placed a significant value on manual activity in the development of the child. He began his educational experiments at home with his children in Johannesburg. There he introduced them to the discipline of manual labour. A handmill was purchased to grind flour and the children were encouraged to assist with the grinding. He noted the children's tireless pleasure in productive work which Montessori would observe a few years later in the Casa dei Bambini in Rome and incorporate as an integral part of her educational method. Gandhi's children also assisted the servant with his daily tasks in the home and they learned to clean the toilet closet, an activity which would normally have been undertaken by an "Untouchable" caste under Hindu custom. According to Gandhi:

This proved a good training for the children. The result was that none of my sons developed any aversion for scavenger's work, and they naturally got a good grounding in general sanitation. There was hardly any illness in the home at Johannesburg, but whenever there was any, the nursing was willingly done by the children. 126

Through these early experiments with his own children Gandhi received a lesson in the educative value of manual work. This concept of "learning by doing" underscored the practical life exercises in the Montessori Children's Houses and later became the basis of Gandhi's Basic Education Scheme.

Whilst Gandhi encouraged activities which would foster the children's physical and character development, their literary education
was largely neglected. He made no arrangements for their formal tuition, but rather provided his own informal instruction in conversations whilst they accompanied their father on the five mile journey to his office.

Gandhi always spoke to them in the Gujarati language despite the strong view expressed by his friend, Henry Polak, that they should learn English. Aware of the damaging effects of English education on the Indian psyche, Gandhi defended his decision:

It has always been my conviction that Indian parents who train their children to think and talk in English from their infancy betray their children and their country. They deprive them of the spiritual and social heritage of the nation, and render them to that extent unfit for the service of the country.127

Gandhi had vehemently expressed his opposition to English education in _Hind Swaraj_, the little book published in 1909 which sets out his non-violent philosophy of life.128 He posited that Indians should not only be educated in their own provincial languages but should learn a national language, Hindi, through which all could communicate, thus obviating the need to learn English. He believed that if the English language were driven out, the nation would eventually become free.129 He was fully cognizant of the role of English education in the process of cultural imperialism in India. In this context, educationist Paulo Friere writes that, "Education as the exercise of domination stimulates the credulity of students, with the ideological intent (often not perceived by educators) of indoctrinating them to adapt to the world of oppression...."130 Gandhi claimed that he had freed himself of the ill effects of his English literary education and it was his task to liberate others.131

_Hind Swaraj_ contains the first expressions of the formation of Gandhi's educational philosophy. Not only did he reject the imposition of instruction through the English medium, he also opposed the Western
formal education system with its literary bias, which the British installed in India. In its stead he advocated a return to India's ancient system of education in which character building was primary. "A building erected on that foundation will last", he said. When Tagore's English colleague Reverend Charles Freer Andrews, who would become a close friend of Gandhi, left Santiniketan to visit the Phoenix Settlement in 1914, he found a modern embodiment of the simple asceticism of the tapovan (forest hermitage) existence.

India's ancient Hindu tradition was not, however, the only model for the establishment of Gandhi's first ashram community at Phoenix. In 1895 Gandhi had visited a community of Trappist monks at Mariann Hill near Pinetown, a village close to Durban. Gandhi's interest in the Trappists was initially aroused because they were vegetarians. The community at Mariann Hill consisted of 120 monks and sixty nuns or sisters as well as 1,200 native African men, women and children. All were engaged in an austere existence and the community was self-supporting. As well as growing their own food the inhabitants, including the children, learned useful crafts in various workshops; for example there were blacksmiths', tinsmiths', carpenters', shoemakers' and tanners' workshops for the boys; and the girls learned ironing, sewing, straw-hat manufacturing and knitting. The children were also taught English as well as the Zulu language. Gandhi was delighted that, although most of the Trappists were German, they did not attempt to impose their language. He was also greatly impressed by the religious atmosphere and the spirit of racial harmony which pervaded.

Gandhi sought a similar austere spiritual existence at the Phoenix Settlement and also at the Tolstoy Farm, established in 1910 to provide accommodation for the families of Satyagrahis. In both communities, the education of the children was not separated from daily life as in the Western system. Although there were school buildings at both Phoenix and
Tolstoy Farm in which some formal lessons took place, much of the learning occurred through active participation by the children (who had different ages and communal backgrounds), in the life style adopted by the communities. Consistent with the ancient Hindu tradition, Gandhi, like Montessori, believed that character building was an important outcome of child education:

But I had always given the first place to the culture of the heart or the building of character, and as I felt confident that moral training could be given to all alike, no matter how different their ages and their up bringing, I decided to live amongst them all the twenty-four hours of the day as their father. I regarded character building as the proper foundation for their education and, if the foundations were firmly laid, I was sure that the children could learn all the other things themselves or with the assistance of friends.137

In Gandhi's view, physical activity, especially manual labour in the kitchen, or in the garden, would assist in training character as well as developing strong healthy bodies among the children. He also wanted to teach the children "some useful vocation" for which purpose his friend Kallenbach visited the Trappist monastery at Mariann Hill to learn shoe-making. Gandhi learned the craft from him and in turn taught it to all who were interested. Carpentry was also taught and the children learned cooking as part of their daily work in the kitchen. Because the children participated in all the tasks undertaken by the adults who were their teachers, there was always a teacher guiding them in their labour.138

The experiment could be described as small-scale, nonformal, community-based education utilizing the services of untrained teachers.

At Tolstoy Farm Gandhi also involved himself in the literary education of the children, although this task proved difficult with few resources and a minimum of time, as much of the day was taken up with manual work. The children learned their mother-tongues, Tamil, Gujarati and Urdu, in the vernacular. English was also taught and some children
learned Sanskrit. All were taught elementary history, geography and arithmetic. Gandhi was not unduly concerned that they did not have access to proper text books to assist their studies. In his view, drawing on his own school experience, the teacher was the most appropriate text book, providing the subject was made interesting. He felt the children would remember more from their talks with him than they would ever recall from book learning.\textsuperscript{139}

Gandhi appears to have been more concerned with their spiritual and moral development. It proved a difficult and challenging task. While he felt that the children should be acquainted with the basic tenets of their various religions, he had long been aware that this involved the acquisition of knowledge. Gandhi realized that spiritual development was something quite apart:

\begin{quote}
To develop the spirit is to build character and to enable one to work towards a knowledge of God and self-realization. And I held that this was an essential part of the training of the young, and that all training without culture of the spirit was of no use, and might be even harmful.\textsuperscript{140}
\end{quote}

In accordance with the ancient tradition of the guru he believed that the character of the teacher was instrumental in the training of the child's spirit. "I saw, therefore, that I must be an eternal object-lesson to the boys and girls living with me."\textsuperscript{141} He largely attributed the increasing asceticism of his life at Tolstoy Farm to his role as teacher. Gandhi hoped that the children would follow his example of self-discipline and personal sacrifice.

Consistent with his doctrine of Ahimsa, he opposed corporal punishment and the two occasions on which he felt obliged to use it distressed him greatly but also served to demonstrate the heuristic value of love and understanding between pupil and teacher. Like Montessori, Gandhi held that blame for misbehaviour on the part of children lay with
the adults responsible for their care and he undertook a fast as penance for the wrong doing of some of the children at Phoenix. He wrote:

It is not my purpose to make out from these incidents that it is the duty of the teacher to resort to fasting whenever there is a delinquency on the part of his pupils. I hold, however, that some occasions do call for this drastic remedy. But it presupposes clearness of vision and spiritual fitness. Where there is no true love between the teacher and the pupils, where the pupil's delinquency has not touched the very being of the teacher and where the pupil has no respect for the teacher, fasting is out of place and may even be harmful. Though there is thus room for doubting the propriety of fasts in such cases, there is no question about the teacher's responsibility for the error of his pupil. 142

Gandhi's emerging educational philosophy was thus predicated upon his belief in love and non-violence. In keeping with the ancient Hindu tradition, he believed that education should be concerned with the total development of the individual in harmony with nature, and should therefore include physical and spiritual as well as intellectual training. The education of children should not be carried out in a formal institutionalized setting divorced from the community in which they lived. The cultural background of the children ought to be considered in determining appropriate learning experiences and the mother-tongue used as the medium of instruction. He was progressive in that he also supported the co-education of boys and girls, not a feature of the Hindu tradition. He also felt that some kind of vocational training, through which children could earn a living, should be provided.

Gandhi's educational thought and practice was thus a synthesis of both traditional Hinduism and Western progressive education. He was reacting against the rigid, formalized literary schooling introduced in India by the British and which he had endured as a child. He was not, however, a trained teacher and unlike Tagore, he had no interest in education for its own sake. Rather he saw education as an agent of
political and social change. In his view India could not be free of the British until her people had truly freed themselves from submission to a foreign culture. Right education, he believed, provided the means by which this could be achieved. But the education Gandhi envisioned involved not merely the acquisition of skills and knowledge, nor the development of bodily strength and vigour. He was ultimately concerned with the attainment of self-realization through the training of the spirit. Gandhi had taken the ancient Ashrama system and transformed it to suit the requirements of modern civilization. Rather than withdrawing to a life of contemplation he had chosen Karma Yoga, a life of selfless action in the service of his countrymen and women and ultimately all humanity, as the path to self-realization. He commented:

I am familiar with the superstition that self-realization is possible only in the fourth stage of life, i.e., sannyasa (renunciation). But it is a matter of common knowledge that those who defer preparation for this invaluable experience until the last stage of life attain not self-realization but old age amounting to a second and pitiable childhood, living as a burden on this earth. I have a full recollection that I held these views even whilst I was teaching, i.e., in 1911-12, though I might not then have expressed them in identical language.

He believed that the path towards self-realization should be commenced at an early age through the educational process. In the Hindu tradition, education for Gandhi was thus primarily a spiritual unfolding.

Gandhi continued his educational experiments in India. He left South Africa at the conclusion of the Satyagraha campaign in 1914 going first to London to meet Gokhale. The remaining members of the Phoenix party returned to India ahead of him, travelling, at the instigation of C.F. Andrews, to stay at Tagore's Santiniketan. Tagore advocated the simple life of Brahmacharya in harmony with nature, but when Gandhi arrived in 1915 he did not find the lifestyle sufficiently austere and, with the approval of the poet, set about introducing changes. He
encouraged the boys to participate in a programme of self-help which involved the preparation and cooking of their own meals, and cleaning the kitchen and surroundings afterwards. The food prepared by the pupils was simple and bland emulating the diet of the Phoenix party. Gandhi admitted, however, that the standard of asceticism he set was probably too demanding for the large number of pupils and teachers. The experiment continued for a time after his departure, the boys breaking the tedium of the mundane cleaning operations, for example, by playing the sitar beforehand. It was, however, eventually discarded. Gandhi's attempt to instill the dignity of some forms of labour amongst the upper caste boys at Santiniketan proved a failure.\textsuperscript{146}

Both Gandhi and Tagore decried the prevailing Western formal education and sought an alternative in terms of Indian culture and traditions. Both were concerned with the total development of the child and, consonant with Hindu tradition, did not divorce spiritual life from temporal existence. The religious dimension was thus fundamental to their educational thought and practice. "They established further continuity with India's past for the extraordinary teacher was the guru, the religious educator."\textsuperscript{147} Gandhi, however, was more utilitarian in his view of education than Tagore because, as well as his concern with the individual's spiritual development, he "saw the role of education in terms of social and economic development."\textsuperscript{148} In contrast, Tagore has been described as an ananda yogin - one who chose the path of aesthetic devotion and joy.\textsuperscript{149} He sought realization through personal artistic pursuit. Tagore's educational experiments remained largely within the confines of the institutions he created. Gandhi, however, had chosen the path of public action in the service of mankind. He therefore sought the application of his educational ideas on a large scale in the form of a national system of education. His aim was to produce men and women who would, in turn, serve the nation.
When he returned from South Africa, Gandhi had determined to establish an ashram community of his own from which to continue his experiments in search of Truth. On 25th May, 1915 the Satyagraha Ashram was founded at Kochrab in Ahmedabad.\textsuperscript{150} The settlement which comprised some forty men, women and children was later moved, following an outbreak of plague, to a more hygienic site on the banks of the Sabarmati River.\textsuperscript{151} Gandhi continued his educational experiments at Sabarmati, although his continued preoccupation with the freedom struggle slowed developments considerably. M.S. Patel writes:

It was perhaps in the best interests of the country that Gandhiji gave political freedom the highest priority in his activities and let the educational reconstruction of the country wait for an opportune time for without political freedom, how could his theory of education have been practiced on a country-wide scale?\textsuperscript{152}

But Gandhi believed that India would not achieve Swaraj without a new education incorporating physical, intellectual and spiritual training which would produce individuals capable of independent thought and action. According to Gandhi:

To say that this kind of education can only be given after we have attained our independence would, I am afraid, be like putting the cart before the horse. The advent of independence would be incredibly hastened if we could educate millions of our people through an intelligent exercise of their respective vocations like this and teach them that they live for the good of all.\textsuperscript{153}

Despite a host of competing demands requiring his attention, education was therefore never far from Gandhi's thoughts and he continued to take an interest in new educational experiments including the Montessori Method.
CONCLUSION

The chapter has sought to provide a background to the introduction of the Montessori method in India by discussing some of the major forces for change in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A thorough analysis of the complexities of social and political change in India during this period was not attempted. Rather, the intention has been to reveal those factors which may have had some direct or indirect influence on the subsequent history of the Montessori movement.

The impact of English education in India was discussed drawing upon the thesis that education functions as a form of cultural imperialism. English education facilitated the economic exploitation of India under British rule because it created a loyal élite who favoured British goods and institutions and denigrated local customs and traditions as outmoded. They believed that the importation of Western ideas, science and technology was essential for the progress of India. English education thus encouraged cultural dependency amongst Indians. Although the Montessori Method was not English, it was popular in England and would consequently arouse interest in India amongst the Westernized élites. It was also new and progressive and would therefore appeal to those who favoured modernization.

Another response to British imperialism in India was the desire for a revaluation and reform of traditional social and religious practices. In the process a renascence of Hinduism occurred in which some in India attempted to resist British acculturation and restore pride in the ancient religious traditions. The reemergence of "the Hindu personality in education" as a product of the Hindu renascence was discussed with emphasis upon the ideas of Tagore and, in particular, those of Gandhi. Like Montessori, both Gandhi and Tagore were holistic in their view of the child. In the Hindu tradition physical, intellectual, and spiritual
development were part of the same process. Education was the vehicle for a spiritual unfolding through which the individual achieved self-realization. The appeal to the spirit in Montessori education would thus also attract interest in a deeply religious society.

The evolution of Gandhi's educational thought and practice as an integral part of his non-violent philosophy of social and political action, was a major theme in the chapter because more than any other individual, he was responsible for effecting significant social and political change during the period of the introduction of the Montessori Method in India. He believed that it was through right education that Indians could obtain real freedom. Although it was not indigenous, the Montessori Method was based upon the principle of liberty and it favoured the growth of independent thought and action on the part of the child. It would thus appeal to those seeking to rid India of foreign domination.
NOTES


6. Ibid.


9. This view was held by Sir Thomas Munro, Governor of Madras, as early as 1824. See A.M. Mayhew, The Education of India, Faber & Gwyer, London, 1926, p. 21.

10. Ibid.


13. Ibid.


16. Basu, op. cit., p. 59. The educated professional classes were predominantly high caste Hindus.

17. See Mayhew, op. cit., p. 17.


28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., pp. 4-5.

30. The term "metropole" is used in the Dependency theory of development and under development to refer to the central country, in this case Britain, which exploits a peripheral country, i.e. India, through colonialism or neo-colonialism. "The process whereby the metropolis dominates the countryside within a country is identical to that which occurs between countries". Ingemar Fågerlind & Lawrence J. Saha, Education and National Development, Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1983, p. 22.

31. See Gandhi, op. cit., p. 31.


33. Gandhi, op. cit., pp. 41-44. Gandhi realized, however that he was "pursuing a false ideal" and sought to make changes, living more simply and concentrating on his studies.

34. Rudolph, op. cit., p. 245. For an expose of the psychological damage caused to colonized people see Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1967.
35. Literacy increased by approximately 1.75 per cent in the hundred years after 1835. By 1931 only 7 per cent of the total Indian population (excluding Burma) were reported in the Census to be literate, Nurullah & Naik, op. cit., pp. 601-602.


41. Carnoy merely mentions that Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the "first leader of a movement of Hindu religious reformers (Brahmo Samaj)...." op. cit., p. 99. Carnoy cites Roy as an example of the success of the British policy of "cultural conquest", but does not discuss those educated Indians who resisted.

42. For example, Farquhar writes of the British in India, that "every competent observer was deeply impressed with the extraordinary hold Hinduism had upon the people. Every element of life was controlled by it." J.N. Farquhar, Modern Religious Movements in India, Macmillan, New York, 1915, p. 9.

43. Farquhar, op. cit., p. 33.

44. Hay, op. cit., p. 605.

45. Ibid., p. 616.


49. See Hay, op. cit.

50. Dayananda was so vehement in his defense of the Vedas that he went so far as to claim that many modern inventions including steam engines and railways were described therein. See Farquhar, op. cit., p. 116.

51. Hay, op. cit.
52. Farquhar, op. cit., p. 111, disagrees with Valentine Chirol's assessment but claims Dayananda's "unhealthy teaching has produced very unhealthy political fruit." See also Farquhar's discussion of religious nationalism, ibid., pp. 354-359.


59. See ibid., pp. 107-108.

60. Hay, op. cit., p. 647.


63. Romain Rolland, op. cit., p. 91.

64. Farquhar, op. cit., p. 220.


68. Gandhi had taken the vow, in order to appease his mother and his caste. See Gandhi, Autobiography, op. cit., p. 33.

69. See ibid., p. 41. A school boy poem of the region where Gandhi grew up asserted: Behold the mighty Englishman
  
  He rules the Indian small,
  
  Because being a meat-eater,
  
  He is give cubits tall.
  
Ibid., p. 18. Indians, including the young Gandhi had attributed their powerlessness in the face of British rule to their vegetarianism.

70. The house became the headquarters of the Theosophical Society in London, Meade, op. cit., p. 397.
71. Gandhi, op. cit., p. 57.

72. Ibid., p. 58.

73. Hunt, op. cit., p. 34. He joined on 26 March, 1891 and was a member for six months.

74. M.K. Gandhi, Letter of May 8, 1911 to Dr Pranjivan Mehta, cited in ibid., p. 34.


77. See Hunt, ibid., pp. 33-34.

78. See ibid., p. 35. The E.C.U. eschewed any interest in the Occult.


82. Gandhi's mother, who appears to have exercised a significant moral and spiritual influence on him, was reared in the small pranami sect which mixed Islamic and Hindu belief and encouraged social contact between the two communities. See Stephen N. Hay, "Jain Influences on Gandhi’s Early Thought", in S. Ray, ed., Gandhi India and the World, An International Symposium, Hawthorn Press, Melbourne, 1970, p. 29.


84. The observance of Ahimsa, according to the Laws of Manu (the most authoritative of the Hindu Law books), involves "doing no harm to any living thing". Cited in R.C. Zaehner, Hinduism, Oxford University Press, London, 1962, p. 149.


86. See Rudolph, ibid., pp. 242-245.

87. Indian historian, Ravinder Kumar has stressed the power of moral force in India and the ability of Indian leaders like Gandhi and Ambedkar to effect change by utilizing moral force as a political weapon. Ravinder Kumar, "Gandhi Ambedkar and the Poona Pact", paper delivered at the "Conference on the Indian National Congress: A Centenary Perspective", University of Sydney, 1985.


90. Satis Chandra Mukherjee, cited in *ibid.*, p. 7.


95. Mukherjee & Mukherjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67. With the slowing of the Swadeshi movement the schools and the National College eventually closed.


Hunt, op. cit., p. 29. It is possible although there is no reference to it by Gandhi, that in the company of the vegetarians and 'simple-lifers', he may have heard of the educational experiment being carried out by Cecil Reddie at his secondary school, Abbotsholme, established in 1889 on an agricultural estate in southwest Derbyshire. Reddie knew Edward Carpenter, the "sandal-wearing socialist and advocate of the simple life" - Hunt, op. cit., p. 23, - and stayed at his farm at Millthorpe. There Reddie witnessed the practical application of 'simple-life' socialism which provided inspiration for the establishment of his school. In the proposed curriculum, emphasis was placed upon the harmonious all round development of the boys, through the provision of manual training in various crafts such as carpentry, metal work, wood work, tailoring and leather work, as well as agriculture and animal husbandry. See W.A.C. Stewart, The Educational Innovators, II, Macmillan, London, 1968, Chs 1 & 13.

Gandhi, op. cit.

Ibid., p. 80.

See ibid., pp. 84-85.

Ibid., pp. 101-104.

Ibid., p. 75. Gandhi had been introduced to Rajchandra, also called Raychandbhai, when he returned from London in 1891. An apostle of truth and non-violence, Rajchandra was a living example to Gandhi of the practice of Ahimsa in daily life. He continued to correspond with Rajchandra from South Africa and the latter sent him Hindu religious texts. Ibid., p. 115.

Ibid., p. 114.


Cenkner, op. cit., p. 86.


M.S. Patel, The Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1953, p. 84.

124. Gandhi, Autobiography, op. cit., p. 250. For a detailed study of the history of the Phoenix Settlement, see Thomson, op. cit. It is interesting to note in this context that Reddie was also influenced by Ruskin. W.A.C. Stewart, op. cit., Ch. 1.

125. Cited in Patel, op. cit., p. 86.


127. Ibid., p. 261. It is ironical that in the pursuit of a better system of education for all Indian children, Gandhi sorely neglected some important aspects of the education of his own children. He felt that training in the service of the community was more useful than literary education. His major regret was that he did not "prove an ideal father" to his children. Ibid., p. 260.

128. See Gandhi, Hind Swaraj.

129. Ibid., p. 92.


131. Gandhi, op. cit., p. 89. By 1906 Gandhi had taken his vow of Brahmacharya (spiritual and secular discipline including celibacy), and had embarked upon a life of simplicity and asceticism, eschewing the trappings of Western Civilization.

132. Ibid.


135. Ibid., pp. 181-186.

136. See Thomson, op. cit., Ch. 2.


138. Ibid., p. 280.

139. Ibid., pp. 281-282.

140. Ibid., p. 282.

141. Ibid., p. 283.

142. Ibid., pp. 286-287.

144. This refers to the four stages or *ashramas*, the student, the householder, the hermit or recluse and the ascetic, into which an individual's life was organized in the Brahmanical period of ancient India. See R.N. Dandekar, *Chapter X: "Dharma, The First End of Man"*, in de Bary, op. cit., pp. 218-220.


146. Ibid., pp. 318-319. Gandhi's visit is none the less still remembered at Santiniketan today on Gandhi Day when the entire community contributes to the running of the school. Cenkner, op. cit., p. 119.

147. Cenkner, op. cit., p. 200. He notes that the guru was distinguished from other teachers and holy persons by the fact that the "guru was a spiritual precepter and his superiority rested on the conviction of the community that his knowledge and teaching were both powerful and of a transcendent origin. The spirituality and the discipline (yoga) of the guru were believed to be efficacious because just as the teacher was liberated so too could he lead others to liberation." Ibid., p. 201. He also notes that Gandhi was regarded as a guru by his intimates but, although Gandhi referred to him as Gurudev, Tagore was not "esteemed as guru during his lifetime." Ibid.

148. Ibid., p. 196.

149. Cenkner, pp. 29-30.

150. Gandhi, op. cit., p. 329. Gandhi had chosen Ahmedabad because it was the capital of his native Gujarat and there was the prospect of patronage from some of its wealthy citizens. It was also the centre of the ancient handloom industry which Gandhi sought to revive.


152. Patel, op. cit., p. 97.

CHAPTER THREE

"SOWING THE SEED"

THE FIRST PHASE OF THE MONTESSORI MOVEMENT IN INDIA 1912-1939

- Introduction
- The Beginnings of Early Childhood Education in India
- The Introduction of the Montessori Method
- Gijubhai Badheka: "The Mother with the Moustache"
- Sarala Devi Sarabhai: "A Montessori Mother"
- The Montessori Method and the Theosophists in India
- The Parsis and the Montessori Method
- The Montessori Method in Bengal
- Gandhi and the Montessori Method
- Conclusion
INTRODUCTION

The Montessori Method was introduced into India during a period of critical social and political change with the nineteenth century renascence of Hinduism playing a significant role as a catalyst. The previous chapter has argued that this renascence encouraged an environment favouring reform and thus prepared the ground in which the Method could take root.

This chapter proposes to trace the history of the initial phase of the movement in India prior to Maria Montessori's arrival on the subcontinent in 1939. The chapter will focus upon certain individuals and social and religious groups who made significant contributions and thus attempt to account for the continued appeal of the Method at a time of national resistance to foreign domination. The first section, however, prefaces the introduction of the Montessori Method by a brief discussion of traditional approaches to early childhood and the beginnings of early childhood education in India.

THE BEGINNINGS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN INDIA

In ancient India only the three highest castes received formal education. A Brahmin, Kshatriya or Vaishya boy began his education, following his initiation (upanayana) as a student of sacred knowledge, at the age of eight years.¹ He thus entered the first of the four ashramas, or stages of life. There was no concept of developmental stages in early childhood. Erikson writes that:

... traditional Hindu images of life, ... do not conceptualize stages before the 'sense' age is reached, that is, before a child can listen attentively to things told and read and sung and shown to him, and
when he is eager to attach himself to people who will teach him: until a boy is eight years old, he is like one newly born, marked only by the caste in which he is born.²

The rearing of very young children was traditionally undertaken informally in the joint family by various adult members including grandparents. In the homes of the wealthy, care of the young was frequently placed in the hands of servants who were often arbitrarily and unduly restrictive towards their charges. Rabindranath Tagore humourously referred to his infancy as "The Regime of Servants". Memories of this unhappy period,

... made him painfully aware of the torture which little children experience under such conditions of cruel and artificial restraint, and formed the genesis of his later educational theories wherein he feelingly pleaded for the child's supreme need of free joyous movements.³

Perhaps the first Infant School in India was reportedly established in 1830, attached to St James Church in Calcutta and teachers trained in infant school-work were brought out from England with the intention of training others. However, the experiment, which was fifty years in advance of its time, did not survive.⁴ It is generally accepted that the concept of educating young children outside the home and the family was imported from the industrialized West in the latter part of the nineteenth century by Christian missionaries who introduced the kindergarten and the nursery school as part of the formal school system. Among the first such schools were the Loreto School, Lucknow, established in 1874 and St Hilda's Nursery School, Poona, which opened in 1885.⁵ In the same year a kindergarten class was started at Saidapeth High School, Madras, with the aim of training teachers.⁶ At Sholapur in Bombay Presidency, the American Mission Josephine Kindergarten School began in 1901-1902, with similar intentions.⁷

As a result of the reformist climate in which the Hindu renascence
had emerged, some Western educated Indians also began to take an interest in the new education which was viewed as scientific and progressive but not in conflict with Indian aspirations. One of the first Indians to receive training in kindergarten methods in England was Pandita Ramabhai Saraswati. Shd was the daughter of scholarly parents and had been educated at home by her father, a Chitpavan Brahmin, as if she were a boy. Subsequently she travelled throughout northern India, lecturing in support of education for Indian women.\(^8\) She was widowed in 1882 and began working on behalf of women, for the Hindu reform organization the Prarthana Samaj. She founded the Arya Mahila Samaj or Ladies' Society.\(^9\) In 1883 she became a Christian and travelled to England where a religious sisterhood arranged for her to study the Kindergarten Method at Cheltenham Ladies' College.\(^10\)

After her return to India Pandita Ramabhai opened a home for Hindu widows and in connection with this work, advocated the introduction of the kindergarten in India. She began lecturing to teachers in Poona schools in 1891 and news of her work was received in England where it was noted with some pleasure that "in India Froebel's principles have found an eloquent and enthusiastic exponent in the accomplished and learned Pandita Ramabhai."\(^11\) A major difficulty restricting the spread of the kindergarten and one encountered in the early years of the Montessori Movement in India, was the absence of trained teachers. In 1892 The National Froebel Society was asked to establish an examination centre in India but there were few people capable of satisfactorily carrying out the practical examinations there. In 1910 an Indian Committee proposed granting its own certificates but students were still required to come to England for a year's study in order to receive the Teacher's Certificate of the National Froebel Union.\(^12\)

Swami Vivekananda's great woman disciple and staunch nationalist, Sister Nivedita, also strongly advocated the introduction of the kinder-
garten in India. As Margaret Noble, she was a school teacher and had become interested in the ideas of Pestalozzi and Froebel with which she experimented at a school she started in London in 1892.\textsuperscript{13} Later in India, she found an important similarity between the \textit{bratas}, the first lessons in worship acquired by the child in Hindu Society, and the activities of the kindergarten. She wrote:

They combine practice, story, game, and object, with a precision that no Indian can appreciate or enjoy as can the European familiar with modern educational speculation. India has, in these, done on the religious and social plane, what Europe is trying in the \textit{Kinder-garten}, to do on the scientific.\textsuperscript{14}

Sister Nivedita believed the ideal place for rearing small children was under the care of the mother in the home. The lack of educational opportunities for most women and the strictures imposed by social customs limited the ability of the average mother to ensure the optimum development of her children. Nivedita felt that this would only be achieved by using the scientific knowledge and specialized training of the kindergarten teacher. None the less she had certain reservations about introducing the Kindergarten Method. The precision of the Method meant it tended to become too mechanical in its application. She believed that an understanding of the basic principles was far more important for kindergarteners than a complete set of the materials and a precise knowledge of their sequences. Given the great diversity in the application of Froebelian methods in Europe, Sister Nivedita was also concerned that the kindergarten in India should not strictly conform to the European model. She wrote that

... if, within the same country and a single village, the difference between various applications of the same principle can be so marked, it follows that the \textit{Kinder-garten} in Europe and the \textit{Kinder-garten} in India, ought to be two different things. And no one can create an Indian \textit{Kinder-garten}, save Indian educators; for the system must be an efflorescence of Indian life,
embodying educational principles that are universally true of man.\textsuperscript{15}

Another concern was the high cost of the kindergarten equipment. Sister Nivedita believed a solution lay in the utilization of some local equivalent. While the Indian rag ball covered in the appropriate colours provided a suitable alternative for the first Gift, the wooden cubes and cylinders which comprise the later Gifts caused difficulty:

They cannot but be expensive. For an Indian kindergarten, therefore, they are out of the question, unless they could be reproduced in earthen-ware, by the village potter, and so far, I have not succeeded in having this done, often as I have tried. A substitute for the building gifts is to my own mind, one of the crying needs of the Indian child-garden.\textsuperscript{16}

She suggested that dried nuts and seeds might be used for the number concepts the child acquires through the wooden bricks.

In discussing the problems associated with the introduction of the kindergarten in India, Sister Nivedita was anticipating similar difficulties which beset the application of the Montessori Method. Although she appears to have had no knowledge of Montessori's work, and died in 1911\textsuperscript{17} before the translation of Montessori's first book into English, Nivedita did forecast some of its special features - which later appealed to Indians - in her suggestion that reading and writing should be "Froebelized".\textsuperscript{18} She wrote that:

... a box full of little card-board tiles, printed with the letters of the alphabet, would be a more child-like way of teaching a child to read,.... The learning would be more rapid and more pleasant, if these letters were to be picked out and put together, like the pieces of a puzzle. Certainly writing comes before reading, .... Word-building, - the spelling of detached words - comes before the reading of sentences. And so on. Always the appeal to the senses. Always the learning by experience. And always joy, the hunger for more.\textsuperscript{19}

Like Montessori, she argued that such work was not a strain for the child
but rather a joyful experience, "the joy of self-control, the joy of energy and absorption, the joy of work."^20

British educational authorities in India had in fact adopted the kindergarten model before Sister Nivedita arrived in India, but its application varied from Province to Province. Kindergarten methods were introduced into the infant classes that were attached to primary schools for children of four or five years, prior to entry into the first standard. In Bombay Presidency, infant classes were introduced in 1887. They were often divided into A and B sections according to age, and adopted kindergarten methods. Object lessons, story-telling, singing and games were an essential part of the curriculum. Some formal learning was also included, comprising reading, numeration up to one hundred and multiplication tables up to ten.

The infant classes functioned as a kind of "half-way house between full-fledged Pre-Primary Education on the one hand and formal Primary Education on the other."^21 There was a definite attempt on the part of Education officers in India to imitate English initiatives,^22 and these classes resembled the infant or "babies" classes attached to English and Scottish elementary schools during the mid-nineteenth century.^23 By 1902, kindergarten methods were required for all subjects in Madras, were made compulsory in the infant classes and Standard I in Bombay and in the infant classes in Bengal, and were optional in the Central Provinces and Berar.^24 Kindergarten, object lessons, and nature study lessons were given prominence in courses at the Poona Training College. In the practicing school, attached to the college, lessons in the two lowest classes were "conducted on strict Kindergarten lines."^25

A less salutary aspect of the introduction of Froebelian methods in India by the British was the view, expressed by the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, that kindergarten methods and object lessons should be adopted in primary schools "to correct some of the inherent defects of the Indian
intellect! Such views deeply offended the intelligentsia and further advanced the cause of nationalism among them.

There was no official attempt to introduce kindergarten preschools. Despite official rhetoric in support of their adoption, the use of kindergarten methods in primary schools generally declined. In Bombay, for example, the infant classes survived for approximately sixty years, although they were far from satisfactory. Very few of the teachers had attended training colleges, and in many such colleges the study of kindergarten methods was given a low priority. Classes in schools were overcrowded and the absence of appropriate equipment also prevented instruction along kindergarten lines. Irregularity of attendance and stagnation in the infant class, resulted in children leaving school before they had entered the primary level, often without the rudiments of literacy. Poverty was probably largely responsible for the high wastage, but ineffective teaching also appears to have been a factor. Ultimately, in 1947, the Government of Bombay decided to abolish the "wasteful" infant classes and to raise the admission age for primary schools to six plus.

In India, as elsewhere, early childhood education was not considered an obligation of government for many years and efforts to establish and expand pre-schools were undertaken independently. Although the pioneers in this field were missionaries, they did not succeed, in expanding the work amongst the great body of Indian society. The task of popularizing early childhood education was taken up largely by Indians in a private capacity. Those who became enamoured of the Montessori Method appear to have made a significant contribution.
THE INTRODUCTION OF THE MONTESSORI METHOD

When Montessori's book describing her experiments with the slum children of San Lorenzo was translated into the English language in 1912, articles about the Montessori Method began appearing in Indian newspapers. Readers of The Times of India were informed of the strong interest in the Method in Australia, particularly in the State of New South Wales. There, the Minister for Education, Carmichael, impressed by the "libertarian" features of the Method, was eagerly awaiting the arrival of a copy of Montessori's book in order to assess the suitability of her Method for the education system of his State. 29 The article stated that the Montessori system had "made great progress in Italy, was adopted by Switzerland but twelve months ago and has just been introduced into Paris, where two model schools were opened in September." 30

The news also reached India and there was strong interest in the Montessori Method in England where, at a joint conference of the Child Study Society of London and the Montessori Society of the United Kingdom, it was explained that the Montessori system was based on the principle of "self-development in an atmosphere of freedom", and, that it "resulted in the development of a new type of discipline, which, based on self-control, was voluntarily imposed by the children upon themselves." 31

English-educated Indians learned that education would never be the same again because it was realised that, as a result of Montessori's work, "education must not begin at twelve years but at two years." 32

Disillusioned with English education, but always eager to examine new ideas from the West, India's educated élites became excited by reports of this innovative method in which four year olds were able, "without the least trace of mental strain, to write words and sentences in a good round hand", 33 within a mere three months from the date of admission.

The Princely State of Mysore in the South of India, appears to
have been among the first to avail itself of the new educational method by sending an official delegate to attend the first International Montessori Training Course held in Rome in 1913. Education in Mysore was quite progressive in comparison with other States and Provinces, particularly after the transfer of administrative power to the ruling family by the British in 1881. By 1913 legislation had been passed with the object of introducing compulsory elementary education. The State sent the enthusiastic Headmaster of the Government Middle School at Bangalore, Paul Chinnappa, to Rome where he was "the most exotic among the exotic representatives at the Course." He was the son of Christian converts and had been educated at a Methodist boarding school in Mysore. At a function held in Montessori's home at the close of the Course, Chinnappa told the gathering of the evils perpetrated by the caste system, particularly that of brahmin hegemony, both moral and political, over the remainder of the population. He also spoke of the oppression of women, including the plight of young widows whom custom had denied the right to remarry. Chinnappa believed that education provided the means of alleviating some of these problems. The Montessori Method with its scientific base and the pervasive atmosphere of liberty, greatly appealed to one so concerned with the uplift of his people.

The young school master returned to his homeland, a staunch advocate of the Montessori Method. In December, 1915, a lengthy unsigned article appeared in The Times of India urging the introduction of the Montessori Method into India. The writer, who showed a thorough understanding of the Method and its application, claimed to be the only Indian who had taken a training course in Rome. In the absence of any contrary evidence it can be assumed that the author was Chinnappa. The article argued that, because Italian was a phonetic language, there would be no difficulty if the Method were to be applied in the very phonetic Indian vernaculars. The "capriciousness of English spelling" had been overcome
in American and English Montessori schools. The writer had, in addition, "experimental evidence in favour of using English with Indian children." The Montessori Method could therefore be applied in both English medium and vernacular schools. More importantly, Indian children whose parents wished them to have an English education, could learn to read and write efficiently and accurately at a much earlier age.

A note of caution was raised, however, concerning the exorbitant cost of the Method when compared with Indian expenditure on infant education. Two sets of apparatus for a class of thirty children cost three hundred Rupees. The use of cheap Indian labour to make the materials, was suggested as a means of halving the cost. The issue of cost would continually plague the expansion of the Montessori movement in India. Advocates of the Method argued, however, that the benefits would far outweigh the initial costs. Indian children usually commenced formal education later than their occidental contemporaries often as late as eight years of age. The Montessori Method was therefore seen as a means of redressing,

The intellectual wastage due to the tardiness of our infant education.... Learning by doing and not by hearing brings forth dynamic experience and not passive knowledge. Confronting a problem and solving it independently of others develop the habit of self-reliance, promote realistic study and research and implant seeds of intellectual and moral honesty.

In India, where young men depended on their parents for their education and livelihood, custom dictated subservience in the extended family, and British rule invited political and cultural servility. An education which promised the development of true independence of mind and action was greeted with interest by those concerned with social and political reform.

The first Montessori school in India appears to have been established not in Mysore, however, but in the Gujarati speaking Princely
State of Baroda, at Vaso, in 1915. The founders were two social workers, Motibhai Amin and Darbar Gopaldas, who had read various articles about the Method in *The Times of India*. Education in Baroda had received a strong fillip under the progressive rule of the Maharaja, Sayajiro Gaekwar, who realized that education for all his subjects was essential for the advancement of his State and took the unprecedented step of introducing compulsory education. When he came to the gadi (seat) in 1881 there were some 180 primary schools in the State. Compulsory education was to be introduced gradually and in March 1892 the scheme commenced as an experiment in the town of Amreli, and in nine villages of the taluka (local government area). Boys between the ages of seven and twelve, and girls between the ages of seven and ten, living within a mile of a school, were required to attend. Following the apparent success of the experiment an Act making education compulsory in the State was passed in 1906.

As in British India, grant-in-aid infant schools in which the first standard, and a "below standard" class were taught, were established in Baroda from 1897. These schools were apparently unpopular and were eventually closed. A "below standard" class similar to a kindergarten class was retained, in the elementary schools. Although most of the learning appears to have been formal, involving reading, writing and the recitation of multiplication tables, there was some kindergarten activity, including Froebel's "gifts and occupations", games, observation lessons, stories and songs.

The conventional kindergarten classes were opened, during the 1912-13 school year at Amreli and in Baroda city. These classes were experimental with the aim of examining the suitability of European methods. They appear to have been the first pre-schools in Baroda State and were very popular, with some 41 children in attendance by the close of the first year. The State proposed that if this initial experiment in early childhood education proved successful, more kindergartens would
On his return from South Africa in 1915 Gandhi visited what he later described as a Montessori school at Amreli. Like many of his compatriots who were interested in the role of education in social and political reform, he had heard of Dr Maria Montessori's successes in educating very young children in the slums of Rome. This was his first opportunity to observe the Method in practice. He later told Montessori that he

... found no difficulty in finding out at once that this school was not carrying out the spirit of your teaching; the letter was there, but whilst there was an honest - more or less honest effort being made, I saw too that there was a great deal of tinsel about it. 47

It is possible that this school was actually one of the kindergartens established by the State. Gandhi may have mistakenly confused it with the Montessori Method, but it is also possible that Montessori apparatus had been introduced once the Method became known in Baroda in 1915.

Montessori's emphasis upon sensory-motor development and the role of manual activity in the child's intellectual development accorded with Gandhi's belief in the dignity of labour and his desire to incorporate manual training within a national education scheme. Contact with the Montessori Method in Western India no doubt reinforced his support for sensorial and manual learning. Despite the exigencies of the political campaigns, he maintained a strong interest in educational developments in India and subsequently came in touch with many more Montessori schools and with students and supporters of the Method. Among these was an ardent supporter of Gandhi's nationalist cause, a fellow Gujarati, Gijubhai Badheka.

In this context is is important to emphasize the significant role played by members of the Gujarati community in the first phase of the Montessori movement in India. Their involvement can be attributed to the
high level of education among the upper castes and to an associated literary, social and political renascence which occurred later than elsewhere in India, and which engendered pride in the region's heritage but also fostered reform. This cultural awakening had begun prior to Gandhi's return from South Africa in 1915 but it was further stimulated by his activism and his emergence as a national leader.\textsuperscript{48}

GIJUBHAI BADHEKA: "THE MOTHER WITH THE MOUSTACHE"

Gijubhai Badheka\textsuperscript{49} is regarded by many connected with education in India as the "Father of pre-school education in India". He is also probably responsible, more than any other individual, for spreading the Montessori message throughout Western India prior to 1939.\textsuperscript{50} Yet his contribution to early childhood education is little known outside his country. He was born into a Brahmin family in a small princely State in Kathiawar on 15 November, 1885. In his youth, he was sent to live in the home of his maternal uncle in order to undertake education in the more progressive State of Bhavanagar in the Bay of Cambay. As a Brahmin boy, he received a strict religious upbringing. The spiritual way of life of his Uncle, Hargovindbhai, was to have a profound impact on the direction of his life and work.

After his marriage in 1906 Gijubhai followed other members of the Gujarati community to East Africa in 1907, to expand his horizons and take advantage of opportunities there to provide for his family. But, he became disenchanted with the business world he had entered and returned to India in 1910 to study law in Bombay. In 1913 he entered legal practice as a pleader at Wadhwan Camp, now Surendranagar. The geographical location of Wadhwan Camp as an important rail link between Kathiawar and the rest of what is now the State of Gujarat, enabled him to come in contact with some of the leading national personalities who passed through
there by train. Gandhi, for example, stopped at Wadhwan in 1915 on his way to Rajkot and received the promise of support from local youths.\textsuperscript{51}

It is possible that Gijubhai may have had contact with nationalists and social reformers during his stay at Wadhwan. Certainly during this period, he met the social worker, Darbar Gopaldas, who gave him Montessori's first book and invited Gijubhai to visit his school at Vaso. At the time, Gijubhai was greatly concerned about the rearing and education of his infant son. A deeply religious and sensitive man, he abhorred the physical violence perpetrated upon children, in many homes and schools. In the Montessori Method he found that the use of punishment as a means of disciplining the child was unnecessary. Indeed such treatment was anathema to Madame Montessori.\textsuperscript{52}

Whilst Gijubhai was at Wadhwan Camp, Hargovindbhai, together with Nanabhai Bhat,\textsuperscript{53} had founded an educational institution, Daxinamurti Vidyarthi Bhavan, at Bhavanagar. They sought Gijubhai's assistance in preparing the trust deeds for its establishment. In 1916 he made the important decision to change the direction of his life from the law to the education of children. He joined Daxinamurti and became Principal of the Vidya Mandir or High School. Despite the responsibilities of the High School he continued his study of the Montessori Method, absorbing its basic principles with a view to applying them, not only in the rearing of his son, but also in the school.

During 1918 Gijubhai began his first educational experiments with young children utilizing the Montessori Method. Within two years he had decided to give up his position as Principal of the High School and to devote himself entirely to early childhood education. As a Brahmin he was able to obtain influential support for his new scheme, including the generous provision by the ruler of Bhavanagar of a grant of land on top of a hill commanding views of the city and the sea. Other local philanthropists donated funds and in 1920 the foundation stone of the
The first Montessori school in Bhavanagar was laid by the wife of the Dewan. In 1922, Gandhi's wife, Kasturba, inaugurated the Daxinamurti Bal Mandir. The term Bal Mandir, meaning "children's temple", was coined by Gijubhai's friend Ravishankar Raval, a prominent artist of the time. For Gijubhai, the Montessori Children's House was to be an abode of devotion on behalf of the child.

The emphasis upon freedom and non-violence in the Montessori environment had appealed to Gijubhai, but it was Montessori's focus upon the spiritual growth of the child that inspired him most. For example, in her conclusion to *The Montessori Method*, she wrote:

> The children work by themselves, and, in doing so, make a conquest of active discipline, and independence, in all the acts of daily life, just as through daily conquests they progress in intellectual development. Directed by an intelligent teacher, who watches over their physical development as well as over their intellectual and moral progress, children are able with our methods to arrive at a splendid physical development, and, in addition to this, there unfolds within them, in all its perfection, the soul, which distinguishes the human being.

The child's absorption in the various Montessori tasks seems almost yogic. It is similar to a meditation in which the aim is not only mental and physical growth but, ultimately, the evolution of the human spirit. For a devout Hindu like Gijubhai, in search of the soul's enlightenment, there was much in the Montessori Method that accorded with the *Bhagavad Gita*, which is concerned with the spiritual struggle of the human soul. Hindus found that the Montessori principle of "auto-education" was consonant with the view espoused in the *Gita*, that the self develops through personal action. The individual is primarily responsible for his or her development. This is *Karma Yoga*, the way of action, adopted by Gandhi as his philosophical touchstone, discussed in the previous chapter.

The Montessori Method was not concerned merely with the attainment of observable skills, but with the complete personality of the child,
with physical, intellectual and spiritual development. It thus accorded with the ancient Indian tradition in which religion and education were indivisible. According to Deepakbhai Mehta, "educationally, psychologically, methodologically and spiritually, Montessori touched the core of the soul of Gijubhai." Inspired, he devoted his energies to the spread of her ideas in Western India. Gijubhai appears to have had no thought of copying from Montessori or using her ideas for his own personal advancement. Rather, he wanted to understand and to absorb her philosophy, and to practise her Method within the Indian context. In 1922 he was visited by a young college Principal, Tarabhai Modak, who sought his assistance in the education of her young daughter. Together they would forge an Indian pre-school movement which drew inspiration from the Montessori Method but was essentially Gandhian in its effort to provide education consonant with Indian needs and aspirations.

Tarabhai Modak was born into a progressive Prarthana Samajist family in Bombay in 1892. Her father, Sadashive Pandurang Kelkar, was the first full-time missionary of the Samaj. He had broken a strong Hindu taboo by marrying a widow. Tarabhai's mother belonged to a different Brahmin sub-caste, and such an alliance was also not customary. Kelkar was an active social reformer, editing Subodh Patrika, the journal of the Samaj, and running a weekly paper for industrial workers. His wife Uma, was educated and emancipated by comparison with most Indian women at the time. Such a household undoubtedly encouraged the development of that personal independence which would enable Tarabhai to become a politician and educational pioneer in Western India. Almost inevitably she married into another Prarthana Samajist family. Her husband, K.V. Modak, was a prosperous lawyer in Amravati. The marriage was unsuccessful however, and they separated.

In 1921 Tarabhai had become the first Indian Principal of Barten Female College of Education at Rajkot, which was a unique distinction
for an Indian woman at that time. She was so impressed, however, with Gijubhai's application of the Montessori Method that she decided to resign her prestigious position at Rajkot and in 1923 joined him at Daxinamurti, in order to further the Montessori cause. In that year the institution was expanded by the establishment of the Bal Adhyapan Mandir or pre-primary teacher's training school.

At that time Kilpatrick's critique of the Method was in vogue at the University of Bombay and a somewhat biased view of the Method was being introduced among teachers. Another more serious difficulty involved encouraging parents to appreciate the worth of this new educational approach. To try and overcome some of these biased views and prejudices, a Montessori Association was soon established by "the proponents of a new type of organized but non-directed education" for very young children. In 1925 the first Montessori Conference was held under its auspices at Bhavanagar.

It will be recalled that during this period, many Indians, particularly Gujaratis, came under the influence of the Indian nationalist movement, spearheaded by Gandhi. He had begun experimenting with education in South Africa and became convinced of the important role for education both in the freedom movement and for village uplift. In 1917, for example, he went to Champaran in Bihar to try to alleviate the exploitation of the villagers by indigo planters. Gandhi wrote:

As I gained more experience of Bihar, I became convinced that work of a permanent nature was impossible without proper village education. The ryots' ignorance was pathetic. They either allowed their children to roam about, or made them toil on indigo plantations from morning to night for a couple of coppers a day. In those days a male labourer's wage did not exceed ten pice, a female's did not exceed six, and a child's three. He who succeeded in earning four annas a day was considered most fortunate.

Through Gandhi's efforts, primary schools were established in six
villages, in which Hindi, arithmetic, rudimentary history and geography were taught and instruction was given in certain crafts to provide the children with the means of earning a living in the future.\textsuperscript{62} His experience at Champaran confirmed Gandhi's belief that a radical new education was necessary to suit the needs of village India.

Just prior to his departure for Champaran, Gandhi had set down proposals for a national school to be established initially within the ashram at Sabamarti but which he hoped would become "a model for others to copy."\textsuperscript{63} Emphasis was placed on character building through crafts such as spinning and weaving in the daily activities of the school. At the time there were four teachers in the ashram, including Kaka Kalelkar whom Gandhi had met at Shantiniketan in February 1915, and who would become his chief collaborator in the ashram educational experiments.\textsuperscript{64}

The establishment of the National School was complemented in 1920 with the founding by Gandhi of the Gujarat Vidyapith, a national teacher training institution. Under the guidance of Kalelkar and J.B. Kripilani, the institution was eventually placed on a strong foundation. The students were encouraged to become more village-minded through the introduction of khadi (hand-spun, hand-woven cloth) and other crafts into the curriculum and the creation of a new degree similar to a "Bachelor of Rural Science".\textsuperscript{65} Gandhi sought teachers who were prepared to volunteer their lives for village development. He was not interested in the Westernized salaried graduates who staffed the Indian Education Service. The village teacher would be required to embark upon a life of self-less action in the service of the country's illiterate poor. Gandhi was consistent with the ancient educational tradition in which the teacher was not paid remuneration but lived an ascetic existence, whilst the students provided for daily needs.\textsuperscript{66}

In 1921 Gandhi made public his views on national education voicing fierce opposition to the existing foreign system with its emphasis
on book learning. The prevailing education was not appropriate, according to him, because it was based on a foreign culture to the almost entire exclusion of indigenous culture. It ignored "the culture of the heart and the hand", and was confined to the head, and it was imparted through a foreign medium. Spinning and weaving were introduced into the National School curriculum. Khadi not only provided children with a craft by which to earn a living, but, Gandhi perceived, it also had educational import. He later wrote of the educative value of the takli, a simple spinning device:

... it develops in the spinner patience, persistence, concentration, self-control, calmness, realisation of importance and value of detail, ability to do more than one thing at a time, making one of them so habitual that its control and operation are almost unconscious, sensitiveness, sureness, delicacy of touch and of muscular control and co-ordination ... a realisation of the value of co-operative work, self-respect and self-reliance arising from recognition of one's ability to create something of economic value useful to oneself, one's family, to the school and to the village, province or nation.

The development of the character traits of patience, concentration, self-control and calmness which Gandhi sought to encourage in the child through manual activity was similar to the development of self-discipline in the child described by Montessori. During 1920-22 Gandhi launched his first non-cooperation movement in India with the aim of achieving Swaraj. A nation-wide campaign was unleashed which included the boycotting of schools and colleges by students and teachers in opposition to English education and British rule. Education was opposed not only because it was imparted in a foreign tongue and inculcated a foreign culture, but also, because its products with their literary training, were mainly suitable for employment as clerks in the British administration and were thus responsible for propping up British rule. The boycott of educational institutions was
highly successful and although the non-cooperation campaign eventually resulted in violence and was withdrawn by Gandhi, the movement succeeded in politicizing a great number of his countrymen and women. The British conceded that,

The non-cooperation movement, whatever may be its other achievements, has spread political ideas, I may say revolutionary ideas, among the masses of the people and their placid contentment has been disturbed far beyond the anticipations of the late Secretary of State.71

Apart from the general politicization of the populace, Gandhi's non-cooperation movement did much to remove taboos restricting the participation of women in public life.72 Whilst reform organizations such as the Brahma Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj had been prominent in the movement for female emancipation begun in the nineteenth century, their efforts were still well in advance of public opinion and mainly benefited members' own kin. The period from 1905-1921, however, saw a comparatively rapid expansion in the education of women at all stages. This occurred due to a combination of factors including changing attitudes as a consequence of the influence of nineteenth century social reforms, support for the education of women on the part of the British, and a general appreciation, particularly amongst high caste Hindus, of the benefits, including the economic value, of educating women.73 Gandhi was able to take advantage of the increase in the numbers of educated women. He realized that the women of India provided a vast source of hitherto untapped power and appealed directly to them for support from the early days of his movement. With the commencement of Satyagraha,

... women were everywhere at the forefront. In picketing liquor shops, in enforcing the boycott of foreign cloth, and in undertaking civil disobedience they shamed the men in such a way that Gandhiji continually spoke of them as the main support of his movement. There were many prominent women associated with the movement everywhere, in villages and in towns. Women all over India came forward, defying social
taboos, sacrificing physical comforts, and denying the validity of all restrictions which had been enforced against them, to take up every kind of work connected with the national movement.

The prolongation of the freedom struggle over twenty-five years served to strengthen the emancipation process. During the Salt Satyagraha of 1930, of the 30,000 people arrested, 17,000 were women. "What the Gandhian movement did was to release women from the social bondages that custom had imposed and conservatism upheld." Consequently, more women completed their education and devoted their lives to social service, particularly teaching. Without such change in the status of women, at least among the élite, the survival and spread of the Montessori Method in India might have been more limited.

As a consequence of the social and political awakening stimulated by the nationalist movement and the spread of Gandhian ideas, Gijubhai and his colleagues decided that the Montessori Association did not fully represent Indian aspirations. In 1926 the Nutan Bal Shikshan Sangh (New Association for Child Education) or NBSS, was established at Bhavanagar. The foreign name, "Montessori", was no longer prominent. The organization moved instead towards the development of a pre-school system which would apply Montessori's ideas to indigenous cultural, and economic conditions. Gijubhai and Tarabhai worked together for some nine years experimenting in the field of early childhood education. To achieve the objectives of the NBSS, they were eclectic in their fashioning of a new child education to suit Indian needs. Chitra Naik writes of their work:

Therefore, using the Montessori method as the bulwark of the new edifice they were contemplating, they freely adapted certain aspects of Froebel's methodology and wove into this combination their own techniques of story telling and hand work founded upon the oral tradition and manual artistry which are inalienable components of the Indian culture.

Montessori had placed little emphasis on song and dance in her
Method and had opposed the use of imaginary rhymes and stories with young children. Gijubhai, like Froebel, believed, that such activities played a vital role in the child's acquisition of culture. There was very little indigenous literature specifically for young children at the time. Gijubhai therefore began to write children's stories in the Gujarati language, publishing over eighty such books. Gandhi's educational co-worker, Kaka Kalelkar, who visited Daxinamurti, praised Gijubhai's experiments there and called him the "Brahman of Child Literature", Brahman meaning God or creator. Kalelkar's only criticism was the absence of Harijan children. Subsequently the school was made open to children of every caste and creed in accordance with Gandhian principles.  

Through the journal of the NBSS, Shikshan Patrika, established in 1925, Gijubhai and Tarabhai passed on new educational ideas, particularly those of Montessori, to parents. The journal was initially published in the Gujarati language and later, editions in Hindi and Marathi were produced enabling the wider dissemination of information concerning early childhood education. Gijubhai also wrote a number of books for parents and translated Montessori's books into Gujarati. The Montessori Method was first translated by Gijubhai in 1927 and published as Montessori Paddati. The works were translated and published without first obtaining Madame Montessori's permission as Gijubhai and his colleagues apparently never conceived that the concept of a "patent" existed in the field of education.  

Apart from the publication of books and articles about the Method, Gijubhai's major contribution to the expansion of the Montessori movement in India lay in the training of teachers. Among them was Shesh Namle who made the long journey to Bhavanagar in 1932. He returned to Bombay in 1933 to establish a Montessori Bal Mandir in the suburb of Ville Parle. Namle would later become active in the forefront of the work of the NBSS as well as a personal student of the Dottoressa. Another student of
Gijubhai, Jugatram Dave, took the Montessori approach to the villages of Surat District in Gujarat, establishing a Gandhian ashram at Vedcchi as his base. 80

Gijubhai Badheka never attended a Montessori training course and died in 1939 before Montessori arrived in India. He had been inspired by Montessori's writings finding much that accorded with his own religious belief. He saw the Method as the most appropriate means of aiding the growth of young children, apparently with no thought on his part of exploiting the Method for personal gain. As a supporter of Gandhi and the nationalist movement, education also provided Gijubhai with the opportunity for social service. Indeed, during the Salt Satyagraha, he cared for the children of the Satyagrahis in various camps. In taking on the role of pre-school educator, Gijubhai had entered the traditional realm of the mother. In his educational work he combined the loving concern for the child, traditionally ascribed to the mother, with the scientific pedagogy of the educator. In India he was known as "the mother with the moustache". 81 

SARALA DEVI SARABHAI: A MONTESSORI MOTHER

Another individual to make a significant contribution to the introduction and expansion of the Montessori movement in India was also a Gujarati; Mrs Sarala Devi Sarabhai, the wife of wealthy Ahmedabad mill owner, Ambalal Sarabhai. She was not only a prominent supporter of Gijubhai and the NBSS, but also became a close friend of Montessori and was later Vice-President of the AMI. 

Mrs Sarabhai first heard of the remarkable work of Dr Maria Montessori in The Times Literary Supplement, whilst staying in Simla in 1914. 82 As an inexperienced young mother still in her teens, struggling to rear her babies and disillusioned with the child rearing practices in
vogue at the time, the contents of the article on Montessori seemed to offer a solution to her problems. She immediately wrote to England ordering a copy of Montessori's books.

Sarala Devi was unique among Gujarati women of the time in that her husband regarded her as a social equal and consequently she appeared in public with him and played an active role in the social life of Ahmedabad. From the time of her marriage to the independent young industrialist, her life was to be marked by radical social actions. Their marriage broke rigid Hindu and Jain custom in that they came from different castes and their union was a matter of personal choice and not arranged. The Sarabhais again flouted custom in 1912 by crossing the ocean to visit England. The sea was regarded as evil and fearsome by Gujaratis. Gandhi, was threatened with being cut off from his caste because he crossed "the black waters". Whilst the Sarabhais were in England another daughter, Bharati, was born and Sarala Devi acquired the first of a succession of English nannies.

In the following years the Sarabhais became directly involved in supporting Gandhi's new ashram community in Ahmedabad, and Ambalal provided the necessary funds when Gandhi was on the verge of giving up the experiment. The Sarabhai's were also involved in other philanthropic work in their city. For example, in 1918 when plague broke out, Ambalal established a hospital in a wing of his magnificent home. An article at the time described the qualities which so distinguished Ambalal Sarabhai and enabled his wife to play such a prominent role in public life:

The Sarala Devi Plague Hospital - mark the name - Sarala Devi is the wife of the benevolent donor of this hospital. Even in such a simple matter as the christening of the hospital the act proclaims the man. A young Hindu gentleman does not thus parade the name and fame of his wife. But Mr. Ambalal is nothing if not thoroughly modern in all his ideas. He belongs to a sect of the Jains who, though living in the heart of
Hinduism, have had the rare boldness to discard some of those pernicious customs of the Hindus which hang like a millstone round the neck of this great community. His home life has been singularly happy. He firmly believes that he has found inspiration for what ever good he has been able to accomplish in the love and devotion of this lady, and the naming of the hospital after her is a delicate tribute to her beneficient influence... 87

Sarala Devi was more personally involved in the activities of Gandhi's Satyagraha Ashram than her husband and eventually, like most Gandhians, began wearing a simple sari of white khadi, a practice she continued throughout her life. 88

In their determination to provide the best modern education for their expanding family, the Sarabhai's established a school in the extensive grounds of their home, "The Retreat", at Shahibag, once the Imperial Gardens of the Mughal Viceroy's in Gujarat. To enable the school to function according to the Montessori Method, Sarala Devi sought a trained teacher. On a visit to England in 1921, the Sarabhais met Dr Montessori at her London training course. She advised them to contact Edwin Mortimer Standing who had made a study of her Method. It was the beginning of a long friendship between the Sarabhais, Montessori, and Standing. 89

Standing followed the Sarabhais back to India, stopping in Barcelona to confer with Montessori.

It is not clear whether Standing had actually obtained a Montessori Diploma. He was, however, a teacher at the Theosophical Society's Arundale School at Letchworth. This had a Montessori section 90 so he may have taken the opportunity to make a study of the Method. Standing was dismissed from his position in his third term following, "a colossal row with the Theosophists over religious questions". 91 His interest in oriental philosophy and religion, possibly the reason for his initial association with the Theosophists, prompted him to accept the Sarabhai's offer of employment. 92
During the journey to India on board the P. and O. liner, "The Empress of India", Standing came in contact with the English burrah sahibs, the rulers of India, of whom he wrote to friends and family in England:

Collectively they form a distinct type: well-mannered, well-groomed, self-confident, well-disciplined, and most of all - unshakably secure in their belief in the dominance of the white race, especially whose who belong to the British Empire.93

As he was employed by "natives", however, Standing spent little time with his compatriots of the Raj in Ahmedabad. He preferred to remain with the Sarabhais who had invited him to reside in their home.94 During his stay at "The Retreat", he was afforded the opportunity of meeting some of the most notable personalities of the time including Gandhi with whom Standing discussed religion. On learning that Standing was a Quaker, Gandhi replied wryly that he had many Quaker friends, particularly in South Africa, where one of them continually tried to convert him to Christianity.95 Standing was also not immune from the charge of prosletizer, one of the reasons for his expulsion from Letchworth.96

The Sarabhais' support for the nationalist movement - during December 1921, for example, there were some forty guests at "The Retreat" for the National Congress97 - influenced their children who were not isolated from the great political events going on around them. Standing was witness to a "circus" or play staged by the children, depicting the burning of foreign cloth when the Prince of Wales arrived in India in November, and the riots which followed.98 The eldest daughter, Mridula, who was aged ten in 1921, later wore khadi and became a devoted supporter of Gandhi who later said of her, "If I had 100 women like Mridula Sarabhai I could bring about a complete social revolution."99

Standing had immediately formed strong friendships with the six children who spoke excellent English. But he was surprised to find them
little different from European children. He wrote that they were "real children - just like English or German children. Colour and longitude do not seem to make a bit of difference." He attributed the children's behaviour to the influence of the English governesses who had preceded him, but they had been dispensed with years before when Mridula was three years old because "they couldn't fit in the Indian household and didn't meet with the parent's idea of how their children were to be brought up." Standing's patronizing comments suggest he entertained the same superior attitudes as the burrah sahibs. He seems to have discounted the influence of the Indian masters at the school, but, more importantly, he ignored the significant influence of the children's parents, particularly their mother, who had reared them in accordance with Montessori principles. However, he eventually came to appreciate Mrs Sarabhai's contribution.

Although the school had a Head Master, Mr Choksi, Sarala Devi was the dominant influence. She did not interfere directly in the day to day affairs of the school. If she felt that changes were necessary, she would discuss them with the staff at another time. Standing observed that she seemed "to follow intuitively one of Montessori's principles - that one should teach teaching, not correcting." A quiet, dignified, deeply religious person, she believed, however, that the moral education of her children was of great importance and she did not hesitate to correct them if she thought it necessary. Standing wrote that, "Like Montessori, she believes in giving her children a good deal of freedom, but it is always the Montessori freedom of being allowed to choose something that is good...." No expense was spared in the provision of the best educational materials for the children's use. Not only was there a full set of Montessori apparatus, but a telescope was ordered from Germany, and a gymnasium and a swimming pool were built. The latter was a most
progressive item, as few Indian children learned to swim at the time, particularly girls. Standing lamented that other children could not share the marvellous educational environment provided in the school. He wrote,

I am always urging that the admission of another twenty scholars or so would greatly benefit our own children. It would hardly be any extra expense, and not much of extra trouble. But it seems to me characteristic of Indian life that they should be willing to make any sacrifice for their own kith and kin at the same time being less conscious of any direct obligation to those less fortunately placed. 105

Standing was appalled at the poverty and squalor of the labouring classes in Ahmedabad. At the time the city probably had the highest mortality rate in India. He indirectly blamed Indian industrialists for the circumstances of the mill-hands 106 but made no mention, of the more pernicious exploitation of India under the Raj. Mill owners like Ambalal Sarabhai were endeavouring to expand local industry which the manufacturers of Lancashire were attempting to destroy. 107 The textile workers of Ahmedabad, most of whom were landless untouchables, were undoubtedy exploited, but, as Standing was forced to admit, Ambalal Sarabhai was none the less a great benefactor providing medical care for his mill hands and crèches for their children. 108

A more accurate reason why the Sarabhai's did not invite other children to attend their school was its experimental status. They would not "have enjoyed the same freedom to explore had other parents and children been involved." 109 Given the conservatism of the Gujarati community and the radical nature of the education received by the Sarabhai children, this fear was well-founded. Almost thirty years would pass before Standing's vision of a Montessori inspired institution open to all would materialize in the grounds of "The Retreat".

Standing's main function in the school was the teaching of English
Grammar, Composition and Literature, in which the children received individual tuition. As he gave no details of the learning activities it can only be assumed that the Montessori Method was utilized in the teaching of English. Standing admits to having devoted more time to the children's education out of school, particularly their religious instruction.110

Although they were Jains, the Sarabhais displayed that tolerance of other religions, advocated by Gandhi and by the Theosophists. The Society's leaders, including Dr Annie Besant and Dr George Arundale, were guests at "The Retreat" when ever they visited Ahmedabad. The Sarabhais did not object initially therefore, when Standing read the children Bible stories, particularly the Life of Christ. Eventually, however, they became concerned that his proselytizing might unduly influence the children, who had become fond of him, in favour of Christianity before they were old enough to make their own decisions about religion.

The children's enjoyment of English books and games as well as their desire to attend an English boarding school also gave rise to parental concern. The Sarabhais were afraid that the children would become culturally "uprooted", "belonging nowhere".111 Under Standing's tutelage, they were becoming unwitting victims of the acculturation process fostered by English education which attempted to achieve McCaulay's dictum of turning Indians into Englishmen in everything save colour.

Standing refused the Sarabhai's request to avoid religious matters in his dealings with the children and he resigned with no apparent ill-feeling. He lamented that with his parting the children would have no direct Christian influences, but he was proud that perhaps he had at least sown the seeds of Christianity. He wrote:
One of the strongest impressions I have felt on coming to India is the sense that in the customs and traditions of Europe, in our language, laws, social habits, arts and sciences - we are as it were soaked in a Christian influence, which is so near to us so much a part of us, that - like the air we breath - we do not notice it. All the weight of the thousand years of the Christian Middle Ages is behind us - a millenium of steady Christian pressure. And this, deep down almost in the unconscious, makes a great part of the difference that we feel between Europe and Asia.\textsuperscript{112}

Standing, however, seems to have failed to attribute the same powerful influence to religion in India where it is embodied in the simplest act of daily life. For Hindus this tradition extends over several thousand years. Standing exemplified those English men and women who perceived their role in India as part of the "white man's burden". But in advocating Christianity and his English customs, Standing was undermining the Sarabhai children's own culture and religious traditions. Whether this was deliberate or unconscious is inconsequential. It was the deleterious effects of this process that gave concern to the Sarabhais, and at the national level, to Gandhi, who believed that India would become truly free only when Indians lost their subservience to Western culture.

It was for this reason that the NBSS had become more nationalistic in its approach, seeking the development of an education for young children in accordance with indigenous aspirations. Sarala Devi Sarabhai had become the President of the NBSS following its establishment and remained one of its staunchest supporters, devoting her time and valuable financial contributions to its activities. She was a prolific reader and received the latest literature on educational methodology and psychology from Europe and America. Although supporters of the nationalist cause, the Sarabhais, like many of their educated compatriots, recognized that the West had much that was progressive and worthwhile to offer. New ideas were applied in the school, but, these were adopted only if they accorded with the principles of the Montessori Method of which Sarala Devi
remained a loyal proponent. Berrie Williams, a teacher at the Sarabhai school in 1927, by which time there were eight children, ranging in age from sixteen to three years, wrote to her family that, "according to all the information I can glean, there is nothing quite like it anywhere else in India. Not the richest and most enlightened rajah spends either as much money or as much time for the same purpose."¹¹³

Much of the appeal the Montessori Method had for social reformers and philanthropists like Mrs Sarabhai, concerned not only with the rearing of her own children, but with raising the country to nationhood, can be gauged from her comment on the Montessori approach to education that,

A community of children who have grown up in such an environment would, no doubt, tend to build up a cooperative cohesive society, since its members are free from fear and untouched by rivalry yet activated by an inner urge to put forth their best.¹¹⁴

At least with regard to her own children Montessori education was successful in enabling the development of eight highly talented individuals devoted to the pursuit of excellence in their respective vocations. Certainly the Sarabhai children benefited from being born into a privileged household in India, but it was also one which their father had "founded on a principle of freedom of choice which was to make significant men and women of his children."¹¹⁵

This was the Montessori freedom which had so enthralled Sarala Devi when she first read of Madame's work in 1914. She devoted much of her life to the provision of such education not only for her own children and grandchildren, but for the children of others in India and the rest of the world through her position as Vice-President of the AMI. Montessori acknowledged the significance of Sarala Devi's contribution to the Montessori movement in dedicating the Indian edition of The Secret of Childhood to her as follows:
TO SARALA DEVI SARABHAI
THE IDEAL MONTESSORI MOTHER
WHO HAS DEDICATED HERSELF TO
THE CAUSE OF THE CHILD IN INDIA

THE MONTESSORI METHOD AND THE THEOSOPHISTS IN INDIA

Apart from the NBSS the other prominent organisation to play a major role in the introduction and expansion of the Montessori movement in India, was the Theosophical Society. The Society's interest in the Montessori Method extended over a considerable period. Maria Montessori had inconspicuously attended a public lecture in London given by prominent Theosophist Mrs Annie Besant, who praised the educational methods being developed by the then relatively unknown Italian Doctor. A firm friendship developed between the two women and they met whenever Mrs Besant visited Rome before World War One.

Annie Besant was the second World President of the Theosophical Society from 1907 until her death in 1933. She became deeply involved in the Society's efforts to revive Indian cultural traditions, begun in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and also in the movement for Indian Home Rule. But, she later disagreed with Gandhi as to the best means by which this could be achieved. She believed that his non-cooperation movement would lead to violence, and sought the introduction of self-government through constitutional means.

Mrs Besant was at the forefront in India of the Theosophical Society's educational activities particularly the education of women and girls. With fellow Theosophist, Dr George Arundale who was Principal of the Central Hindu College at Benares, founded by Mrs Besant in 1898, she worked tirelessly for the expansion of education to meet the needs of the country's vast illiterate and impoverished population. By 1917, there were some 35 institutions under the control of the Theosophical Educa-
tional Trust (India) founded in 1913. These included three colleges and nine high schools. Both Besant and Arundale were impressed with the Montessori Method and continually praised it in their speeches and writings in India and abroad. In a lecture delivered at Bolton, Lancashire, on 30 August, 1919, Mrs Besant spoke of having observed the Montessori system at work in India, and applauded its success. Montessori's opposition to the physical punishment of children was strongly supported by Mrs Besant who stated that in the Society's schools in India they found that this was unnecessary, especially, "if you treat the children decently, if the teacher is the friend, the helper, instead of a cold stern person." The Montessori emphasis upon sensory-motor development also appealed to Theosophists for whom the training of the senses in early childhood was considered essential because they saw them as "the windows of the soul." The Theosophical view of education draws considerably upon ancient Hindu tradition. For Theosophists, "the child is an age old soul incarnating." They regard education as an evolutionary process involving a series of "Initiations", each "Initiation" being an expansion of consciousness or awareness. Theosophists believe in reincarnation so that the process continues from past into future lives until the individual, according to George Arundale, "flashes into the buddhic plane and says ... in an ecstacy: 'I am one with everything'." He seized upon the spontaneous explosion into writing by the young child described in The Montessori Method, as an example of an "Initiation", although he doubted that Montessori was aware of "Initiations" as such. According to Arundale, "A child's life must be a series of small tentative initiations, typifying the spirit-tone of the real Initiation, leading up to it gradually...." He believed that each of these small "initiations", or spontaneous explosions, provided the child, through an awareness of his or her increased capacity, with the confidence to build on to the next
stage. Similarly, Montessori wrote of her children, "Each one of them perfects himself through his own powers, and goes forward guided by that inner force which distinguishes him as an individual." She added that her children were "the infancy of humanity in a higher stage of evolution than our own."

Theosophists could thus claim that Montessori's writings accorded with their own view of the child and with the strong support for the Method of the Society's leaders, Montessori schools were soon established by Theosophists in India. By 1922 a Children's House had been opened at the International Headquarters at Adyar with a Montessori trained teacher from England, Miss Barrie, as Directress. Theosophists visiting the school during the Society's Convention that year, were impressed with the child-centered approach to learning being carried out there. A Montessori class was incorporated in the National School - founded in 1918 by Mrs Besant at Teynampet - after it had moved to Guindy Road, Madras. The Principal of the School, G.V. Subba Rao, had visited Montessori schools in Europe and had come in contact with Dr Montessori and her son in 1920. Subba Rao later became Principal of the Rishi Valley School established by J. Krishnamurthi, after the Guindy Road school was destroyed in a cyclone in 1930. He remained a staunch advocate of the Method and attended several of Montessori's courses in India.

During the 1920s and 1930s Houses of Children continued to be established by Theosophists or to be incorporated in existing Theosophical schools in various parts of India. In 1928 Montessori's young Austrian pupil, Elise Herbatschek, travelled to India, apparently against the Dottoressa's wishes, to take charge of the new Montessori section in the Theosophical school at Allahabad in the north. She had been invited there by her friend Kitty Shiva Rao who had married an Indian Theosophist and journalist, B. Shiva Rao, and was running a successful Montessori
The invitation appealed to Elise because it provided the opportunity to combine her interest in Theosophy and Indian mysticism with her vocation. She remained in Allahabad for two years, forwarding progress reports concerning her work and the Movement in India to Montessori. The Dottoressa apparently refused to reply to the correspondence, as she was so incensed at the disloyalty of one of her favourites in deserting her. The two were eventually reconciled in 1929 at the Montessori Congress held in conjunction with the New Education Conference at Elsinore, Denmark, and Elise was invited to present a report to the Congress on the Montessori schools in India.\textsuperscript{132}

Apart from the schools established by Theosophists in the North and South, there was also strong interest in the Method among Society members in Bombay, some of whom were supporters of the nationalist movement inspired by Annie Besant. Others were members as well of the New Educational Fellowship, the progressive education movement which had grown out of the Theosophical Fraternity in Education, established in 1915 by Beatrice Ensor, with George Arundale as President.\textsuperscript{133}

In April 1927, a Fellowship Society was formed in Bombay by a group of public spirited citizens including Dr M.R. Jayakar, J.D. Mahalaxmiwala, Ratansy D. Maorarji, Jamnadas Dwarkdadas, Kanji Dwarkadas and Dhansi M. Khatau. The Dwarkadas brothers were wealthy Gujarati merchants and Theosophists who had played an active role in Mrs Besant's Home Rule League established in 1916. Jamnadas had participated in Gandhi's Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919, selling proscribed Gandhian literature in Bombay with Annasuyabhen Sarabhai.\textsuperscript{134} A Marathi speaking member of Bombay's legal profession, M.R. Jayakar had also been an active member of Mrs Besant's Home Rule League, and indeed, of the whole freedom movement.\textsuperscript{135}

The desire of the members of the Fellowship Society to establish a school incorporating the progressive educational ideas then in vogue
in Europe, became a reality with the founding of the Fellowship School on 7 June, 1927. It was the first such co-educational school in Bombay.\footnote{136}

The emphasis given to cultural and physical activities by schools adopting the New Education, was reflected in the provision of music, drama, dancing, art, handicrafts and scouting in the school's curriculum. The religious sensibilities of the founders were also reflected in the emphasis on daily prayer. The support of Theosophists and the New Education Fellowship for the Montessori Method, led to the incorporation of a Montessori section in the school and a trained Directress, Miss McConack, was brought out from England.\footnote{137}

The school had been established in response to Mrs Besant's expressed desire for four national co-educational institutions in India, at Adyar, Benares, Calcutta and Bombay. Among the staff were two Gujarati Theosophists, M.T. and C.T. Vyas. The Vyas brothers, who came from Rajpipla in Broach district of Bombay Presidency, had studied in Ahmedabad and there they had come under the powerful influence of both Gandhi and Annie Besant.\footnote{138} Her Home Rule League had begun to make strong in-roads into Gujarat by the time of her visit to Ahmedabad in 1918. "Mrs. Besant's semi-religious personality like that of Mr. Gandhi appealed very much to the religiously inclined people of Gujarat."\footnote{139} Fired by a strong desire to contribute to the national education sought by Gandhi and Mrs Besant, the Vyas brothers journeyed to Adyar to train under George Arundale at the College of Education attached to the National University which Mrs Besant had established at Madras.

By 1922 the brothers were prepared to undertake their first major educational experiment and established an ashram secondary school on the banks of the Namada River at Shuklatirth.\footnote{140} The experiment appears to have combined the educational aspirations of Gandhi, Tagore and the Theosophists with its emphasis on, teacher/pupil participation in social service in the village, student involvement in the day to day running of
the school and ashram, and an extensive progressive curriculum which included fine art, music, drama, manual work and scouting.

Whilst M.T. Vyas was at Adyar he developed a close personal relationship with George Arundale who became his guru. In 1924, in recognition of his former pupil's educational efforts and ability, Arundale sponsored Vyas to study education in London. His elder brother carried on their work in the ashram school. Vyas came in touch with the New Education Fellowship in London, probably through Theosophical circles, and found in the organization, a commonality of ideas and approach to education. Given the strong interest of Theosophists and members of the New Education Fellowship in the Montessori Method, it is likely that Vyas also had some contact with Montessori schools in London.

Upon his return to India in 1927, Vyas was approached by Parsi industrialist and Theosophist, Ratansi Maorarji, to run the new school being planned by the Fellowship Society. The Vyas brothers became foundation members of the Fellowship School. However, a disagreement with Maorarji caused M.T. Vyas to resign and in 1930, together with his wife Sarojbhen, and his brother, he founded the New Era High School in Gwalia Tank Road, Bombay. The name was derived from the N.E.F.'s magazine, "New Era in School and Home". Saroj Vyas, who had studied at the Theosophical Women's College in Benares, was placed in charge of the Montessori section at the school. She realized that to run it on a sound basis it would be necessary for her to attend a Montessori training course. She thus attended Montessori's International Training Course at Barcelona in 1933, accompanied by Mrs Yodh, whose daughter was in the Montessori section, and a fellow Gujarati deputed by the Municipality of Ahmedabad.

Prior to her departure, Saroj Vyas had been asked by Gijubhai Badheka to act as an ambassadress on his behalf, to discuss his educational work with Dr Montessori. She was asked to explain to the
Dottoressa that her books had been translated and a teacher training institution established, with the intention of furthering her ideas and expanding the Movement in India; and not for pecuniary gain. The two Indian women had also taken a complete set of the Montessori apparatus with them to Barcelona. It had been carefully made in Bombay by a furniture manufacturer, Mr B.J. Kamdar. The materials were intended as a gift to their inventor in what appears to have been a somewhat naive hope that she would appreciate the strong desire in India to adopt her Method. Montessori, however, was reputedly furious because the materials had been copied without her permission, and she could not be swayed from her conviction that Gijubhai and others were trying to exploit her Method in India.

Very few in India could attend Montessori's international training courses because of financial and cultural constraints, nor could they afford to purchase her apparatus from abroad. By translating her books into the vernacular and training teachers, Gijubhai was able to disseminate the Montessori approach to early childhood education throughout Western India. The establishment of Bal Mandirs by the NBSS and various Gandhian organizations, also brought Montessori education to some of the young children of the growing urban labouring classes. After her training in Barcelona and visits to Montessori schools in Europe, Mrs Yodh, returned to India in 1934, to work in an honorary capacity, in one such Bal Mandir in Bombay.142

Theosophists from élite backgrounds predominated amongst the few Indians who continued to attend Montessori's courses in Europe. Apart from encouraging the establishment of Montessori Houses of Children in various locations throughout the country where there were Theosophical Lodges, the Society's leaders voiced their support for the Method and maintained links with Dr Montessori143 expressing the hope that she would visit India and conduct a training course there.
THE PARSIS AND THE MONTESSORI METHOD

Among the Indians, particularly the women, who attended Montessori's international training courses prior to 1939, many were members of the Parsi community. Some of these Parsis were also members of the Theosophical Society. Parsis are the descendants of the followers of Zoroaster, who fled Persia following the Muslim invasions and settled first at Diu in Gujarat, and then at Thana near Bombay early in the eighth century, A.D. As they were bound by neither caste rules nor by prejudice against taking interest on loans, they traded with the British. As a result of such trade Parsis were amongst the wealthiest, the best educated, and most Westernized Indian community. They also expressed the least opposition to British rule. The popularity of the Montessori Method in England from 1912 and the interest in it of notables like the Earl of Lytton and Edmund Homes of the Board of Education, encouraged Parsis to adopt the new Method in imitation of the English. According to one of them, a Montessori Directress, Dinoo Dubash, much of the strong interest in the Method among members of her community was due to the tendency of Parsis to "get carried away by what Europeans do."

An uncle of Dinoo, Cowasjee Mahalaxmiwalla, was one of the founders of the Fellowship School in Bombay and he was also amongst the first members of his community to establish a Montessori Children's House in Bombay. Parsis spoke the Gujarati language and he became aware of Gijubhai Badheka's experiments with the Montessori Method at Bhavanagar. Mahalaxmiwalla and his daughter Vera visited Gijubhai's school and were so impressed by what they had seen that after their return to Bombay, Mahalaxmiwalla immediately ordered a set of the apparatus. During 1925-26 he established a Montessori school for Parsi children in Bombay in the Zoroastrian building at Tardeo, employing a trained teacher, Mrs McLean, as Directress; his daughter worked as her assistant. Later, Dinoo Dubash
served in a voluntary capacity at the school. This experience marked the beginnings of a life-long fascination for Dinoo with the Montessori apparatus and its use with young children.

An opportunity to obtain employment as a Montessori teacher occurred in 1928 when, on a holiday in Simla, Dinoo befriended some Parsis who had a school at Mhow, near Indore. After visiting her uncle’s school at Tardeo, they urged Dinoo to create a similar Montessori environment for them at Mhow. Dinoo commenced work as the Directress in 1931, for the then handsome salary of Rs.200 per month. A set of apparatus had been purchased from London at a cost of Rs.1,000. Dinoo was assisted by three teachers including a Parsi Theosophist, Amai Nagarwalla, who had taken Gijubhai's Montessori training course at Bhavanagar. The school was apparently so successful that a visiting Inspector suggested Dinoo apply for a position with a Montessori school in Delhi, where a vacancy had arisen through the resignation of the European Directress. Unfortunately, however, Dinoo did not possess a Montessori Diploma, a requirement for the position.

M.T. Vyas urged Dinoo to accompany his wife to the Montessori training course at Barcelona in 1933. As the subsequent course was to be held in London, she preferred to wait and go to England, departing in September 1933. This was Montessori's Nineteenth International Training Course. Four other Indian students attended, two Punjabis and two Parsis, all of whom were members of the Theosophical Society. One of the Parsi students, Freny Dalal, later opened a Montessori school at Dadar, a Bombay suburb with a large Parsi residential colony. Funds for the school were provided by Mr Godrej, a prominent Parsi industrialist. Whilst attending the training course Dinoo met a young Dutchman, Albert Joosten, whose Mother, Rosa Joosten-Chotzen, had been one of Montessori's early students and had played a prominent role in the establishment of the Montessori movement in Holland. Joosten would later devote his
life to the Montessori cause in India.

After her return from London, Dinoo established her own Montessori school in a bungalow opposite the Colaba Post Office in Bombay city. It was an expensive venture costing some Rs.17,000 of which Rs.12,000 was loaned by her cousin Vera. Fees were Rs.10 per child, per month thereby immediately restricting enrollment to the children of the more affluent. Dinoo employed an untrained assistant who was payed Rs.50 per month. Although there were initially only twelve children, the school gained popularity and by 1936 there were over sixty pupils in attendance, ranging in age from two and a half to ten years. A number of the children continued on with the Advanced Montessori work, as their parents were greatly impressed with their progress. Although most of the children were Parsis, a concert programme for that year reveals a sprinkling of European names, unusual in an Indian school in British India.148

An English-medium school, "Casa Montessori" apparently provided a similar environment to Montessori schools in England. Its high standard was evidenced by a letter in the Times of India in 1936, from a young burrah memsahib who had despaired of finding such a school in Bombay.149 During her search, the young parent visited one infant school which contained "small rooms thick with pupils who sat prim and proper in regular ranks at their tables; windows barred and dingy through which hardly a gleam of friendly light could filter."150 Another school was found to be more attractive but, "seemed to be literally swarming with children. There they sat all making a terrible din, which was the only form of activity [she] noticed."151

Eventually, however, the writer was rewarded with a visit to a third school which embodied all she had sought for the happiness of her child. The school was "Casa Montessori", of which she wrote:

In the centre of a large pretty rush matting sat one child bead-threading; another wee morsel was
manoeuvering hefty bricks; another was clay modelling a pair of dumbbells (of all things). Other children sat at tables and chairs with more serious occupations, pairing off coloured plaques, touching raised letters of sand to get the 'feel' of the outline, applying words to the appropriate pictures or writing all about mummy or daddy or uncle. 152

This young English mother had no thorough understanding of the function of the Method. Her major observation was that the children were happily engrossed in various activities without any obvious disciplinary intervention on the part of the Directress. There was order and quiet and an attractive environment in which the children worked with apparent contentment. The success of the school was attributed to the considerable ability of the Directress, Dinoo Dubash, who had managed to build up a good school despite the difficulties of India. 153

There was one important criticism, however, concerning the staff of the "Casa Montessori". Dinoo Dubash had a Montessori Diploma, but, her "trainee-helpers" had no qualifications, although this apparently did not impair the quality of the Montessori education provided. The shortage of trained teachers and the employment of untrained assistants, both out of necessity and often for economic reasons, undermined the expansion of the movement in India. Not only was it economically impossible for most Indians to travel abroad for training, but, despite the influence of the Gandhian movement, social taboos continued to prevent many young women from travelling unattended even to Bhavanagar. It was only the Westernized English-educated, wealthy élite, like the Parsis, who travelled abroad or to train with Gijubhai, unless students were sufficiently fortunate to be sponsored. In India, where teaching was an ancient profession of high status, men were prominent among the trainees in the early years of the Montessori movement.

Many of the Parsis who attended training courses, appear to have opened or taken positions in private Montessori schools which charged
fees. As with the introduction of the kindergarten and nursery schools in Europe in the nineteenth century, the introduction of the Montessori Method in India provided a respectable vocation for young Western educated women, particularly amongst the Parsi community.\textsuperscript{154}

The problem of teacher training was eased in 1936, when Tarabhai Modak, who had left Bhavanagar to return to her native Bombay, established Shishu Vihar Mandal in the Hindu Colony at Dadar, under the auspices of the NBSS.\textsuperscript{155} There were now two vernacular pre-primary institutions training teachers in the Montessori Method although neither was recognised by the AMI. Shishu Vihar, which incorporated a Bal Mandir for practice teaching, was given recognition by the new Congress Party Government in Bombay in 1938.\textsuperscript{156} Gijubhai established another Adhyapan Mandir or teacher training school at Rajkot in 1938 so by the late 1930s the movement in Western India, had strengthened considerably.\textsuperscript{157}

\textbf{THE MONTESSORI METHOD IN BENGAL}

Whilst the Method appears to have made the strongest impact initially in Western India, there was also some interest in the East. Bengal's most famous son, Rabindranath Tagore, had met Montessori in New York during the First World War and remained a great admirer of the Dottoressa and her Method.\textsuperscript{158} During the 1920s there were Tagore-Montessori schools scattered throughout India as well as on the island of Java, established by those who were inspired by the educational ideas of both Tagore and Montessori.\textsuperscript{159} The two educators emphasized the importance of freedom and self-discipline in the child's development and saw the teacher as one who guided rather than forced the child into particular areas of learning. Both emphasized the provision of opportunities to enable the child's spiritual growth and also the education of the senses. Montessori, however, stressed intellectual growth while
Tagore focused upon aesthetic and cultural development. The combination of their methods appealed to the Indonesian nationalist and educator Ki Hadjar Dewantara who had taught in a Montessori school in the Hague and was on the Board of the first Montessori school in Holland. In 1922 he established the Taman Siswa school system employing Tagore-Montessori ideas. Tagore visited his institution in Jogjakarta in 1927. Tagore attended the New Education Fellowship Conference at Elsinore in 1929, at which Montessori was also present, and he spoke about his institution, Shantiniketan, as well as the Tagore-Montessori schools in India. A friend of Theosophical Society leaders, Tagore opened the new premises of the Society's Montessori school at Rajghat in Benares in 1934.

The first formal invitation for Maria Montessori to visit India came from Bengal. Tagore's son-in-law, Professor N. Gangules of the University of Calcutta, referring in 1924 to the many Tagore-Montessori schools, expressed the hope that the Dottoressa would come to teach the "pure" Montessori Method. A further invitation to hold a series of lectures was made in 1932.

Despite such overtures, Bengal was none the less behind Western India in the use of the Montessori Method in schools. While one of the first articles in India on the Method appeared in the Bengali language in 1910, it was another twenty years before the first Montessori school was established in Calcutta. By 1937 there was a flourishing Montessori school sponsored by Lady Abala Bose, as well as some Montessori sections in educational institutions run by various Christian religious orders. Apart from Tagore, Bengal seems to have produced few dynamic individuals and organizations interested in the Method. Satyananda Roy told the All-India Educational Conference in Calcutta in 1937 that,
Wherever our friends of the New Educational Fellowship, the Theosophical Society and other forward thinking movements have been intensely thinking about the most difficult problems of child training and the child guidance the new schools have sprung up in those places as expressions of the creative activities of their members.166

GANDHI AND THE MONTESSORI METHOD

Until 1936 the Montessori movement was supported by Gandhian nationalists and the Mahatma also expressed interest in the Method. In 1931 he had the opportunity to meet Dr Montessori while he was in London for the Round Table Conference. On that occasion he told her that he had been invited to promote her cause in India. He said:

If you have children I have children too.

Friends in India ask me to imitate you. I say to them, no I should not imitate you but should assimilate you and the fundamental truth underlying your method.

Montessori replied

As I am asking my own children to assimilate the heart of Gandhiji. I know that feeling for me over there in your part of the world is deeper than here.167

Later, on 28 October, Gandhi addressed the students of the Montessori training course and expressed his concern for the millions of poverty stricken children in India. He wondered whether it would be possible for those children to receive the kind of education the Montessori Method provided. With reference to the educational experiments he was undertaking in India, he lamented the lack of available resources and the dearth of trained teachers prepared to work in a voluntary capacity in order to give "real vital education to these children of India's hovels."168 He concluded by alluding to the fact that Montessori education was largely available to the children of the
elite. Gandhi said to Montessori:

Therefore, I repeat that even as you, out of your love for children are endeavouring to teach those children through your numerous institutions, the best that can be brought out of them, even so I hope that it will be possible not only for the children of the wealthy and the well-to-do, but for the children of paupers to receive training of this nature.169

Gandhi's enthusiasm for the Method at this time is evident in a letter he wrote to the children of the Sabarmati Ashram about his meeting with Montessori. The emphasis on sensory-motor development impressed him as well as the absence of memorizing which Gandhi always regarded as the scourge of Western formal education. But, it was the training of the child's powers of concentration and self-control through the "Silence Game" that appealed to him most and he urged the ashram children to try it.170 The "Silence Game" probably appealed to Gandhi because of its similarity to meditation. It will be recalled that from the time of his early experiments with education in South Africa, Gandhi had stressed the importance of the spiritual and character development of the child. This emphasis was also enshrined in the Montessori Method. The spontaneity of the learning process in the Method, the teacher acting as a guide also found favour with him and he hoped that the adults at Sabarmati would adopt such a role with the children so their education would continue outside as well as within the ashram school.171

Gandhi had a further opportunity to meet Montessori and to observe the Method in practice when he visited Rome as part of his return journey to India. Inspired by what he had seen he apparently expressed a desire for the adoption of the Method in India.172 Montessori had publicly awarded Gandhi a Montessori diploma stating that he fully understood her system and had been practising it. He later claimed that "This Certificate was not by way of false flattery. For I had given a certificate to myself at the very outset."173
In 1932 while under detention in the Yervada Prison, Gandhi set down a brief summary of his conclusions on education which were a precursor to proposals he was to put forward in 1937 for a national education scheme. Several of his ideas reflect the influence of the Montessori Method on him at the time. He believed that both girls and boys should be educated together and should spend most of their time engaged in some form of manual activity under the supervision of a teacher. He stressed that there should be no compulsion, and advocated the provision of stimulating subject matter of interest to the child; learning should be conducted through play. While these are features common to the work of a number of progressive educators including Montessori, the following points suggest a more definite influence deriving from Gandhi's observation of the Montessori Method in practice. He wrote that,

6. The hand of the child should be trained to draw geometrical figures before he learns to write, that is, good handwriting should be taught from the beginning.

7. The child should learn to read before he is able to write; i.e. he should learn to recognize letters as if they were pictures and then draw their figures.¹⁷⁴

The above is a simplistic but reasonably accurate interpretation of the principles underlying the Montessori approach to the child's acquisition of reading and writing skills, commencing with the development of visual and muscular co-ordination through tracing around the geometrical metal insets. If Gandhi had made a close study of Montessori's writings, however, he would have discovered that she considered the recognition of letters formed part of the process of learning to write, and that reading, being a more complex intellectual task, followed writing.¹⁷⁵ His understanding of the Method was thus somewhat superficial. At this stage he thought some kind of infant education was important because he stated that as soon as the child had sufficient comprehension, general knowledge
should be taught. He envisaged that, utilizing the educational scheme he had outlined, the child could gain much knowledge before the age of eight years. 176

By 1936, however, Gandhi's attitude towards the value of the Montessori Method for India had hardened considerably. 177 The previous year, whilst opening a Montessori Bal Mandir, he referred to the Method in a critical fashion and warned that "Those who blindly imitate in this country the way it is practised in Europe are fools. And how far will you carry out that imitation?" 178 He felt India could never be completely free whilst Indians continued to adopt, without question, foreign educational practices. Rather, he sought to develop a national system of education consonant with the most progressive trends in educational thought and practice yet peculiar to the Indian genius, and in particular, to the needs of the country's villages. Gandhi was not a trained teacher, his focus was the larger political and social arena. The political domination of India by the British and the immense problems associated with the poverty and illiteracy of the country's vast rural-based population, were his chief concerns, yet he perceived that education was inextricably bound up with the alleviation of these problems.

In 1936 Gandhi decided "to attempt his last major experiment in non-violence by settling alone in a small and backward Maharashtran village." 179 Although he did not wish to establish an ashram a community of devoted followers soon gathered around him at Sevagram. His stay there became the catalyst which coalesced forty years of thought and experimentation to form a unique and revolutionary alternative to Western formal education.

By 1937, as a result of the introduction of Provincial Autonomy under the Government of India Act (1935), the entire field of Provincial administration came under the control of a Minister responsible to a largely popularly elected legislature. Congress had come to power in
seven out of the eleven Provinces, while the other four had governments supported by a majority of the population. The Indian Educational Service (I.E.S.), which had been dominated by an élite corps of British civil servants from its inception, was virtually liquidated by 1937 and the number of British officers reduced to a small minority. As a result of the general improvement in the world economy there was more money available for expenditure on Indian education and it was hoped that the new Provincial Governments would be able to work towards educational reconstruction with increasing vigour and a "freer hand".

With the promise of increased Indian involvement in education Gandhi revealed his proposals for a national education scheme in several articles in Harijan during 1937. All learning was to be imparted through the medium of a traditional village craft. Spinning was regarded as that most appropriate to the needs of rural India. The product of the craft was intended to meet the cost of the teacher and educational materials, thus enabling the provision of free, universal, basic education at little or no expense to the Government. According to Gandhi, his scheme was "conceived as the spearhead of a silent social revolution fraught with the most far-reaching consequences." This social revolution would, he hoped, bring about a reunion of the village and the city and remove the need for a class war or the importation of foreign technical skill and machinery. Foreign dependence, which had so enslaved India would, he believed, disappear, because, "by obviating the necessity for highly specialized talent, it would place the destiny of the masses, as it were, in their own hands."

Gandhi's proposal, which became known as the Wardha Scheme of Basic Education, focused on the seven to fourteen age group. There was no provision for pre-school education which was considered much too expensive for incorporation in a nation-wide scheme. He wrote, in reply to a letter from Chaganlal Joshi who was Gijubhai Badheka's father-in-
law, that they were not even attempting to follow the Montessori Method at Sevagram so there would be little purpose in seeking the assistance of such a prominent exponent of the Method as Gijubhai. "For, as far as I know him, he will not be able to co-operate unreservedly in implementing the Wardha Scheme." 185

Gandhi had chosen a politically opportune time to introduce his radical plan of Basic Education to the Indian public and it sparked much controversy amongst educators throughout the country. His belief that pre-school education was not vital for a national education scheme, and in particular, the hardening of his attitude toward the widespread adoption of the Montessori Method in India, did not auger well for its continued expansion in the long term.

CONCLUSION

India and Australia, both far flung members of the British Empire had welcomed the new Montessori Method with enthusiasm. In Australia, however, the phenomenon did not survive more than two decades so that by 1937 when Martha Margaret Simpson, pioneer of the Method in New South Wales, spoke on "The Influence of Montessori on the State Schools" at the Froebel Centenary session of the New Education Fellowship's Sydney meeting, there was barely a soul present. 186 The Indian movement, in contrast, had continued to expand from the time of its inception. By 1927 there were ten Montessori classes in the State of Baroda alone. 187 In 1937 Kamalakanta Mookerjee, lecturer in Education at the University of Calcutta, wrote that the Montessori Method had brought about the demise of classroom instruction and the "disease that brought its death has spread all over the country." 188

The Montessori "disease" was not stimulated by any official action on the part of the British, apart from the introduction of
Montessori apparatus in a few Model schools.\textsuperscript{189} Some of the more progressive Princely States demonstrated an interest in early childhood education and in innovations like the Montessori Method. But, it was mainly private individuals and organizations who sowed the seeds of the Method in India.

The major protagonists in the first phase of the movement came largely from the English-educated \textit{élite} who could afford the expensive apparatus and could travel abroad for training. They belonged to certain distinct but not necessarily mutually exclusive cultural and religious groups. These mainly comprised the Parsi, Gujarati and European communities with a sprinkling of Maharashtrians like Tarabhai Modak and Shesh Namle. There were high caste Hindus and Jains, Zoroastrians, Theosophists and some Christians. Some Gujaratis and Parsis were also members of the Theosophical Society as were most of the European advocates of the Method in India. Many were also nationalists, some being supporters of Mrs Besant’s more moderate Home Rule League while others were followers of Gandhi.

The foregoing examination has revealed that Indians were receptive to the Montessori Method for a complexity of reasons. For many Hindus and Theosophists, Montessori education accorded with deeply held religious beliefs. However, the Montessori Method also appealed to social reformers because it was held to be modern and scientific, the latest in Western progressive education. The initial popularity of the Method in England aroused interest amongst Anglicized Indians like the Parsis. But, the major emphasis upon freedom, independence, and self-discipline in the Method also appealed to nationalists like Gijubhai Badheka and Tarabhai Modak, as it had in the Dutch East Indies to Ki Hadjar Dewantara. Petersen notes, with reference to the spread of Montessori ideas during the 1920s to out-of-the-way places like Australia, Columbia, Panama, the Phillipines and the island of Java that,
A pedagogy of liberation has its appeal in colonial and neo-colonial societies. In the heady atmosphere of national unification and independence from England, ... there was a predisposition among Australian educators to try new things and indigenise them.190

Gijubhai and Tarabhai demonstrated a similar tendency, under the auspices of the NBSS. Consistent with the aims of the nationalist movement they endeavoured to "Indianize" the Montessori Method.

By the late 1930s, however, Gandhi opposed the widespread introduction of the Method because it was expensive and foreign, and he proposed a purely home-grown national system of education. The Montessori Method was largely the prerogative of the Westernized urban élites but it failed to retain the support of many staunch nationalists who followed Gandhi's lead. Prior to Madame Montessori's arrival in India, a tension had already emerged within the Movement in India between Gandhian nationalism and Anglo/Westernization. Although the reality was more complex, the evidence suggests that Montessori schools tended to be more "Indianized" if those running them were staunch Gandhians. Whereas, the more Anglophile Montessori supporters tended to adhere strictly to the Method. One notable exception was Sarala Devi Sarabhai who became an advocate of Gandhi's Basic Education Scheme while remaining President and Patron of the NBSS. Yet she followed the Montessori Method closely in the education of her children and remained a friend and supporter of Maria Montessori.
NOTES


10. A kindergarten room was established at Cheltenham in 1876 and the training of teachers in the Method began after 1881. Woodam-Smith, op. cit., p. 52.

11. Cited in ibid.


15. Ibid., pp. 120-121.


19. Ibid., pp. 132-133.

20. Ibid., p. 138.


27. See Naik & Narullah, ibid., pp. 244-245.


31. TI, 10 December, 1912, p. 11.

32. Reverend Cecil Grant, cited in ibid. It will be recalled that Grant was one of Montessori's most fervent English admirers. See Chapter 1.

33. TI, ibid.
34. For a brief history of education in Mysore see Narullah & Naik, op. cit., pp. 873-880. They note that Mysore had "several features which even British India could have copied with advantage." Ibid., p. 873. These included a scheme of aided elementary schools at village level which were also maintained by local support in both cash or kind, p. 876.

35. "Dr. Montessori's Method Takes Root in India", Giornale d'Italia, 30 April, 1913, p. 4. Translated for the writer by Dr R.C. Petersen, Senior Lecturer in Education, University of Sydney. See also S. Paul Chinnappa, The System of Education in India. Bangalore, n.d. This was a Phd. thesis, Columbia University, 1915. It includes biographical details of the author. Boyd notes that in 1912 preparations were being made to establish Montessori schools in a number of countries including India. William Boyd, From Locke to Montessori. George G. Harrap & Co., London, 1914, p. 7.


38. Ibid., p. 8.


42. Narullah & Naik, op. cit., p. 901. Baroda was well in advance of British India in introducing compulsory elementary education. It was not introduced into the latter until 1918 when a Private Member's Bill from the Gujarati Nationalist, Vithalbhai Patel was introduced in Bombay, ibid., p. 542.

43. Pandya, op. cit., p. 52.

44. Ibid., p. 84.


46. TI, 12 August, 1914, p. 6. By 1920, the Kindergarten Method had been introduced in every school in Baroda, teachers were enthusiastic and many of the larger schools contained all the important kindergarten materials. In some of the classes arrangements were made to feed the children during school hours. Verma & Agnihotri, op. cit.


49. There is very little written about Gijubhai in English. Most of the biographical material in this section was obtained in a recorded interview with Deepakbhai Mehta, Principal, Dixinamurti Highschool, Bhavanagar. Gijubhai's daughter-in-law, Vimoobhen Badheka was also present throughout the interview and provided additional information. Deepakbhai Mehta, Interview, C. Wilson, 6 January, 1984. (Hereafter, Mehta Interview.)


52. See, for example, Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, Schocken Books, New York, 1964, p. 21.

53. Nanabhai was also a Gujarati. He became a supporter of Gandhi and was a great pioneer of education in modern India. Mehta Interview.


55. Shesh Namle, Interview. C. Wilson, 28 August, 1980. (Hereafter, Namle Interview.)

56. Mehta Interview.


60. Naik, op. cit., p. 2.


64. Gandhi, op. cit., p. 317.

65. Kaka Kalelkar, Stray Glimpses of Bapu, Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1950, p. 120.

67. Young India, 1 September, 1921.

68. Young India, 15 April, 1926.

69. See Maria Montessori, op. cit., Ch. 5.


76. Panikkar, op. cit., p. 111.

77. Naik, op. cit., p. 3.

78. Mehta Interview.

79. The books included, Montessori Paddhati, (The Montessori Method) translated by Gijubhai, Nanabhai & Gijubhai, Bhavanagar, 1927; Montessori Praveshika, (Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook) translated by Gijubhai & Tarabhen, no publication details. Other books published about the Montessori Method in the Gujarati language were, Gijubhai & Tarabhen, Montessori Shikshan Prachar Mala, (Montessori Education Propogation Series), Montessori Sangh, Bhavanagar, 1933; S.K. Patel, Montessori Siddhantao Prathanic Gramit Shikshan, (Teaching of primary arithmetic through the principles of Montessori), S.K. Patel, Sunu via Anand (Gujarat), 1933; Montessori Phaddhatimo Atma, (Soul of the Montessori Method, Translation by Sayaji Sahibja Mala of a book by Dorothy Canefield Fisher, Pustakalaya Sahayak Salkakari Mandal, Baroda, 1929; Gopalji Kalyanji, Montessori ane Kindergarten, Union Press, Bombay, n.d. This book advertised a set of English made Montessori apparatus for Rs.500, available from Delvadkar's Kindergarten Stall, Girgaum Back Road, Bombay.


81. Mehta Interview.


86. *Ibid.*, p. 332. See also Erikson, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-71. At one time the Sarabhai's saved Gandhi's life when he was suffering from dysentry by removing him to one of their bungalows in Ahmedabad where he was nursed back to good health. Gandhi, *op. cit.*, p. 376.


89. Edwin Mortimer Standing, "Indian Twilight", I, Shreyas, Ahmedabad, n.d. (for internal circulation only), pp. i-iii. This consists of a collection of circular letters Standing had written against the background of Indian politics and personalities of the period for friends and relatives in England. Some of the letters were also forwarded as articles to English newspapers.


94. *Ibid.*, 22 August, 1921, III, p. 82.


99. M.K. Gandhi, cited in Arun Gandhi, "If I had a 100 Women Like Mridula Sarabhai", *Illustrated Weekly of India*, 2, November, 1975, p. 36. Arun Gandhi writes that "Mridula Sarabhai is most remembered for her association with Sheikh Abdullah - for which she was branded a traitor and detained. Few remember her heroic efforts in rescuing thousands of abducted women on both sides of the border during Partition." *Ibid.*

101. Ibid., p. 7.

102. Bharati Devi Sarabhai, Editor's note, in ibid.


104. Standing, op. cit., p. 18.


108. Standing, op. cit.


111. Editor's note, in ibid., "Mr. Standing Resigns: Conscientious Objections", p. 165.


114. Sarala Sarabhai, "Greetings from India", op. cit., p. 18.

115. Erikson, op. cit. For example, Vikram Sarabhai became one of India's top nuclear scientists, Bharati Devi became a poet, Leena devoted her life to education. Gavtam is an industrialist.


117. Edith Pinchin, "Maria Montessori: The Protector of the Child", The Young Citizen, 18, 1943, p. 132. (Hereafter, YC.)


120. For an examination of the contribution of Annie Besant and George Arundale to Education in India, under the auspices of the Theosophical Society, see Lawson, op. cit., pp. 66-92.
121. Arundale's wife, Rukmini Devi, recalled that she had heard the name "Montessori" spoken among Theosophists long before she discovered that Montessori was actually a person. YC, op. cit., p. 121.


125. G.S. Arundale, "The Problem of Education", in The Theosophical Outlook, Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, 1919, p. 43. This consists of the four Convention lectures delivered in Calcutta at the Forty-Second Anniversary of the Theosophical Society in December, 1917.

126. Ibid., p. 46.


128. Ibid., p. 376.

129. K.J. Sharma, Interview, C. Wilson, 16 August, 1982.

130. Tehmi Wadia, a prominent Indian Theosophist and member of the Parsi community recalled that as a child of about seven, she attended the Theosophical Convention at Adyar in 1922 and was taken to the Montessori school. Tehmi Wadia, Interview, C. Wilson, 23 September, 1980. Rukmini Devi Arundale assisted at the school when it started but found she had little patience for such work. Rukmini Devi Arundale, Interview, C. Wilson, 18 August, 1982.

131. Mario M. Montessori, "The Professor", Shri G.V. Subba Rao Memorial Fund Bulletin, 1 August, 1977, p. I. For an account of Krishnamurthi's educational work see Lawson, op. cit., Ch. 3.


134. See James Masselos, "Some Aspects of Bombay City Politics in 1919", op. cit., pp. 145-188. Annasuabhen was Ambalal Sarabhai's sister and had established the first textile worker's union in Ahmedabad.

135. See ibid., p. 153.


137. Mrs Yodh, Interview, C. Wilson, 6 August, 1981. (Hereafter, Yodh Interview.)


141. Ibid., p. 6.

142. Yodh Interview.

143. For example, C. Jinarajadasa, Society President from 1946-1953 recalled that "it was Bishop Leadbeater who drew my attention to the Montessori system long ago. In 1927 I had a memorable though brief visit with Dr. Montessori in London, and as I was able to speak Italian, the visit was agreeable to both of us." The Theosophist, 73, 1952, p. 149.

144. de Bary, op. cit., p. 112. In 1921, the Parsis were the most literate community in Bombay Presidency, followed by the Gujaratis. Masselos, op. cit., p. 157.

145. Dinoo Dubash, Interview, C. Wilson, 5 August, 1980. (Hereafter, Dubash Interview.)


147. Ibid., pp. 251-252.

138. It was apparently the first Parsi run school to enrol European children. Among them was Marthe Vanura, aged 13. She was the daughter of the French Consul and had been sent to the school to learn English prior to enrolment in the Colaba Convent. Dubash Interview.


150. TI, 28 January, 1936, p. 15. This was Mrs Laly's school at Appollo Bunder. Dubash Interview.

151. Ibid. This was the New Model Infant School run by Mrs Laly's sister, Mrs Maneck Mistry. Dubash Interview.

152. TI, op. cit.

153. Ibid.


156. Namle Interview.

157. Mehta Interview.
158. ATC, 6, 1961, p. i. There is no evidence, however, that Tagore ever introduced the Montessori Apparatus and the Method as such in his school. Mukherjee, op. cit., p. 422.


162. Mario M. Montessori. "Dr. Montessori and Her Work", pamphlet, n.d. p. 5. The land was left for this purpose by Mrs Besant in her will. For Tagore's speech, see ATC, op. cit., p. v.


165. The article was written by Dr Sartananda Roy and appeared in a monthly journal for Bengali youth; publication details, unknown. See S. Roy, "Local Secretary's Survey", Report of the All-India Educational Conference (Thirteenth Session), Calcutta, December 26-30, 1937, S.M. Roy, Calcutta, 1938, p. 96.

166. Ibid., p. 95. The Theosophical society had less impact in Bengal than in the South and West of India. Masselos, Indian Nationalism, op. cit., p. 148.


168. Gandhi, op. cit., p. 239.

169. Ibid., p. 240.


171. "Letter to Parasham Mehrotra", 18 April, 1931, ibid., pp. 321-322. See also "Letter to Premabhen Kantak", 12 May, 1932, ibid., p. 427. Gandhi sent an article by Montessori which had been published in the weekly Hindu and asked Premabhen to read it and see if it contained anything worthy of adoption in the Sabarmati Ashram school.

172. A.M. Joosten, "Mahatma Gandhi and Maria Montessori", in Joosten & Gupta, eds, op. cit., p. 15. See also Maria Montessori, "Gandhi and the Child", in S. Radha Krishnan, ed., Mahatma Gandhi Essays and Reflections on His Life and Work, Kitabistan, Allahabad, 1944, pp. 199-201. This collection was presented to Gandhi on his seventieth birthday on 2 October, 1939."


175. See Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 296.

176. See Gandhi, cited in Patel, op. cit.

177. Gandhi wrote to a young woman whose father had sought his advice concerning the possibility of his daughter undertaking Montessori training, that "There can be no harm in your learning the Montessori Method, though I don't fancy it." "Letter to Prabhavati", 19 May, 1936, CWMG, 62, p. 421.


181. Ibid., pp. 556-557.

182. Ibid., p. 748.


184. Ibid.


186. R.C. Petersen, op. cit., p. 264.

187. Verma & Agnihotri, op. cit., p. 34.


189. For example, the Victoria school in the Punjab was taken over by the Government and Montessori and Kindergarten methods were introduced during 1914-1915. Indian Education in 1914-15, Government of India, Calcutta, 1916, p. 24.

190. R.C. Petersen, op. cit., p. 234.
CHAPTER FOUR

"THE FLOWERING OF THE PLANT"
MONTESSORI IN INDIA 1939-1944

- Introduction
- Maria Montessori in India
- Internment
- At Kodaikanal: The Birth of Cosmic Education
- Conclusion
INTRODUCTION

Indeed it is true to say that this astonishing old lady at the age of seventy — when most persons have already retired for some years — actually began one of the most interesting and important phases of her already remarkable life.¹

During 1937, whilst educators and Governments debated the merits of Mahatma Gandhi's Basic Education Scheme, Dr Maria Montessori was seriously considering invitations to visit the country. Early in 1937, George Arundale, President of the Theosophical Society, and his wife, Rukmini Devi, visited her in Baarn² outside Amsterdam where she and her son were living with the Pierson family.³ Both Montessori and Arundale expressed their opposition to the prevalence of education systems which focused purely on the mind, and they decried the lack of emphasis on practical activity and character development. Arundale was sympathetic to Montessori's distress at the demise of her work in Europe, particularly in Spain and her native Italy.⁴ He later informed Theosophists that she was anxious to visit India because,

She feels that there will be in India a response to her methods greater than in any other country, and she specifically desires to come in touch with the masses of the people, the villagers, the peasants, and help them, fine material as she believes them to be, to grow under the influence of a system which is designed to develop character above all else, courage to face life's problems, and to educate the creative faculty through doing, through the use of the hands, through making, building, producing.⁵

Montessori told Arundale that by coming in personal contact with the Indian people she would be able to adapt her system to their needs. She also agreed with his contention that "education in India must be Indian education, a truth which even many Indians themselves seem unable to
understand, so enslaved have they become to the western system under which they have been instructed but certainly not educated.\textsuperscript{6}

The idea of visiting a country, largely removed from the threat of war enveloping Europe, and one in which people had remained receptive to her Method over a long period, appealed to the exiled educator. Eminent Indians such as Gandhi and Tagore had met with her and endorsed the emphasis upon practical activity and the development of the senses in her Method. Montessori also received great support for her work from members of the Theosophical Society which had its International Headquarters in India at Adyar, Madras. Unaware that Maria Montessori had been a member of their Society, Theosophists continued to find much in her ideas which accorded with their own beliefs. In the forward to an article by Edith Pinchin, which appeared in The Theosophist in 1937, George Arundale claimed:

In reading this article we are impressed with the following facts: (1) That the cosmic sense, as we know it in Theosophy, permeates the Montessori system; (2) That the system itself is evolving, is being adapted to the founder's advancing ideal; (3) That it is designed to train children to realise their inherent kingship and divinity; (4) The greatness of Dr. Montessori.\textsuperscript{7}

For Pinchin, who had undertaken Montessori training in London in 1919, the essence of the Method lay, not in the specialized apparatus nor the techniques involved in its presentation to the child, but in the spiritual elements of the Method and in the "profound and scientific reverence for the Wholeness of Life, for a Cosmic Plan and Purpose."\textsuperscript{8} The Theosophical view of life as perpetual realization at different levels in the cosmic cycle was, according to Pinchin, reflected in the ideas propounded by Montessori in her latest book, The Secret of Childhood published in 1936. Pinchin found much in common between the mystical content of Montessori's book and Arundale's educational treatise, Gods in the Becoming, also published in 1936. Referring to the Montessori apparatus as "material for
spiritual exercise", Pinchin wrote:

Indeed with all the apparatus based on mathematical forms one sees the children approaching the condition that our President longs for 'when we shall be able to offer the new young guests of earth ... the so-called regular Platonic solids, the Toys of Dionysius.'

Theosophists were not alone, however, in requesting Montessori to come to India. Although Gandhi had eventually rejected the Montessori Method as inimical to national aspirations, other Westernized members of Congress hoped to obtain Montessori's support in stimulating educational reforms. During 1937 Mrs Pandit, Minister in the Cabinet of the United Provinces Government and sister of Congress leader Jawajarlal Nehru, agreed to sponsor a lecture tour by Dr Montessori throughout India, under the general direction of the Indian National Congress. Montessori was preoccupied with other engagements until the end of 1939 but she hoped to come the following year to study Indian conditions and hold training courses. She had recently developed her system much further to cover high school and university education, and wanted to bring new students in touch with her ideas. Montessori had expounded some of these ideas at the Fifth International Montessori Congress at Oxford in August, 1936 but she had given consideration to the extension of her Method to the University level from the 1920s.

In July, 1937, she attended the 14th Annual Congress of the Theosophical Society's European Federation of National Societies in Copenhagen. The Congress theme concerned peace in Europe and on the second last day Montessori read an address in English entitled "Education for Peace." Peace was the theme for the Sixth International Montessori Congress which was also held in Copenhagen the following month. A resolution, proposed by an Indian delegate, that Montessori should establish special courses to train teachers to give peace education to children was carried unanimously. In her keynote address she declared:
The adult must understand the meaning of the moral defence of humanity, not the armed defence of nations. He must realise that the child will be the creator of the new world peace. In a suitable environment the child reveals unsuspected social characteristics. The qualities he shows will be the salvation of the world, showing us all the road to peace. And the new child has been born! He will tell us what is needed.15

The "new child" was, of course, the Montessori child. At the final session of the conference on the 10th August, she proposed that a "Social Party of the Child" be established,

... aiming at the scientific study of all questions related to childhood and at gathering all information regarding these questions with the view of initiating in different countries scientific comparative studies and to work out those measures of social legislation deemed necessary to assure the general welfare of childhood and the recognition of its rights.16

It was a "utopian proposal, reminiscent of her plea for the establishment of the White Cross organization" to save the refugee children of Europe at the end of World War I.17 Montessori was convinced that the provision of right education for the child would result in a new social order based on peace and cooperation. Referring to the rise of Fascism in Europe, she said, at a meeting of the Social Party of the Child in March, 1939:

The tyranny of the totalitarian nations received much publicity, yet something much more complex than oppression lay behind their development. It was the fact, as powerful as armaments, that they understood the power of childhood. When one of these States found it necessary to arm it did not do so from the 18-year old upward, but from the age of four years.18

Like Gandhi, Montessori advocated a moral rearrangement to create social change. Whilst she had always been a social reformer, in the latter phase of her life she became more concerned with the wider social implications of her Method and less with the intricacies of its implementation. Pacifism was an important theme in her speeches and writings, but the pleadings of the aging educator were, however, to no avail in a world preparing for war.
For Montessori, the opportunity to visit India, where there was sympathy for her cause, provided a welcome escape.

George Arundale and his wife visited Montessori again in Holland in 1938 and in March, 1939, it was announced that she had finally accepted their invitation and would visit India as a guest of the Theosophical Society from October for a period of six months. Arundale had offered to place the Montessori department of the Besant Memorial school at Adyar at her disposal and he hoped that she would direct a teacher training course to be attended by as many students as possible. It was planned that Montessori would also visit some of the most important educational centres in the country and give lectures. 19

Montessori had chosen an opportune time to visit India during a period of renewed interest in education. While her Method was considered old fashioned and out of date in much of Europe and America, Montessori schools remained popular in India amongst the Westernized élite and she was assured of a positive reception. Her long association with Theosophy and Theosophists and her acquaintance with many prominent Indians, including Tagore and Gandhi, had kindled a desire to visit the country and spread her educational system further. She planned to be back in Holland the following year to continue the training course at her new school in Laren. 20 However, Montessori was not to return there for a number of years. Once again, international events interfered with her plans and she was forced to remain in India during most of the final phase of her life. This chapter will examine the first four years of Montessori's stay in India and discuss the initial impact of her presence there on the Montessori movement in India and on the direction of her work.

MARIA MONTESSORI IN INDIA

Dr Montessori and Mario finally arrived in Madras by air on the 4th November, 1939. The visit was made possible, ultimately, through the
generosity of a wealthy Theosophist, Herbert Staggs, as the Montessoris were apparently not able to afford the cost of the journey. They were met by George Arundale and Rukmini Devi whose arms were laden with garlands of roses and jasmine to greet the visitors after the Indian tradition. There were also long lines of children from the Theosophical schools to welcome them at the entrance to the Society's magnificent estate on the river at Adyar. Montessori gave a press conference and expressed her delight at being able to fulfil her long held desire to visit this ancient land from which she expected to receive more than she would possibly be able to give. Her words were prophetic because she would stay in India much longer than she had envisaged and during that stay, would achieve the culmination of her life's work. Despite the flurry of excitement at Adyar, however, the arrival of the world famous educator was coolly noted by the Times of India in a simple three sentence statement.

Dr Montessori set to work almost immediately and on the 11th November the First Indian Montessori Training Course was inaugurated at Adyar. While Montessori teachers had been trained in India by others, this was the first course in which use of the name "Montessori" was approved by Madame. The Mayor of Madras welcomed her presence in India. He said that if "Dr. Montessori could leave behind something of her genius and a sound system of education for children in this country, she should be remembered for many generations as one of the benefactors of India." Montessori responded in Italian and stated that she had not come to India solely to teach a method of education, but rather, "to fuse all the aspirations of her soul with the experiences of their glorious country." It was undoubtedly an important spiritual journey for Madame, but from the outset she appears to have consciously appealed in her speeches and writings to the sentiments of her Theosophical hosts and to Indian nationalism.
The popularity of the Method in India was demonstrated by the large numbers of students who flocked to enrol in the teacher training course. Initially the limit was 200 but accommodation was expanded, ultimately, to enable a final enrolment of 316 students. Further applicants had to be turned away due to the lack of space. The students came from all parts of the Indian sub-continent and included 90 from Bombay and 60 from Madras. A few students also came from other British colonies and included 3 from Burma, 2 from Ceylon, and one each from Zanzibar and British East Africa. The Princely States of Baroda, Hyderabad, Indore, Bhavanagar, and Porbander, were officially represented. Except for Hyderabad, these were primarily Gujarati speaking States with access to Gijubhai Badheka's translations of Montessori's works and his own books about the Method. There was also a strong interest in pre-school education in these States, largely due to the influence of Gijubhai and the NBSS. The students were housed in a village of palm-leaf huts specially constructed for the Course. In a lecture hall made from the same materials the students sat barefoot on rush mats on the floor in accordance with Indian custom, whilst Montessori delivered her lectures seated in a wicker chair on a raised platform above them, with Mario beside her translating them into English.

Montessori's presence in India stimulated further interest in the Method and a variety of press articles soon appeared. Some were full of indiscriminate praise whilst others exaggerated certain aspects of the Method, claiming that "Dr. Montessori went the whole hog of unlimited individuality to the child, the teacher or 'directress' being merely content to supervise unobtrusively." The Times of India Educational Supplement voiced a number of common objections including, with particular reference to the Indian context, the problem of the Method's high cost:

Manifestly, therefore, her basic educational principle runs counter to the group activity of children. Her emphasis on the tactile-muscular activities of the child, for their own sake, in the education process is not
altogether unexceptional; and the elaborate apparatus, which her method postulates is, for a country of India's resources, a little beyond practical possibility.31

A less critical view held that "in fairness it must be admitted that the Montessori system includes some notable lines of reform."32 It was argued that, rather than being allowed unlimited freedom, the Montessori child was in fact restricted by the need for consideration of the freedom of others. Some fusion of the Montessori Method with the best of traditional methods was believed to be necessary but it was held that Montessori had "rung the death knell of class teaching", and that,

She has emancipated the child from the tyranny of the timetable, the teacher and the class. She has shown that self-education is the beginning of all education and the senses, gateways of the mind, cannot be neglected.33

Despite criticisms of her work from some quarters, Montessori enjoyed immense popularity following her arrival in India. Apart from the demands of the training course, her time in Madras was also taken up with attending functions and giving speeches, including lectures on her Method at the University of Madras.34 She also addressed the South Indian Teachers' Union and the Madras Teachers' Guild. She inaugurated the Madras Women's Conference, spoke at a Boy Scouts camp on the importance of their movement for the social development of youth, and met with prominent Catholic personalities, including the Bishop of Mylapore, at the Loyola College.35 On such occasions Montessori expressed her disillusionment with events in Europe. She felt that perhaps India with her ancient traditions could, through right education, provide some solutions to the problem of world peace. She observed on one occasion, "I feel that India wakes, and I foresee the day when India will offer to the world the light which will dissipate the shroud of darkness which enfolds it."36

A feature of the Montessori Training Course at Adyar was the organization by Rukmini Devi Arundale, a talented exponent of Indian
classical dance, of an Arts Course from the 1st December until February, 1940. Concerts were given by some of India's leading musicians and Rukmini Devi delivered lectures on South Indian Art. Many visitors from Madras also attended these concerts. Montessori was fascinated by the performances of Indian classical music and dance during the Course, which was held under the auspices of Kalakshetra - Rukmini Devi's educational institution for the arts. Montessori, who was made a patron of Kalakshetra, later told Rukmini Devi that she felt she had not paid sufficient attention to the arts in her educational Method and suggested that perhaps they could collaborate to develop a Montessori course focussing more closely upon the arts. But Montessori had refused to collaborate with others in the past and, like many of the proposals she was to give her support to during her stay in India, the idea never came to fruition.

At Adyar, the Arundales tried their utmost to provide the best facilities possible for the Montessoris and to ensure the success of the Training Course. Their efforts appear to have been directed at tempting Madame to extend her stay in India. At its International Convention in December, George Arundale expressed the Society's gratification at having such a distinguished educator as its guest. He told Theosophists,

I am very confident that her visit will have a profound effect upon the new life that is beginning to animate Indian education and I feel proud that the Theosophical Society has been chosen as the instrument through which her genius shall fructify this great field of the Indian Nation's life.

He regretted that Montessori would only be able to visit a few educational institutions such as the Universities of Madras and Calcutta during her short visit and hoped she would come again in the near future, "to effect that wider contact with a land and people which have already endeared themselves to her."
Arundale was careful to note in his Report of the Convention that, although Montessori had addressed the Convention, she was "not actually a member of the Theosophical Society." Her speech, however, was couched in a mystical language which undoubtedly appealed to her audience and revealed her conversance with Theosophical writings. She claimed that addressing the Society was one of the greatest moments of her life and said of her Method,

But how much lack of comprehension, how much misunderstanding have I not met in so many countries, because people thought I was talking about a method of education while I was speaking of a revelation given to me by the soul. But here among you all I feel that there is a very deep and dear understanding, the awakened spirit and soul is necessary in order to be able to enter into the spirit, the soul.

Montessori went on to speak of the child as, "the Peasant Messiah who cultivates the soil of the soul, of man, so that it becomes ready to receive the Divine Seeds which may be sown in it. The child is the Tiller of the Seeds of the Spirit." This theme of the child as the Messiah was emphasized again by Montessori at the close of the Training Course on the 15th February, 1940. She asked the students to,

... keep in mind that your tasks must be more that of being apostles of truth than of a method of education of being fighters rather than teachers. Go forth humble and non-violent, with a luminous faith in your heart. Go forth and preach all over India so as to prepare the way to the Kingdom of the Child.

Montessori's Messianic view of the child accorded firmly with George Arundale's mystical perception of youth as Kings or "Gods in the Becoming". He viewed education as essential to this process of realization and claimed, "The object of education, then is to help to develop the kingly life, the Godlike life, where it is, from the stage it has so far reached on its way to Kingship, to Divinity." But Montessori did not utilize spiritual language only to appeal to the religious sensibilities of her
hosts at Adyar. Mindful of Indian nationalism and the fight for freedom spear-headed by Gandhi, she urged her students to be non-violent and humble fighters, but as apostles on behalf of the child rather than the political freedom of India. Their task was to convince others of the path that Montessori had shown them, the Montessori way to the Kingdom of the Child.

The First Indian Montessori Training Course proved a resounding success. Most of the students had been educated in English and included university graduates and "leading personalities in secondary education." Some 266 students completed the course, of whom 106 were women. There were 186 teachers. The remainder came from various other professions and hailed from the length and breadth of the sub-continent, demonstrating its religious, linguistic and cultural diversity. Some eighteen different languages and eight religions were represented among the students who came from twelve provinces and States.

The enthusiastic response from her Indian students and the bountiful hospitality of the Theosophical Society encouraged Montessori to consider extending her visit. She had also received many greetings and invitations from prominent Indian acquaintances. Tagore wrote:

As you know, I am a great admirer of your work in education and along with my countrymen think it very fortunate indeed that India, at this hour, can get your guidance in creative self-expression.

I am confident that education of the young, which must underlie all work of national reconstruction, will find a new and lasting inspiration from your presence.

May I hope that you will visit our Institution when you come to Bengal?

Although Montessori had received invitations to visit South America to hold a training course under the auspices of the Government of Chile, she decided to remain in India and open her own training centre at Adyar. She had succeeded in inspiring both her students and members of the
Theosophical Society. Although she was not a member of the Society, she was invited to remain at Adyar. George Arundale felt that her continued presence would assist the Society's own educational work and enable it, "more effectively to serve India and the East generally." While many in India encouraged her to stay and contribute to the country's educational reconstruction, the Montessori Training Centre at Laren in Holland was also anxious that Madame and Mario should remain longer due to the uncertainty of events in Europe. It was envisaged that they would return towards the end of 1940 or early in 1941, when they hoped that conditions would be more favourable to the continuation of her work.

After the closure of the training course, Montessori set off on a lecture tour of Gujarat and Bombay, following an invitation from the NBSS in Bombay. Prior to her departure, she had been fêted by Gujaratis in Madras who offered to place the services of their entire community at her disposal and formally presented her with a declaration to this effect. Gujaratis had been the first to introduce the Montessori Method in India and they continued to support its expansion. Montessori hoped during the tour to go to Wardha to visit Gandhi at his Sevagram Ashram. Although this wish was never fulfilled she did visit the Gujarat Vidyapith, the national teacher training college established by Gandhi in Ahmedabad to train teachers for village work, and he sent a telegram to mark her visit.

In Ahmedabad Montessori was hosted by one of her oldest Indian supporters, Sarala Devi Sarabhai and her family, in their magnificent home at Shahibag. On 8th March she visited Gandhi's Harijan Ashram at Sabarmati to open the Bal Mandir. A Harijan girl garlanded Montessori with a hank of hand spun yarn. Khadi, or home spun cloth, woven from yarn spun by the children, and a takli peti, or spindle box, were also presented to her. The Ashram residents were greatly honoured to have the presence of such a great friend of children to open their Bal Mandir, in a country where there was not even a primary school for each village.
Montessori was apparently overcome by her reception and replied in English that visiting Gandhi's former home was one of the most auspicious moments of her life: "It is my great honour that I have been called here and I declare open the memorial of our seva guru." She then addressed the large crowd in Italian and praised Gandhi's efforts on behalf of freedom, education and the emancipation of women, subjects dear to her own heart. Montessori was fully aware of the symbolism of Khadi and its significance, not only in Gandhi's education scheme, but in his plan of national reconstruction and, ultimately, freedom. She spoke of spinning and weaving as the symbolic and the actual means through which Gandhi would achieve national unity. Gandhi was weaving the unity of the heart of the Indian people in his cloth. Although a single cotton thread was weak, the collective weaving of many threads produced strong cloth which was symbolic of the spiritual unity so essential to attain freedom.

Montessori stressed that Sarvodaya, welfare for all, must be established in education as well as in constructive work. The welfare of children, women, and "untouchables" was vital. She believed that the achievement of equality between all castes and communities would being about their unity and, ultimately, that of the entire Indian nation. To achieve this goal Gandhi had made craft the basis of his education programme but she believed it was the spiritual spinning and weaving which was ultimately important. She concluded by urging the gathering to remember "that all mankind, all souls are interwoven together." The unity of humanity was basic to both Gandhian philosophy and Theosophy but it was also the core of Montessori's own ideas. It was the foundation upon which she based her belief in the universality of her educational Method.

From Ahmedabad the Montessoris travelled to Bombay by train and arrived on March 9th to be warmly greeted by Theosophist, M.T. Vyas, co-founder of the New Era School and Chairman of the New Educational
Fellowship. Despite her 70 years and a considerable weight problem, Montessori appears to have coped admirably with the climate, the rigours of travel in India, and the demands of a busy schedule of functions including two public lectures. Indeed, the Times of India remarked that the "distinguished educationist" was "noted for her youthful zest." In her speeches at Bombay, Montessori continued to expound the wisdom of her guru, the child. Just as Gandhi sought a dynamic social revolution through truth and non-violence, she believed that through provision of the right educational environment the child would be the spearhead of a far-reaching human revolution. At a reception held in her honour by the Mayor of Bombay, Mr Behram Karanjia, and attended by many other prominent Parsis, Montessori asserted that by entering into the spirit of the child and reforming education by placing the human nature of the child at the centre of all educational activity, the vast problems confronting humanity could be solved. She felt that perhaps India would be able to achieve this goal because the country was blessed with a great leader who preached humility and non-violence.

The theme was continued in her first public lecture in the city, entitled "Society and the Child" and held under the auspices of the New Education Fellowship at the Cowasjee Jehangir Hall on the 11th March. Montessori told the audience that the present age of confusion and chaos heralded a new order in which the child would be the central element. Although it was the age of the armed man, the present was also being recognized as the epoch of the child. The correct study of the child and the development of all its faculties through right education would, she believed, enable the creation of a new world order.

In her second public lecture, entitled "The Child and the Montessori Method", Montessori spoke more specifically about her Method and the observations concerning the child's development upon which it was based. She emphasized the importance of the first three years of the child's life,
particularly for personality development, and hence the need to prepare an appropriate educational environment. Montessori charged a fee for these lectures but many who had come to learn something of the Method from its founder were disappointed because they could not understand Mario's English translation. Although an Italian speaking Professor from St Xavier's college was asked to assist, his unfamiliarity with the Method rendered his translation unacceptable to Madame.

Montessori's visit to Bombay was none the less highly successful. The announcement of her proposed visit had aroused considerable excitement among the city's educational fraternity. Her lectures were attended by Bombay's educated élite and included many prominent personalities. Among them were Mr B.G. Kher, Education Minister for Bombay Presidency from 1937-1940, who presided at the first lecture and paid a glowing tribute to Montessori, and the poet and Congress politician, Mrs Sarojini Naidu, who addressed the audience and thanked Dr Montessori. The lectures were also attended by members of the British Raj including the Chief Justice of Bombay, Sir John Beaumont, who introduced the second lecture. Montessori was feted at numerous social occasions including a dinner to celebrate Teacher's Day held by the Bombay Secondary Teacher's Association. B.G. Kher presided at the dinner which was attended by a number of other distinguished guests including the Archbishop and the Bishop of Bombay. At a party at the Radio Club, a large crowd of men and women associated with many of the city's educational and welfare institutions gathered to honour her. Montessori's successful tour augured well for the future and she was able to return to Adyar confident of the support of India's Westernized élites for her work.

INTERNMENT

The popularity of Montessori's First Indian Training Course and the enthusiasm with which she was greeted on her tour of Bombay and Gujarat
were undoubtedly manifestations of the support for her Method in India, but they also reflected the general desire for educational advancement which was sweeping the country. However, although the effects were not immediately felt, the Second World War and the consequent resignation of the Congress Ministries at the end of October 1939, heralded a period of instability which severely restricted further educational developments. As in the past, Montessori was once again caught up in the maelstrom of conflagration and her plans to develop an educational centre at Adyar could not be immediately realized.

In June 1940 Italy declared war on the Allies. Italian nationals in India, including the Montessoris, were interned by the British as "enemy aliens". Although Congress refused to collaborate with the British in the war effort until a political settlement had been achieved, Italian intervention in the war was widely condemned in India, Mussolini's decision being described by one Congress Party newspaper as an act which "has covered his name with infamy, and has earned for his country the contempt of the world." 73

Mario was interned at a civilian camp at Ahmednagar for some months but Madame was able to remain within the more salubrious confines of the Theosophical Compound at Adyar. After the jubilance of their initial welcome to India it was profoundly humiliating to be treated as "enemy aliens". 74 Madame was particularly distressed for, not only was she concerned for the safety of her grandchildren still in Europe, she was also insecure with regard to her continued stay at Adyar where, not being a member of the Theosophical Society, she felt she may have outstayed her welcome. Above all, however, she was most upset at being separated from her beloved Mario, a situation she found almost impossible to bear. Despite these setbacks she was none the less anxious to remain in India where she felt there was at least five years work ahead of her. 75

Almost immediately after their internment efforts to obtain the
release of the Montessoris were made by their supporters in India and abroad. In a letter to The Times newspaper, Montessori's devotee and co-principal of the Montessori Training College in London, Mr C.A. Claremont stressed the internationalism of her work, claiming that she was a servant of all mankind and therefore above national considerations. Claremont wrote:

One hopes the British Raj will be quickly visited, if not by a sense of proportion or duty, at least by a return of humour, and place on Dr. Montessori no restrictions that could impede her never ending and arduous educational work in a gesture that will be worthy of England.76

The British authorities did allow Montessori to see her son during his detention. However, the meeting proved extremely distressing for Madame as Mario's head had been shaved at the camp, no doubt as a protection against lice.77 Fortunately Montessori's misery was of short duration for on her 70th birthday she received a somewhat patronizing telegram from the Viceroy of India stating, "We have long thought what to give you for your 70th birthday. We thought that the best present we could give you, was to send you back your son."78 Elsewhere it has been noted that this was the first recorded public reference to Mario as Montessori's own son, the supposition being that perhaps the Viceroy believed because of Montessori's "age and distinction no one in India would criticize her."79 But Mario had in fact been referred to earlier as Montessori's "son" by the Press.80 None the less Theosophists and Montessori's Indian students always referred to Mario as her "adopted" son or her "nephew". Most seemed ignorant of Mario's illegitimacy or took pains to hide it.

The Montessoris were united for Madame's birthday celebration at Adyar on the 31st August, 1940, and a few days later Mario was finally released from the camp. However, despite the efforts of prominent people like Gandhi, Nehru and George Arundale, it was several years before the Montessoris were able to visit other parts of India to give lectures and
courses, and even then they were kept under surveillance by the British. They were not able to travel more than five miles from any town where Montessori was lecturing. This was because Mario had been classified as "objectionable" by the British Government and was a security risk. The exact reasons for this remain confidential, but he appears to have made anti-British statements during his internment at Ahmednagar. The public support by Mussolini's Government for the Montessori Method and the apparent acquiescence of the Montessoris under the Fascist regime in Italy during the 1920s and early 1930s, probably also influenced the British.

Following Mario's release from the camp, the Montessoris engrossed themselves in various activities at Adyar where they were to remain as guests of the Theosophical Society. The training of Indian Montessori teachers continued with two further courses from the 4th November, 1940 until the 27th January, 1941, and from the 1st November, 1941 until the 8th February, 1942. Both Dr Montessori and Mario gave public lectures on various occasions, including Theosophical Conventions, and continued to work with and observe the children of the Besant Theosophical School. In order to strengthen the work and the movement, an Indian Branch of the Association Montessori Internationale was established at Adyar towards the close of 1940.

If members of the Theosophical Society were embarrassed by the presence of "enemy aliens" in their midst, their views were carefully hidden. George Arundale wrote:

A very obvious highlight is the hospitality the Society is able to offer that great educationist Madame Maria Montessori and to her adopted son, at Adyar. There will hardly be any question that Madame Montessori is the most distinguished scientist in education now living, and I am hoping that after her second training course, now just completed, she will be able to consider the ways and means whereby her system may be most suitably applied to India.
"simple life, temperate meals, preference given to the vegetarian diet, and even to raw food, joy in a physical effort, the total giving up of one's self to natural life-giving forces." In reality, however, she was extravagant, enjoying fine food, clothing, jewellery and all the comforts of life her Theosophical hosts could provide. Madame was permitted to eat meat at Adyar and she smoked cigarettes, although her non-vegetarian students, mostly Christians, Parsis and Muslims, were not allowed under the Society's rules.

George Arundale chose to ignore her personal foibles and continued to shower praise on Montessori, claiming at a memorial meeting to pay homage to Rabindranath Tagore, who died on the 7th August 1941, that Montessori had much in common with Tagore. In his view both shared a certain elusive quality "which distinguished those who live in heaven while on earth from those who live on earth and can rarely visit heaven." Montessori's continued presence at Adyar was further justified on the grounds that:

Though she is not a member of the Theosophical Society, she most generously appreciates the value of The Society and its own message of Theosophy, and in her educational contribution to the world's uplift is indeed a great Theosophist.

Montessori disclaimed any such direct association with the Society. She once asked a Parsi student, many of whom were members of the Society, whether she was a Theosophist. When the student answered in the negative, Montessori replied, "Thank God!" However, she artfully trod the path of diplomacy, indeed, personal survival, and continued to speak at Annual Conventions and other special functions of the Society, giving full vent to the spiritualism which had always been inherent in her work but had rarely reached the ears of such an appreciative audience.

Montessori chose the occasion of her Convention Address on the 28th December, 1941, under the giant Banyan tree at Adyar, to deliver her
first lecture entirely in "deliberate but expressive English." It was on the same date under the Banyan tree in 1925 that the extraordinary Indian Teacher, Krisnamurti, initially believed by Theosophists to be the "vehicle of the Coming World Teacher", was first thought to have spoken in the Voice of the Lord. The 28th December had in fact been a sacred day for members of the Esoteric or Eastern Section of the Theosophical Society since 1911, when in Benares members of the Order of the Star in the East prostrated themselves before Krishnamurti as a tremendous power suddenly appeared to flow through his body.

In her address Montessori utilized the language of the Esoteric Section of the Society, referring to the child as "that new master who has a new world and who can give new hope, who can open a new path." It will be recalled that Theosophists believe the Masters, or Mahatmas, are Adepts, highly evolved perfect beings who govern and direct the world. Montessori spoke of the child as a unique and immensely powerful and miraculous being, alone capable of constructing himself and his reality. Referring to the unfolding of the human embryo she said:

What is meant by the idea of incarnation? Do you mean a Soul that has come into new life? If so, how does it come into new life? In a tangible way the spiritual being becomes a physical entity with power inherent within itself to construct itself along a special design of nature in a determined time and he does construct every single part of his body.

Theosophists were undoubtedly impressed by the Montessorian rhetoric. They felt it a rare privilege the Dottoressa utilizing the Primary Department of the Besant Theosophical School as the demonstration class for her teacher training courses and that the conduct of the Department had been placed directly under her guidance. Mario was also very much involved in the experimental work at the School, observing, taking classes, instructing the teachers and supervising the making of the materials. The Montessori apparatus was prepared with Dr Montessori's approval by Kalakshetra,
which had the sole right to produce the materials in India. By October 1940 she had received royalties of Rs.1,261 from their sale. 100

When he came to India, Mario Montessori had been informed that the Indian child was "slovenly" and would not appreciate the precision of the Montessori apparatus. However, after observing the results of his experiments at the Besant School, he was extremely impressed with the children's willingness to learn and, "was forced to the conclusion that in point of receptivity the Indian child was 25 per cent better than his compatriot [sic] in Europe or America." 101 The readiness of the Indian children at Adyar to participate in the Montessori environment gave support to Montessori's contention that the Method was universally applicable, as all childhood development was the same irrespective of nationality or race. Referring to the extension of the Montessori Method up to the third grade at Adyar, as had been successfully tried in Italy, Spain and England, Mario Montessori wrote:

I saw the miracle happen again here in India. Work and interest spurted from those young souls like a fire and warmed the hearts of adults who had despaired, as the sunshine that has been hidden by the long arctic night restores life and hope to explorers imprisoned by insurmountable barriers of ice. 102

The Headmaster of the Besant School, K. Sankara Menon, praised the contribution of the Montessoris:

There is no teacher in the School who does not feel personally grateful to Dr. Montessori and Signor Montessori for the very vital training given to them, for a new vision of teaching, and a new presentation of the world of the child in which he creates himself into a man and creates a world for himself. 103

Montessori was so greatly admired and loved by the staff and students of the Besant Memorial School that they regarded her as a "mother" of equal status with Dr Besant. 104 Indeed Madame was frequently called "Mother" in India, where the shakti or mother image of spiritual power is a
significant element in Hinduism. In Hindu mythology the goddess Devi is worshipped as the world-mother. The application of the honorific "Mother" or "mataji" thus denotes considerable respect.

The students of the Training Courses were also effusive in their praise of the efforts of both Dr Montessori and her son. At the conclusion of one course they paid the following public tribute to them:

We the students of the Third All-India Montessori Training Course greet you and pay our humble and reverential homage to you.

The vast sweep which you have taken in your addresses and the scientific facts on which you have based them the new conception of the child which you have given us, and finally the sublime heights to which you have taken us, and the subtle transformation which you have brought about in us - all these have left a lasting impression on us, which we shall never forget.

You, Mr. Montessori, have been the true interpreter of the soul of our dear Mother. You have given us a glimpse into the spiritual insight of her mind. In you we have found a living embodiment of what a Montessori teacher should be.

Montessori was also effusive in her reply to the students. She said:

What am I to tell you more than you have told me? It is you who have given. It is you who have gone beyond the understanding of my words. Continue to work. Take that light and spread that light and may the blessing of God be upon you. I am at this moment as a child and you are as teachers who have irradiated my heart, and I thank you.

In India she was treated like a guru, a kind of "divinely inspired teacher who had come to reveal the mental and spiritual potentialities of childhood and through them to show the way to a redeemed humanity." For her the child was the eternal Messiah from whom she had been privileged to receive enlightenment. Her task, therefore, was to train educational apostles who would take her message into the world and work for the renewal of society. Montessori had so inspired some Hindus and Theosophists that they believed her to be a Rishi or seer, the reincarnation of a great religious teacher from Vedic times. Her birthdays were always celebrated
at Adyar with great reverence and ceremony, as the following account reveals:

In the afternoon, following the ancient Indian tradition, the Headquarters Hall of the Theosophical Society became for a time a temple theatre. Shri Krishna - the Divine Child who represents all children - and Madame Montessori's garlanded picture were enshrined amidst flowers, incense and flickering oil lamps, and to one side of this shrine, students of the school and Kalakshetra presented a much appreciated programme of music, dances, recitations, and mimes, in honour of the great and gracious personage who has worked so many years in order that children's lives may become happier and more in harmony with the divinity she has perceived in every child.  

Although Montessori continued to inspire a coterie of devoted apostles, the War and India's internal political upheavals were taking their toll, severely restricting the numbers of students who could come to Madras to attend the training courses. Only 70 students from various parts of the country were able to attend the Third Course. With fewer students there was less money available and, because she was considered an "enemy alien", Montessori was prevented from travelling and the opportunity of earning from lectures. In an effort to consolidate the gains to the Montessori movement in India achieved through the training courses, Madame hoped to start a publication enabling her to retain contact with her Indian students. She also sought a vehicle to further her ideas in India. Urgent requests were therefore made in the pages of The Theosophist for funds to support such a publication. Appealing to the religious sentiments of Montessori's admirers, Mario wrote:

Will you who read this, who have in your lives the ideal of religion, will you help to give the possibility to this practical form of religion; to the cultivation of the human soul to reach realization by helping to create and sustain this publication?

By utilizing Indian spirituality and the power of his own charismatic personality, Gandhi had managed to arouse the support of millions of his countrymen and women. Mario was relying upon the same technique, to gather support for his mother's work. However, no Montessori magazine
or journal could be published at this time as the exigencies of the period again conspired to influence the direction of Maria Montessori's life and work.

THE BIRTH OF COSMIC EDUCATION

In early 1942, bombing raids by the Japanese along the Madras coast made the area unsafe and the British authorities ordered all foreigners to leave. After the Third Course the Montessoris were given permission to go up to Kodaikanal, a hill station favoured by the British at an altitude of 8,000 feet, which would be more congenial for Madame's health during the ensuing summer months. Despite the setback of having to leave the security of Adyar with its excellent facilities, the Montessoris were eventually able to give two Primary training courses from August to November 1942, and May to August 1943, followed by the first Advanced Course to be held in India from November 1943 to March 1944. A short course of lectures on religion was held prior to the Advanced Course.

The Theosophical Society provided the Montessoris with a house, "Rosebank cottage", containing few stairs, a garden at the front and back and a front and back verandah. Madame often utilized the back verandah in the afternoons to work free from the menace of the numerous passing hawkers. It became almost a sacred venue where it was forbidden to encroach upon her privacy. Mario welcomed the presence of the back garden through which he could escape to find solace in the nearby woods. The welfare of his children, still in Holland under the care of Ada Pierson, was a great worry to him. He was particularly concerned for the safety of his son, who was working with the "underground" rescuing British airmen and guiding them through enemy territory to a place from which they could cross to England. Despite the distress of the war and their predicament as "enemy aliens" in India, cut off from their family and financial security, the Montessoris none the less took advantage of their
mountain environment for study and much creative activity.

Lena Wikramaratne, a student from Ceylon who had attended the Third Training Course at Adyar and then followed the Montessoris to Kodaikanal, started a small school in her cottage. Initially, there were only four children who had come with their mothers, a Dutch and a Bengali woman, to Kodai at Montessori's request. Lena was assisted by another student from Ceylon, Joyce Gunesekhara, who, like Lena, had become fascinated by Madame and her Method and wished to study further with her. The school quickly expanded as there were many young children at Kodaikanal from wealthy European backgrounds, whose parents had come to the hill station to escape the war or for holidays. Some were also the children of soldiers. There were English, American, Swedish and Dutch children whose parents were able to afford fees. There were also, later, some Indian children whose parents came to attend the Course. By the end of 1942 some 60 children were in attendance. Madame Montessori had only one set of the apparatus with her so Lena arranged for her father to send another from Madras. She and Joyce, along with an artist from Kodakaikanal, and a carpenter, also spent much time assisting the Montessoris in preparing card materials and charts for botany, geography and biology.

Mario often visited Lena's school and encouraged the children to take an interest in the natural world outside the Montessori environment. The school had a small garden cared for by the children and in which they observed and classified the different parts of the plant and the various plant species present. According to Mario, the children discovered that,

Each species has its respective parts that conform to the composite. They could see that plants were really different yet still belonged to a universal plan. That was really a surprise to the children.

Mario constructed terrariums using moss and other plants and small animals from around the lake so that his pupils could observe survival within a particular ecosystem. He found that many of the animals refused to eat in
captivity, including the frog which became extremely thin. He recalled:

Then one day, I got so mad I threw a pebble at her and she pounced on it, and took the pebble in her mouth. I realized then that some animals were possessed with the instinct of eating only animals that move. This was a great cosmic mechanism because their eating would consume the living surplus. Eating only that which moved meant that the consumers would eliminate the living over-population.  

Lena and Mario would discuss such discoveries with Madame in the evenings. Although Dr Montessori did not have a direct role in Mario's experiments, as she only visited the school on special occasions, having taken a degree in biology she was able to contribute her knowledge in this area. Gradually the seeds of an educational plan, which would convey the interdependency of the Universe to children, began to germinate. Great emphasis was placed upon the presentation of reality to children through exploration of the environment, from which they would derive various scientific principles and relationships. Apart from working in the garden and taking excursions to the surrounding woods and the lake, Mario utilized local materials, rock, clay and wood, to demonstrate to the children the formation of various landforms and the action of the elements upon these features. According to Mario, they "tried then to work with the child in nature, to show the erosion of the land, the sedimentary formation - we would try to help the imagination of the child with real experiences."  

A "moral" influence was exerted upon the children to some extent as they were encouraged to appreciate the ecological importance of creatures hitherto considered vile. Crows, for example, were viewed with fear and repugnance by the local people of Madras because, as scavengers, the birds often fed upon human excrement. They would sometimes descend upon people as they defecated, there being no toilet facilities in the villages. The Montessoris "tried to communicate that every creature had its cosmic task. And some of these tasks were not pleasant for human beings."  

As well as their experiences in nature, the older children were
given access to the library of the American School at Kodaikanal, whilst Father Guthier, a French historian and anthropologist, also lent them books from his seminary.  

After almost two years of experimentation, and the preparation of charts and other materials, the Montessoris were ready to incorporate them in an Advanced Training Course designed to prepare teachers for the application of the Montessori approach with 6-12 year olds. However, before its commencement, a short course on religion consisting of 14 lectures was held. Montessori felt it important that a religious consciousness, an awareness of God, be introduced into the lives of children between six and twelve years of age. In the past she had written *I Bambini Viventinella Chiesa*, an account of experiments involving the application of her ideas to the religious instruction of children at her school in Barcelona, where a special "Children's Chapel" had been constructed. E.M. Standing later collected and edited her writings on religious education in an English publication entitled *The Child in the Church*.  

In the first lecture of the Course at Kodaikanal, Montessori told the students:

> This small course which we have been asked to give is not intended to teach religion, but its aim is rather to present to you the child as he has revealed himself through experiments carried out on him. These show the child possesses energies which before were unknown.  

Although she claimed the lectures were intended as a bridging course for those who were unable to attend the previous Primary Course at Kodaikanal, the focus was on the presentation to the child of the ceremonial aspects of worship from the Roman Catholic liturgy, almost like one of the Exercises of Practical Life. Montessori told her non-Catholic students that, "this Course has been mere stimuli, just seeds of thought in the mind." But she hoped they would utilize her approach in their own
religious traditions. The presence of a large Jesuit seminary, the Shenbanganur Sacred Heart College of which Guthier was Director, near Kodaikanal, may have induced Montessori to hold the course. Priests from throughout India stayed at the seminary and many of them visited Montessori at "Rosebank", holding lengthy discussions with her.129

Montessori gave the first of her 53 lectures for the Advanced Course on the 1st November, 1943, and then she proceeded to reveal her Cosmic Plan of Education. An outline of this had previously been given in England,131 but it was in the lectures of the Advanced Course at Kodaikanal that the Cosmic Curriculum, which involves the presentation to children of the history of the earth and the various epochs of civilization, was introduced in detail. The Kalakshetra Press at Madras later published, in 1948, Montessori's book, To Educate the Human Potential, setting out the Plan of Cosmic Education. Madame's lectures were complemented by some 100 lectures from Mario on the Plan's practical aspects. These covered biology, botany, geography, chemistry, physics, mathematics, geometry, language, history, and the Exercises of Practical Life, appropriate to the 6-12 age group. There were also sessions on astronomy by Dr Narayan and on English literature for children by Mrs Lavendar.132 A Montessori school, directed by Mrs Maria Peerzada in the house adjoining "Rosebank", served as the observation school for the Advanced Course.133 As with the previous Montessori courses in India there was no practice teaching experience. The students were, however, encouraged to make their own materials and charts and spent much time engaged in this activity.134

Mario Montessori organized many excursions including visits to the Museum of the Shenbanganur Sacred Heart College which had a large collection of artefacts belonging to the aboriginal inhabitants of the area.135 At night they went to the Kodaikanal Solar Observatory to gaze at the skies through the powerful telescope, or they would go into the woods in rubber soled shoes to observe nocturnal life. During the day there
were long treks to the Berijam Lake twelve miles away, and to the water reservoir. Devoted Montessorian C.N. Vaidheswaran recalled:

The way Mr. Montessori presented the subject was unique.... Sometimes, with snacks on their backs, the trainees went on long hikes in a spirit of adventure. It was all so lively that the trainees wanted more and more of such experience. To many, it was a new experience to walk through the jungles and forests and climbing steep rocks facing mist and cloud.136

For the students, most of whom would have rote learned their geography, biology and botany facts as children, it was a novel and exhilarating learning experience. In providing such activities for the trainees Mario hoped they would appreciate the educational value of presenting the wonders of nature, its forces and laws, to children in a realistic and highly stimulating way. The classification of plants and animals was introduced using illustrated card materials and the corresponding wall charts. The students were then able to test the knowledge gained in the classroom during their forays into the natural environment.137

The students at Kodaikanal comprised an international gathering of different nationalities, as well as different castes and communities from all over India. Some were educators with degrees and long years of experience while others were parents "stirred by the very name of Dr. Montessori and her reputation in the Educational World."138 Some were private students, whilst others, like Shesh Namle who had studied with Gijubhai and had been employed to teach the children of the Sarabhai family, were sponsored by their employers or institutions.139 There were also numerous visitors who came to hear the lectures, including Mrs Sarla Devi Sarabhai, her daughter Leena, and her daughter-in-law Manorama Sarabhai, the politician, educator and member of the NBSS, Mrs Tarabhai Modak, and Mr G.V. Subba Rao, Theosophist and staunch Montessorian whom Madame called "the Professor" and whose opinion she would often seek on educational matters.140
The Montessoris were also fortunate in the presence at Kodaikanal of a band of devoted assistants, many of whom were deputed by the Theosophical Society. Notable among them were Mr K.J. Sharma, a school teacher at Rishi Valley who had been introduced to Montessori when she was staying at Ootacamund, another hill station, in the summer of 1940, by his Director, Subba Rao. Sharma assisted in the preparation and demonstration of the geography materials. Subba Rao had also deputed a colleague of Sharma's, Mr C.N. Vaidheswaran, who assisted with the physics and chemistry demonstrations and experiments. Devayani, Vaidheswaran's sister, another devoted Montessorian, had attended the Primary Course in 1942 and remained at Kodaikanal to assist Madame and attend the Advanced Course. 141 The Theosophical Society also sent Arundale's assistant, an American, Norma Makey, to help Montessori in the preparation of material for new publications of her work. 142

The students and assistants formed several work groups to produce the Advanced materials in conjunction with professional artisans under Mario's supervision. Despite the cold weather the groups would work long into the night, absorbed in the task at hand. 143 As well as preparing the materials, the students also co-operated with each other in order to practice using the materials. They lived together in various residences close to their guru in a "warm, healthy community of 'Soldiers - Knights ready to fight for the rights of the Child'." 144 The Montessorian community at Kodaikanal was like the tapovanas, the forest communities of ancient India where students lived with their teachers in a spirit of mutual support and devotion, expanding their consciousness through an education steeped in nature. Tagore had sought a similar educational environment at Santiniketan. Unlike the ancient tradition, however, Montessori expected monetary payment from her chelas rather than the mere provision of sustenance. 145

At Kodaikanal, Montessori continued to give her lectures in
Italian although she had demonstrated that she was quite capable of delivering them in English. She was always quick to correct Mario's translations if he did not accurately convey her meaning. The students were not unduly concerned at this inconsistency. For them the lectures were an inspiring spiritual, as well as an educational experience, and Madame's expressive Italian served to heighten this. Describing his first Darshan with Montessori at "Rosebank", Vaidheswaran recalled, referring to the forty to fifty men and women who waited for the lecture to begin in silence:

It looked as if they were sitting there for prayer or meditation. When I turned my face in the direction where all were gazing I saw an elderly lady elegantly and tastefully dressed in black silk, with an attractive shawl on her shoulders, a milk white pearl necklace and equally beautiful pearl ear-rings. She looked like a Queen-Mother....

Her lips quivered, the serene silence was broken with radiant words almost musical yet ununderstandable at first because she spoke in Italian, her mother tongue....

After the lecture a few went up to her and took leave of her with deep devotion. Some touched her hands, a few kissing her beautiful ring and a few saluted her with folded hands and some bowed gracefully at a distance. One or two knelt and touched her feet. On everyone she poured her affection, love and smile.

Montessori's listeners were not only inspired by her charisma and the spiritual atmosphere which pervaded her lectures, they also felt themselves transformed by her message. In her inaugural address to the Advanced Course, Montessori told the students it was their duty to contribute "to the reconstruction and development of the Soul of Man." This would be achieved by the provision of an education, which would enable children to understand humanity through a study of the history of the earth and its civilizations, and which would facilitate their total development. She said, "It is our duty to throw light upon man and to Serve him."
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craft in his Basic Education scheme, Montessori proposed that for the

6-12 year old child all work should be "correlated to a central idea,
of greatly enabling inspiration - the Cosmic Plan in which all,
consciously or unconsciously, serve the great Purpose of life." There
were to be no distinct subjects as such, through which various facts
would be taught and in which the teacher was limited by a circumscribed
syllabus. Learning activities would be organized around the central theme
of the unity and purpose in nature and would vary according to the demands
and interests of the children. The onus was on the teacher, however, to
prepare a huge amount of stimulating material "to satisfy the child's
mental hunger", and thus "the teacher can no longer defend himself
behind syllabus and time-table." 

Although Montessori had emphasized the importance of the presenta-
tion of reality to the very young child, in Cosmic Education the 6-12
year old child, who was well able to distinguish reality from fantasy,
was encouraged to utilize imagination much more. In order to stimulate
the child's interest in the Universe, Montessori said, "we may usefully
call to aid some myths or fairy-tales, but they must be such as symbolise
truths of nature, not the wholly fantastic." For example, in one
lecture Montessori told the trainees that she imagined herself transported
above the earth as in an aeroplane, to see the land covered in plants
in the period before the appearance of animals. As this landscape no
longer existed she sought the assistance of an "Angel" who enabled her
to see the world as it was. Montessori described the evolution of
plant life to the students, and the role of plants in the cosmic plan,
through the creation of coal:

So what greater cosmic task is there than that of the
plants, who are continually drinking in poison and
making it part of their lives? They live for thousands
of years, and when their task on earth is done they sink
into the earth to create a new energy to be used for the benefit of the World. 156

In presenting the Cosmic Plan of Education, Montessori saw no contradiction between religion and scientific fact. Asked if she opposed the theory of evolution Montessori told the students:

Even if I were so my opinion would count for nothing as we are dealing with scientific facts and not with opinions.... Geology does not deny evolution, on the contrary it proves the existence of evolution. 157

But, she also believed in divine intervention, that the evolutionary process was the product of a cosmic intelligence, "which keeps the equilibrium and order on earth." 158 She felt that what took place on earth was an expression of the will of God. "Creation was no instantaneous act of God, but has unfolded itself continuously in time, and still is unfulfilled, the Sabbath of rest not reached." 159

While the Montessori Method for the 3-6 year old emphasized the correct use by children of certain precision apparatus, the materials providing the conceptual structure for the child, in Cosmic Education there were few specified materials. It was instead the teacher's responsibility to produce stimulating materials to illustrate the dynamic Cosmic Curriculum which varied according to the particular interests of the children. Montessori provided few definite guidelines in To Educate the Human Potential apart from suggesting charts and timelines to show the evolution of man and nature. She wrote:

Children like at first to place pictures separately prepared on blank charts showing epochs only, and realisation is helped by the isolation of difficulties, one thing at a time being presented to their consideration, to avoid confusion. 160

She emphasized that the memorization of facts and dates was not part of the Montessori Method and had no place in Cosmic Education which focused instead upon the development of certain understandings about nature and
mankind. She wrote:

One thing has been well established by our experience, that facts are of less interest to the child than the way in which these facts have been discovered, and so children may be led to the history of human achievement in which they want to take their part. 161

From the outset Montessori had stated in the Advanced Course that the years 6-12 were appropriate for the acquisition of "culture" and, because it was impossible to include modern culture in its entirety, she said, "a need arises for a special method, whereby all factors of culture may be introduced to the six-year-old not in a syllabus to be imposed on him, or with exactitude of detail, but in broadcasting the maximum number of seeds of interest." 162 In the Advanced Course, as in the previous courses in India, she neglected certain aspects of culture, particularly the arts. The trainees compensated, however, by providing their own artistic activities. Montessori acknowledged this neglect, claiming:

I have had no time to speak about art during this course, so that it is an added consolation for me to think that you have already developed this side of your natures and can apply it to your students. It is certain that recitation, dancing, music, singing, form an integral part of life. 163

It is possible that because she had little personal knowledge or expertise in this area, she did not feel competent to include it in the Course.

Montessori did, however, give a lecture on Gymnastics and additional lectures on the appropriate Children's House and Garden after the main lectures on Cosmic Education had been completed. 164 The kind of physical environment she envisaged for children was, however, well beyond the means of most Indians and could only have been afforded by the most affluent of the élite, like the Sarabhais. She showed the students photographs of a model school in Vienna, and spoke of the need
for tiled or polished floors; glass walls facing the garden in which small "kiosks" could be erected to shelter children on hot or wet days; wooden huts in the garden to house garden tools, bicycles, scooters, handcarts, wheelbarrows and other play materials; an extensive garden with vegetable and flower beds, fruit trees, climbing apparatus and swimming pools. She appears to have given no consideration at this time to the kind of school which would be appropriate to Indian conditions generally, but the lecture may have been directed more to the European students present.

While the Montessoris were developing Cosmic Education and holding training courses at Kodaikanal, the work they had initiated in the Theosophical schools at Adyar continued in their absence. Before going up to Kodaikanal in 1941 Montessori had introduced her Method in the Olcott Memorial School. The school had been established in 1894 by Colonel Olcott, co-founder of the Theosophical Society, for the education of "Panchamas", as the "untouchables" were then called - the term "panchama" meaning the fifth, or out-caste. It was one of the first such schools in India for this downtrodden group. In accordance with the Society's advocacy of the unity and brotherhood of man, Brahmins, Caste Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, and Harijans, all mixed freely in the school. When inaugurating her Method there Montessori said: "Blessed be those who founded it. Blessed be they who remember the children who are abandoned by society."165

An exhibition was held in the Montessori's absence on the 8th April, 1943, at the Besant Theosophical School as part of a three day educational festival. Distinguished visitors to the exhibition included Lady Hope, wife of the Governor of Madras, who, although familiar with the Method, was greatly impressed with the newer materials, particularly the brightly coloured apparatus, charts and maps for teaching the beginnings of geography, history and botany. The application of the
Montessori Method to the teaching of Indian languages, Sanskrit, Tamil and Telegu, as well as English, was also of interest. In the Middle School, where the Advanced Method had been introduced by Madame and Mario, new charts, maps and other materials had been produced by the Teachers and were demonstrated at the exhibition. Edith Pinchin, the Montessori Directress, felt that the remarkable achievements at the school were undoubtedly due entirely to the guidance and inspiration of the Montessoris. 166

Despite the progress in the Theosophical schools and the various other privately run Montessori institutions whose teachers had attended Madame's lectures and courses, Rukmini Devi Arundale regretted that Departments of Education in India were not taking advantage of the presence of the Montessoris. 167 The state of many of the schools in the country was observed to be such that:

As one goes from town to town and visits the educational institutions in them, one feels not only that their standards in every material particularly are hopelessly inadequate and out of date, but there is about most of them an atmosphere of depression calculated to stifle every spark of natural liveliness in the pupil. Neither the quality of the teacher nor the environment is regarded as of importance to the pupil. 168

However, the Second World War, during which India was threatened by the Japanese in the North-East, together with the "Quit India" movement, was placing considerable strain on the Central and the Provincial "Caretaker" Governments. With the commencement of the movement in August, 1941, Gandhi and the other members of the Congress High Command were immediately arrested. Yet, despite the absence of leadership, a civil disobedience movement, which found expression in a variety of forms from the sabotage of Government facilities to political killings, was unleashed throughout the country during 1942-43. 169 As a result, "educational reconstruction had more or less to mark time till the popular ministries came back again in 1946." 170 Montessori referred to the national unrest in her New Year
Message for 1943 when she urged the nation's youth to:

Prepare yourselves to foster not the dismantling and piecing of your nation, but the achievement of a larger unity that will make of India one of the mighty stones in the building of the whole world united into one nation. 171

It was this vision of the future unity of mankind which had inspired the Cosmic Curriculum. But as an "enemy alien" in a country wrought by political and communal dissension as well as the burden of a world war, Montessori was denied the possibility of interesting Governments in her utopian educational proposals.

Throughout the period of the Montessori's stay at Kodaikanal, efforts were continued to secure their release from internment. The Montessori Society in England claimed Madame wished to return to continue the Teachers Diploma Course usually held there every two years and which had ceased from 1939 due to her absence. The Society stressed that because of the very personal nature of the courses it was "necessary to have her presence and inspiring influence. At her age she cannot lecture much longer, so time is a vital element; it is far better to have a live exponent than a hallowed memory...." 172

George Arundale also continued to press for their return to Adyar in order to hold an Advanced Training Course. In June, 1943, he wrote in a letter to the Governor of Madras:

May I add that Madame Montessori and Mr Montessori are dependent for their means of livelihood on the training courses they are able to hold. At present their finances are at the lowest ebb. Naturally, having invited them to India, we feel the obligation of helping them as far as we can. But, of course they would prefer to earn their living.

If my offer of personal responsibility be approved, Madame Montessori and her nephew might be interned within the Estate of The Society and not be allowed to go out from it anywhere. 173
However, the Government of India refused permission for Mario to return to Adyar where a Royal Air Force Post had been established close to Theosophical Society Headquarters. His presence was "not considered desirable." The British Government also refused to allow Mario to enter the United Kingdom on security grounds. As Madame would not leave Kodaikanal without her son, the Montessoris were forced to remain there until 1944. The first course on Cosmic Education was thus held without access to the more extensive facilities available at Adyar.

CONCLUSION

When Maria Montessori set foot in India in 1939 she claimed she had come to satisfy a heartfelt desire to visit this ancient land whose people she had come in contact with in Europe over many years as among the most enthusiastic and supportive students at her training courses. The Montessori Method had been largely rejected in England and had been eclipsed in America. But in India the Method had survived and continued to find enthusiastic support, at least among the educated élite. Prominent Indian acquaintances like Gandhi and Tagore had also found much to admire in Montessori's work and had indicated that her contribution to education was welcomed in their country. Montessori was no doubt encouraged by the desire for educational reconstruction sweeping India at the time. With the dark shroud of war enveloping Europe, the possibility of visiting India provided a bright ray of hope for the aging educator, who had witnessed the closure of Montessori schools and the burning of her books as Fascism engulfed Spain, Italy, Germany and Austria.

In India, as never before elsewhere, Montessori was able to give full expression to the spirituality which had always underlined her work. Rationalist thought in the West opposed her, but in India learning through the ages had always been pursued as an integral part of religion. It was
through education that one achieved self-realization, Mukti or emancipation, the ultimate pursuit of life.¹⁷⁵ Both Gandhi and Tagore had returned to the ancient writings of the Vedas and the Upanishads in the formation of their educational ideas, as had the philosopher Aurobindo Ghose. Swami Dayananda Saraswati, as part of the nineteenth century renascence of Hinduism, was the first of these and other religious personalities to initiate a renewal in Indian education. Like Montessori they sought the full development of the child through an holistic education. The development of the child's character, intellect and spirit were all equally important. Montessori was, therefore, consistent with a tradition of religious educators in India in both modern and ancient times. She was out of step in the West but in the East her ideas were accepted without question.

In India she was treated with the veneration of a guru, some even suggested she was the reincarnation of a Rishi, and as such she attracted a band of devoted apostles of the Method who would play a significant role in the furtherence of the movement in India. Max Weber writing of the charismatic personality says:

The holder of charisma seizes the task that is adequate for him and demands obedience and a following by virtue of his mission. His success determines whether he finds them. His charismatic claim breaks down if his mission is not recognized by those to whom he feels he has been sent. If they recognize him he is their master - so long as he knows how to maintain recognition through 'proving' himself.¹⁷⁶

In Europe and America the spirit of enthusiasm which had initially surrounded her had dissipated, but in India her mission to bring about human reconstruction through right education of the child, was recognized and approved, particularly by Theosophists, but also by Hindu and Zoroastrian élites. She was able to maintain their support and devotion by taking on the role of the great educational sage, which had been ascribed to her. Ardent supporters of Montessori vehemently denied that a "personality cult" had grown up around her in India, claiming that it was "utterly
untrue to insinuate any ambition or even complacency on Dr. Montessori's part.  

But the deep regard in which she was held by prominent and wealthy Indians greatly benefited Montessori when she suffered the bitter humiliation of being interned and branded an "enemy alien". She was neither forced to endure the indignity and privation of an internment camp nor was she ultimately prevented from carrying out her work, training teachers, studying and writing. Although she was not a member of the Theosophical Society and refrained from mentioning that she had been in the past, she continued to remain the Society's honored guest.

Montessori's internment gurukula style in the hills and forests of Kodaikanal ironically proved a great boon for the educator. Isolated from the political turmoil confronting India and the horrors of the war in Europe, she was able to focus all her energies upon the fruition of a dynamic educational plan for the 6-12 age group. Like the Rishis of ancient India, Montessori had gone to the forest to study and to impart learning to others. There she had received enlightenment. Mookerji writes that, "India has thought her highest in the forests, her civilization is sylvan and not urban, the product of out-of-the-way schools or hermitages."  

At Kodaikanal, Montessori had given birth to an educational vision in which the child, through understanding the interrelationships between man and nature, would contribute to the realization of a new society based on the unity of all mankind. The attempt in the cosmic curriculum to correlate all subjects to demonstrate the development of civilization and the unity in humanity was not unique to Montessori. Lawson has noted that it resembled the cultural epoch theories of the Neo-Herbertians, particularly Ziller, in the second half of the nineteenth century.  

In the late 1920s and early 1930s at the Beacon Hill School in England, Bertrand and Dora Russell also experimented with the integration of various subjects including history, geography, archaeology, and the sciences, in order "to suggest some concept of the unity of mankind
developing from primeval human beings to the diverse competence and organization of modern society." 180

Lawson has argued convincingly that Montessori's conception of the evolution of civilization owed much to Theosophy with its emphasis on the contribution of Asian civilization to human progress 181 and its Hindu and Buddhist cosmology. Trudeau notes the similarity between Montessori's understanding of the cosmic purpose in life and Eastern thought, 182 but she makes no mention of Theosophy. She also denies the existence of a "mystic focus" in Montessori's writings, attributed by Kramer to the years in India. 183 This thesis supports the view that Montessori's writings had always contained spiritual allegory, although it certainly reached its height during her stay in India when she was a guest of the Theosophists. Moreover, evidence has been presented to show that Montessori's contact with Theosophy was older than the Method. She may have returned to her Catholic faith, but at Adyar she attended the Liberal Catholic Church founded by Theosophists, and was much closer to Theosophy than orthodox Catholicism. 184 Her cosmic vision was in essence pure Theosophy as George Arundale claimed:

But the common basis of both Theosophy and the Montessori system is the truth of the Universal Brotherhood of all Life. The Montessori system, like Theosophy, knows no distinction such as divide the outer world into castes and faiths and communities and colours. 185
NOTES


2. The Theosophist (Adyar), February, 1937, p. 381. Arundale had become President of the Theosophical Society in 1934 following Annie Besant's death in 1933.


5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.


8. Pinchin, Ibid.


17. Kramer, Ibid.


22. The Theosophist, July 1943, p. 208. This has an interview with Montessori.

23. The Theosophical Worker, 4, 12, 1939, p. 303. (Hereafter, TW.) See also Lawson, op. cit.

24. Times of India (Bombay), 9 November, 1939, p. 8. (Hereafter TI.)


26. Ibid.

27. TW, op. cit., p. 305.

28. Times of India Educational Supplement, 30 November, 1939, p. 5. (Hereafter, TIES.)


30. TIES, 22 November, 1939, p. 11.

31. Ibid. At this time despite Gandhi's Basic Education Scheme and other educational experiments such as the Vidyar Mandir Scheme in the Central Provinces and the Scheme of Voluntary Schools in Bombay, progress in the expansion of Primary Education was extremely poor. The number of Primary Schools in the country actually declined from 192,144 in 1937 to 167,700 in 1946. See S. Narullah and J.P. Naik, A History of Education in India, Macmillan, Bombay, 1951, p. 778.

32. TIES, op. cit.

33. Ibid

34. The Hindu, 15 January, 1940, p. 9.

35. "AMI Monthly Letter" (Amsterdam), March 1940. I am grateful to Dr Jean Miller for this item which appears to be a mimeograph. See also The Hindu (Madras), 29 January, 1940, p. 9, and TI, 31 January, 1940, for a report of a reception for Montessori by the Indian Women's Association, Madras.

36. Cited in TI, 1 December, 1939, p. 3.

37. The Theosophist, January 1940, pp. 296-297. See also, TW, 5, 1, 1940, pp. 8-21.

38. Rukmini Devi Interview.


40. Ibid.


42. Maria Montessori, "The Child the Eternal Messiah", The Theosophist, March 1940, p. 495.

43. Ibid., p. 502.


47. TI, 16 February, 1940, p. 4.


49. TI, 27 December, 1939, p. 8. The newspaper item announced that Montessori was to tour South America at the conclusion of the training course, however it hinted that it was more than likely she would make Adyar her permanent residence.

50. TI, 2 March, 1940, p. 5.


53. TI, 1 March, 1940, p. 4.

54. The Hindu, 12 February, 1940, p. 3.

55. TI, 16 February, 1940, p. 4.


57. TI, 11 March, 1940, p. 11. According to Trudeau, Montessori visited Ahmedabad in 1941 to give a training course at which the Ashram Bal Mandir was used as an observation school. Christina Marie Trudeau, "A Study of the Development of the Educational Views of Dr Maria Montessori Based on an Analysis of her Work and Lectures While in India", D.Ed. Dissertation, University of Hawaii, 1984, pp. 39-50. Her account relies on interviews alone. Montessori was interned by 1941. The first Montessori Training Course in Ahmedabad was held in 1944-1945. See Chapter 5, herein.

58. "Madam Montessori Sabarmati Ashramman", Harijan Bandan (Poona), 8, 1940, pp. 13-14. The article was translated for the writer from the Gujarati by Dr R.A. Mody, lecturer in Gandhian Philosophy, Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad.

59. Ibid. Seva means service.

60. Ibid.

61. TI, 11 March, 1940, p. 11.

62. Ibid., p. 6.

63. Ibid., p. 11.
64. TI, 12 March, 1940, p. 5.
65. TI, 13 March, 1940, p. 9.
67. It was reported that, "Bombay's educational dovecotes are all a flutter over the visit of Dr. Maria Montessori...." TI, 11 March, 1940, p. 6.
69. TI, 12 March, 1940, p. 5.
70. TI, 13 March, 1940, p. 9.
71. TI, 12 March, 1940, p. 9.
72. TI, 14 March, 1940, p. 3.
73. Cited in "Seeking Agreement in India", The Times (London), 15 June, 1940, p. 5.
77. K. Sankara Menon, Interview, C. Wilson, 14 August, 1982.
80. See, for example, TI, 11 March, 1940, p. 11.
81. See TNSA, Note, 29/1/44, p.10, in "Foreigners - Montessoris - Return to United Kingdom", Public (War) Department, 1944 (MS), G.O. No. 474, 10/2/1944. (Papers marked Secret.)
82. A complete history of the movements of the Montessoris until 1943 can be found at 3-5 N.P. of G.O. 1576 Public (War) 12/6/43. This file was not transferred to the Archives by the Govt. of Madras. Reference to it can be found in ibid., p. 1.
84. See Kramer, op. cit., pp. 311-317.
85. *The Young Citizen* (Adyar), 15, 12, 1940, p. 175. (Hereafter, *YC*.)


88. Rukmini Devi Interview.

89. Tehmie Byramjee, Interview, C. Wilson, 4 August, 1981. (Hereafter, Byramjee Interview.) Students were advised of these rules in a pamphlet on the Training Course: "Montessori The First Indian Training Course in Education", Adyar, October 1939 - January 1940", in TNSA, Education Department, 1939,(M.S.) G.O., No. 2149 Ed. 30/9/1939, p. 5.


92. Byramjee Interview.


98. Montessori, *op. cit.*, p. 3.


101. *YC*, 17, 1, 1942, p. 11.

102. Mario M. Montessori, "Dr. Montessori and her Work in India and Elsewhere during the War", *The Theosophist*, September, 1942, p. 458.


110. _YC_, 18, 9, 1943, p. 151. The August edition was dedicated to Dr. Montessori in honour of her birthday on the 31st August. _YC_, 18, 8, 1943.

111. N. Shri Ram, "Dr. Montessori's Work", _The Theosophist_, December 1941, p. 163.

112. Mario M. Montessori, "Dr. Montessori and her Work in India and Elsewhere during the War", _op. cit._, p. 460.


117. Mario Montessori, _op. cit._

118. Wikramaratne, _op. cit._, pp. 59-60. See also Joyce Gunasekera, "What I Remember of Dr. Montessori", _ATC_, _op. cit._, p. 27.

119. Mario Montessori, _op. cit._, p. 57.

120. _Ibid._

121. _Ibid._, p. 58.

122. _Ibid._

123. Wikramaratne, _op. cit._, p. 49.

124. Mario Montessori, _op. cit._, p. 58.

125. Kramer, _op. cit._, pp. 328-329. See also Standing, _op. cit._, pp. 45-46.

126. Maria Montessori, "Religion Course", Lecture No. 1, p. 1. Unpublished lecture notes from the course provided by Mrs. Pareen Lalkakar, formerly Miss Nanavutty, a Parsi who attended the Advanced Course at Kodaikanal. She recalled the lecture notes were given to her by Mario Montessori. Pareen Lalkakar, Interview, C. Wilson, 16 June, 1981. (Hereafter, Lalkakar Interview.)

127. Maria Montessori, _op. cit._

129. Gunasekera, *op. cit.*

130. A synthesis of the final lecture, by Mario Montessori, was published under the title "Cosmic Education", *AMI Communications*, December 1976, pp. 2-7.


132. Maria Montessori and Mario Montessori, unpublished lecture notes for the Advanced Course at Kodaikanal provided by Pareen Lalkakar. Mrs Lalkakar typed up her lesson notes at night, making six copies, one of which was always given to Mario Montessori. Lalkakar Interview.

133. K.J. Sharma, Interview, C. Wilson, 16 August, 1982. (Hereafter, Sharma Interview.)

134. Lalkakar Interview.


139. Shesh Namle, Interview, C. Wilson, 28 August, 1980.

140. Sharma Interview.


142. Wikramaratne, *op. cit.*, p. 49. Norma Makey married Rukmini Devi's brother, and is now Mrs Shastry. She is the Recording Secretary of the Theosophical Society at Adyar.


145. According to K.J. Sharma, the fee for the earlier courses was approximately Rs. 150. The salary of a primary school teacher at the time was less than Rs. 50 per month. See Narullah and Naik, *op. cit.*, pp. 784-785.


149. "Dr. Montessori's Inaugural Address", Advanced Montessori Course, Kodaikanal, op. cit., possibly on 31 October, 1943.

150. Ibid.

151. Maria Montessori, To Educate the Human Potential, op. cit., p. 2. See also Lawson, op. cit., p. 43.

152. Maria Montessori, op. cit., p. 8.

153. Ibid.

154. Ibid., p. 28.


156. Ibid., p. 4. See also Maria Montessori, To Educate the Human Potential, op. cit., pp. 47-49.


158. Ibid., Lecture No. 11, 24 November, 1943, p. 4.

159. Maria Montessori, To Educate the Human Potential, op. cit., p. 35.

160. Ibid., p. 63.

161. Maria Montessori, op. cit., p. 64.

162. Ibid., p. 5.


164. Maria Montessori, "On Gymnastics", 5 April, 1944; "The House of the Children", 4 April, 1944; "School Gardens", 10 April, 1944, and 13 April, 1944.

165. The Theosophist, April 1944, p. 43.


171. Maria Montessori, cited in VC, 18, 1, 1943, p. 2.

173. Letter from George S. Arundale to Sir Arthur Hope, 14/6/1943, in op. cit.


175. Mookerji, op. cit., p. xxi.


177. A.M. Joosten, "The Expansion of the Montessori Method in India and Neighbouring Countries", in Joosten & Gupta, eds, op. cit., p. 64.


182. Trudeau, op. cit., p. 76.

183. Ibid., p. 86.

184. Norma Shastry, Interview, C. Wilson, 12 December, 1986. She had "always thought of Madame as a Theosophist."

CHAPTER FIVE

"REAPING THE HARVEST"
MONTESSORI IN INDIA 1944-1949

- Introduction
- Montessori and Pre-school Education in Official Policy
- Montessori as Missionary in India
- "The Flowering in the Desert" - The Birla Education Trust
- The Arundale-Montessori Training Centre
- Montessori for the Villages
- "Reaping the Harvest" - The Culmination of her Work
- Montessori and the Indian Years
INTRODUCTION

In 1944 Maria Montessori and her son Mario were released from internment and were permitted to travel throughout India to give lectures and courses. This chapter proposes to trace the direction of the Montessori movement in India following their release until their final departure for Europe in 1949. The chapter will reveal that although Montessori spent a considerable time in India and trained many teachers, her Method was never ultimately, adopted by Governments. To attempt to account for this, the chapter will therefore commence with an examination of official policy towards pre-school education focusing on the Central Advisory Board's post-war development plan, known as The Sargent Report, which included a section on pre-school education.

The second section will describe the period immediately after Montessori's release, in which she embarked on a nation wide tour to place her movement on the sub-continent on a sound footing. The high point of this period was the holding of the First All-India Montessori Conference in the desert town of Pilani where the Birla Education Trust had established a Montessori school. The third section will discuss the establishment of this school and, the relocation of the organizational structure for the Montesori movement in India away from Adyar to Pilani under the patronage of the Birla Education Trust.

The establishment of the Arundale-Montessori Training Centre in an independent partitioned India is discussed in the fourth section. The fifth section introduces two attempts to take the Montessori Method to "village" India. They will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters but have been introduced here for the purpose of historical continuity and to highlight Montessori's major preoccupation with and
patronage by elite groups in India. The events leading up to the final departure of the Montessoris will be discussed and the chapter will conclude with an examination of the impact of Madame Montessori's presence upon the Montessori movement in India and the impact of the Indian experience upon Montessori's own life and work.

**MONTESSORI AND PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN OFFICIAL POLICY**

During the period of Montessori's internment in India, considerable attention was devoted in official and non-official circles at both the Central Government and the Provincial levels, to the preparation of plans for future educational directions. The Central Advisory Board of Education was engaged in a critical examination of various aspects of Indian education and in 1943 the Board was asked by the Reconstruction Committee of the Viceroy's Executive Council, to submit a post-war development plan. The plan became known as The Sargent Report after the Board's ex-officio chairman, John Sargent, Educational Adviser to the Government of India. It was submitted in January, 1944.

By 1943 the granting of Indian independence after the war was being discussed in Britain and there was a view in official circles, as John Sargent told the East India Association that,

> ... if we are really going to hand India over to the Indians in the near future, we ought for our own credit if for no other reason, to hand it over as a going concern. It can hardly be so described at any rate in the educational field.

The Sargent Report contained a plan which attempted a remedy to the problems of Indian education, but one that it was estimated would take forty years to effect. While care had been taken not to copy Western educational ideas and methods, "without being fully satisfied that they are those best suited to India", the Board's substantive aim
was the provision of standards of education, "comparable with those already attained in Great Britain and other western countries before the war," in order "to place India on an approximate level with other civilized communities." Significantly, at the time of the preparation of the final Report, "Caretaker Governments" remained in charge in the Provinces, whilst Gandhi and most of the Congress leaders were still in gaol. Nationalists were sceptical at the time, of the value of such plans as they were believed to represent the interests of Britain and not India. The Indian members of the Board were hardly nationalists and were therefore more likely to accede to British views. Indeed it was noted that the Report was largely the work of Sargent.

Universal compulsory and free education for boys and girls between the ages of six and fourteen was afforded the highest priority "in order to ensure literacy and the minimum preparation for citizenship." The Board also concluded that: "An adequate provision of pre-primary instruction in the form of Nursery Schools or classes is an essential adjunct to any national system of education." It considered that while compulsory pre-school education might not be feasible, nursery schools and classes should be free and every effort made to persuade parents to send their children, especially in urban areas with insanitary housing and where mothers were required to work.

The Board expressed some concern, however, not only at the apathy and neglect by successive Central and Provincial Governments in India towards pre-school education, but also the "ignorance and indifference" of Indian parents in relation to early childhood education. According to The Sargent Report, Even if proper facilities were provided, it would be by no means an easy matter to persuade the Indian mother to subordinate her natural affections in the interest of a more healthy physical and mental environment for her children. A great deal of propaganda and training of public opinion will be necessary before a
system of pre-primary education can be successfully introduced.\textsuperscript{14}

Some members of the Board opposed the adoption of pre-school education even though the proposals were comparable to schemes adopted in Britain.\textsuperscript{15} They only signed the document subject to the inclusion of their own reservations. Concern was expressed that the Report was recommending the implantation in village India of a system of education developed in a highly urbanized and industrialized country like England.\textsuperscript{16} They argued that pre-school education would probably not be possible in rural India for several decades and should not therefore be freely provided until a large proportion of the population were willing and able to take advantage of it.\textsuperscript{17}

A national pre-school education scheme was opposed by some because of the cost and drain on resources its provision on a large scale would necessitate,\textsuperscript{18} but also because of the widely held belief that the optimum environment for the education of the very young child was in the home under maternal guidance. One opposing voice hoped that,

\ldots{} this evil of western industrialism - mothers at work in factories - will not be reproduced in India. Nothing, not even the brightest and most up-to-date nursery school, can be a substitute for the influence of the mother, even an illiterate mother, in regard to the earliest education of the child. Education in the traditional social ideas and emotions of the people can be done only through the mother. We want to breed human beings not State-cells. And the prospect of a thorough State-bred population is appalling.\textsuperscript{19}

Such opposition ignored the vital economic contribution of women at the village level as well as in the cities and towns, a contribution made necessary by poverty. They had also not considered the value of nursery education in association with the kind of village cottage industry advocated by Gandhi. The Sargent Report was proposing at least some attempt by Government to ensure that pre-school age children did not
suffer because of economic want.

The Board did not, however, nominate any specific method of pre-school education as suitable for India but spoke in general terms of fostering the mental, social and physical development of the child "through sensory-training, through the promotion of self-expression, through community living and companionship in an educationally controlled environment." \(^{20}\) In the Board's view, "There is hardly any room for any formal instruction in the 3 R's in the daily programme of a Nursery school." \(^{21}\) Although they were concerned at the appalling level of primary school wastage and illiteracy in India, members did not consider the possibility that a pre-school education scheme which incorporated literacy and numeracy might contribute to the alleviation of these problems.

The Board was undoubtedly aware of the Montessori Method, which emphasized cognitive skills including literacy and numeracy, and of the presence of its founder in India. In acknowledging the significant role of private initiative in the provision of pre-school education in India, the Report noted that the best known institutions were, the Jitendra Narayan Ray Infant and Nursery School for Indian children in Bengal, the Rajghat School and Children's Hostel, Benares, and the Infant's Section of the Besant Theosophical School Adyar, in which the Montessori system of education was followed. \(^{22}\) Montessori and her son were interned, however, as "enemy aliens" and could therefore do little to influence official policy. The Montessori Method had also been largely adopted by private interests in India and provided a livelihood for many of its proponents. It was generally considered too expensive for widespread application by governments. \(^{23}\)

The Sargent Report believed private initiative would continue to play an important role, but doubted if it could "be relied upon to fill the gap." \(^{24}\) Pre-school education was therefore viewed as largely a State responsibility, especially where mothers were required to work. Cost,
however, proved an inhibiting factor in the deliberations, particularly in view of the large numbers of children concerned - there were an estimated 21,308,000 children between three and six years in the rural areas and 3,100,000 in the towns of British India in 1940. The Board assumed that, as in England, one in seven children would attend voluntarily before the compulsory school age, thus necessitating provision for 3,500,000 children. The proposed Scheme provided for only one third of these children in nursery schools and classes. The total estimated cost of the proposal was Rs.31,840,000, the average salary envisaged for teachers being Rs.42.5 per month. The Board acknowledged the difficulty of obtaining the necessary space and equipment but suggested that much of the cost and the problem of obtaining adequate staff could be reduced if senior female high school and Basic school students could be seconded to nursery schools for specific periods of training in child welfare.25

The Sargent proposals barely attempted to provide pre-school education for the millions of children below the age of six but none the less marked a significant step forward in giving official recognition to the provision of a national scheme of pre-school education. Other Post-War Reconstruction plans prepared by the National Planning Committee and the All-India Educational Conference also acknowledged the importance of pre-school education by incorporating it in a national education scheme.26 Neither of these plans proposed that the Montessori Method should be utilized.

While the British Raj had no interest in adopting the Montessori Method in India, there was some attempt at the official level to take advantage of the presence of Madame Montessori. Towards the end of the war an officer of the political police attached to the Government of Madras visited Maria Montessori and her son offering them an apology from the Allies for their suspicions that the Montessoris were spies. An invitation was extended to Dr Montessori to speak about her Method over
the Government Broadcasting system. Her lectures would be publicized throughout India and the world. She refused, however, fearing her work would be utilized for propaganda purposes in support of the war effort. Montessori believed that the British were not really interested in taking up her ideas on behalf of the child but merely wished to utilize her personal following for political purposes. Perhaps if she had complied the Montessori movement in India might have attracted the whole hearted support of the British. Ultimately, however, Montessori would not have allowed her Method to be dominated by Governments. She had left Italy for that reason. In India she had spoken out in support of freedom and had argued that her educational methods encouraged true independence on the part of the child. It would have been an act of great hypocrisy to collaborate with the Raj.

MONTESSORI AS MISSIONARY IN INDIA

The restrictions on her movement were lifted in 1944 and Montessori emerged from her forest gurukul to present the culmination of her life's work to India and the world. No longer an "enemy alien" she was free to gather her apostles and to reembark on her ministry, to deliver the Messianic gospel of the child which she believed would lead the way to peace and world unity through "right" education.

At the conclusion of the Advanced Course at Kodaikanal in 1944, Montessori had been invited by the Headmistresses Association of Ceylon to give a course of lectures there. After her long internment in India she was unsure initially as to her popularity in Ceylon. However, Joyce Gunasekera, a devoted Sinhalese student, was able to reassure her. Another Sinhalese student, Lena Wickramatne, had returned to Ceylon from Kodaikanal in June, 1944, establishing the first Children's House in Colombo, and, later that month, Madame and Mario followed her to Ceylon.
Montessori was indeed warmly welcomed and was soon being met by educationists and officials of the Ministry of Education. The Montessori training course, the first in Ceylon, received official recognition and by August 1944, an Association Montessori Internationale had been organized in Ceylon. The aim of the association was to assist the development of the child through the application of the Montessori Method and to further propagate Dr Montessori's educational ideas and the use of her didactic apparatus throughout the island. Consistent with Montessori activities elsewhere, emphasis was placed upon the protection and perpetration of "the essential form and spirit of the Montessori System and to prevent unauthorized manufacture or distribution of Montessori devices or materials...." The Montessori apparatus was to be supplied in Ceylon by the Hewavitarna Industrial School, Rajagiriya. The wealthy Hewavitarna family, like the Birlas of India, were well known for their educational, religious and industrial philanthropy.

The demonstration of support for the Method amongst the educated élite in Ceylon, enabled Montessori to return to India later that year with the confidence and enthusiasm, "to organize a full fledged nationwide campaign. During the years of internment, as well as preparing her plan of "Cosmic Education", Montessori had been engaged in the extension of her education to the period from birth to three years of age. The campaign to propagate the Method in its new form, was to commence with a course of lectures in Ahmedabad beginning in December 1944.

Despite war time stringencies restricting air travel in India, Madame was able to avoid the rigours of a long train journey from the South and arrived in Ahmedabad by aeroplane on 20 December. The Montessoris once again enjoyed the patronage of the wealthy Indian élite as guests of Sarala Devi Sarabhai and her family for some months. The Sarabhais provided Madame and her entourage with a separate bungalow in the grounds of their vast compound at Shahibag.
The lecture course, which was attended by some three hundred enthusiastic English and Gujarati speaking women, was held at the Gujar­
at Vidyapith (the University established by Gandhi), where a hostel was organized to cater for the students from outlying districts. Montessori focussed her lectures around the new ideas she had developed concerning the education of children before the age of three years, because many of the students were mothers - she had always encouraged as many mothers as possible to attend her courses in India. The presence of very young children in the Sarabhai household also influenced her decision to introduce the new material. The lectures were later published in a volume entitled The Absorbent Mind.

In India, particularly during the years of internment, Montessori was able to observe babies closely. On visits to the Kodaikanal Bazzar, for example, she would sit in the car and watch with great fascination the Indian women carrying babies on their hips or on their backs. Montessori was also able to observe the way Indian babies were cared for in the extended family by relatives of all ages. She noted that the infant was stimulated by and constantly "absorbed" the surrounding family activity, the sights, sounds and physical contact. Mario Montessori recalled that much of the inspiration for the "Absorbent Mind" concept also derived from her observation of the very young children staying in the international community at Adyar, where there was a boarding section attached to the Besant School:

There indeed one could experience the phenomena which Dr. Montessori has included in the term 'Absorbent Mind', the effortless absorption of language, whatever it was, the development of movement, the development of independence, the development of intelligence....

The "Absorbent Mind" concept concerned the child's unconscious ability to take into the psyche, all the inputs from the environment. In the process the child's personality and intellect were being formed. It was
a new idea which Montessori had not expressed before outside India. Her Indian experience had not only produced the "Cosmic Curriculum", but also, utilizing the principle of the "Absorbent Mind", the possibility of "education from birth." \(^{39}\)

The Ahmedabad course concluded in mid-April and in May the Montessoris journeyed north to escape the harsh Indian summer and to give a further course at Srinagar, sponsored by the Maharaja of Kashmir. Rukmini Devi Arundale had hoped that Madame would return to Adyar to complete the work begun at the Besant School, prior to her internment at Kodaikanal. \(^{40}\) But, Adyar was not in any condition to provide adequate accommodation for the Montessoris in the manner to which they were accustomed as the large bungalows were still occupied by the Army. The Society's funds had also been severely depleted during the war. \(^{41}\) Fortunately, for the Theosophical Society, the accommodation and living expenses of the Montessoris were provided by the Sarabhai family in both Ahmedabad and Kashmir.

Despite the unavailability of facilities at Adyar, the future of the Montessori movement in India seemed assured during this period. After the Kashmir course there was to be an All-India Montessori Conference at Pilani, in the Princely State of Jaipur, in December and Montessori had been invited to give a course at Karachi in January 1946. \(^{42}\) The uncertainties caused by political exigencies which had plagued Montessori in the past, were gone and she wrote to her old friend Anna Maccheroni from Srinagar: "I am well, but gradually my vivacity and my faith diminish. Perhaps it is because all goes well and I have no worries: the stimulus of having to struggle is lacking." \(^{43}\)

In Kashmir, however, Montessori received the sad news of the passing of her friend and benefactor in India, Dr George Arundale during the night of 11-12 August, after a six month long illness. \(^{44}\) Montessori owed much to Arundale. He was responsible, ultimately, for her initial
visit to India and also, through the auspices of the Theosophical Society, he provided her with financial support during the years of internment. Much of the expansion of the Montessori movement in India, was due to Arundale's efforts through his speeches and writings praising the Method, and in encouraging the establishment of Montessori Children's Houses in Theosophical educational institutions like the Besant school.

Six highly successful teacher training courses had been undertaken in India by the Montessoris, due to the patronage of the Theosophical Society and in particular George Arundale who placed every possible resource at their disposal. He lent the services of his personal staff and, other Theosophical workers were also spared in an honorary capacity, to assist the Montessoris. Madame was also able to take advantage of Theosophical journals to further disseminate her ideas world wide. The Theosophical Publishing House published her speeches as small booklets from which she derived royalties. By 1945 four booklets had been published: The Child, Introducing the Child, Peace and Education, and Reconstruction in Education. Rukmini Devi's institution, Kalakshetra, which had exclusive rights to produce the Montessori apparatus in India, also payed Madame royalties. Without the continuation of such patronage, the expansion of the movement in India was threatened.

"THE FLOWERING IN THE DESERT" - MONTESSORI AND THE BIRLA EDUCATION TRUST

The Kashmir course finished in September, 1945 and the Montessoris began their journey south to Madras for consultations with Rukmini Devi and the Theosophical Society concerning the future of their work in India. Before proceeding to Madras, however, they visited Pilani to discuss plans for the proposed Montessori Conference, and whilst there, saw what Madame described as "a great scheme of education." The
institution included a Montessori school and for a time, Pilani became an important centre of Montessori activity in India.

The school Montessori visited belonged to the Birla Education Trust which had been formed on 23 January, 1929 by wealthy industrialist G.D. Birla and his brother. The impetus for the institution had initially come from the Birla's grandfather who had wanted to have his grandsons, then aged eight and six, properly educated without having to send them away to a private English school. He had therefore acquired the services of a teacher. Various neighbours also wanted to take advantage of this instruction and in 1900 the first Birla school was established with three hundred pupils. 48

Like his grandfather, G.D. Birla was opposed to English education. He was not an educationist, but he was prepared to provide the millions that would enable the establishment in a remote desert town, of an educational institution "to which international educationists would come on pilgrimage, which the Presidents and Prime Ministers of an independent India (itself still a dream) would visit with pride in a great national achievement." 49

Birla opposed British rule because it restricted Indian industrialization, and though wealthy, he was a staunch supporter and patron of Gandhi making Birla House in Bombay available to him whenever he was in Bombay. 50 Birla was conscious of the inappropriateness of much of Indian education with its bias towards preparation for university and neglect of the needs of the country's predominantly rural population. He wanted to provide primary schools with a "rural bias", consonant with Gandhi's view of the need for an education suitable to village India. Emphasis was to be placed on the learning of handicrafts as well as the three R's.

The Birla Education Trust was keen to experiment with progressive methods, particularly those favouring the development of manual skill,
and it had introduced the Montessori Method in its school. In 1943, Lieutenant Commander S.D. Pande, Secretary of the Birla Education Trust, had given a newly employed teacher, Radha Raman Pathak, leave on full pay so that he could attend the Primary course Madame Montessori was conducting in Kodaikanal.

As a young man Radha Raman had developed a strong interest in Gandhi's Basic Education Scheme and was among those who responded to Gandhi's call for teachers to take up the challenge. Like most school teachers of the period, however, he had received no training in the teaching of rural handicrafts. In 1941 he attended a three month course in Delhi given by Mr. Padam Chand of the J.K. Happy Education Society, who had been trained by Madame at Adyar. The course provided an introduction to the Montessori and Kindergarten/Nursery Methods.

Radha Raman became fascinated with the Montessori Method and was keen to utilize it in his own teaching. He heard that the Birla Education Trust was expanding its rural work and wished to participate in the exciting educational experiments they were undertaking at Pilani. Radha Raman wrote to Pande, and ultimately, he was appointed headmaster of a rural school at Kothi on the meagre salary of Rs.65 per month. His commitment to education was such that he turned down the offer of a government job providing Rs.750 per month. Shortly after arriving at Pilani he departed for Kodaikanal where he attended both the Primary and the Advanced Montessori courses.

In 1944 Radha Raman was able to put his Montessori training into practice when he became Headmaster of the new Birla Montessori school, Pilani which commenced on 31 August, Montessori's 74th Birthday. She was delighted with the news of its opening and sent a message from Srinigar hoping that, "it is an institution wherein the child can reveal what is in Him. Make yours such and you will have done well not only for India but for the world." Montessori believed, given the right educational
environment for Indian children, much of the communal strife which threatened to tear India apart would ultimately disappear. The school at Pilani provided the opportunity to begin an experiment which she hoped would, in time, be replicated throughout the sub-continent.

The Birla Montessori school was established as a result of the amalgamation of two existing upper primary schools and the abolition of the third and fourth grades. The new school, which inherited some 250 children and a staff of ten, provided education up to second class only; but children below the age of five were admitted. The Birla Education Trust provided only one set of Montessori materials at the outset and therefore, to enable such a large group of children to take full advantage of them, the materials were initially distributed among several rooms in the following manner:

Sensorial apparatus and the material for exercises of practical life were kept in one room; language material and arithmetic apparatus in another, and materials for drawing and clay modelling in a third. Pictures cut out of the old numbers of the Illustrated Weekly furnished the Geography Room, while old planks, chairs, pipes and such other oddities, brought out of a lumber room, improvised the play material. Thus we were able to create seven centres for the different activities of children, who were divided according to their mental equipment in groups of 28, each in charge of a teacher. The various groups were allotted definite periods for going into different rooms, their teacher accompanied them everywhere.

The splitting up of the apparatus, requiring the children to move, was a departure from strict Montessori practice, but it was the kind of accommodation often met with in India because of large class sizes and a shortage of space and equipment. Further problems were presented by the lack of Montessori training among the staff, apart from Radha Raman. During the first year evening classes were held over a two and a half month period on the theory of the Method. "The practical application of the ideas, however, was left to teachers themselves so as
not to make too abrupt a departure from their old practice." The children also experienced difficulties, not only in moving from room to room, but also in adjusting from the traditional Indian primary school where they had been "suppressed and coerced into inactivity", to a radical new education environment where they were expected to "become active, happy, independent and responsible and that too by means of the same old teacher." 

Early in 1945 some of these problems were alleviated by the purchase of another set of Primary Montessori apparatus and a set of the Advanced Materials. Four new Montessori trained teachers were also employed. The staff began to take an active part in the preparation of the educational environments, collecting pictures and making charts and cards. The enthusiasm of the pupils and teachers so impressed the Trust authorities that they approved the addition of four new rooms including a science and a craft room and the construction of a playground. With the provision of extra rooms, it became possible to allocate the large central space exclusively to the pre-school age-group. Low cupboards and small geometrically-shaped tables were provided.

When the Montessoris arrived in October from Kashmir they were greatly impressed by the progress of the school. They spent some twenty days in Pilani supervising arrangements for the forthcoming All-India Montessori Conference, but they also involved themselves in the Birla Montessori school and in plans for a new building which was "especially designed to meet the needs of the Indian child", and was to be "an incarnation of Dr Montessori's ideas in bricks and mortar." Exactly what kind of Indian child and which needs were to be provided for, was apparently not specified. It was to be an ambitious project and included an aquarium, a swimming pool, a small lake and a sports ground. The design was "inspired by a beautiful Montessori school in Holland", so that it was hardly in keeping with Indian villages.
An examination of the tasks included in the Exercises of Practical Life at the school also reveals that they would have been more familiar to the children of the Westernized elites than those from the traditional rural area which Pilani served:

The children sweep the floor, dust the furniture and other material, clean pictures, windows and wash hands, polish boots, comb hair, arrange flower vases and cut vegetables. The materials with which they perform these activities are brooms, dustpans, pieces of cloth, brushes, wash-basins, combs, tables and cupboards - all of small size to suit them.61

Such activities undoubtedly enabled the children to "learn concentration, coordination of movement, independence, social adjustment in waiting their turns and sense of order in replacing the material back in its proper place after use."62 Some of the tasks, however, were hardly applicable to village life. Few village huts contained furniture to be dusted or polished, there were no glass windows to be cleaned and boots were not customary apparel. The Birla Montessori school with its expensive facilities and imported education, seemed from the outset to be planned as a showcase, not as a model for replication in village India.

Before the commencement of the All-India Montessori Conference at Pilani, the Montessoris returned to Adyar where there were plans for the establishment of a Montessori teacher training college. The centre was to be named after both George Arundale and Montessori. This was fitting, according to Rukmini Devi, because not only were both educationists, "but above all they were tremendous friends and admired and understood each other. Therefore their affectionate comradeship will be known to all and to future generations at least through this."63

The passing of her friend George Arundale had been a great loss to Montessori but it had none the less made the Centre a possibility. Arundale supported the Montessoris in India, but he had opposed the centralization of their movement in the form of an institution at Adyar.
He told Mario that Adyar could not support two major world movements, Theosophy, and Montessori education. With Arundale's passing there was no major opposition to the establishment of a Montessori Centre at the Theosophical Headquarters.

The establishment of such a centre was essential for Montessori if her movement was to survive and expand in India. Travelling from place to place to hold courses and lectures with the "Montessori Circus", as one of her Indian disciples described it, was most unsatisfactory for the Montessoris, for their entourage of workers, and also for the students. The travelling was costly and sometimes arduous, and it was not always easy to assemble sufficient trained assistants prepared to volunteer their services to demonstrate the apparatus, and to help the Montessoris with the examinations and course administration.

The most significant problem, however, concerned the quality of the training. In a short three-month course, the students were expected to absorb the principles and practice of the Montessori Method in its entirety, but often without the benefit of observations in functioning Montessori classes, or the experience of practice teaching. The courses, apart from the 1942-1943 period, were generally very large because Montessori hoped to acquire as many converts as possible. It was extremely difficult to examine adequately such large numbers of students and assess their grasp of the Method.

Montessori was convinced that to overcome these problems, it was essential to establish a central training college, and as well, a model school and a laboratory in which to further the experimental work she had initiated in India. She also hoped to produce publications to disseminate her ideas and expand the movement. Montessori was aware of the enormous potential for her work in India and hoped to remain there for some time. She told Theosophists, "There are great possibilities for my movement. Either I must have a centre, or my movement is gone. This is a necessity,
but I have to make it a reality."66

On her return to Adyar, there was an invitation from the Minister of Instruction in the new post-war government of her native Italy, for Montessori to return there:

The Italian Government presents through me the deep homage of the whole nation to the noble educationist who gave the greatest impulse for the formation of free consciences through the school and wishes to see you soon in Italy to contribute to the moral reconstruction of our country.67

But Montessori was unswayed by such overtures and preferred to remain in India where she had always received such warm support. Besides she had committed herself and Mario to the proposed Arundale-Montessori Training Centre.

The teachers' training centre was to be established in 1947 as part of the Besant Centenary celebrations. These celebrations were to also include the establishment of a Besant College incorporating a section devoted to international cultural work. The Besant Theosophical High School and Kalakshetra were to be developed as "feeders" to both the College and the Training Centre.68 A meeting to launch the Scheme was held in the Theosophical Society's Headquarters Hall at Adyar on December 1st, Arundale's 67th birthday. It was chaired by former Premier of Madras and associate of Gandhi, Dr C. Rajagopalachariar.69 Mindful of nationalist sentiment, Rukmini Devi assured the audience that although Dr Montessori was an international personality, her educational Method was none the less applicable to India and was indeed "a national scheme for every country, because she works for humanity."70

Montessori was in great demand at the time as her assistance in the field of education was sought overseas and also, by several Indian princes. According to Rukmini Devi the Theosophical Society which had neither great financial resources not facilities to offer, was therefore
greatly honoured that Montessori had agreed to become Director of the new institution. It was intended that the Centre would initially commence with a preliminary course of three months in child psychology and theories of teaching to be followed by seven months of practical training. Rukmini hoped to attract the support of State Governments for the scheme and already had received the promise of assistance from her friend the Dewan of the southern Princely State of Travancore, Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer.71

In her inaugural address, Montessori expressed her aspirations for the new institution. She continued to plead for a social revolution which could only take place through right education of the child. Referring to the forces clamouring for freedom, not only in India, but elsewhere in the world, Montessori claimed that, "We cannot become free if the child is a slave; we cannot expect the greater consciousness of the new man if that consciousness does not develop from childhood,...."72

For Montessori, the only means to develop this consciousness was through the provision of the appropriate educational environment wherein the child could explore and discover, without hindrance or imposition from adults.

Montessori argued that the proposed centre would enable the study of child psychology in order to ascertain the most appropriate educational environment for the child's optimum development, for the liberation of the child. She also spoke out against the use of violence on the path to Indian independence and told her audience, "Do not ask for your own independence if you have not first given independence to your own children."73 She warned that independence for children could not be achieved by violence, but through science, wisdom, humility and love. A more humane society would be the resultant reward.

The announcement of the proposed training centre assured Montessori of the future of her Method in India and she returned to Pilani towards the end of December for the First All-India Montessori
Conference. The 27th-29th December, had been chosen for the Conference because the Christmas period was believed to be an auspicious time for the birth of a new chapter in the Montessori movement in India. There were to be five main sessions, the subjects for discussion being, "The Child in the Family", "The Child in the School", and "The Child in the Society". 74

The Conference, which was held in the Birla College Hall, proved very popular. Several hundred delegates and visitors attended from all parts of the sub-continent including Kashmir, and from Ceylon. There were also official delegates representing the governments of many of the Provinces and Princely States. The majority were women:

It was a colourful hall packed with artistic saris and eager faces but much more colourful looked the apostle of child-education, Dr. Montessori, with her beautiful flowing robes and a lively twinkle in her eyes signifying a great and abiding interest in a noble cause. 75

Montessori made full use of her personal charisma by insisting on presiding over events, initiating and concluding the discussions on each topic in Italian. Mario, whom she continued to introduce as her nephew, translated. The Cosmic Plan of Education was chosen as the topic for her inaugural address and with her characteristic idealism, Montessori claimed the scheme would bring co-operation and peace to humanity. The emphasis on the organic unity of man and nature in the cosmos struck a deep chord with many of the delegates. The Hindu and Buddhist doctrine of Ahimsa stressing respect for all life and which formed the basis of Gandhian thought, was an ideal they hoped to inculcate in their children.

Montessori's tirade against the neglect of the child was believed by some delegates to be more appropriate to Western circumstances, however, for in India it was considered vital to bear healthy children who would later perform the death ceremonies for their parents. In an
agrarian society, children were also essential for the family's survival, so that they were always cared for. They were also continually surrounded by adults in the joint-family, whether in the fields or the home, and were therefore rarely neglected. Indeed attention was usually showered upon children whatever their circumstances. Societal attitudes towards child-rearing, however, were primarily based on custom and tradition. In the face of modern research in child psychology, these were regarded as outmoded, not necessarily providing for the optimum development of the child. Montessori's call for a scientific approach to child rearing and education was thus given strong support by delegates.76

However, whilst speakers such as Sarala Devi Sarabhai, F.G. Pearce, Director of Public Instruction in Gwalior State, and Dr Montessori, were highly idealistic in their exhortation to respect the needs of the individual child to encourage optimum development, others sounded a note of warning against such excessive idealism. Dr K.C. Khanna introduced a note of realism when he said, "it is not that we in India do not know what ideal conditions are necessary for the fullest physical, moral and intellectual development of our children, but we have not the means to secure them."77 Poverty was the great scourge of many efforts for national reconstruction in India. Montessori, however, had directed her message at the Westernized elites who could so easily afford the Method. She made little effort to devise educational materials appropriate to the learning needs of the great bulk of India's children who endured abject poverty in the villages.

Apart from the various discussion sessions, there was also an exhibition of the Advanced and the Primary Montessori apparatus for Conference delegates and visitors, and there were daily visits to the Birla Montessori school. Some of the visitors were so impressed with the progress of the school that there were immediate offers to lure the Montessori trained staff elsewhere. Radha Raman wrote:
In January, in the desert of Shekhawati the garden of the school was a comfort to the eyes of the visitors, but when they went away after the conference, they took with them not merely pleasant reminiscences of the spirit of our school, but also three of our new teachers.78

According to Radha Raman, the visits also provided the first opportunity to witness "the results, although preliminary, of the application of Dr Montessori's ideas to the teaching of Indian children above five years of age."79 Advanced Montessori apparatus had been introduced at the Besant Montessori school at Adyar for some time, but this was probably the first opportunity for a large number of people to observe the Cosmic Curriculum in operation.

Another function of the Conference was the election of new office bearers of the AMI (India). With the death of George Arundale, the position of Vice-President, had become vacant. The Secretary of the Birla Education Trust, S.D. Pande was elected to fill the position. Radha Raman, was elected Organizing Secretary and Representative of the General Director of the AMI (India), Mr Mario Montessori.80 The Conference decided to shift the Association's Headquarters from Adyar to Pilani where several of the new office bearers resided. Another reason for the move was the prospect of financial support from the Birlas. G.D. and B.M. Birla had agreed to become Patrons of the Association and had each donated Rs.1,000 to its funds.81

Montessori's long held wish for a journal to publicize her Method, and to keep in touch with her Indian students was fulfilled at the Conference with the decision to establish The Montessori Magazine, to be published at Pilani. The quarterly journal would not restrict itself, however, to material specifically concerned with the Montessori Method and movement. Rather, the Editor welcomed material from educational, medical and welfare officials, indeed anyone interested in child welfare.82

The Conference proved a resounding success. It had established
a strong institutional structure through which the Montessori movement could function and expand in India. It had also enabled a refresher course to be held for the many Montessorians who attended. They had observed the application of the Method to children in a new form and across a wider age group than most had hitherto seen. A report of the Conference concluded:

Dr. Montessori and her ideas and methods have evoked a wide-spread interest in this country, her humanitarian appeals on behalf of the child have stirred sympathetic chords and through her courses she has gathered a large mass of enthusiastic young men and women ready to work for her ideas and methods. Already she is a great and powerful influence on our educational thought and practice, but if that influence for the well being and redemption of the Indian child is to live with us, a Montessori Conference should be a regular annual feature of the intellectual life and endeavour in this country.83

But the introduction of regular Montessori Conferences was not itself sufficient to ensure the continued expansion of the movement. If the Montessori Method was to have any significant impact on post-war educational reconstruction its appeal would have to be broadened and a more flexible institutional structure adopted. While the decision making for the AMI (India) remained primarily under the control of the Montessori's such a proposition was impossible. Surrounded by wealth and privilege, Montessori was largely out of touch with the problems of the village child whom she professed to have come to redeem. The Indians she mainly encountered were high caste and belonged to the Western-educated urban elite.

The involvement of the Birla Education Trust in the Montessori movement had caused a "flowering in the desert" at Pilani in the establishment of a magnificent Montessori school and in the holding of a highly successful all-India conference. With the transfer there of the headquarters of the AMI (India), Pilani became an important centre for
the Montessori movement in India.

THE ARUNDALE-MONTESSORI TRAINING CENTRE

Montessori returned triumphant from Pilani to Adyar for discussions with Rukmini Devi concerning the proposed Arundale-Montessori training centre and to meet with the Director of Public Instruction of Madras Presidency. As the training centre was to be inaugurated in 1947 as part of the Besant Centenary celebrations, the Montessoris took the opportunity to return to Europe to be reunited with Mario's children after their long period of absence in India. Before leaving the subcontinent, however, they had agreed to give the Seventh Indian Montessori Training Course (Primary) in Karachi where there was strong interest in the Method, particularly amongst Theosophists.

Montessori received the support of the local branch of the Theosophical Society in holding the Course there. At the conclusion, on 27th June, 1946, she inaugurated the Karachi Branch of the AMI (India) in the Theosophical Hall. The meeting was presided over by the Director of Education for Sind Province, Dr Daudpotta who was elected Vice-President of the new branch. The President, a Parsi, Mr Jamshed Nussurwanjee, was instrumental in establishing a new limited liability company, "Montessori Materials Ltd", with Dr Montessori and Rukmini Devi as Directors. The company was to take over from Kalakshetra the sole right to manufacture the Montessori apparatus in India. With the increasing demand for the apparatus and the prospect of further increases following the establishment of the training college, the Art and Craft Department at Kalakshetra would be unable to provide supplies on a commercial basis.

On 30th July, 1946, the Montessoris returned to Holland and to a Europe devastated by war. In India, despite the humiliation of her
internment, and her concern for the safety of Mario's children still in Holland, Montessori had been shielded from the horror and the danger of the war. She was feted and surrounded by relative comfort and had suffered only the deprivation of her family and European friends. Even at Kodaikanal, where the Montessoris lived a simple existence, they were able to continue their work assisted by a coterie of devoted students. After her sojourn in India she was able to return to Europe with vigour and enthusiasm and, despite her age, a firm resolve to continue to preach what Theosophist Helen Veale described as Montessori's "gospel of human regeneration through the child." \(^{87}\)

After a month in Amsterdam with family and friends during which time she celebrated her 76th birthday, Madame and Mario flew to London to give a training course. \(^{88}\) At an international gathering of teachers and students in the Examination Hall, Queen's Square, London, on 3rd September, Montessori gave the first of a series of lectures on child education. She called for the study of the child to be placed on a scientific basis. The importance of child education for later human development had at last been recognized but she urged that "The building up of man, the phases through which he lived, must attract more attention and the study must be a science." \(^{89}\) Montessori argued that if the problem of attaining human peaceful co-existence in the post-war work was to be solved the work must begin with early childhood, "from the moment when all men were alike." \(^{90}\)

There was nothing new in much of her rhetoric but she was able to inform her followers of her additions to the Method conceived during the years in India. The lectures were given in the same imperious manner; she had become the queen mother of child education. But, they were a departure from her usual practice in that she delivered them in halting English. \(^{91}\) Perhaps there was no longer the same need to transport her audience with her flowery Italian. She may have also considered it
inappropriate to use her native tongue in a country which had just fought a war against Italy and which had interned her.

During her six years in exile in India, she had been largely forgotten by the educational fraternity, indeed many people, including her old students, had assumed she was dead. The lectures and the training course in London served to remind the world not only of her existence, but that her enthusiasm and devotion to her work had not diminished. The task was as urgent as ever, but Montessori was out of touch with developments in child psychology. To give substance to the Montessori rhetoric she would have to acknowledge the work of others in the field and to agree to collaborate. But she had cut herself and her movement off from the mainstream and with her advancing years such a task was beyond her.

Montessori preferred to return to India and she held frequent discussions with Rukmini Devi, who was in London during a European tour, to plan the Arundale-Montessori Training Centre. In India elaborate plans were already being made for their return. As the Training Centre was due to open from July 1947, a refresher course was to be held until the planned arrival of the Montessoris in September. The regular course would commence on the 1st October. The Theosophical Society had given permission for the Olcott Gardens, which still contained military huts and camp facilities left over from the war years, to be rented again for the course; and the necessary staff, furniture for the lecture and classrooms, laboratories and hostels, were being organized. Fees were to be higher but the hostel accommodation was of a more permanent nature than the palm leaf huts of previous years. Food and labour costs were also higher. Helen Veale denied that there was any attempt to exploit the students and claimed the costs were justified. She impressed upon Theosophists, the view that India was indeed fortunate in having "an international celebrity of Dr. Montessori's genius to direct her educational reforms."
By March 1947 the Arundale-Montessori Training Centre had begun registering students for its first term later in the year. Assistance for the establishment of the Centre had been received, as promised, in the form of a donation of Rs.25,000 for the first year from the Government of the State of Travancore. The State also agreed to send students to the new Centre. Rukmini Devi had written to the Governments of India and Madras seeking recognition of the Training Centre and for the Diplomas it planned to award to students, and had received indications of a positive decision. The Centre's teacher training activities were to commence in the Olcott Gardens, Besant Gardens and Damodar Gardens, all in the Theosophical Society's compound, but Rukmini hoped that ultimately they would be able to open on their own grounds.

The inauguration of the Arundale-Montessori Training Centre took place at Adyar on the 3rd July, 1947. In keeping with Theosophical practice, the auspicious full moon day of the Hindu calendar month of Asala, commemorating the first sermon of Buddha, was specially chosen. Rukmini Devi wrote in the Theosophist:

> It is fitting that, on a day commemorating the message of Lord Buddha, an institution is offered which will give to the world good and enlightened teachers moved to undertake their profession in a spirit of love and understanding for the child.

A ceremony was held at Olcott Gardens in the morning attended by students and staff of Kalakshetra, the Besant Theosophical School and the Arundale-Montessori Training Centre, at which a lamp was lit in dedication to the service of the Child. Representing the Montessoris at the Ceremony was a former Dutch pupil, Albert Joosten, who gave a short address on their behalf and in keeping with the spiritual atmosphere, and with Indian custom, suggested that a small boy present be garlanded as a representative of the child.

In the evening a public function was held in the Headquarters
Hall of the Theosophical Society to mark the establishment of the first permanent Montessori training centre outside Europe. Joosten took the opportunity to thank India for the generous hospitality her people had showered upon the Montessoris and for the great interest throughout India in the Montessori Method. It provided, he said, the kind of education most likely to lead to "moral re-armament and lasting world peace." 100

The commencement of the Centre was applauded by members of the educational fraternity in Madras who attended the function. The Chancellor of the University of Madras, Sir A. Kakosomswami Mudaliar, stressed the value of Montessori teacher training and the significant role Montessori teachers could play in education. He claimed there were insufficient trained teachers in Madras Presidency to meet the demand and it was ludicrous to speak of expanding primary and secondary education in the Province without them. The Arundale-Montessori Training College was therefore filling an urgent need and he hoped that it would receive recognition from the Department of Public Instruction, and that the Centre's diplomas would be accepted as equivalent to educational training provided by the University.

The Vice-Chancellor was less than enthusiastic, however, with regard to the question of the Centre's affiliation to the University. He felt that such recognition would necessitate regulation by the various rules and statutes of the University and would therefore inhibit the vitality and the essential innovative nature of such an institution. It was also his fervent desire that teachers graduating from the Centre would not be blind followers of a particular method, but would develop sufficient creative abilities to cope with the specific needs of the children they were to teach. 101

The Montessoris finally arrived in Madras on 7th August by air from Karachi to take over the running of the Centre. Whilst in Europe, Montessori had returned briefly to her native Italy and had been honoured
by the Constituent Assembly of the Italian Parliament for her services to education. The Government urged her to remain and assist with the reconstruction of the nation's education system, and the University of Berlin offered her a Chair: but she preferred to return to India. She had refused to allow political interference in her work in the past in Italy and was probably wary of allowing such a situation to develop again. Montessori felt there was stronger interest in her Method in India:

'If they really intend to do something, I'll come back' she commented laughing, 'Otherwise I'll stay in India. where they are registering infants in the Montessori school from birth the way they do at Oxford.'

On her arrival in Madras she said,

I am happy to be back in India, and that too in an India which is going to be free in a few days. It would have been easy to start centres in other parts of the world, but I have come to India because I love the land most.

This is a glorious period for India, and from now on, every Indian must take an oath that he would work for the progress of the country in all spheres. That is my message to a Free India.

Like Gandhi, Montessori opposed the expansion of the existing education system and believed the uplift and true independence of the Indian people could only come about through right education. She considered her own Method to be "truly basic education" and argued that, being scientific, it provided the means to realize fully, the potential of the Indian child. Montessori had returned to India imbued with great optimism for the future of her work there. She believed that the end of the war and the emergence of India as a newly independent nation promised opportunities for the expansion of her Method as part of the reconstruction of national education. However, Independence, at midnight on 15th August, 1947 also brought partition of the nation to provide for the creation of the new Muslim State of Pakistan and the unleashing of a
savage communal butchery which saw an estimated one million killed as ten million people crossed over from one country to another:

... train loads of Sikh refugees moving east were slaughtered by Muslims in Pakistan and Muslims headed west were butchered by Sikhs and Hindus in India. The stream became a flood, the flood a holocaust of pain, looting, rape, and murder.106

Because of the national upheavals brought about by Partition, few students ventured south to undertake the first Primary and the subsequent Advanced Course at the new Arundale-Montessori college. At the outset, in July, there were only thirty students. It was claimed that the small number was due to uncertainties concerning the actual arrival date of the Montessoris, "but they had come from all parts of India, showing thereby wide-spread interest and enthusiasm in the movement."107 Three months later, however, after the Montessoris had taken over the running of the Centre, student numbers had increased to only forty-five. Fourteen of the students had been sent officially by the Government of the southern State of Travancore which had already provided substantial financial support for the Centre. The Governments of Bombay and the Kingdom of Nepal had also sent students and there were a few from Ceylon.108

As well as the disappointing number of trainees, the new Centre lacked sufficient books and equipment largely due to the shortages created by the widespread national chaos and disruption.109 However, despite these shortcomings the Training Centre managed to function adequately with a competent staff of assistant lecturers. Helen Veale reported:

The Training Centre that opened last July is far from perfect, having been hurried by various urgencies. But its courses expect to get Government recognition and will be long enough to include the necessary school practice and accompanying instruction in cultural subjects, specially needed for the Montessori Teacher who is worthy of the name. The Montessoris are its life and inspiration, but they are assisted and supplemented
by well-qualified professors from various parts of India, skilled in Science, and Arts and sympathetic in spirit.110

The Centre planned to prepare text books for the students in a number of Indian languages, and a Tamil translation of Montessori's recent book *Education for A New World* had been prepared for publication.111

On 1st October, as a memorial to former Theosophical Society President, Dr Annie Besant, the Arundale-Montessori Training Centre, the Besant Theosophical School and *Kalakshetra* were amalgamated in a single institution called the Besant Cultural Centre. Approximately fifty acres of land near the Adyar Beach, on which to build the new institution, had been purchased by the Besant Cultural Trust. The founders hoped that it would eventually develop into a world university in the image of the ancient Nalanda.112 It was inaugurated by Montessori to mark the commencement of the Besant Centenary celebrations. Madame acknowledged the great contribution of her friend claiming that Besant was the "embodiment of universal culture", in combining the best from both the occident and the orient. Dr Besant had sought a truly national education for India, which also accorded with her ancient culture in that the development of all aspects of the child including the spiritual were emphasized. Montessori believed this to be true education and claimed that in encouraging the unified development of the child, the Cultural Centre would indeed reflect the spirit of Annie Besant's work.113

During the Besant Centenary Celebrations *Time* magazine discovered that Maria Montessori, the famous educator, was still alive though "almost forgotten", and despite her advancing age was continuing to train teachers. *Time* also found that the imperious Montessori, "was still quite capable of laying down the law."114

In the shade of a giant banyan tree in the oceanside colony of Adyar, India, she had just laid it down to members of the Indian Theosophical Society. When some-
one asked her if she had become a theosophist, the self-confident old (77) Dottoressa snapped: 'I am a Montessorian.'

Montessori apparently never admitted to Theosophists during all the years of her stay in India that she had once joined their society, although she provided them with numerous hints of early associations with Theosophy and Theosophists, including Dr Besant. Madame once acknowledged to Rukmini Devi that she had read Madame Blavatsky's writings on education "and she was surprised that so long ago that there were educational ideals so similar to her own of today." Montessori thus encouraged the view amongst Theosophists that her Method was consonant with theosophical thought on education but she would never allow them to claim her as their own. By declaring herself to be a "Montessorian", she was equating her movement with that of the Theosophists and also that of Gandhi. She considered her work to be not merely educational but the spearhead of a world-wide social and almost religious movement dedicated to the attainment of universal peace and understanding. Montessori claimed it was only through right education of the child that such a goal could be achieved. The child had revealed to her the requisites of this education and she had become the "apostle of the child", her "Master". Gandhi, however, claimed no such unique enlightenment. He regarded his whole life as an experiment in search of Truth and had denied "Gandhism", claiming: "I myself do not know what is a Gandhian hue. I am sailing an uncharted sea."

MONTESSORI FOR THE VILLAGES

Montessori had renewed her acquaintance with Gandhi following his release from detention in the Agha Khan Palace, Poona, and the removal of restrictions on the Montessoris in 1944. They met at Birla House in Bombay. During the years of detention Gandhi had given consideration
to the possibility of including some kind of early childhood education in his Basic Education Scheme. At his request, the Montessoris had taken with them a set of the Advanced didactic materials. Radha Raman Pathak accompanied them to assist Mario in the demonstration and Dr Zakir Hussain was also present. As the meeting occurred on a Tuesday, being observed by Gandhi as a "day of silence", he made no comment.

Gandhi's major objection to the Montessori Method in the past had been that it was foreign and that it was expensive. At a subsequent meeting he attempted to impress upon Montessori the problem of educating the children of India's 700,000 villages wherein most of her vast poverty stricken and illiterate population resided. He had described these villages as "dungheaps" and urged Montessori to adapt her apparatus for application at the village level:

There are seven hundred thousand of them. Often the only water available for the number of these dung-heaps spread on a five miles radius is a shallow pond where buffaloes wallow and many jackals drink. Your type of education we need; we shall be happy of your help. Make a plan suitable to these conditions and come to me personally any time of the day or of the night.\\

But Montessori was not prepared to make alterations to her Method, even for a Mahatma. Artfully she replied: "I am not a tailor. I have produced the cloth. If you want to wear it in a special way in India, it is for your teachers to cut it according to their taste." The response suggests Montessori was not opposed to those who wished to apply the Method in terms of their own social and cultural milieu. But she refused to concede the use of her name under such circumstances. If the Method was altered it could no longer be called Montessori. By claiming to have "woven the cloth", Montessori was assuming her Method had universal application. Taking the metaphor further, however, she failed to appreciate that not all fabrics are suitable for wear in every environment. She was hoping to provide an expensive foreign "cloth" for Indian
children, just as the British had introduced their own education. Twenty years previously, however, Gandhi had advocated the ritual burning of foreign cloth symbolizing his opposition to Indian dependence upon British goods and institutions. The Wardha Scheme of Basic Education was his attempt to provide a homespun system that was affordable and appropriate to village life.

By the beginning of 1945 Gandhi had become embued with a new vision of Basic Education which he now considered must "include the education of everybody at every stage of life." He had become convinced of the significance of some form of education during early childhood for the child's later development. How much his change of view was influenced by the presence of Madame Montessori in India, and as a consequence of his meeting with her, is not clear; as other proponents of pre-school education including Tarabhai Modak and Sarala Devi Sarabhai were also attempting to influence Gandhi.

At the Third All-India Basic Education Conference, which commenced on 11 January, 1945, he placed his revised scheme before the nation. The four day Conference, examined Gandhi's proposal for the introduction of pre-basic education for children below seven years of age and post-basic for those over fourteen years. Pre-basic education was to involve the introduction to the child of the elementary principles of sanitation, hygiene, nutrition and life-centred activities concerned with helping parents in the home. The Conference accepted the new orientation given to the Wardha Scheme by Gandhi as education "from cradle to grave through manual work and rural handicrafts." Consequently the Provincial Governments and some States commenced extending and in some cases introducing Basic Education. Pre-basic education was, however, only marginally adopted due to the lack of appropriately trained teachers.

One experiment in pre-basic education was begun in Sevagram
village by Shanta Narulkar under the guidance of Gandhi, for children aged two to six years.\textsuperscript{125} He had incorporated those vital aspects of the Montessori Method which did not necessitate the provision of expensive equipment. There could be little benefit derived ultimately from an education which placed undue economic burden on the villagers. Rather, he envisaged that pre-basic education, consistent with the entire Gandhian scheme, should contribute as far as possible to the uplift of the village. Personal and environmental hygiene were therefore afforded the highest priority. Nutrition was also considered important, not only as a means of improving physiological development but also encouraging appropriate social behaviour among the children.

There was to be no separate sensorial apparatus as in the Montessori Method. Although Gandhi valued sensory training, like the Agazzis in Italy,\textsuperscript{126} he felt this could be achieved in a general way through the life-centred activities. There would also be no special play materials or toys as in a nursery school. He considered the tools of work, such as small brooms, hoses, watering cans, spinning apparatus, constituted appropriate play materials. Unlike the Montessori Method, learning to read and write was not part of the pre-basic programme. Provision was made for the learning of simple devotional songs or bhajans, for drawing pictures, story-telling and excursions to places of interest to improve the general knowledge of the children.

A major emphasis was also placed on the education of the parents to ensure reinforcement of the pre-basic programme. Home visits and direct involvement of parents in the running of the pre-basic centre, which ideally was to be located in the centre of the village, were also considered essential tasks of the teacher.\textsuperscript{127} The Gandhian scheme therefore required not only devoted but highly resourceful and imaginative teachers. Few talented teachers were prepared, however, to run village pre-schools for a meagre remuneration. Gandhi considered women to be the
ideal teachers at the pre-basic level, but unless sufficient village girls could be trained to take up the challenge pre-basic education held little hope of success on a large scale.

There is no evidence of any collaboration on Montessori's part with Gandhi's experiments in pre-basic education. His assassination on the 30th January, 1948 has been given as the reason why she did not accede to his request to develop a special education plan for the villages. It is more likely, however, that Montessori's association with the wealthy elites who patronized her and adopted her Method, left her neither the time nor the inclination to visit some of Gandhi's "dung heaps" to assess their problems and educational needs. This task was taken up by others.

Gandhi's Basic Education Scheme had had a significant impact on educational thinking in India during the late 1930s and early 1940s but whilst Gandhian supporters and co-workers of Gijubhai such as Jugatram Dave and Nanabhai Bhatt had established educational institutions in rural areas at Vedchchi and Ambli in Gujarat, the activities of the NBSS had never the less remained predominantly urban based. Tarabhai Modak and others were conscious of the need to introduce pre-school education at the village level. Her experiences running a pre-school centre for low caste children in Bombay during 1936 demonstrated to Tarabhai that such deprived children required Montessori education more urgently than the urban middle-class children who were its major recipients in India.

Tarabhai appreciated the worth of the Montessori Method but she had also been apprehensive about the high cost of the elaborate educational apparatus with "its indifference to the economic life of the children," and she questioned whether it was appropriate for the villages. She was also concerned that this scientifically designed material might introduce a degree of artificiality and strangeness in a village setting, where children from an early age were used to
participating in the daily activities of their parents.

At the time there was considerable dissatisfaction with Madame Montessori and her Method amongst some nationalists. They felt she was a businesswoman exploiting Indians by charging such high fees for training courses of short duration and in which there were only lectures on the philosophy and methodology without any practice teaching. The requirement that the Montessori graduates must then teach for at least two years in an AMI recognized school - and there were very few in India - in order to have their diplomas endorsed, also aroused opposition. Without such endorsement the teachers could not establish their own schools or classes and utilize the name Montessori. Montessori and her followers were so jealous of the Method that they went to extraordinary lengths to protect it and as a consequence produced an elitist system which alienated many and lost her vital support in India.

Tarabhai therefore turned to Gandhian thinking. In 1945 she had taken a small set of Montessori materials - mainly sensorial apparatus such as sound boxes and colour tablets - with her when she visited Gandhi at Marbleshwar, near Bombay. Gandhi had no objection to the application of the Montessori Method at the village level, provided that the teaching apparatus could be prepared using materials obtained from the local environment, and that teachers would prepare their own aids as far as possible. If they had to purchase ready made apparatus, in his view it should be obtained from local craftsmen and not from foreign manufacturers. Gandhi felt that to understand the needs of the children they would teach, and to assess the availability and suitability of local materials, educators, like his village workers, should go into the villages from the outset.

Tarabhai accepted Gandhi's view that to provide appropriate education, the educator must have some understanding of village life. The only means through which this could be acquired was to go and live
amongst the villagers. She also agreed that learning should take place through some form of vocational activity. But as Chitra Naik observes, "there was no precedent in India or abroad for mounting vast programs of rural education and rural reconstruction in an inexpensive but effective manner." There were various rural education experiments undertaken over the years by Gandhians, and by Tagore but these were largely small-scale and isolated. The Wardha Scheme of Basic Education introduced with such enthusiasm in 1938 suffered a severe set back during the Nationalist movement of 1942-1945. Thus Tarabhai did not have a wealth of research and experience to draw upon.

Never the less, armed with Gandhi's approval and his principles for the application of pre-school education at the village level, as well as her belief in the basic tenets of the Montessori philosophy and the years of experience with the application of the Method in India, Tarabhai set out in 1945 to begin her own experiment in rural pre-school education. Government support for the project was obtained from the Chief Minister of Bombay, B.G. Kher, who was also Education Minister and who had been closely involved with the activities of the NBSS as well as maintaining a strong interest in the Montessori Method. Sarala Devi Sarabhai, as President of the NBSS, also provided an initial donation of Rs.7,500 for the establishment of Tarabhai's Gram Bal Shiksha Kendra, (GBSK) Centre for the Education of Rural Children near the coastal town of Bordi, north of Bombay.

Tarabhai Modak was not alone at this time in her attempt to take Montessori pre-school education to village India. Another experiment, and one which adhered strictly to the Method and submitted to regulation by the AMI, was undertaken by one of Dr Montessori's students, Maya Devi Balachandra, at Yeotmal, close to Wardha in central India. The wife of a wealthy pleader, Maya Devi had established a Montessori pre-school, Shishu Vihar, at Yeotmal in 1946. When they heard of the success of the
pre-school, villagers from the surrounding region complained to Maya Devi, who was known for her philanthropic work, that there were no such facilities for their own children. Like Tarabhai Modak, Maya Devi became embued with the idea of taking Montessori pre-schools to the villages around Yeotmal and of training teachers from the local area to staff them. But unlike Tarabhai, who was a Gandhian nationalist, Maya Devi had no interest in "Indianizing" the Method. Because of her personal wealth and her elite connections, the cost of the apparatus was not a consideration for Maya Devi.

Maya Devi and two others attended the first training course in the Arundale-Montessori Training Centre. She subsequently asked Albert Joosten to visit her school as a representative of the AMI and to inspect it with a view to obtaining AMI recognition and affiliation. An experimental teacher training class was begun early in 1948, with four students and Joosten travelled north from Madras to examine them. He was impressed with the quality of their work and Maya Devi's Montessori Adhyapan Mandir became affiliated to the AMI (India). It was the second recognized Montessori teacher training institution in India.136

The future development of Tarabhai and Maya Devi's experiments will be discussed in subsequent chapters. They have been introduced here to highlight Madame Montessori's pre-occupation with elite groups whilst she was in India.

"REAPING THE HARVEST" - THE CULMINATION OF HER WORK

In 1948, the Montessoris began the final phase of their stay in India. The year began well with the formation in January of a branch of the AMI (India) in Madras.137 Its establishment overcame the absence of a local organizational structure which had occurred as a result of the transfer of the movement's headquarters to Pilani.
On 24 March, the Arundale-Montessori Training Centre celebrated the anniversary of its first academic year and Montessori presented Diplomas to the graduates. Mario Montessori's past indiscretions had apparently been forgiven by British officialdom, for the Guest of Honour was Sir Archibald Nye, popular Governor of Madras, who stressed that the students were indeed fortunate in securing the guidance of outstanding educational personalities such as Dr Montessori, Mr Montessori and Rukmini Devi Arundale. He urged the students to utilise their new found expertise in the service of the country. It was announced that the Centre had been recognized by the Government of Madras. Sixteen of the students were to sit for the Secondary Grade teachers examinations and three for the elementary grade examinations conducted by the Government. Efforts were also being made to have the Advanced courses offered by the Centre elevated to university standard, so that degrees equivalent to the Bachelors degree could be awarded to students. 138

With the apparent establishment of her movement in India on a firm footing Montessori was able to announce plans to return to Italy later that year to attend the Eighth International Montessori Congress at San Remo in November, and to lay the foundation stone of the proposed Montessori university. 139 The Conference would be the first international gathering of Montessorians after the War. Before her departure, however, there was a demanding schedule of engagements.

The Montessori Society of Ceylon had been holding a training course parallel to the primary course at Adyar and the Montessoris were invited to conduct the final examinations. They were also asked to attend official functions during Ceylon's Independence celebrations and were accompanied by Mario's wife Ada and his daughter, Renilde. 140

As in India the major difficulty impeding the expansion of the Montessori movement in Ceylon had been the lack of trained teachers. Few Sinhalese could afford to travel to India to attend the training courses.
Although teachers had been trained during Montessori's visit to the island in 1944, the AMI's insistence upon two years practical experience for diploma holders in an AMI school further compounded the problem. The AMI Ceylon was equally as zealous, if not more so, as its Indian counterpart, in attempting to protect the Method. In 1947 the Association reported that:

There are many diploma holders who have not realized their duty to obtain the necessary training in order to propagate the Montessori Method in its purity. The Association does not recognize any Montessori School whose teachers have not received this two years' training.\(^\text{141}\)

During 1946, State Council member Rajah Hewavitarna, had decided to establish a training centre at the Rajagiriya school to enable Montessori Diploma holders to receive the requisite two years practical experience for endorsement of their diplomas.\(^\text{142}\) By September, 1947 twelve diploma holders had completed their practical training under the supervision of the Technical Education Committee, which comprised Joyce Gunesekera and Lina Wikramaratne, and a further six were undertaking their training.\(^\text{143}\) Hewavitarna also offered a two year scholarship of Rs.6,000 per annum to send a student to India to attend the Arundale-Montessori Training Centre. To increase the number of diploma holders in Ceylon, Montessori eventually approved the introduction of permanent training courses under the auspices of the AMI (Ceylon). The first course, which included practice teaching as well as theoretical lectures, commenced in Colombo in July, 1947.\(^\text{144}\)

As in India, the Montessori movement in Ceylon was patronized by the elite. Prominent among the members was the Prime Minister, Mr Senananayke who was a Patron of the AMI (Ceylon), and had three grandchildren attending Montessori schools. At the time of Montessori's second visit, there were seven AMI recognized schools catering for over
three hundred pupils. Some, like the AMI Montessori School in Colombo, were autonomous institutions whilst others were incorporated in large church schools. The Montessori Primary school which Joyce Goonesekera directed, was part of the Good Shepherd Convent. In some of the schools, English, Sinhalese and Tamil were variously used as the medium of instruction, depending on the mother tongue of the pupils. At the Rajagiriya Montessori school, education was imparted in Sinhalese, and English was taught as a second language. Determining the appropriate equivalents for the Montessori terminology in the local languages proved a problem initially but was overcome successfully by the Sinhalese teachers.

Apart from her teacher training responsibilities and lecture engagements, 1948 was also a productive year for Montessori in that a number of books were published in her name. Some of the material was new, but much of it had been merely revised from her lectures, taken down by Indian students, and from earlier works. In 1946 despite shortages due to the War, Kalakshetra had published *Education for a New World*, which was dedicated to the memory of her friend and benefactor in India, George Arundale. The book comprised the substance of lectures given at her primary courses in India and was recommended as a text book for students of the Arundale-Montessori Training Centre. It was followed early in 1948 by its companion, *To Educate the Human Potential* which concerns the educational needs of the child beyond the age of six. The publication enabled Montessori to reveal the basis of the curriculum for the Cosmic Plan of Education which she had first presented in India in the lectures of the Advanced Course at Kodaikanal. Indeed, she made substantial use of the lectures throughout the book. Elsewhere it has been noted that the contents of both works "suggest a venture into Theosophical country."145 While Montessori refused to disclose her past membership of the Theosophical Society, in India she made full use of
Theosophical imagery in her writings and was happy to receive royalties from their publication, giving further credence to the charge that she was a businesswoman.

A collection of Montessori's Ceylon lectures was also published by Kalakshetra in 1948 as *What You Should Know About Your Child*. Montessori wrote of the book:

> It is a beautiful synthesis, clear, concise and compiled on the ideas I expressed during a course in Ceylon. A member of the British Psychological Society, a famous lawyer, has edited the book. His name is Ghana Prakasam and he compared me to Napoleon saying: 'a century ago the world was shaken by Napoleon in the realm of politics..., today in the world of thought'.

The same year Kalakshetra published *The Discovery of the Child*, a revised version of *The Montessori Method*. The book contains photographs of children in Indian Montessori schools and examples from Montessori's Indian experience. Lawson has also noted discrepancies between the earlier and later works. It is probable, as he suggests, that specifically Catholic references and those relating to the sexual slavery of woman, were deleted in deference to her Theosophist publishers, but she also no doubt wished to avoid offending her Hindu and Muslim followers.

A book by Mario Montessori, *Education as Help to Life* concerning the technique of the Method and its psychological background and Montessori's newest work, *The Absorbent Mind*, were prepared for publication in 1948. The latter did not appear until the following year.

In June 1948 Montessori gave a series of twelve talks broadcast from Madras on All-India Radio. The talks were published that year as *Child Training*. She had given such a broadcast only once before in Barcelona in 1936. Those talks were later expanded into a larger work, and published as *The Secret of Childhood*. According to Mario Montessori his mother made the broadcasts from Madras on behalf of "the
child of India; for hers is the VOICE THAT SPEAKS ON BEHALF OF THE
CHILD." The Indian child however, is barely mentioned in the talks. She used examples from her European experiences to illustrate her views on child development. This was consistent with her belief that all children grow and develop in the same way:

My experience of forty years with children of all
races, of different religions, belonging to the most
divergent social strata - from Royal families to the
worst slums - has shown me that the child obeys in
his development natural laws which are alike for all.

She had therefore considered her Method was universal and gave little thought to the cultural and economic context of its application. Her talks appear to have been directed to the English speaking Westernized elites who could afford her expensive didactic apparatus.

On the 14th October, 1948 Montessori flew from Madras to Bombay for a two week visit prior to a three month training course in the nearby city of Poona. She had been invited to inaugurate the Bal Shikshan Nagar (Children's Educational Town) on the 16th October in the company of Bombay Premier, B.G. Kher. The exhibition was organized on behalf of the NBSS by Tarabhai Modak and also Shesh Namle, who had given up his position with Leena Mangaldas in Ahmedabad and had returned to direct the Shishu Vihar teacher training college at Tarabhai's request.

The activity-oriented exhibition was held in eleven rooms at the Wilson College affiliated to Bombay University, and six hundred children at a time were able to participate. It enabled massive public exposure to the Montessori Method, and generated much interest in Shishu Vihar. In opening the exhibition, Montessori acknowledged the work of the NBSS on behalf of the Indian child and hoped that the efforts of her "honoured colleagues and pupils" signalled "the first step of a glorious ascent for the education of India." But, although she remained on friendly terms with Tarabhai and her cohorts Montessori refused to allow
the NBSS and its institutions, to use her name, despite the persuasive efforts of its President, Sarala Devi Sarabhai, because it had diverged from the path and was not "purely Montessori."  

The Eighth International Montessori Congress, was to have taken place in November, but was postponed until April 1949 because of Montessori's extensive commitments in India. She gave a series of lectures on behalf of the Bal Shikshan Nagar at the Theosophical Society's Blavatsky Lodge, and attended a reception held in her honour by the Bal Shikshan Nagar at which Gijubhai's co-worker Nanabhai Bhat, who had become Education Minister of Saurashtra, presided. She also inaugurated the Bombay Branch of the AMI (India). The Montessoris left Bombay for the city of Poona at the end of October. 

In Poona, on the 5th November, the Vice-Chancellor of Poona University, Dr. M.R. Jayakar, inaugurated the Tenth Indian Montessori Training Course in the Lady Ramabhai Hall of the S.P. College. It was the final Montessori Training Course to be held in India under Dr Montessori's personal direction and was probably the largest, with over four hundred students. In her opening address, Montessori expressed her appreciation to the Indian people for the enthusiastic reception her ideas had received and praised Indian parents for their sense of duty toward their children. She urged them to continue to foster the development of the child's potential for the benefit of the nation and of humanity. 

Montessori introduced her first lecture on 8th November, by stressing that education must become a "social movement in the psychic field instead of the political or economic field." She called for a movement which would seek to raise "the spiritual and intellectual values hidden in every human being," and she saw the child as the "instrument" by which a new vision of education could be realized which would bring about a "higher level of human personality." Her ideas were similar
to those of the Moral Rearmament movement, and it is interesting to note that Montessori met with Frank Buchman, founder of Moral Rearmament in Rome prior to her return to India. Montessori believed that her education could produce the "superman", the superior realized individual, above the prejudices of nationalism, racism, communalism and sectarianism which she had seen tear nations, including India, apart. With her elitist idealism she declared that "There is no European nor Indian, no high or low, no truly rich or poor, except in the construction of ones' mind." Montessori believed that her education could produce the "superman", the superior realized individual, above the prejudices of nationalism, racism, communalism and sectarianism which she had seen tear nations, including India, apart. With her elitist idealism she declared that "There is no European nor Indian, no high or low, no truly rich or poor, except in the construction of ones' mind." 165

The Poona Course was marred, however, by a communication from the Theosophical Society which ensured that the Montessori's planned departure from India in April 1949, would be final. Despite the successful establishment of the Training Centre at Adyar, there had been a cooling of the special relationship between the Montessoris and the Theosophical Society leadership, particularly Rukmini Devi Arundale, as the extravagance of their "guests" was a severe drain on the Society's resources. Exorbitant salaries of Rs.1,500 each per month were paid to Mario Montessori and Albert Joosten to run the Training Centre and the Society contributed substantially to the costs of holding the courses. It had also assisted the Montessoris with travel costs - "Madame loved to travel by aeroplane" - and had paid for the servants and up-keep of the Olcott Bungalow in which the Montessoris lived. Madame continued to receive a personal allowance of Rs.500 per month, - "It was like entertaining a Maharani". It has been claimed, in defence of Montessori's extravagance, that she was not concerned with money, if it was available she spent it, apparently without concern for the consequences. But her behaviour led to rumours of a "financial scandal" as some people wondered what had happened to all the money the Montessoris were payed for the various courses and in royalties.

While they were in the North, matters were brought to a climax
by a letter from the Treasurer who stated that the Theosophical Society could no longer afford to support the Montessoris in India. As she was absent from Adyar, Montessori was unable to clarify the matter with Rukmini Devi whom she accused of betraying her. Rukmini believed that Albert Joosten, who was a staunch Catholic, may also have presented the matter to Madame in a negative light. He considered, no doubt because of her interest in the occult, that Mrs Besant was "in league with the Devil", and Rukmini felt he may have viewed her similarly. All contact between the Montessoris and Rukmini Devi was immediately severed and the word, "Montessori", was deleted from the name of the training college at Adyar, which became simply, The Arundale Training Centre.

Despite the enormity of this setback, the Montessoris completed their commitments before returning to Europe. In March, 1949, following the conclusion of the Poona Course, they visited Gwalior, where Madame supervised the establishment of a model school for children up to the age of twelve. The Maharani Scindia of Gwalior was an advocate of the Method and had earlier opened a Montessori school, Shishu Vihar in a palace there, on 22nd July, 1945. The Maharani was fortunate in having the services of an English Theosophist, Mr F.G. Pearce, as Inspector-General of Education in Gwalior. He was a great supporter of the Montessori movement in India and his Indian wife had trained in the Montessori Method in London. Pearce had been largely responsible for the establishment of the Shishu Vihar, and another Montessori school in the city. The Directress of the School was Shanta Dravid who had trained under Madame Montessori at Kodaikanal.

While she was in Gwalior Montessori held a short refresher course for teachers. The Education Minister of Madya Bharat, Mr K. Virulkar, took advantage of her presence to give a fillip to pre-school education in the region by making provision for fifty teachers to attend the course. He also proposed to establish initially, at least one nursery school in
each district.  

The Montessoris returned to Bombay in April where on the 17th, at the Siddartha College Hall, they were feted by the Bombay Branch of the AMI (India) prior to their departure for Europe. Dr Montessori was praised by eminent educationalist, Professor S.B. Hudliker, Organizing Secretary of the local association, who "paid a glowing tribute to the services rendered by her to humanity in general and to India in particular." As a farewell gesture, she was given a purse of Rs.2,000 and a portrait of Mahatma Gandhi. The farewell from India, however, was not marked by the same fanfare and accolade as that with which Montessori had been greeted at Adyar some eight years previously. It is probable that this was due, at least in part, to the "financial scandal" which lost her valuable support at a time of post-Independence economic struggle in India. 

The Montessoris flew to Karachi from India to commence the first Montessori Training Course in the new nation of Pakistan. Albert Joosten, who would return to India as the Montessori's "Personal Representative", and Director of the Indian Montessori Training Courses, completed the course in Karachi and examined the students after the Montessoris left for Amsterdam in May. As a consequence of the "split", Joosten was forced to leave Adyar and to re-establish the Indian Montessori Training Courses elsewhere. He was also denied the opportunity to hold such courses in the Madras area in the future. A former student of Montessori, P.S. Krishnaswamy, who was a Theosophist and one of the founding members of the staff of the college, took charge of the Arundale Training Centre. Madame did not return to India again and the dream of a Montessori University at Madras was never realised. Kramer suggests that the latter was due to the political turmoil created by the partition of India. Partition and the ensuing national chaos undoubtedly undermined the first
course at the Arundale-Montessori Training Centre. However, these events would not have been sufficient to drive Montessori from India permanently, given the enthusiasm for her Method amongst the élites there and her own fascination with the country. It is more likely that the rift between the Montessoris and Rukmini Devi, who together with her husband, Dr Arundale had so lavishly patronized them and who, through their élite connections, had attracted strong interest in the Method, ultimately prevented the realization of Montessori's plans for the Training Centre to become a university.

MONTESSORI AND THE INDIAN YEARS

Although Montessori's dream of a university at Adyar was never realized, the survival of the Montessori movement in India, after her departure was, never the less, assured. Her presence in India provided a tremendous fillip to the movement. Her charismatic personality and the spiritual and moral appeal of her message in a deeply religious society, ensured a receptive audience among the English educated élite who could afford her lectures and courses. Because it was regarded as progressive the Method had also appealed to those Westernized Indians who supported the modernization of India and were attracted to foreign goods and institutions.

From 1949-1946 and 1947-1949 Montessori spent almost nine years in India, a longer period than she had spent in any other country except her native Italy. During this period, despite being interned as an "enemy alien" by the British Raj for four years, Montessori trained over a thousand students in her Method, in ten Primary and two Advanced courses at diverse locations spanning the length and breadth of the sub-continent. She had also given several refresher courses and numerous lectures. At the time of her departure there were Montessori schools and Children's
Houses in most of the major cities and towns and the Montessori Method had begun to be introduced in a few villages.

Among the best known Montessori schools were the Annie Besant School of Allahabad, the Rajghat Children's School at Benares in the United Provinces, and the Besant Montessori School at Adyar in Madras, all run by Theosophists, and the Birla Montessori School at Pilani in Rajputana, the new building of which, designed by Dr Montessori, was reputed to be the best of its kind in India. Both the Birla School and the Besant School were personally directed by Montessori. There were also Montessori schools in Bombay Presidency and city, in Assam run by missionary societies, and at Indore, Gwalior, Rewar and Hyderabad. Apart from the schools, there were two AMI recognized teacher training institutions at Adyar and Yeotmal.

There were also many institutions which, though directly influenced by the Montessori Method, did not follow the Method in its entirety. Among these, the most notable were the institutions run by the NBSS begun by Gijubhai Badheka and carried on by his disciples under the leadership of Tarabhai Modak. Some ninety pre-schools had been established under its auspices in Western India. Pre-primary teachers were trained at colleges in Bombay and Bhavanagar, and the organization had more recently embarked on a village-based education project which was reported to be the only rural centre of its kind at the time preparing pre-school teachers for the villages. Mr Padam Chand's J.K. Happy Society, had organized approximately a dozen schools in Northern India, and had trained over three hundred teachers. The Society also produced a monthly magazine, Happy Education.

Perhaps the most significant contribution Montessori gave to India, was the heightened awareness among parents and teachers, and to some extent at the Government level, of the importance of early childhood education. Mahatma Gandhi had also accepted this by including pre-basic
education in the Wardha Scheme. Montessori's contribution was acknowledged in the election of Albert Joosten, General Secretary of the AMI, as President of the Childhood and Home Section of the Twenty Fourth All-India Education Conference at Mysore from 29-31st December, 1948.

Joosten told the Conference:

Indeed I could not possibly accept such a distinction, did I not feel that, in conferring it upon me, you wish to honour the educational movement initiated by Dr. Maria Montessori at the beginning of this century in one of the poorest and most wretched quarters of Rome. If today we can assemble here concerned with the education of the pre-school child, and if this section is considered to be at least of equal importance with the other sections in this educational Conference, we are, perhaps unconsciously giving evident proof of the impetus given by Dr. Montessori who was the first to place education of normal children on a scientific basis and to stress the pre-eminent place of the education of the young child in truly scientific pedagogy.187

In response to the view of the previous conference in 1947 that the All-India Federation of Educational Societies, should prepare "some concrete schemes of Indian Education",188 to assist State and Provincial Governments with the mammoth task of educational reconstruction, K.V. Phadke, Secretary of the Federation, had prepared a scheme for nursery education in India. The co-operation of a number of scholars and pre-school practitioners was sought in its preparation. Among them Mr Bani Charan Mahendra, the then Editor of The Montessori Magazine who showed the draft scheme to Dr Montessori.189 She forwarded her own suggestions and was thus able ultimately to make a formal contribution to plans for post-Independence educational reconstruction at the pre-school level. The final scheme which Phadke placed before the Conference in December 1948,190 adhered to Montessori principles, though not strictly to the practicalities of the Method.

Although there was ample support for pre-school education and indeed for the Montessori Method at the All-India Education Conference,
and despite the proposals embodied in various plans for educational reconstruction, there was no unified recognition by Governments of the significance of early childhood education. It was suggested by the Conference that part time children's play centres, libraries and museums were more likely to attain widespread Government support than a more costly national pre-school system and proposals were incorporated in its scheme, for play centres which could be adopted immediately as a precursor to a national nursery school movement.  

While the Post-War Plan of Educational Development (1944) had proposed the introduction, on a limited scale of a national scheme of pre-school education, government inertia and the difficulty of obtaining wholesale agreement among the various Governments, resulted in little effort being made to implement any of its recommendations prior to Independence in 1947. The Five Year Plans adopted from the 1st April, 1947 by the Provincial Governments generally concurred with the proposals contained in the Sargent Report, although there were variations in emphasis according to local conditions and the available financial resources. Few governments, however, made specific provision for pre-school education. The national upheavals associated with Partition and the exigencies of post-Independence readjustment resulted in education being afforded a low priority:

The new Government decided on the advice of their Planning Commission that the limited funds available for the lower stages of education should be assigned in the first instance to develop primary schools and the implementation of the directive in the Constitution that free and compulsory education should be provided for all children up to the age of 14 should be postponed until easier times.

Pre-school education was regarded as the least important area, and remained largely the domain of private initiative.

Despite Montessori's presence in India for such a considerable
period, her Method was never adopted by the British Raj or by Provincial and State Governments, although some, such as Madras, Gwalior and Travencore, did recognize the Montessori Diplomas and also deputed students to attend the courses. Before the war, official interest in early childhood education was almost negligible. During the war, the Raj could hardly have been expected to advocate the adoption of a pre-school method developed by a declared "enemy alien", even though she might be internationally renowned. Post-war plans of educational reconstruction did make some provision for pre-school education. It is probable the interest in early childhood stimulated by Montessori's continued presence in the country was partly responsible. Governments were in no financial position, however, to devote the necessary expenditure to introduce even limited pre-school education schemes. Montessori's possessiveness with regard to the Method, the high cost of the apparatus, and charges of financial extravagance, had lost her support among some nationalists. Despite her protestations concerning her international status and the universality of the Method, she was never the less a foreigner and a European. Those Gandhian nationalists who sought true independence for India, found difficulty in giving their whole hearted support to Montessori education.

The application of the Montessori Method in India, thus remained largely in private hands. In the main the Method had been adopted by the urban, Westernized elite who could afford the expensive training courses and lectures and the apparatus. Although Gandhi had asked Montessori to develop a plan which would enable the application of her Method appropriate to village conditions, the challenge was left to others. She did acknowledge, however, towards the end of her stay in India that the scientifically designed apparatus was not essential to the Method. She agreed that in the village, many of the concepts embodied in the apparatus could be taught utilizing materials obtained from nature. When she
addressed the Ninth International Montessori Congress in London in May, 1951, the last she would attend before her death, Montessori warned those present not to look at her own finger, but rather, at what it was pointing, "the child". At the end of her life she not only rejected the cult of personality that had grown around her, but also, she had returned to an essential Montessori concept. The principle of "the observation of the child" and the provision of appropriate learning, had enabled the development of a method of education among slum children in Rome. Montessori's disciples, and also the Dottoressa, in their insistence on the precise observance of the Montessori ritual, had perhaps lost sight of that principle, but the Indian years served to revive and reinforce it.

When she arrived in India, Montessori had expressed the view that she expected to receive more than she ever hoped to give. To a large extent that prophecy was fulfilled for Montessori was able to achieve the culmination of her life's work in India, the extension of her Method from birth to "adolescence". The years of internment had been a great humiliation for her but they had enabled the opportunity for study and writing. "I feel like a young student again", she said. Mario later wrote of the Indian years:

Indeed, it began to look as if Divine Providence had willed this restriction to our freedom so that we should concentrate on completing the missionary work Dr. Montessori was destined to carry out.

For during the years in India, the research on children (in which years I had the privilege to participate) and the psycho-pedagogical results derived from the research enabled us to extend the Montessori approach to children from birth to three years on the one side and on the other, to define and mature that 'Cosmic Education' which would help in the future development of older children and of the young people who frequent the secondary schools.

In India Montessori had been venerated as a guru, training many teachers
and developing a band of devoted disciples who would ensure the continuation of the Montessori movement after her departure. Patronized by the Westernized élite, however, she was largely isolated from the village-dwelling poor who were Gandhi's main concern.
NOTES


7. Ibid., p. 5.


10. Ibid., p. 235. At the time the level of illiteracy in British India was 85 percent of the total population. More than half of those children who did enrol in a school had left by the end of the first year. Ibid.


12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., p. 15.

14. Ibid.


17. Ibid., pp. 101-102.


23. As early as 1940 when the Board's Simla meeting was discussing a proposal to provide model infant and nursery schools at central locations, one newspaper editorial commented that an obvious drawback was the tendency of such schools 'to develop into Kindergarten and Montessori centres - a type of training far too expensive for the average parent in India'. The Times of India (Bombay), 11 May, 1940, p. 10. (Hereafter, TI)


25. Ibid., pp. 17-18. At the time, the average salary of a primary school teacher was Rs.27 per month.


29. The Montessori Magazine (Pilani, India), 1, 1, 1946, p. 73. (Hereafter, MM) See also Lena Wikramaratne, "What Brought Me to Montessori", AMI Communications (Amsterdam), 2, 1971, p. 4.


31. MM, op. cit., p. 74.

32. Mario M. Montessori, "The Knight of the Child", ibid., p. 17.

33. TI, 21 December, 1944, p. 4.

34. Manorama Sarabhai, Interview, C. Wilson, 10 January, 1984. (Hereafter, Sarabhai Interview)

35. The Theosophical Worker, (Adyar, Madras), 10, 5, 1945, p. 49. (Hereafter, TW) Among the students to receive diplomas were Manorama Sarabhai, and Vimoo Badheka, Gijubhai's daughter-in-law, who continues to direct the pre-primary section of Daxinamurti at Bhavanagar.


37. Goonasekera, op. cit., p. 28. See also Kramer, op. cit., p. 347.

39. Maria Montessori, op. cit., p. vi. See also M. D. Lawson, "Montessori: The Indian Years", The Forum of Education (Sydney), 33, 1, 1974, p. 44.

40. TW, 10, 5, 1945, p. 49.

41. Ibid., p. 45.

42. Ibid., p. 49.


44. The Theosophist (Adyar), September, 1945, p. 209. Montessori sent the following tribute in a telegram from Srinagar: 'Wonderful and great up to the last breath. Faithful to his mission. Immortal is the heart of those who have loved him. I pay my sorrowful and humble homage to him and to you.' Maria Montessori, cited in The Theosophist, October, 1945, p. 23.

45. The Theosophist, April, 1945, p. 41.


47. TW, 10, 12, 1945, p. 133.


51. Radha Raman, "Our Experiment with the Montessori Method", MM, 1, 2-3, 1947, p. 35.

52. Founded in 1933 and centred in Delhi, Padam Chand's J.K. Happy Education Society was another 'Indian adaptation of the Montessori Method.' K.V. Phadke, "sectional survey", The XXIV All-India Education Conference, Mysore, 29-31, December, 1948, p. 206.

53. Besides Pareen Lalkaka, Radha Raman, is one of the few Indians to have been awarded the Advanced Montessori Diploma. His family name, Pathak, means teacher. Radha Raman, Interview, C. Wilson, 27 1983. (Hereafter, Radha Raman Interview.)

54. Maria Montessori, cited in Radha Raman, op. cit., p. 35.

55. Radha Raman, ibid., pp. 36-37. It appears to have resembled the Dalton Plan devised by Montessori's former American student Helen Parkhurst, in which the students moved from one subject laboratory to another. Kramer, op. cit., p. 295.


60. *TW*, 10, 12, 1945, p. 133.


63. Rukmini Devi, *The Young Citizen* (Adyar), 20, 12, 1945, p. 52. (Hereafter, *YC*)

64. Norma Shastry, Interview, C. Wilson, 19 February, 1984. (Hereafter, Shastry Interview.)

65. Radha Raman Interview.

66. Maria Montessori, cited in *TW*, *op. cit.*

67. Cable from the Minister of Instruction, Rome, cited in *Ibid*.


69. *Ibid.*, p. 156. Like many nationalists, 'Rajaji', as Rajagopalachariar was known, was initially opposed to the adoption of the Montessori Method in India because it was foreign and expensive, but became persuaded as to its benefits. Rukmini Devi Arundale, Interview, C. Wilson, 18 August, 1982. (Hereafter, Rukmini Devi Interview.)


71. *Ibid*.


77. Cited in "The Child in India", *op. cit.*, pp. 63-64.


79. *Ibid*.
80. MM, op. cit., p. 77.

81. MM, 1, 2-3, 1947, p. 66.

82. MM, 1, 1, 1946, p. 79. The first edition was dated December, 1946, but due to 'almost insurmountable difficulties, consequent on the post-war dislocation of business and organisation the press took five months to print the number so that it could be distributed only in the last week of March 1947, when the second number should have already been out.' MM, 1, 2-3, 1947, p. iii.

83. "The Child in India", op. cit., p. 64.

84. YC, 21, 2, 1946, p. 11.

85. MM, 1, 1, 1946, p. 78. The first AMI recognized Montessori school in Karachi was started by a Theosophist, Gool Minwalla who had attended the First Montessori Training Course at Adyar. She was assisted by the late Tehmie Byramjee who attended the Third Course at Adyar and also the Advanced Course at Kodaikanal. Gool Minwalla continues to be closely involved with the Montessori movement in Pakistan, training teachers, and also with the AMI as an examiner. Tehmie Byramjee, Interview, C. Wilson, 4 August, 1981.


89. The Times (London), 4 September, 1946, p. 2.

90. Ibid.


92. Ibid., p. 350.

93. YC, 21, 10, 1946, p. 121.

94. Helen Veale, "Opening of the Training Centre", YC, 22, 2, 1947, p. 23. Veale concluded that, 'Whatever is spent is truly the soundest of investments, and specially blest as it is for no personal gain.' Ibid.

95. YC, 22, 3, 1947, p. 25 & p. 27.


99. YC, 22, 7, 1947, p. 78.

100. The Hindu (Madras), 4 July, 1947, p. 10.
101. Ibid.

102. See Centenary Anthology, op. cit., p. 50.


105. Ibid.


111. Ibid.

112. Rukmini Devi, "Besant Centenary Celebrations", op. cit. Both Kramer, op. cit., p. 354, and Centenary Anthology, op. cit., p. 50, refer to Montessori's return to India to establish a Montessori University in Madras. The writer assumes this was the Besant Cultural Centre.


115. Ibid.


118. Radha Raman Interview. See also TW, 10, 5, 1945, p. 49, & Hennessey, op. cit., p. 162.


120. Maria Montessori, cited, in Hennessey, op. cit., p. 162.

121. Gandhi, cited in Seven Years of Work, Eighth Annual Report of Nai Talim (1938-46), Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Wardha, India, p. 24. (Hereafter, Seven Years of Work.)
122. Anutai Vagh, Interview, C. Wilson, 24 September, 1980. (Hereafter, Vagh Interview.)


124. Gandhi, cited in Seven Years of Work, op. cit., p. 27.


126. For an examination of the materials and methods used by the Agazzis, see Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice, Nursery Schools in Italy, The Problem of Infant Education, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1934, Part I, Ch. 5.


130. Vagh Interview.


132. Ibid., p. 9.

133. For details of Tagore's rural education scheme at Sriniketan, see H. Mukherjee, Education For Fulness, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962, pp. 203-225.

134. Fifteen of the twenty-one members of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh were gaoled during 1942-45 and many of the institutions were closed. See Seven Years of Work, op. cit., p. 23.


137. The Hindu, 7 January, 1948, p. 10.


139. Ibid., 20 March, 1948, p. 3.


141. MM, 1, 4, 1947, p. 65.
142. MM, 1, 1, 1946, p. 75.
143. MM, 1, 4, 1947, p. 65.
144. Ibid.
145. Lawson, op. cit., p. 42. For example, he cites Montessori's claim that 'the purpose of life is to obey the occult command which harmonizes all and creates an even better world. The world was not created for us to enjoy, but we are created to evolve the cosmos.' Maria Montessori, Education for a New World, Kalakshetra Publications, Thiruvanmiyur, Madras, 1967 (1948), p. 7, cited in Lawson, op. cit., p. 42.
146. Maria Montessori, "From a letter to Anna Maccheroni from Adyar, India dated February 4, 1949", cited in Centenary Anthology, op. cit., p. 20.
147. Lawson, op. cit., p. 44.
149. The talks were later published as Child Training, Government of India, Delhi, 1948. The talks were also published as Child Education, Kalakshetra, Madras, n.d.
150. Mario M. Montessori, "Introductory Note" in Maria Montessori, Child Training, op. cit., p. iv.
151. Ibid.
154. Shesh Namle, Interview, C. Wilson, 28 August, 1980. (Hereafter, Namle Interview.)
155. Maria Montessori, "Inauguration of the Bal Nagar, Bombay", October, 1948. Unpublished speech. The writer is indebted to Dr Jean Miller, Executive Director, Montessori Development Foundation, Cleveland, Ohio, for making it available to her.
156. Namle Interview.
157. TI, 4 August, 1948, p. 3. India was to be represented at the Congress by the eminent Hindu Philosopher, Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, and Sarala Devi Sarabhai.
158. TI, 19 October, 1948, p. 5; TI, 28 October, 1948, p. 9.
159. TI, 29 October, 1948, p. 8.
160. TI, 27 October, 1948, p. 5.
161. TI, 6 November, 1948, p. 9.
163. Ibid.


165. Maria Montessori, op. cit.

166. Rukmini Devi Interview.

167. Shastry Interview.

168. Leena Mangaldas, Interview, C. Wilson, 8 December, 1981.

169. Rukmini Devi Interview. There are no records concerning this matter in the Adyar Archives. Rukmini claimed to have some correspondence with the Montessoris but her papers were stored at Kalakshetra and had not been sorted. This remained the case when the writer met with Sankara Menon on 13 December, 1986. Rukmini Devi died on her birthday on 28 February, 1986.

170. Rukmini Devi Interview. Apart from Rukmini Devi, none of those interviewed were prepared to discuss the 'split' in any detail. According to K.J. Sharma, he was assisting Joosten at the Training Centre at Adyar when he received a request from Montessori to come to Poona to help with the Course there. At the time the Montessoris' association with the Theosophical Society ceased due to 'ideological differences'. K.J. Sharma, Interview, C. Wilson, 16 August, 1982.


172. TI, 28 July, 1945, p. 11.


174. MM, 1, 2-3, 1947, pp. 64-65. Rukmini Devi's sister-in-law, Mrs Jhoria, who had trained in the Method at Adyar, was teaching in the high school at Gwalior and also influenced the Maharani in favour of Montessori Education. Rukmini Devi Arundale Interview. This was confirmed by Norma Shastry, Interview, C. Wilson, 19 February, 1984, who accepted a position as governess to the Scindia children in 1945.

175. TI, 14 March, 1949, p. 7.

176. TI, 18 April, 1949, p. 5.

177. Ibid.

178. Ibid.

179. The writer could find no reference to the departure of the Montessoris in 1949 in the pages of The Theosophist which had been so faithful in the past in recording Montessori's activities in India.
180. Vagh Interview.


185. Ibid., p. 208.

186. Ibid., p. 206.


188. K.V. Phadke, op. cit., p. 204.

189. Ibid.

190. For details of the scheme see "A Scheme of Nursery Schools for India", The XXIV All-India Education Conference, op. cit., pp. 234-242.

191. Ibid., pp. 242-244.


193. Of the various Plans adopted by States and Provinces and cited in Narullah & Naik, op. cit., pp. 849-854, only the small Province of Assam appears to have made provision for the opening of six pre-primary classes each year. See ibid., p. 583. They also note that 'the plans of the Provinces of Bengal and Punjab were completely upset by the partition of India.' Ibid., p. 849.


195. Sarabhai Interview.


CHAPTER SIX

"THE SCATTERING OF THE SEEDS"
THE MONTESSORI METHOD IN INDIA AFTER 1949

- Introduction
- "Abs" Joosten and the AMI (India)
- The Indian Montessori Training Courses (IMTCs)
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- The AMI (India) and Montessori for the Villages
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INTRODUCTION

Despite the problems stemming from the political exigencies of the time, the period of Montessori's visit to India was a high point in the history of the movement in India. Her charismatic personality and international reputation had attracted many devotees, for whom she was a guru. She had won the approbation and friendship of prominent individuals and families, including Gandhi, Tagore, Nehru, Radha Krishnan, Zakir Hussein, the Arundales, Sarabhais, Birlas, and Scindias. It was to be a hard task for someone to step into her shoes and take over the running of her movement there.

Apart from filling the vacuum created by the absence of such a dynamic personality, there were other difficulties facing the new incumbent. The eventual split with Rukmini Devi and charges that Montessori was a business woman who exploited her Method, had lost the movement valuable support. The choice of a Dutchman, Albert Joosten, rather than an Indian, as Director of the Indian Montessori Training Courses (IMTCs) and Montessori's Personal Representative, at a time when India was asserting her triumph over foreign domination, further exacerbated the bitterness and disillusionment of some Montessori supporters.

At the national level, Joosten was also taking over during the crucial period of India's emergence as a newly independent developing country. After Partition the Government of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was faced with the mammoth task of finding a solution to the problem of the poverty and illiteracy of India's vast population. Major land reforms, or the nationalization of essential industries, which may have alleviated poverty were not undertaken because of the traditional reliance of the ruling Congress Party on support from wealthy landowners and industrialists
like the Tatas, Birlas and Sarabhais. The loss of large areas of the food producing Punjab to Pakistan at Partition, rapid population growth and the failure of the Monsoons in 1952 and 1953 increased India's food deficit. As Wolport writes,

The average "free" Indian thus remained one of the world's most poorly nourished human beings, lacking protein, as well as vitamins in his daily diet of gruel, victim to all the diseases of malnutrition, especially tuberculosis, which claimed more than half a million lives annually. Indian life expectancy at this time averaged only thirty-two years, approximately half that enjoyed in most economically developed nations.2

Education was regarded as a major stimulus to development and, although the funds allocated to it were meagre, Primary education was afforded a high priority:

The new Government decided on the advice of their Planning Commission that the limited funds available for the lower stages of education should be assigned in the first instance to develop primary schools and the implementation of the directive in the Constitution, that free and compulsory education should be provided for all children up to the age of 14 should be postponed until easier times.3

The goals set down in the Five Year Plans were impossible to achieve given the enormity of the problem and the minimal resources available. By 1960, only 60 per cent of children between the ages of six and eleven were going to school and only 20 per cent of those between eleven and fourteen years were in attendance. In 1961 the national literacy level was 23.7 per cent of the population and only 12.8 per cent of India's women were literate.4 Massive expenditure to build new schools and to train teachers was required and there was thus little finance available for pre-primary education which received only the barest token support. As one commentator noted,

... the Education Commissions were perhaps so confronted with the stupendous challenge presented by other aspects of education that they were unable to give to preschool
education the foundation role .... A sense of inadequacy in resources seem[s] to have led to some pessimism.⁵

In the First Five Year Plan, voluntary organizations were given responsibility for various social welfare programmes. Despite the proposals set down in the Sargent Report (1944) pre-school education continued to be regarded by Government as primarily a welfare activity. The Central Social Welfare Board was established in August, 1953, under the Plan, to co-ordinate the various activities and to dispense the miniscule financial resources available to it. The Board was also expected to devise programmes for women and children in the rural areas where the vast majority of the population continued to reside. Welfare Extension Projects were introduced in 1954 and included a pre-school programme but the major focus was health and social welfare, rather than education.⁶

In such circumstances Albert Joosten took charge of the IMTCs and the task of representing the AMI and the Montessoris. The following chapter will focus primarily upon Joosten's involvement with the AMI (India) over a period of thirty years and will survey developments in the Montessori movement in India under his direction. The formation of the various Montessori associations, the function of the IMTCs, and the establishment of Montessori schools will be discussed. The chapter will also attempt to assess Joosten's contribution to the application of the Montessori Method in India.

"ABS" JOOSTEN AND THE AMI (INDIA)

Albert Max Joosten was born on 21 November, 1914, and attended both the Montessori pre-primary and the primary schools his mother directed in Amsterdam.⁷ During the Summer holidays he accompanied her when she visited Dr Montessori to learn of the latest developments in the Method. He had thus grown up in a Montessori environment from early childhood.
Most of the summers of his youth were also spent in the Montessori household and he was permitted to participate in the work and conversations of the adults during those sessions. He soon acquired a profound appreciation of the Method's principles and their practice and developed a deep personal regard for both Madame and Mario who affectionately referred to him as "Abs". Later, he interrupted university studies hoping to become involved in the organization of the international movement. Montessori agreed and invited him to reside in her home. He was therefore able to take part in the training courses, typing her lectures, and gaining further specialized knowledge of the Method.

When Montessori fled Barcelona in 1936 and started the training centre at Laren in Holland, Joosten joined the teaching staff while maintaining his involvement with the work of the AMI. Because of his expertise in the Method, Joosten's responsibilities at Laren increased, particularly after the departure of the Montessoris for India. He ensured that the work in Holland continued in their long absence during the War years, prior to his own departure to assist them in India in 1947. He ultimately asked to remain in India and was given approval to do so because it was believed, "there was no one who was technically better to become Dr Montessori's personal representative and conduct Montessori training courses there...."8 Indeed there was some resentment towards Joosten who was seen as a kind of "Viceroy" of the AMI in India.9

The first major problem Joosten confronted in taking over the IMTCs, was the lack of a permanent institution for teacher training. As the Arundale Montessori Training Centre was no longer available to him alternative venues had to be found. Close friends and former students of Montessori volunteered assistance and the Eleventh IMTC was held at Gwalior under the patronage of the Maharaja Jivajirao Scindia.10 This was followed by a course at St Xavier's College, Bombay and another at the Modern School, New Delhi, in 1950.
Initially the courses continued to run for a three month period. Joosten sought official recognition for the IMTC Diplomas from the Central and State Governments, to ensure appointments and appropriate salaries for the teachers in Montessori schools, and in the hope of attracting financial assistance. His efforts were partially rewarded when, in 1952, the Central Government sent a directive to all States recommending that they recognize the AMI Diplomas awarded by the IMTCs. There was also an accompanying memorandum, drawn up by Joosten as Montessori's Personal Representative, "to serve as a basis for such recognition and to suggest ways and means to protect the proper use of the name Montessori in Schools and Training Institutions." 11

Most State Governments accepted the recommendation, 12 with Bombay a notable exception. One of the criticisms levelled against the courses was their short length of three months as approved nursery training courses were usually for at least one year. Joosten was in favour of a one year course but stressed "it must be practically possible. Recognition of our diplomas should, as I also pointed out, be independent of this duration just as it has been granted in other Indian States." 13 The Bombay Government had also recognized previously the courses and institutions of the NBSS. They were regarded as being "Montessori" and there was a view that having two Montessori training programmes was unnecessary and wasteful. Joosten wrote in this regard:

There also seems to be some confusion regarding both Mrs Indumati Seth's personal attitude and the status of the N.B.S.S. diplomas. Mrs Sarabhai has more than once assured me that Mrs Seth, who is her relative, has no personal prejudice against the Method. She has also informed me that the diplomas of the N.B.S.S. are NOT Montessori-diplomas so that the argument of there being two kinds of Montessori-diplomas would seem to be without foundation. 14

India also lacked sufficient AMI recognized Children's Houses, especially in Bombay, to act as observation and practise teaching schools.
Joosten argued that this prevented the holding of IMTCs in Bombay:

It is exactly because there are so few real Montessori Schools in Bombay, that I still do not see how a fair number of students could be given an opportunity for thorough practical work. To ask them to observe and practise in schools which use a variety and mixture of methods would not be of any help to students just orienting themselves in our Method and create more confusion than clarity.  

Another difficulty involved obtaining AMI trained staff to assist at the courses on a long term basis. Many were establishing their own schools or had family commitments. They could occasionally volunteer their services for short term courses but not for extended periods of time. Other major problems included financing the courses and obtaining suitable accommodation in India's crowded cities on a short term basis.

Perhaps the overriding challenge was the revitalization of the movement and its re-establishment on a firm footing. The rift between the Montessoris and Rukmini Devi Arundale and accusations that Montessori was a business woman and her Method too costly for a poor nation like India, had lost the movement valuable support. This is evident in the paucity of the obituaries for her in the Indian press. While an Editorial in The Times of India praised Montessori's contribution to child education in general, there was no mention of the impact of the introduction of her Method and her presence in the country on early childhood education in India.

It was Joosten who informed the English speaking world of this contribution in his address at a meeting of the Montessori Society in London in September, 1952. He said that,

In spite of the difficulties caused by poverty, tradition, parental prejudices, and the vast distances separating Montessori teachers, the movement had met with success. The conscience of the people had been roused, and they had become increasingly aware of the children's needs. Their work in India had demonstrated that the Montessori Method was not limited by
differences of country, philosophy, religion or social conditions. It had helped the children of Brahmins and Untouchables to live more harmoniously together.18

But in a new nation struggling to deal with social and economic re-adjustment problems of an enormous magnitude, Montessori's visit seemed to have been virtually forgotten. In 1957, an article in The Indian Review referred to the educational Method of Dr Montessori, "whose services to India have not been adequately acknowledged and whose work in the Kalakshetra in Madras, in Ahmedabad and elsewhere deserves more recognition than has been given to it."19

Joosten blamed the lack of official support for pre-primary education for hampering the continued expansion of the Montessori Method.20 The relatively few existing pre-schools were mainly run by private individuals or organizations. Government financial aid to pre-schools was almost negligible. In India in 1950-51, "there were 303 pre-primary schools (including 28 in rural areas) with 866 teachers and 28,309 students. The total direct expenditure on these schools came to Rs. 1.2 million or 0.1 per cent of the total educational expenditure."21

In 1949, in Bombay Presidency, the Government had decided to pay a grant-in-aid to pre-primary schools of forty per cent of their admissible expenditure providing the tuition fee charged was not more than Rs. 3 per month. Due to "financial stringency", however, the rate could not be maintained and it was gradually reduced. The grant was eventually discontinued for all schools which had been receiving it for more than five years unless they were serving slum or backward areas.22

As many of the schools following the Montessori Method were not recognized by the Government, or their fees were too high, they were not eligible for the grant-in-aid. Pre-primary education and the Montessori schools, in particular, continued to be supported mainly by fees in post-Independence India, although there were some exceptions like the Mysore and Andhra Pradesh Governments who did provide grants.23
Apart from the problems of finance and the absence of Government support, the Montessori movement had become fragmented. As well as the rift with the Arundale Training Centre at Adyar, the appointment of Joosten had alienated some of Montessori's staunch followers, among them Bhambhra and Radha Raman. It will be recalled that the latter had been made Montessori's Personal Representative at the Pilani Conference in 1945, but he had been replaced subsequently by Joosten. Thus when Joosten took charge both Adyar and Pilani ceased to be centres for the AMI (India). Radha Raman continued the Montessori work at Pilani, training his own teachers. There were charges by some that he was issuing Montessori Diplomas "illegally". Joosten claimed, however,

Regarding Courses and diplomas given by Mr. Raman at Pilani, I know absolutely nothing about this, neither does Mr. Montessori. I do know that Mr. Raman has no authority from either Dr. Montessori or Mr. Montessori to give training Courses and diplomas, he has only been permitted to give practical training to those teachers he may from time to time need to fill vacancies in the Montessori section of the Pilani institution. 4

Rada Raman continued to work independently of Joosten who apparently had no contact with the Birla Montessori School at Pilani. 25

There was also disunity due to personal conflicts among some of the Montessori Associations. In Bombay, the Association dissolved itself in 1954. 26 Joosten believed that the major problem lay with the apathy of a large percentage of its members. It had only survived because of the diligence of a few devoted Montessorians, among them Pareen Lalkaka, who conducted an excellent Children's House in her home before she was forced by the landlord to close it. 27

Some of the members had accused Joosten of not making sufficient effort to obtain Government recognition for the Montessori schools and for the IMTCs in Bombay Presidency. He considered, however, that he had done all in his power to persuade the Government and, having obtained the
support of the Central Government, felt that it was the responsibility of the local Association to prepare a convincing case. He argued that the fault lay with them. He believed that, in terms of the number of hours involved and the concentrated nature of the work, the IMTCs were equivalent to any existing training courses. 28

The ineffectual case put forward and the absence of any long term commitment on the part of many of the members of the Bombay Association appears to have contributed to the failure to obtain Government recognition for the IMTCs there. Joosten's somewhat authoritarian manner and the fact that he was a foreigner, may also have prejudiced his case in the eyes of some in Bombay. 29 It was Tarabhai Modak's NBSS which received the necessary political patronage for its training institutions.

The Bombay Branch of the AMI (India) was never revived although, after the formation of the new State in 1960, a Maharashtra Branch was established in Poona where there was considerable support for the Method amongst the educated élite. 30 During the 1950s and 1960s, the centre of activities for the AMI (India) thus moved away from the South and West as new organizations were established in Delhi, Calcutta and Hyderabad.

In Delhi where an AMI Montessori School had been established in Sikandra Road in 1951, 31 a very active Association of Delhi Montessorians was formed which included a number of former students of the IMTCs, among them R.K. Gupta. He attended the 16th IMTC at Bhaga in 1953 and worked in Montessori schools in Muzaffarnagar, Gwalior and Bikaner before going to Delhi where he assisted Joosten at the 22nd, 23rd and 24th IMTCs, from 1957-1960. He was Vice-Chairman of the Association of Delhi Montessorians and Secretary of the Montessori Education Society, 32 which was formed in 1962 with Joosten acting as the inaugural President. Besides a general desire to promote the rights of the child in the community, the aim of the Society was "to propagate the Montessori Method and to establish Montessori institutions for children also in co-operation with educational and other
institutions."\textsuperscript{33} The Society also provided "technical" assistance to local Montessori schools. Despite the apparent enthusiasm of the Association of Delhi Montessorians, disagreements among the members resulted in the formation of a splinter group, called The Indian Montessori Association, in 1964. This organization was not supported by Joosten and the Council of the AMI refused to recognize it.\textsuperscript{34}

During the 1950s an active Montessori organization also developed in Calcutta. Founded in August, 1955, with Joosten as President, The Association of Montessorians, Calcutta, had expanded its membership to a healthy 141 in less than ten years.\textsuperscript{35} The idea for an association in Calcutta had been suggested at the end of the 18th IMTC held there in 1954. It was greatly encouraged by Mayadevi Balchandra who had come from Yeotmal to examine the students. When a newly established AMI affiliated school, Montessori Shishu Bhavan (Children's House) offered to provide accommodation for such an organization, Joosten had no hesitation in approving its formation. Dipti Devi, Directress of the Montessori Shishu Bhavan, became head of the Association which attracted a membership of 50 in its first year.\textsuperscript{36}

With the departure of the IMTCs from Calcutta for a period, however, the initial enthusiasm for the Association waned. One means of reviving that enthusiasm and helping to sustain it, was the decision of the Association to produce an annual journal, \textit{Around the Child}, to mark its anniversary. The publication accepted articles in English, Bengali and Hindi and soon became the major activity of the Association in its efforts to maintain contact with AMI Diploma holders in West Bengal, to enable the continuation of links with other Montessori Associations in India and with AMI Headquarters, and to promote the Montessori movement in the State, "according to Dr. Montessori's principles." It also became the major organ of communication between the AMI (India) and former students of the IMTCs.\textsuperscript{37} Other activities of the organization included the holding
of exhibitions of Montessori apparatus and the provision of assistance in the establishment of Children's Houses. With the return of the IMTCs to Calcutta during the mid 1960s the enthusiasm and activities of the organization increased. In 1965 a "Study Circle" was established enabling members directly involved with Children's Houses to meet at monthly intervals to exchange ideas, discuss problems and to provide mutual assistance. 38

The city of Hyderabad became a major centre of activity for the movement during this period and has survived as such until the present. Not only were schools established there by former students of the IMTCs but, also, two active organizational structures emerged which continued to provide support for the IMTCs when they were located in the city, and also for the growing number of schools in both Hyderabad and the surrounding State of Andhra Pradesh (A.P.).

The Hyderabad (A.P.) Working Committee of the AMI was established in 1953 at the instigation of a social worker, Mrs M.K. Vellodi, wife of the former Administrator of Hyderabad. Joosten was conducting the 15th IMTC in the city and gave his full support to the proposal. The establishment of the original 11 member Committee was ultimately approved by the AMI as an Executive Body which would promote the development of the Montessori movement and undertake the work of organizing the training courses in Hyderabad. With Joosten as its Founder-President the Committee organized a number of IMTCs attracting an average of 175 students from India and abroad to each course. The Committee was also responsible for the dispersal of government grants among the various Children's Houses and for the arrangement of displays of Montessori Apparatus in the Education Pavillion at the Annual All-India Exhibitions. 39

A complementary organization was later formed in 1961 when, at a gathering of former students of the IMTCs to hear a talk by Joosten on "Walking on the Line", it was decided to form an association and hold such
meetings on a regular monthly basis. The principal aim of the organization was to "assist the Hyderabad Working Committee of the AMI in its efforts to promote the movement." It was called the Association of Montessorians, A.P., and it fulfilled an important function in providing a forum for the exchange of ideas among teachers concerning activities and problems involving the Children's Houses. It also enabled Joosten to maintain contact with his former students and to provide "refresher" lectures on specific areas of the Method. Such organizations were essential to ensure strict adherence to the principles and practice of the Method and to maintain the high standards expected by Joosten and the AMI.

Hyderabad became a Montessori Centre because Joosten was able to obtain vital support for the IMTCs and the Montessori movement from several key areas including the State Government. When the Central Government forwarded its recommendation that State Governments give recognition to the IMTC Diplomas, the Government of Andhra Pradesh agreed, provided the duration of the course was one year. For the purposes of remuneration, all teachers who had undergone such Montessori courses were to be paid on a par with those who had received "matriculation training". This instruction does not appear to have been followed, however, in some schools.

The Government was also prepared to consider the provision of grants to private institutions that wished to open Montessori classes, provided they were not already in receipt of Government funding. Grants of between Rs.3,000 and Rs.4,000 were allocated annually and were mainly utilized for the purchase of essential Montessori apparatus and other equipment. The Government also provided financial assistance to the IMTCs when they were located in Hyderabad. In 1960, for example, it not only made a "liberal grant-in-aid" to the 25th IMTC, but also deputed thirty students to take the training.

The provision of such support was probably due in part to the
involvement with the IMTCs of prominent members of the Government and senior officials who were keen to patronize the Montessori movement in their State. Mr L.N. Gupta, the State Secretary for Health, was also Chairman of the Hyderabad Working Committee which organized the Course there in July, 1960. He was able to obtain the services of the State Governor to inaugurate the Course. At a valedictory function at its closure in March, 1961, the Secretary for Education, Mr J.P.L. Gwynn, I.C.S., lamented the dearth of high quality pre-primary teachers. He expressed a desire for the establishment of more schools which were "representative of the Montessori Method and not merely making use of its name." He also stressed the need to extend the Montessori Method to the rural areas and stated that the Government was considering adding Montessori sections to some of its Primary schools. It envisioned that the Montessori trainees could contribute to various Child Welfare projects incorporated by the Central Government in the Third Five Year Plan. The State Government was also prepared to assist private endeavour in the area of pre-primary education until such time as it had the resources to assume greater responsibility. It demonstrated its approval for the Method in organizing the establishment of a Montessori Children's House at Raj Bhavan (Government House), which was to be sponsored by the then Governor's wife, Lalita Sachar. L.N. Gupta observed enthusiastically that "with State patronage and popular support the movement should be extended to all sections of the community ...."

Support for the Montessori movement in Hyderabad was also provided by the Nizam and his family, the traditional Muslim rulers of the region. Financial assistance was provided by the Nizam's Charitable Trust in the form of scholarships for students to attend the IMTCs. In 1960 it offered 25 scholarships and in 1961 the Trust allocated Rs.5,000 for "needy and deserving students" to attend the 26th IMTC in Hyderabad. Members of the Nizam's family, some of whom had received a Montessori education, were
frequent guests at Montessori functions. Prince Mukarram Jah Bahadur, for example, presented the diplomas at the close of the course in March 1962 and praised the work of the IMTCs.\textsuperscript{51}

A devout Catholic, Joosten was able to obtain considerable support for the Montessori movement, in Hyderabad and elsewhere, from various Catholic orders and congregations. The Church sent numbers of Sisters to attend the various IMTCs, who then applied the Method in their respective educational institutions.\textsuperscript{52} It also assisted the courses through the provision of accommodation. For example, accommodation for the 26th IMTC was generously provided by the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary who held special significance for the Montessori movement, according to Joosten, in that they,

were the first religious congregation to adopt the Montessori Method in their schools already before the First World War and to offer the hospitality of their Mother House to the Second Training Course given by Dr. Maria Montessori in Rome. It was there that the "Orphans of Messina" were received and showed such wonderful results both curative and developmental, as described in "The Secret of Childhood" and there also the students of the First International Montessori Training Course given by Dr. Montessori in 1913 came for their observations.\textsuperscript{53}

All Saints' High School was also made available to the 26th IMTC by Brother John of the Sacred Heart.\textsuperscript{54} When the first IMTC in the State of Bihar was held at Ranchi in 1965/1966, St Xaviers College provided lecture halls and class rooms for the practical work.\textsuperscript{55}

Whereas the Theosophical Society had once been the major religious group to patronize the Montessori Method in India, especially throughout the visit of its founder, during Joosten's Directorship of the IMTCs the Catholic Church became more directly involved in the movement. Even if there had been no falling out between the Montessoris and Rukmini Devi Arundale, it is unlikely that Joosten would have remained at Adyar as he had no sympathy with Theosophy. Descriptions of the garlanding of
portraits of Krishna as the eternal child ceased to appear in reports of Indian Montessori functions. Celebrations of important Montessori events, for example the anniversary of the opening of the first Children's House, or Madame's birthday, continued, but the nature of the religious devotions became more Christian, as the following description of the celebration, on the 6th January, 1962, of the inauguration of the first Casa dei Bambini reveals:

They decided to forego refreshment and to offer the money thus saved for poor children. A spontaneous collection trebled this amount which, in a purse made of gold paper, was placed at the feet of the Holy Child, during a tableau of the Epiphany. Early in the morning a H. Mass had been offered for the intentions of Dr. Montessori's work and the children of Taraporewalla's AMI Montessori School had arranged a wonderful display of clothes and other useful articles which they themselves distributed to poor children who had been invited to attend their celebration and were also given a treat.56

Previously it has been argued that much of the appeal of the Montessori Method for Indians lay in the emphasis by Montessori on the child's spiritual growth and life and that her approach, although she professed Catholicism, had much in common with Theosophical and Hindu belief. This spiritual emphasis was certainly not discouraged by Joosten although his tendency to intrude his own religious beliefs was not always appreciated by Hindus.57 Generally, however, the Method had appealed to Westernized Indians, especially Theosophists, with considerable religious tolerance and this continued to be the case.

During the 1960s there was certainly an increased interest in the Montessori Method in States like Kerala and Mysore with large Christian populations. As mentioned in Chapter Three, Mysore was educationally progressive and had a long history of involvement in the field of pre-primary education. In 1961 the Government, which had given recognition to the AMI Diplomas, sent its Secretary of the Committee for Pre-Primary Education to visit the 25th IMTC in Hyderabad and to discuss with Joosten
the appropriate means of applying Montessori education at the pre-primary level in the rural areas.\textsuperscript{58} The 32nd IMTC was held in the State capital, Bangalore, in 1967/68 and Joosten and his assistant, Mr S.R. Swamy, were invited by All India Radio, Bangalore, to give a broadcast in both English and the local language, Kannada, on the 20th July, to introduce the course due to start the following day. Fifty student's stipends of Rs.30 per month were provided by the State Government to enable needy and deserving students to attend and the Bangalore City Corporation sent six trainees to the course.\textsuperscript{59}

The State of Rajasthan displayed some interest in the Montessori Method during the 1960s. In 1961 a pre-primary section was established in the Bal Bharati of the Rajasthan Vidyalaya and an exhibition of Montessori apparatus was organized for its opening on the 19th November. The State's Chief Minister and the Vice-Chancellor of the Rajasthan University were both active members of the institution's Managing Committee.\textsuperscript{60}

Much of the revitalization of the Montessori movement during the 1950s and 1960s can be attributed to the efforts of a few dynamic former students of the IMTCs, who established schools and were active in forming and running local AMI associations. Prominent among them were Dipti Devi in Calcutta, R.K. Gupta in Delhi and L.N. Gupta and R.P. Bashyal in Hyderabad. The latter trained at the 20th IMTC at Varanasi in 1955/1956; it was the first of the longer nine month IMTCs. Afterwards he became Joosten's personal assistant at all successive courses in India and Ceylon.\textsuperscript{61}

The major credit, however, must be attributed to Joosten. He appears to have been undaunted by the mammoth task ascribed to him and undertook the work with a single minded determination which reflected his devotion to the Montessori cause. Apart from his teacher training commitments, he visited those Montessori Children's Houses that could pay his travel costs, in an inspectoral capacity, providing a critical appraisal of the activities and
making suggestions for improvements. On such visits to various locations around the country he was often invited to address community and church groups and took advantage of every possible opportunity to publicize the importance of pre-primary education and particularly the features of the Montessori Method. He also contributed numerous articles over the years to the journals of organizations concerned with child welfare and pre-school education. Often these were reprinted in Around the Child as were a number of his radio talks. Many were published as booklets by the IMTCs and some of them made required literature for students of the courses. The titles ranged from the broad themes adopted by Montessori such as Peace and Education, to more practical topics directly related to the functioning of the Children's Houses.

Joosten functioned as a kind of "Apostle Paul" of the Montessori movement in India, zealously undertaking the task of spreading the Montessori Method. He did not isolate the AMI (India) from the mainstream of early childhood education and had no hesitation in meeting with members of bodies such as the Indian Council for Child Welfare or the Indian Association for Pre-School Education. He was, for example, elected a Vice-President of the Indian Federation of Pre-Primary Institutions. He also took the opportunity to present papers at their conferences or to at least send a representative of the AMI (India), thereby ensuring that the "official" Montessori voice was heard.

Joosten made an effort to adopt many of the customs of his adopted home. He learned the national language, Hindi, and wore Indian dress of khurta and pyjama. Interestingly, he donned the black cap favoured by the monotheist Muslims and Zoroastrians rather than the white "Ghandi cap" of the predominantly Hindu Congress party members and supporters. Of greater significance, however, was his encouragement of the provision in the Children's Houses of furnishings, equipment, and cultural activities in keeping with traditional Indian households. This was especially
evident in the Exercises of Practical Life and will be discussed in more detail in a later section.

By the late 1960s, although many problems remained, the Montessori movement in India was firmly established so that when Mario Montessori and his wife Ada payed a return visit in 1967, they not only found a well organized AMI (India) but, also, six quite active local Associations in Delhi, Calcutta, Hyderabad and Poona. Prior to their visit, Joosten had made a three month trip to Europe visiting Amsterdam where he had grown up and become a Montessorian, and also the Sacred Heart Convent in Dublin where he had conducted a Montessori training Course in 1946 with E.M. Standing. In Europe he reportedly encountered "great interest" in the work of the Montessori movement in India, and an "appreciation and confidence" in the efforts of Indian Montessorians.

The tone of the report suggests, however, that there may have been a view that the Indian Montessori schools were not equal to those in Europe, hence Joosten's need to reassure Indians that their work was considered worthwhile. Joosten may have entertained such a belief himself because he urged Indian colleagues to continue their efforts in order to "justify" such approval. In a movement which relied to a large extent on voluntarism for its survival, the task of sustaining the motivation and involvement of members was not easy.

The visit of the Montessoris caused considerable excitement amongst devotees of the Method in India, and "elaborate plans" were made for their initial reception in Calcutta. They arrived from Nepal on the 25th November and, on the following day, after meeting the executive of the local AMI Association, they visited the Mongrace Montessori House in Short Street and the Gokul Montessori House at New Alipore. As it was a Sunday there were no children present but they inspected the display of apparatus in the various rooms. On the 27th they observed children working in the oldest AMI recognized Montessori Children's House in Calcutta, Dipti Devi's
AMI Montessori Shishu Bhavan and were "much impressed" with the two environments that had been created in separate buildings. They also visited Bal Nilaya in Prince Anwar Shah Road, the Montessori section of Abhinav Bharati in Pretoria Street and the Shri Bhowanipur Gujarati Bal Mandir. However, few schools were functioning because of political disturbances in the city. 

Their visit "revived dying spirits" and provided the necessary encouragement to those involved in the movement in Calcutta to work harder. One of the members took the opportunity to make a request for the provision of an Advanced Course in Calcutta. None had been held in India since 1948 and there were few teachers with the qualifications to extend the Montessori Method into the primary school.

In his address to members of the Association of Montessorians on the 27th November, Mario responded to some of their grievances, particularly the complaint that the movement had not expanded sufficiently in terms of the size of the membership and the number of schools, and the major problem of a shortage of committed workers. He told them their main concern should always be the cause of the child. "You must become the 'Voice of the Child'", he urged. "Many are called but few are chosen, be the chosen few." Mario praised their work thus far, particularly the efforts of Joosten who, he said, was like a son to him. He suggested that they should seek Joosten's "expert" advice whenever they were experiencing difficulties, indicating complete faith in his work in India.

Mario also urged members to follow the example of Madame Montessori who had managed to continue her work in the face of adversity. He claimed that, whilst many had rejected the Montessori Method in the belief that it was "old-fashioned and out-dated", they were eventually forced to return to its principles in seeking solutions to the problems of "deviance", such as violent behaviour, in the child. He asserted that this was because the Montessori Method was "God's Method", which had been revealed to Dr Montessori
when she was working among the slum children of Rome and which had transformed these children "who were wild, unmanageable and thieves." According to Mario many students claimed to have been "transformed" after undergoing the Montessori teacher training and he told members, "There lies your secret and strength."75

Mario was still proclaiming that the Montessori Method was divinely inspired and amongst the converted in India, his rhetoric did not appear out of place. He concluded with the announcement that plans were underway for the celebration of Dr Montessori's Birth Centenary in 1970. Rather than one gigantic World Congress the decision had been made to hold several large celebrations, one of which would be in India as it was there that the Cosmic Curriculum was fully developed and The Absorbent Mind was written. Mario observed, "It wouldn't be wrong to say that she put the crown on her work in India."76

Apart from Calcutta, the Montessoris also visited Madras, Bangalore, Mysore, Hyderabad, Bombay, Ahmedabad and Delhi. At Adyar they met with Theosophical Society President, N. Sri Ram, and were able to return, after almost twenty years, to Olcott gardens where Dr Montessori and Mario had given their first course in India.77 They also visited Kalakshetra which had moved to a new location at Tiruvanmiyur by the ocean. The new site housed Kalakshetra Publications, which had taken over the publishing of Montessori's books in India, the Arundale Training Centre which continued to train Montessori teachers, and the Besant School. The Montessori section of the school was housed in a building constructed on the basis of a design developed in consultation with Dr Montessori. It functioned as an observation school for the Arundale Training Centre.78

The visit was significant in that it afforded the opportunity for a reconciliation with Rukimini Devi Arundale. Two years later, during the celebration of Montessori's Birth Centenary, Rukmini Devi paid generous tribute to her work. There was no hint of their differences in the past.
She wrote:

What we owe to her in our Centre cannot be put into words. Our Montessori School and the Arundale Training Centre for Teachers are institutions started with her help .... The world of children has become happier because of her. It could be even happier if only we could realise that what she taught was not just a method but a truth that is lasting for all time. The forms may and should change but the spirit cannot and should not. I am indeed fortunate to have known her and my gratitude will surely inspire me to better work.

Joosten did not accompany the Montessoris to Adyar but they met him in Bangalore when they visited the 32nd IMTC and he travelled with them throughout the remainder of their stay. In Hyderabad, which had become an important centre for Montessori activities, they visited several schools including the excellent Montessori House of Children run by Miss K.T. Taraporewalla which, it was reported, "came up to their expectations and is certainly one of the best in this country, it is one of the few AMI Houses of Children and maintains and develops the high standard the AMI strives for."80

The Montessoris met Shesh Namle, former student and "collaborator of Dr and Mr Montessori during the war years", when they visited Bombay. Namle, who had become Principal of Shishu Vihar after the retirement of Tarabhai Morlak, was preparing a series of books and charts for publication which he showed the visitors. These were concerned with various aspects of the Cosmic Curriculum which he had worked on with the Montessoris at Kodaikanal and which included detailed illustrations of the distinguishing characteristics of mammals, the nature of their behaviour and the use made of them by man.81

In Ahmedabad they met AMI Vice-President, Sarala Devi Sarabhai and paid a visit to Shreyas which Mario had opened on the 15th November, 1947. It began as a small school of 25 pupils in the grounds of "The Retreat", but had developed, primarily due to the dynamic effort of Sarala Devi's...
daughter, Leena Mangaldas, and her daughter-in-law, Manorama Sarabhai, into an "impressive education centre" for children virtually from birth up to the matriculation level. The grand scale of Shreyas contrasted markedly with the Lions Montessori Balghar, which they visited subsequently at Shanti Nagar on the outskirts of Delhi. The Montessori Children's House and the Primary school were directed by R.K. Gupta with the assistance of his wife. It had been established by the Montessori Education Society, with financial assistance from the Lion's Club, to cater for impoverished children. The Montessori Method had evolved sixty years previously among children of the urban slums in Rome, but this was one of the few attempts by an AMI organization to apply it amongst such children in India.

The visit of the Director-General of the AMI and his wife appears to have come at a crucial period for the "official" movement in India because it provided the necessary fillip to bring together disparate and disgruntled members and gave encouragement to Joosten's work. In doing so, it also highlighted the dependency of the AMI (India) upon the approval and support of the parent body in Amsterdam. Mario's appearance in India had provided a vital link with the past, and the charismatic personality of his mother, with whom a new generation of Indian Montessorians had had no contact. In making a pilgrimage to the places where they had lived and worked, and in visiting the new schools, Mario provided a bridge which enabled the fragmented elements of the old movement to come together in 1970 to celebrate his mother's Birth Centenary in a significant way.

Although Montessori's contribution to education in India had scarcely been acknowledged at her passing, her Birth Centenary was celebrated with great fanfare. A National Centenary Committee had been established to coordinate the celebrations which included a national centenary function, an all-India Seminar on the Montessori Method, and the compilation of a souvenir publication, Maria Montessori's Contribution to Educational Thought and Practice. Financial assistance for the celebrations was provided not
only by the various Montessori Associations, but by the Ministry of Education, the Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO, the Nagaland Government and the Sarabhai Foundation. The Government of India recognized and honoured Montessori's work with the issuing of a special commemorative stamp.

Apart from the official celebrations, the Indian Association For Pre-School Education (IAPE) dedicated its Sixth Annual Conference to the memory of Dr Montessori with "Re-discovery of Montessori" as the major theme. It was inaugurated by Sarala Devi Sarabhai. One of the main purposes of the conference was to highlight Montessori's contribution to early childhood education in India and to draw attention to the relationship between recent research in the field and the Montessori Method. Another focus was the examination of recent experimental projects in pre-primary education and their relevance for India, and a discussion on possible strategies for the expansion of facilities for pre-school education in the country. A feature of the conference was the provision of several teacher's sessions, one of which concerned the Montessori Method and was conducted by S.R. Swamy on behalf of the AMI (India).

The influence of Montessori's ideas and her personal contribution to early childhood education was publicly acknowledged at the conference by Indian specialists in the field and their appreciation of her work was reflected in the following resolutions and recommendations, that,

1. The Conference pays tribute to the memory of Madame Montessori, a great pioneer in child education, especially for her role in strengthening the movement in India.

18. Comparative research studies on Montessori and other methods be undertaken in order to highlight the significant features of Montessori pedagogy for integrating it with the main stream of educational thought.

19. The possibility of application of the Montessori Method for educating the mentally retarded child be explored.
The other major organization concerned with the young child in India, the Indian Council for Child Welfare, also held a conference in December, 1970, in conjunction with the International Children's Centre, Paris. A.M. Joosten was a delegate in his capacity as Director, Indian Montessori Training Courses and Special Representative of the AMI. He reminded delegates that Maria Montessori's Birth Centenary coincided with the celebration of the International Education Year and drew their attention to her life long crusade on behalf of the child. Many of the Conference papers had focused on the need for an integrated approach to child development and education. Joosten pointed out that Montessori had always advocated such a view of the child. "Life Long education" had been proposed by UNESCO as one of the major themes for International Education Year. Joosten claimed that:

Dr. Maria Montessori was perhaps the first educationist to use this term, stress its essential importance and implement it practically. Her method is still today the only one which covers the whole of this life long development.

and,

The educational institutions that use her name (not as an advertisement, but as a programme they sincerely try to implement and serve) are places where the developing human personality (from birth until it reaches the threshold of adulthood) shows his liberated powers and the promises they hold in store and offer to mankind, to its survival and development.

Couched in typical Montessori rhetoric, wherein the child is deified, Joosten's idealistic contribution seemed incongruous given the context of the other papers with their research data and statistical details concerning child health, nutrition and educational programmes.

Joosten had begun the celebration of Montessori's Centenary Year with a broadcast on All-India Radio (Hyderabad), on 31st August, 1969. He took advantage of the coincidental overlapping of the Birth Centenaries
of Montessori and the "Father of the Nation", Mahatma Gandhi, by focusing the theme of his talk around the mutuality of their thought and action. He said that,

More than being an historical curiosity this coincidence can and should help us recognize the kinship between the lives and spirits of Mahatma Gandhi and Maria Montessori. Both were apostles of peace, passionate champions of the equality in dignity of all men and all human activity. Both are also shining examples of unconditional and unreserved dedication of their whole selves to the noblest of all causes: the development of the human being, of man the individual and of man the member and builder of society.91

He went on to relate how Gandhi and Montessori had become personally acquainted and discussed the similarity of their ideas and aspirations for humanity. Montessorians and Gandhians shared a common cause, according to Joosten, and should learn from each other and work together. In conclusion, he stated that both Gandhi and Montessori "could say, as in fact on the eve of the Second World War Dr Montessori did say: 'The seed we sow is the seed of hope!'".92 Unfortunately, however, in post-Independence India, the "seed of hope" planted by Gandhi withered as the Gandhian movement became fragmented and lost its dynamism. Many Gandhian workers believed it was sacrilege to deviate from Gandhi's own theory and practice and his ashrams became transformed into shrines and museums rather than centres for experimentation in the field of community development.93

In continuing to eulogize Montessori, there was a danger of her movement in India following the same direction. The mythologizing had already begun during the period of Madame's visit to India and for some she had become a cult figure. According to educationist Hansaben Mehta,

All those who took the short courses had no proper background and were not competent. They very often did not understand the principles underlying child education. With them [the] Montessori method became a ritual and the Montessori implements - very expensive though they were - [the] sine qua non of child education.94
Despite such criticisms, the celebration of Montessori’s Birth Centenary in India appears to have been a great success and underscored the growing significance of early childhood education in terms of both government and private initiative. Educationist Rajalakshmi Muralidharan expressed the view in her Presidential Address to the IAPE Conference that, as a result of the contribution of both Madame Montessori and the Indian pioneers of her Method, such as Gijubhai Badheka, Tarabhai Modak, and the Arundales, "India now occupies a significant place in the world map of early childhood education." The various activities appear to have provided a major boost to the Indian Montessori movement. Joosten was able to report to the AMI General Assembly in 1971, that "After the Centenary Celebrations ... the Montessori Movement in this country both consolidated and expanded its activities."  

THE INDIAN MONTESSORI TRAINING COURSES (IMTCs)  

The IMTCs were the major means of ensuring the continued expansion of the movement. A nine and a half month Diploma Course had been introduced by Joosten from 1955/1956 when the 20th IMTC was held at Varanasi. He could then claim that his courses were equivalent to any twelve month pre-primary training course as there were no vacations except for Indian Government public holidays. The requisite age for entrance to the course was eighteen years. Possession of at least a High School Certificate or matriculation equivalent was also obligatory although the Director of the Course could make some exceptions with regard to qualifications, "in special cases at his own discretion for Indian students residing in India."  

The qualifications of students attending the courses was generally very high, many holding Indian or overseas degrees. For example, at the 33rd IMTC at Bangalore in 1968-1969, 5 per cent of the students were post-graduates, 15 per cent were graduates, 20 per cent were under-graduates and the remaining 60 per cent were matriculates or its equivalent.
The courses were conducted in English with the availability of translation into Hindi. The utilization of English was necessary because of the numbers of students from central and southern States where Hindi was not the mother tongue, nor was it widely spoken. Despite Gandhi's campaign against the English language it remained the medium of instruction in many schools and universities after Independence and proved a unifying factor, at least for the educated.

Each course attracted an average of between 150 to 180 students comprising "parents, teachers, members of the armed forces, of religious congregations, social workers, doctors, of all ages, languages, creeds and social conditions." Significantly, once the longer courses had been established on a regular basis, they began to attract a few foreign students including some from other developing countries which lacked such training and whose students could not afford the cost of a Montessori course in the United States or Europe. There were three students from East Africa, for example, at the 26th Course in Hyderabad in 1961/1962. At the 33rd Course in Bangalore in 1968/1969, there were six students from Malaysia and one each from Ceylon, Kenya and Sikkim. Over the years the Courses also attracted a sprinkling of students from the so-called "Advanced" nations, who wished to combine Montessori studies with their interest in Indian culture. Such students came from the United States, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom and Ireland.

A distinguishing feature of the IMTCs during Madame Montessori's stay in India had been the numbers of mature age students in attendance. She always encouraged parents, particularly mothers, to attend her lectures so that her philosophy of child education would penetrate the home environment, and it was a tradition maintained by Joosten. One of Joosten's assistants, R.P. Bashyal, wrote in this regard,

As far as I know this is the only course in the field of education where we find girls who have just reached 18 years of age sitting next to ladies who are well over fifty,
discussing subjects which both find of interest or dealt with in the course of the lectures, or again sharing something they may have discovered during the course.104

Apart from the wide range in age amongst the students, the IMTCs were also culturally diverse with students from most Indian States as well as those from overseas. At the Bangalore Course there were twenty different languages spoken as the mother tongue amongst the students. Almost all the States and territories of India were also represented and, over all, the students came from 54 different locations, some having travelled over 2,000 km. within India.105 Over the years there were a number of Tibetan students from refugee camps at Dharamsala and outside Bangalore, and also increasing numbers of Adivasis (tribals), particularly when the courses were held in Ranchi in Bihar. Houses of Children also began to appear in areas where previously none had existed, in parts of Bihar, Orissa, Assam, Tripura, Sikkim and Nagaland. The Method was thus being extended to some of the more isolated and "backward" areas of India, and was no longer confined to the larger towns and the cities.

It was usual for the city hosting the course to supply a large number of students and by far the greatest number of students at the 33rd IMTC came from Bangalore, which provided 34 per cent of the total. More than half of these were originally from outside the city, however, as they were religious sisters who had supplied the name of a local convent as their permanent address. Christians were the largest religious community, comprising 64 per cent of the total number of students. This was unusual in a country where they formed such a tiny minority. Basyal argued that it demonstrated "the Christian community's consciousness of the value of education."106 A large Christian contingent was to be expected given the location of the course in Mysore which, with nearby Kerala, contained relatively large Christian populations. However, the high percentage of Christians, particularly the numbers of religious sisters, also reflected the support that Joosten received from the Catholic Church. Catholics, who
may have been less inclined to attend courses associated with the Theosophical Society, appear to have flocked to those organized by Joosten.

Whereas several of Montessori's courses had been organized on the ancient gurukul pattern at Adyar and at Kodaikanal, with the students residing in the same compound or in little houses nearby their guru, this was not possible when Joosten took charge of the IMTCs. There was no permanent location for the courses and it was impossible to organize such idyllic accommodation in India's increasingly overcrowded cities. The courses also differed in several other respects. Because they were longer it was possible to extend the breadth and depth of the Montessori studies in terms of the hours of observation and practical work. Former students of Dr Montessori in India, however, lamented the change. Some of them believed that, having studied directly under her, they had received the Montessori Method in its entirety and there was nothing else for them to learn. Bashyal commented that "They forget that we benefitted [sic] from sitting at the feet of a great Master not by merely repeating the Mantras given by the Master which does not bring Mukti." 107 Unfortunately, the Montessori Mantras had been presented by Madame and Mario, and later by Joosten and Swamy who "hammered it and hammered it", 108 in such a way that they were regarded by students as "the gospel" from which there should be no deviation. Many students consequently applied the Montessori Method so rigidly in practice that they lost sight of its essential principles, thus leading to the charge that it had become a ritualized dogma.

The new courses were divided into three main sections: Child Psychology, with the main emphasis being "the psychological development of the child from birth to six years of age as expounded by Dr. Maria Montessori"; the Theory of the Montessori Method, incorporating the role of the adult and the function of the "prepared environment" in
satisfying the "vital needs of self-construction"; and Practical Demonstration Lectures, involving the presentation and explanation of the Montessori Apparatus. The major focus of all the lectures was the "conception of education as a help to life and the child as the lever of human uplift." 109

As was the case with Montessori's own courses in India, the lectures were held in the evening, from five until eight o'clock, to enable parents and those engaged in employment to attend. Practical Classes were held during the day from Monday until Saturday. 110 Students were expected to attend a total of 757 hours each throughout the entire course. Of these, 15 per cent were taken up with practical work, 11.8 per cent with lectures on Montessori Theory and Psychology, 14.8 per cent for "cultural subjects" including Geography, Botany and Geometry, and the remainder, or roughly half the time, was spent at Practical Demonstration classes. 111 They were required to purchase and keep an attendance book and to attend lectures punctually. Late students were penalized by being marked down for "half-attendance\). Attendance of less than 90 per cent resulted in disqualification to sit for the examinations. 112 The organization of the IMTCs thus appeared extremely rigid, bearing no resemblance to the Montessori environment in which the trainees were later to work. Montessori had always opposed tangible rewards and punishments for children but this principle apparently did not apply to adults.

A major difference between the IMTCs and their counterparts in Europe and the United States, was the absence of practical experience with children. Montessori had argued that it was unfair to subject children to the endeavours of untrained or perhaps "unenlightened" trainees and the historical tradition was continued in India. 113 But the IMTCs were out of step with Montessori work elsewhere and with general directions in teacher education. The absence of practice teaching with children - students worked with each other in presenting the apparatus - was a major
A positive feature of the courses was the attempt to,

... give special consideration to the conditions peculiar to the country and in particular to the characteristics of the regional and national languages with their own problems on which the child and experience in Montessori schools have thrown so much light. 116

Montessori had always advocated the education of the young child through the medium of the mother tongue and had thus expressed opposition to Gandhi's preoccupation with Hindi as the national language. It should also be noted, however, that Montessori had opposed a suggestion by the Congress Party for the creation of linguistic provinces in India because it would be divisive. She said in a speech at Pilani on the 27th January, 1946, that "this characteristic affinity for the mother tongue which is incarnated in each and every human being is a definite obstacle to human unity." 117

Joosten was opposed to the utilization of English as the medium of instruction in schools where it was not the mother tongue of the children. He did not, however, object to the introduction of English, in its spoken form only, with young children. 118 A complete methodology for the presentation of reading and writing in Hindi, according to the Montessori Method, was developed in India:
This implied a re-classification of the letters of the Devanagari script and their presentation on a psychological basis, the gradation of orthographical difficulties and corresponding material for children between 2½ and 6 years of age.119

The same process was applied to the Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Kannada and Tamil languages.

Apart from the preparation of Montessori Apparatus in the various regional languages and the development of appropriate techniques for its presentation, Joosten was also concerned that the Montessori Children's Houses should reflect indigenous culture in terms of the observance of religious and social customs, and the utilization of local furniture and household utensils. He stressed that the classification of items under the heading, Exercises of Practical Life by the IMTCs, was not complete and was "orientative" rather than final. A child in an Indian Montessori school could therefore engage in some of the following practical life activities: pouring dry materials and liquids from a _lotā_ (vase shaped vessel) into a _katori_ (small bowl), lighting a _diwā_ (oil lamp), preparing cotton wicks, cleaning and carding raw cotton, using a _takli_, cleaning rice and _dhāl_ (lentils), kneading dough to make _chapātis_ and _purīs_ (Indian breads), crushing spices with special tools for the preparation of _marsalas_ (curry powders), decorating the floor, entrance, and special places with _rangoli_, i.e. white and coloured powders used to create special designs, often including religious symbols.120 Such activities had originally been introduced into the Montessori Children's House by Gijubhai and Tarabhai at Bhavanagar and were a feature of the _Bal Mandirs_ run by the NBSS.

Joosten was not so much concerned with the kind of practical life activities adopted, but with the manner of their presentation to the child or group of children. He thus provided precise details concerning the appropriate procedure, as with the preparation of the Montessori environment
and the presentation of the Montessori Apparatus for the students of the IMTCs. His aim was always to preserve the "scientific pedagogy" devised by Montessori and to discourage the students from any deviation from the approved Method. But the rigid formalism of the courses and the manner in which the Montessori theory and practice was "hammered" sometimes resulted in the absence of creativity and spontaneity in the Children's Houses, particularly amongst the less talented and receptive students. 121 Not all students had the requisite spirit of service toward the child and sought a "divinely inspired" method of child, indeed human, development. Most wanted to undertake an approved diploma course which would enable them to earn a living. For some, the establishment of a Montessori school proved a lucrative business, particularly in cities like Bombay where entrance to the first standard in prestigious schools was highly competitive. Others wanted a Montessori Diploma to engage in a socially acceptable occupation and to earn some "pocket money" prior to marriage. 122 In concentrating on the detail of the technique they often failed to understand the essential underlying philosophy and attitude towards the child.

THE MONTESSORI SCHOOLS IN INDIA

The possession of a diploma from the IMTCs enabled the recipient to obtain a position in a Montessori school and be paid the approved salary for pre-primary school teachers. It did not necessarily allow someone to establish an "approved" Montessori school. Certain requirements had to be met before this was permissible, as the following extract from an AMI communiqué indicates.

Only such classes, sections or institutions where all the staff-members in charge of the education of children in possession of valid Montessori Diploma or Certificate (see above) for the age-groups specified in the diploma or certificate, and where all the requirements concerning equipment, organization, constitution or mixed age-groups, and age at admission set forth by authorised Montessori
Training Courses are fulfilled and where the Montessori Method is applied in its integrity are entitled to use the name "Montessori" in any form.123

As the AMI standards were so strict, there were very few schools in India that were eligible to use the name Montessori and to receive AMI affiliation.

There had been a proliferation of Montessori schools as a result of Madame's visit and the large numbers of students that flocked to her courses. The brevity of the courses and the lack of Montessori expertise among many of the students resulted in "abuses" in schools professing to apply the Method. As the demand for Nursery education in post-Independence India expanded, such schools became a commercial proposition and could demand high fees.124 A "good" education was thought to ensure entrance to the lucrative professions and the world of commerce, and in the over-crowded cities of India there was fierce competition for entrance to prestigious schools which expected children to be able to read and write prior to entrance into the first standard. A Montessori pre-school education thus became essential.125 Parents were not concerned generally whether the principles and the techniques of the Method were applied correctly. The name, "Montessori", had made such a strong impact in India that parents were satisfied merely if their children attended a pre-primary school bearing that title.126 It was so widely known in India that "Montessori" education became co-terminous with "pre-school" education and the pre-primary sections of schools were popularly called "the Montessori".127

By the beginning of the 1970s, although reliable statistical data were not available, it was claimed that "the majority of the existing pre-school institutions in India carry the Montessori tag."128 In 1968 there were 3,614 recognized pre-schools in India.129 Montessori schools remained popular because of the belief among educated, urban, upper caste,
and upper class parents, that a Montessori education would "successfully prepare the children for academic learning at an early age." Some parents also favoured the Montessori Method because of the ordered environment and the level of discipline which they perceived to have been "instilled" in the child and which contrasted with the more "casual" atmosphere and the lack of discipline in other pre-schools. Parental concern with obedience and the development of reading and writing skills, however, resulted in the "diluting" of the Montessori Method in many schools. The vital underlying concern for the individual child was missing.

Some in India and elsewhere believed that the "rigid orthodoxy" of the AMI and the opposition to any alterations to the Method without "official" approval, was purely motivated by pecuniary concerns. In the United States, for example, some Montessorians were, according to one Indian visitor, "vexed and bitterly frustrated by this uncompromising attitude which they frankly suspect is fostered by commercial interests manifested by the insistence on royalties and fees." Indian Montessori schools were required to pay fees to become affiliated to the AMI (assuming they had been initially approved), but Joosten's "orthodoxy" appears to have been motivated by a fervent desire to preserve the Method, and to prevent the abuse of the Montessori name by schools which did not strictly adhere to its precepts.

Often the problems caused by overcrowding and the lack of suitable accommodation in cities were cited by Montessori teachers as reasons for failing to adhere to the appropriate arrangement of the environment or for dividing the children in different rooms according to age. Joosten and Swamy, however, argued that,

It is very important also to remember that the different sections or areas of the room should remain articulations of the whole room. It is a great mistake to separate the children in groups according to their ages or levels of
development WITHIN this period from 2½ to 6. If one should not have the good fortune of having a room large enough to hold all the children and all the apparatus, but use several small rooms (this is often the case where a House of Children is started in a private house not built for the purpose), it is better to have the full set of apparatus in one of these rooms; and then let the children come and go there to take what they need (and bring it back to its proper place after use) and carry out their activity wherever in any of the other rooms they find a suitable place.135

They insisted that there was always an appreciable improvement in the attitude and behaviour of the children if the appropriate organization of the Montessori environment was adhered to.136

Despite the numbers of diplomas awarded by the IMTCs, there were relatively few Montessori teachers in comparison to the increasing demand for them. It was cheaper to employ untrained staff and to provide them with a "crash course" in the preparation of the environment and the presentation of the materials. Consequently there were Montessori schools in which only one member of staff had received AMI training, and that may have been many years ago at one of Madame's courses.137 The huge distances involved and the short periods of time available to him each year to travel, prevented Joosten from undertaking inspectoral visits to many schools established by former IMTC students. Some schools which had received AMI recognition in the past ceased to strictly deserve such recognition when they were unable to replace AMI staff or to maintain the approved environment. For example, the Besant Montessori School in the Theosophical Society's Compound at Juhu, Bombay, was an AMI affiliated school but gradually, over the years, because there were fewer AMI trained teachers and because of a lack of space and parental pressures, only one "pure" Montessori environment remained. The schools were also expected to pay Joosten's travel expenses to receive a visit,138 which no doubt dissuaded some of the more commercially minded from concerning themselves with AMI affiliation and a strict observance of the Method.

The lack of qualified people capable of assisting not only with
the training courses, but also with the supervision of former students working in Children's Houses, and the provision of refresher courses, was a major problem for the movement. In 1972 Joosten told the AMI General Assembly:

Our most immediate tasks for the near future besides the consolidation and development of present activities are:

1. to try to attract more suitably qualified (generally and with regard to the Method) persons who can help us expand training facilities with a view to also establish regional centres.

2. to organize facilities for inspection and on the spot assistance for Montessori Houses of Children.

3. specially organized refresher-courses to help those working in the field to look deeper and to up-date their knowledge of the Method and its practical application.

4. to organize Seminars and lecture-series for the public (parents and all concerned with child welfare and education), and last, but far from least,

5. to work for the application of the Method among the socially and economically deprived.139

He made a plea for "funds without strings attached", to attract the necessary specialists and to enable his Indian assistants to further their Montessori study. He suggested the provision of scholarships so that some could take the Advanced Course abroad and thereby enable Primary Montessori sections to be attached to "well-established pre-primary institutions."140 In support of this request he invoked the debt owed by the AMI to India, in view of the great inspirations Madame received there to further develop her work. To prevent "abuses" of the Method and to maintain a viable Montessori school system in private hands, it was essential to have a permanent staff of highly trained personnel, particularly in a country the size of India. The AMI, however, did not immediately respond to his request and three years later in Amsterdam he reminded the General Assembly of its urgency.141
Despite the material problems of finding appropriate accommodation and trained staff, and the high cost of establishing a Montessori environment, there were excellent Montessori schools in India, some of which had managed to survive over periods of from thirty to forty years. Of those established during the 1950s, Dipti Devi's AMI Montessori Shishu Bhavan in Calcutta and Khursheed Taraporewalla's AMI Montessori House of Children in Hyderabad, are specially notable, not only because of their longevity, but also because their Directresses (unlike the many IMTC students who simply "disappeared" after the training), maintained close contact with the AMI (India) and made major contributions to its survival.

Dipti Devi's school had opened with only four children belonging to relatives and friends who "sympathized with the mission and very bravely risked their children to the experiment." The reputation of the school soon grew and it was forced to move to larger premises, eventually expanding to comprise two separate environments. By 1966 the school had become so popular that it had a waiting list of thirty children and Dipti Devi was "reluctantly compelled" to refuse admission to some children below the age of three. When the school began it was not common practice among parents to send very young children. However, the school's reputation and the increased demand for a Montessori education, which had become almost a pre-requisite for admission to most élite schools, resulted in children as young as two and a half seeking entrance. Dipti Devi constantly strove to ensure her school adhered to AMI standards and it was thus utilized by Joosten for observations by the students of the IMTCs. Shishu Bhavan was not the only "good" Montessori school in Calcutta, however, and by 1964 there were five other such AMI affiliated schools.

Taraporewalla's AMI Montessori school opened with just five children in 1953. The Directress, a member of the Parsi community, had trained at the first course at Adyar in 1939. She was invited by the Montessoris to remain at Adyar and assist with the courses but her father
refused permission and she was only able to open her school when her father retired. In the early days few parents understood the function of the Method and it was not widely known in Hyderabad. By holding a Montessori stall for several years in the Education Pavilion of the All-India Industrial Exhibition in the city, she was able to familiarize the public with the apparatus and its purpose and by 1957 her school had begun to expand. In 1970 it was moved to its present location in a large airy mansion in Nampally Station Road. This school also acted as an observation school for the IMTCs when they were in Hyderabad and Miss Taraporewalla remained a stalwart of the Indian movement, being an active member of the Hyderabad (AP) Working Committee of the AMI, and assisting Joosten with the IMTCs when they were held in Hyderabad.

Other good Montessori schools continued to function or were newly established by former IMTC students elsewhere in large centres such as Delhi and Bombay, and in less populated places. An Indian Montessorian wrote after visiting one such school:

There are many Houses of Children - all over India and the whole wide world - yet, I feel that each one of them has to be and is thoroughly unique to be truly and genuinely a Montessori House of Children. And that I found in Jamshedpur.

The Children's House at Jamshedpur was undoubtedly "unique", reflecting the influence of the Directress who had prepared the environment with such care, but it also displayed features which were common to most "good" Montessori schools. Among them the lack of interference by adults in the work of the child, described below:

Smoothly the work went on without others even noticing how some children were called for a group activity, they continued their exercises, unperturbed the youngest of them, with aprons on, were mostly busy sweeping or washing the floor.

Most interesting was it to observe the way the children took their 'nasta'. A little room is set aside for the purpose. The children went to the refreshment room when
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Most interesting was it to observe the way the children took their 'nasta'. A little room is set aside for the purpose. The children went to the refreshment room when
they felt like it. No one disturbed them there, no "Ayah" either. They helped themselves and helped each other.147

The presence of Ayahs - women who usually cleaned and also cared for young children in the homes of the wealthier classes - often caused problems in Montessori schools. Some parents insisted that the Ayahs accompany the children and remain with them in the Children's House where they would sometimes intrude in the activities of their small charges in the belief that they were "assisting". Some schools also had their own servants to carry out large scale preparation of meals (as distinct from the nasta or snack), and to assist with general cleaning duties. It was difficult to dissuade them from also "helping" the children to clean up after their snack or with other Exercises of Practical Life. Joosten and Swamy stipulated that "Ayahs or servants should NOT enter the living-room and not be made responsible for this completion of an activity."148

Some high caste Hindu parents also objected to their children doing the work of a "sweeper" - traditionally an "untouchable". Committed Montessori Directresses like Dipti Devi and Khursheed Taraporewala had to devote considerable effort to explaining the essential function and purpose of the practical life activities to parents. Joosten believed that one of the greatest contributions of the Montessori Method to the Indian child was in the area of caste and communal barriers which broke down when children from different backgrounds served food and drink to each other and engaged in manual activities usually undertaken by people of low caste. Emphasis was also placed on the celebration of the various religious festivals of all the children in attendance in an effort to encourage mutual understanding and respect. However, because there were few Montessori schools which enrolled low caste children this contribution was more potential than real.

While there were numbers of good pre-primary Montessori schools, few attempted to extend the Method into the Primary level. Apart from
the lack of trained staff, the competition for places in prestigious schools ensured that most parents removed their children from the Children's Houses at age five to obtain a place in the first standard. Those schools that contained primary sections, such as Taraporewalla's AMI Montessori school and the Besant Montessori School in Bombay, were usually constrained, in terms of the extent to which they could follow the Advanced Montessori Method and the "Cosmic Curriculum", by parental attitudes and the entry requirements of the private schools. The work thus became more formalised for children beyond the age of five years, consistent with "normal" classroom instruction.149

One school, however, was unique in being able to apply the Montessori philosophy up to the Secondary level. This was Shreyas at Ahmedabad. In 1969 it moved from the grounds of the Sarabhai family home to an extensive elevated site on eighty acres of land on the outskirts of the city. The campus comprised three zones, one each for study, recreational and residential purposes. In keeping with the Montessori approach, the school, which was co-educational, was divided into broad sections - infant, junior, and senior - rather than by class.

The overall emphasis was on the development of an "integrated personality" in the child so the education provided involved not only academic training but artistic, cultural, sporting, religious and community service activities. The pupils assisted each other in the serving of meals and other domestic chores including cleaning duties. These activities were introduced with the aim of encouraging self-reliance and cooperation among the students. Regular health examinations and medical care were provided and the teachers, because of the low pupil/teacher ratio, were able to maintain very detailed records of each child's all round progress.150 A range of vocationally oriented crafts such as woodwork, metalwork, printing, farming and dairying were also available for children to select from age eleven. The school incorporated the educational
philosophies of Montessori, Tagore and Gandhi. The Illustrated Weekly of India wrote of the school:

Children in such an environment are able to discover and develop their abilities to the fullest. They receive the guidance, instruction and direction they need, instead of having to bend their wills and distort their focus to follow the dictates of an imposed and restricted curriculum. They are also freed from the trauma and stress of failure and success, promotion and demotion because there are no examinations, competitions and "rewards".151

The encouragement of self-reliance and a community spirit continued after school hours for the residential students who lived in groups of eight or nine in cottages under the guidance of a house "mother". All domestic activities, shopping, cooking, cleaning and gardening were shared equally.

A unique feature of Shreyas was the focus upon cultural activities, reflecting the influence of Tagore's internationalism and his devotion to aesthetic pursuits. Each year an area of the world was selected and the students made an in-depth study of its people and their culture, culminating in the staging of a mela or festival in which all the facets of that particular country, subject or civilization discovered by the students were reproduced or staged in the modern amphitheatre. The extensive grounds provided camping facilities for visiting experts, cultural troupes and students, enabling the exchange of ideas and attitudes. The institution also reflected Montessori's concern with human unity. The Illustrated Weekly of India observed that, "By actively encouraging such exchanges, Shreyas seeks to develop in its students the idea of One India One World." 152

Besides its cultural and other educational activities, Shreyas was also involved in community welfare work. The campus contained an S.O.S. Village for orphans and destitute children which consisted of family cottages similar to the student residential accommodation. Such children were thus able to grow up in a rich, stable environment in which
they received an all-round education and essential vocational skills. There was also a Women's Training Centre which catered for women and girls between the ages of fourteen and thirty-five and provided a ten month course dealing with all aspects of family life including child care and housekeeping. 153

Unique in all India, Shreyas was not concerned with a rigid application of the Method but rather, in the general vein of progressive education, sought to provide a dynamic learning environment designed to foster the total development of the child. The Shreyas Foundation undoubtedly had more resources at its disposal than the average Montessori school, enabling the provision of a magnificent library, extensive grounds and gardens including a swimming pool, art and craft facilities, spacious airy classrooms and, more recently, a Children's Museum to facilitate the study of India's rich heritage of folk arts and crafts. But it was the pervading spirit of concern for the individual child, the emphasis upon freedom to choose, and the creative endeavour of its Director, Leena Mangaldas, in organizing such a variety of stimulating learning experiences, which made Shreyas a remarkable educational institution.

Although Leena had never obtained a Montessori Diploma, she was raised in a Montessori environment and had attended some of Madame's training courses with her mother, Sarala Devi Sarabhai. She had also visited Montessori schools in Holland, England and the United States. Joosten was a member of the Advisory Board of Shreyas, 154 but Leena preferred to work independently of the AMI (India). She employed teachers trained by the IMTCs if possible as well as some from Daxinamurti, 155 but she never claimed that Shreyas was a Montessori school nor that she was a Montessorian, because of the demands placed on such an institution by the AMI. Sarala Devi Sarabhai had hoped to be able to establish a pedagogical centre in India but Montessori would not agree to this. After her death the Sarabhais approached Mario who devolved responsibility
for such a decision to Joosten. He opposed the idea, possibly because
he would not have direct control over the running of the institution.\textsuperscript{156}
Sarala Devi was a devotee of the Method but she was also a supporter of
the NBSS and admired the educational ideas of Gandhi and Tagore. The AMI
would not approve the establishment of such an institution unless it was
run by approved trainers.

Joosten held the 37th IMTC at Shreyas in 1972-1973; the first
Montessori course in Ahmedabad since Madame's visit. The 38th Course was
also held there in 1973-1974 and Sarala Devi's generosity enabled the
staff and most of the students to reside on the campus in gurukul fashion.
But the courses were marred by State-wide unrest which erupted in violence.
Educational institutions were closed. \textsuperscript{156} Shreyas was also forced to accept
Government advice and send school children home after a violent crowd
threw stones and caused considerable damage. Joosten, however, refused to
close the course and continued working. He was eventually forced to
accede and it was suspended for two weeks.\textsuperscript{157}

Joosten's high handed actions during the period alienated Leena
and after the death of her mother in 1975, there was no further contact
between the AMI (India) and Shreyas.\textsuperscript{158} In his report to the AMI
Conference that year, Joosten merely referred to "the grievous loss the
Movement in India has suffered in the demise of Mrs Saraladevi Sarabhai,
late Vice-President of the AMI".\textsuperscript{169} He made no mention of the significant
contribution she had made to the cause of the child in India, nor the
extensive hospitality she and her family had extended to the Montessori
family. With her passing an important link between the AMI, the NBSS,
and the various Gandhian organizations working in the field of child
welfare and education was severed.

\textbf{Shreyas} continued its efforts to provide the best possible
educational opportunities for children, but Government regulations requiring
the provision of examinations and the pressure for a purely academic
education from conservative Gujarati parents, undermined its progressive programmes. By 1984 the Secondary section had ceased to exist. A promising innovation, however, was the extension into the Primary level of vocationally oriented arts and crafts through the presence of a resident artist and village artisans including a potter, a weaver, a blacksmith and a cobbler, who provided manual training for children from the age of nine years, for one hour each day. As well as enabling the development of manual skills and appreciation for such work, the innovation also provided the children with an insight into village life and encouraged the preservation of traditional arts and crafts.

THE MONTESSORI APPARATUS

After Partition the Indian Montessori schools had experienced some difficulty in obtaining Montessori equipment as the approved apparatus was made in Karachi. While the materials were produced locally by Jai Chand Talakshi and Sons in Bombay, their work was not considered sufficiently precise or well-finished and they were not authorized by the AMI. Although the Montessori materials were long lasting, items sometimes became lost or damaged by children and it was difficult to replace them. The problem was eventually overcome when the AMI approved Mrs Kira Banasinska's application to manufacture the apparatus under license.

Kira Banasinska was the wife of the Polish Consul-General in Bombay during the Second World War. After the War they decided to remain in India as political refugees. A talented artist, Kira began making toys as a means of support. Dinoo Dubash asked her to repair some items of the Montessori apparatus and was greatly impressed with the results. She suggested that Kira contact Joosten with a view to manufacturing the materials in India. He demanded, initially, a royalty on behalf of the AMI (India) but as there was no patent on the materials, only the name Montessori was protected, Kira negotiated instead to supply each IMTC with
a complete set of the apparatus which Joosten could then sell at the completion of the course. 161

Mario Montessori sent the requisite diagrams and details for the manufacture of the materials, from Amsterdam. These had been improved upon over the years so that when the apparatus was produced according to these new designs, there was an outburst of protest from orthodox Indian Montessorians used to the old items. Kira and Joosten, therefore, had to undertake an education programme to convince them that these new materials were the "official" version. Kira described some of the changes thus:

... the Constructive Triangles have less Triangles and the blue ones come only in the first, rectangular box, the total number of boxes being reduced to four. Knobless cylinders are now packaged in their separate boxes and colours are different from those of the old model.162

New Advanced Materials previously not available in India were also produced. Among these were the Dot Game, the Stamp Game, Area Apparatus, Logical Analysis, Hindi, Marathi, and Gujarati language Charts, Pictures and Words, Geography Cards, political and physical maps of India and other regions of the world; also Sand Paper letters and a set of 130 pictures and words in running hand.163 Some of these items, particularly the language materials, were designed by Joosten in consultation with others proficient in the various regional languages and Kira devised some of the geographical and general knowledge materials.

The Kaybee School Aids Manufacturing Company, as the company was called, faced numerous problems in its early years, including the destruction of its factory in Bombay by fire in 1960. A major difficulty involved training the factory workers to achieve the requisite precision and numerous items were rejected in the early years. The absence of many essential materials and rigid controls imposed by the Central Government on the import of certain goods like polysyterere posed problems. Local woods could be utilized but if they had not been properly seasoned, as was often the case, some items became warped, especially in the
extremes of India's climate. 164

The factory initially ran at a loss and when the saw-millers who had provided space for her enterprise in their factory moved to Hyderabad, she decided to follow. In 1967 she established a factory in an industrial estate outside the city and the Company was renamed Kaybees School Aids Equipment Corporation. 165 Due to delays in obtaining power and the extensive period required to train new labour, Kaybees incurred a substantial debt and Kira was forced to seek the assistance of her old friend, J.R.D. Tata, the Parsi industrial magnate. Voltas, a Tata Company, agreed to market and distribute the apparatus from Bombay and with their management advice, she was able to reduce her labour problems. Production expanded and Kaybees began to export to other developing countries including Malaysia and the Middle East, as well as to the United States where the Company was in direct competition with the Dutch company Nienhaus which previously had sole rights to manufacture the apparatus. Exports had to be paid for in U.S. Dollars and the approximate cost of a full set was $2,000 which Joosten felt placed an undue burden on other developing countries who were purchasing the materials regularly.

Although the cost of the apparatus was less for Indian customers, it was none the less expensive and continued to increase in price. The glossy catalogue produced by Voltas' Kaybee Cell displayed an extensive array of high quality educational materials, including non-Montessori items some of which were designed for the mentally and physically handicapped children. 166 Kira Banasinska and other Indian Montessorians argued that the apparatus was not too expensive for Indian schools as the materials were sturdy and it was only necessary to buy one set initially which would last for many years. But the apparatus was far too expensive for large scale purchase, by bodies such as the Central Social Welfare Board, for introduction in village pre-schools. Despite being a businesswoman, Kira had no objection, however, to the materials being copied by village carpenters provided they did not attempt to market them elsewhere.
Apart from manufacturing the apparatus, Kira Banasinska has made a significant contribution to the movement in India. She read Montessori's books and, after joining the Hyderabad (A.P.) Working Committee, actively sought the establishment of a permanent Montessori Pedagogical Centre in the city which would include a training college. Joosten opposed the idea initially. He argued that Indian parents would not permit their daughters to travel to Hyderabad and to live away from home. But attitudes were changing and by the 1970s it was common for young women to be housed in hostels throughout the country so that they could attend educational institutions. The constant difficulty of finding accommodation for the IMTCs and the high cost of hiring the facilities made it imperative to establish a permanent campus. As Convener of the IMTCs in Hyderabad, Kira took the initiative and approached the Government of Andhra Pradesh for assistance. In 1978 the Hyderabad Committee was registered as a non-profit organization and the following year the Government sanctioned a grant of three acres of land in the Banjara Hills outside the city. A campaign was undertaken to collect funds for the construction of the institution which was to provide facilities for training and research in the Montessori Method and for the education of both "normal" and handicapped children. By the beginning of the 1980s Hyderabad had thus become the main centre for the Montessori movement in India.

THE AMI (INDIA) AND MONTESSORI FOR THE VILLAGES

The Indian Montessori movement had remained primarily upper caste, upper class and urban based but Joosten was conscious that if it was going to become the true social movement that Montessori had envisioned, it would have to be extended further. He wrote:

Among the more urgent tasks of the Montessori Movement in India there stands out the necessity to enable the rural and economically less favoured population to take advantage of this education.
Apart from the Lions Balghar in Delhi there were a few Montessori schools established by charitable and religious organizations for needy children. In 1969, for example, former students of Montessori, C. Vaideshwaran and his sister Devayani, established a school for village children to commemorate Montessori's Birth Centenary and to respect a promise given to his mentor, "Professor" G.V. Subbha Rao, at Anaimalai near Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu. But Joosten believed further effort was required on the part of both individuals and private organizations. He also felt that Government involvement was essential to ensure the widest possible application of such programmes. Nevertheless, he opposed the provision by Government of grants-in-aid to establish pre-primary schools if the result was a proliferation of institutions in which there was little or no understanding of the functions of pre-primary education. He stressed that the major function of such schools was not to prepare children for the primary level as was the common belief and practice in India.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Mayadevi Balachandra's institution at Yeotmal was one of the first large scale AMI approved attempts to take the Montessori Method to village India. It had begun as a small experiment but expanded rapidly during the 1950s with the benefit of State Government recognition and assistance. A demonstration school was completed in 1954 and three years later the enrolments had grown to 155 children. At the time there were also 99 students enrolled in two teacher training programmes, a one year course for matriculates, and a two year course for the less qualified. A system of pre-schools developed in Yeotmal and the surrounding villages staffed by Mayadevi's students. By 1957 there were 51 such schools of which 35 were affiliated to the AMI through her training college. Thirty of the Children's Houses were in villages, twenty were run by local bodies and eight by social welfare centres. Twenty of them were also free.
continued to follow the Method in its entirety. The affiliated village schools, of which there were some 100 by 1970, were funded by the State Government and ceased to function on "pure" Montessori lines.

While the Montessori Method now formed only one component of the teacher training programme, the students were able to observe the Method in the Shishu Vihar and the introduction of practice teaching with single children and groups provided the means of ensuring that the students grasped its fundamentals even though their study of Montessori theory and practice had been "polluted" by exposure to other theories and approaches. Unfortunately for the institution, which was attempting to ensure the continued exposure of its trainees to the Montessori Method by subterfuge, many of the students took up positions in primary schools because of the low salaries available for pre-primary school teachers, and had no opportunity to apply the Method. 178

Another AMI approved attempt to take Montessori education to village India commenced in 1961 at Gholeng in the Raigarh District of Madya Pradesh. An Austrian nun, Sister Johanna, began a five month Grihini (housewives) course to train illiterate Advasi (tribal) girls. She had been working as a primary school teacher with tribal children at Gholeng since 1957 and had been continually frustrated by their lack of progress. She attributed this failure to the inappropriateness of formal schooling which included much learning by rote. But she believed that the lack of adequate nutrition, hygiene, and stimulation in the home due to the poverty and illiteracy of parents, were also responsible. She felt that a solution lay in the provision of pre-marriage courses which would include lessons in the Montessori approach to child rearing, and in the establishment of Montessori Houses of Children in "backward" rural areas where the Adivasis lived.

The first Grihini course, which was funded by Sister Johanna's Order, proved a resounding success and by 1965, eleven Grihini centres
had been established, training 1,732 illiterate girls. The scheme was also extended to the Archdiocese of Ranchi in Bihar as a result of the enthusiastic support of the Archbishop. After consultations with Joosten, Sistern Johanna was eventually able to obtain the services of a Montessori trained teacher and a Children's House was established at Gholeng for tribal children. It proved highly successful and she wrote of the experiment,

These little ones between 2½ and 5 developed a remarkable sense of order and responsibility, showed astonishing regularity and care of their room and the equipment, for which they had absolutely no precedent at home. Unlike their bigger sisters who have the greatest trouble in concentrating their minds on any serious study, these little ones were suddenly capable of concentration on their self-chosen tasks for a considerable length of time.179

The Grihinis were encouraged to visit the school to observe what Sister Johanna believed to be "the correct approach to little children as well as their surprising and inspiring development."180 The Montessori approach to the education of the young child was thus able to penetrate Adivasi homes. Sister Johanna was concerned, however, with the lack of continuity between the Montessori Children's House and the primary and secondary education provided for tribal children. She felt that the success of their work risked being undermined in the later years because these children did not receive the same parental stimulation and encouragement with their school work that was available to many middle-class children in urban areas. The quality of teachers appointed to village schools in "backward" regions was also not of the same standard as those in the cities. She believed that some of these problems could be alleviated through the establishment of a teacher training college in the region with at least one permanent Montessori trained staff-member.

The great difficulty was to obtain the services of such a person.

When the 30th IMTC was held at Ranchi in 1965 a large number of Adivasis were able to attend for the first time through the provision of
scholarships and stipends and many of them were from Gholeng. A sub-
sequent course there the following year was also well attended. An
Association of Montessorians was formed eventually at Chotanagpur and
some ten Montessori schools established in the Ranchi area where there
were also numerous tribal communities. 181

Sister Joanna regarded the courses as a positive step in the
direction of establishing a system of well-directed Montessori Houses of
Children in the larger villages throughout the region. It was her belief
that the diffusion of the principles of the Method among both tribal
mothers, and school teachers involved in the later stages of education,
would contribute to raising the intellectual capacity of tribal children
by 75 per cent within a period of from ten to fifteen years. She also
believed that the apparent sense of inferiority among the tribals with
its many consequences including alcoholism, could be overcome. The general
health and hygiene of the family, village and the whole tribal society
would also improve as a consequence of such education. 182

Joosten also saw the success of the Grihini Scheme as evidence
of "the value of the Montessori approach especially for the benefit of
social uplift and development." 183 For him, such attempts to introduce
the Method in tribal localities were "a 'beginning' movingly reminiscent
of the beginning of our Movement among the children of San Lorenzo and
surely holding out promises equally rich and precious." 184

During the late 1960s the AMI had begun to participate in pre-
school education programmes in other developing countries in Africa, mainly
in Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia. Called the "Help the Children Projects",
they involved the provision of AMI "Help the Children" Child Development
Courses and were directed by Miss Murial Dwyer of the Maria Montessori
Training Organization in London. The aim was to provide young women with
an understanding of child development through the Montessori approach and
to train them in the utilization of local resources to produce educational
aids which embodied Montessori concepts. The trainees were then awarded a certificate but it was only valid for the country in which they had undertaken the course. The introduction of such courses marked an apparent change in the AMI towards a policy providing education appropriate to the economic and social circumstances of individual communities and countries. There was no alteration of the belief that Montessori's insights concerning human development were not universally applicable, but there was a recognition that the large scale importation of her Didactic Apparatus was counter-productive in developing countries. The intention was not one of "adapting" the materials as such, but rather, the aim was to utilize local resources in such a way that the essential developmental functions of the original equipment were preserved.

Such Help The Children courses were also introduced in India in 1977\(^{186}\) and strongly resembled the Grihini Scheme. During the early 1970s the Holy Cross Congregation had established a Centre at Ranchi where young women, from the surrounding Chotanagpur Adivasi region, received training which equipped them to return to their villages and run community centres. Such centres provided advice and assistance in health and hygiene, home-making and the care of young children according to Montessori principles, but with what Joosten described as "the inevitable adaptations that local conditions demand."\(^{187}\) The project had Joosten's approval as it was staffed mainly by trained Montessorians and maintained close contacts with the IMTCs. By 1978, when the first group of students to receive the AMI Help The Children Certificate had completed their course, the Centre had already become widely known and was approached subsequently by the Government of Bihar to take charge of a four months training course for social and educational workers engaged in village uplift through community centres called anganwadis (courtyards).\(^{188}\)

Ironically, the anganwadi concept had been developed by Tarabhai Modak as a result of experiments with the Montessori Method amongst tribal
children. It will be recalled from Chapter Five that in 1945 she set out to adapt the Method to the needs and circumstances of the Indian village. Joosten, however, had no direct contact with this work which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

The Grihini Scheme and the AMI Help The Children Projects demonstrated that there were alternative means of extending the Montessori approach to village India without the purchase of expensive apparatus. The innovations appear to have been symptomatic of a general searching for renewal in the AMI which was manifested at the Nineteenth International Congress (and its Fiftieth Anniversary), in Amsterdam in April, 1979.\(^{189}\) Significantly, it was also the United Nations' International Year of the Child, the celebration of which had encouraged a degree of introspection among delegates from the many countries who attended. The focus was redirected towards the Child, rather than the materials and the specific techniques of their presentation with which staunch Montessorians in India and elsewhere had tended to become preoccupied. The AMI Help The Children Projects brought to fruition a promise that Montessori had made when she first came to India in 1939 and which she had reiterated to Gandhi, to provide education commensurate with the needs of village children.

**CONCLUSION**

Tragically, Albert Joosten did not survive to encourage the further extension of the Help The Children Projects beyond their limited introduction in just one Adivasi region in Bihar. He collapsed and died after disembarking from a plane in Hyderabad on the 26th February, 1980. It was a great loss to the AMI, not only because of his expert direction of three training programmes in India, Sri Lanka and in Minnesota (USA) and his work as a travelling examiner, but also because of his contribution to the International Pedagogical Committee. His understanding and vast experience with the Method were such that in 1977 Mario had requested that he be
made a member of the Governing Board of the AMI which was to be established, should he no longer be able to carry on as General Director. 190

Joosten's death was also deeply felt by the AMI (India). He had taken over the direction of a movement fragmented by bitterness, not only towards the Montessoris, but towards himself. The huge problems of economic and social adjustment in post-Independence India had exacerbated his task. There was, initially, little or no Government support for pre-primary education which was left to private initiative and the AMI (India) had meagre resources at its disposal, with apparently no ready access to the AMI's account in India. 191 Despite almost insurmountable difficulties he had managed, over a period of thirty years, to ensure the survival of the orthodox Montessori view.

The movement may have lost many friends and supporters because of Joosten's somewhat authoritarian style, but his approach was perhaps necessary to counter the commercialization and "abuses" of the Method. To prevent attempts to "water down" the Method he appears to have been somewhat dogmatic and overly concerned with detail and precision in terms of the establishment of Montessori environments and the utilization of the materials. This led to a lack of spontaneity on the part of some of his students and encouraged criticism that the Method was too rigid and ritualized. He was not, however, opposed to change and took the view that the Method was dynamic, not static. According to Joosten, Montessori had chosen the word "Method" because, etymologically, it refers to a "path" or a "way" rather than a closed system. 192 Many changes to the materials and the establishment of Montessori environments had been approved by him. Some Indian Montessorians objected to having to seek such approval, but In Joosten's view he had been given this responsibility by the Montessoris in order to protect the Method. He had taken on the role of Montessori missionary in India and remained devoted to the cause. But by the time of his death the orthodox movement in India was in relative
decline and was being maintained only through the efforts of a few staunch supporters. It was ironic that in one of the few countries in the world where the Method had continued to expand from its inception, the AMI (India) was struggling for survival at a time when in other parts of the world, particularly in the United States and Australia, Montessori was undergoing a revival.

The "true" Montessori Method, as espoused by the AMI (India), had remained primarily the preserve of a relatively small Westernized urban élite, for the most part alienated from and lacking in sympathy for the problems and needs of the rural poor who comprised the great bulk of the population. Although there were some notable attempts to introduce the Montessori approach to child development in the villages, the impetus for these projects did not come initially from Joosten but from charitable and religious bodies working in the field. Whilst he was conscious of the great need for such efforts, his preoccupation with the IMTCs and his other responsibilities to the AMI left little time to even attempt to devise an appropriate programme model. There were also no funds available to him for such a purpose.
NOTES

1. A.B. Joosten's private papers, a potentially valuable source for this chapter, were not available to the author. These are stored in several locked trunks in the care of Miss Khursheed Taraporewalla in Hyderabad. The key remains in the possession of Joosten's heir, R.P. Bashyal who lives in the United States. Some of Joosten's letters were made available to the author by Pareen Lalkaka in Bombay and Kira Banasinska in Hyderabad. The latter also made available copies of correspondence between the Hyderabad (A.P.) Working Committee and the Government of Andhra Pradesh.


6. Thakkar, ibid., p. 34.


8. AMI Communications (Amsterdam), 1/2, 1980, p. 39.


10. Around the Child (Calcutta), 6, 1961, p. 83. (Hereafter, ATC).


12. By 1964, 13 State Governments had "responded favourably". Ibid.


14. A.M. Joosten, Letter to members of the Bombay Montessori Association, 14 October, 1954. Indumati Seth runs a number of educational institutions in Ahmedabad including the Sheth C.N. Vidya Vihar which has a Montessori Bal Mandir.

15. Ibid.

17. Times of India (Bombay), 8 May, 1952, p. 6. (Hereafter, TI.)
A news item in the same edition merely stated that she had spent 8 years in India, was interned as an "enemy alien", had trained over 1,000 teachers in the Method and had shown a keen interest in Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence. Ibid., p. 5. There was no mention of Montessori's stay in India in the obituary in the London Times, 7 May, 1958, p. 8d.

18. Times Educational Supplement, 25 September, 1952, p. 49. (Hereafter, TES.)


20. TES, op. cit.


25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.


29. Shesh Namle, Interview, C. Wilson, 24 August, 1982. (Hereafter, Namle Interview.) A number of people involved in the field of early childhood education in India told the author they thought Joosten was too "autocratic" and "rigid".

30. Premila Badheka, Interview, C. Wilson, 28 January, 1984. She is related to the Peshwars, former rulers of Poona and continues to run a pre-school along Montessori lines. Also, Premila Kirtane and Indutai Kirtane, Interview, C. Wilson, 28 January, 1984.

31. ATC, op. cit., p. 84.


34. Ibid., p. 81. A report in ATC noted that 'The President had already communicated to the Nursery Training Institute (c/- Bal Bharati, Gangaram Hospital Marg, New Delhi-5) that it could not be affiliated to the AMI and was not authorized to impart training in the Montessori Method.' Ibid.

35. A list of members was published in Ibid., pp. 92-96.

36. ATC, 10, 1865/1966, p. 115.

37. Ibid., p. 116.

38. Ibid., p. 117.

39. Commemoration of 75 Years of Montessori Education, op. cit.

40. ATC, 6, 1961, p. 86.

41. Letter No. 614/51/GE 11, 1952, from Secretary, Education Department, Hyderabad, to Secretary, Government of India Ministry of Education, New Delhi.

42. Letters from Director of Public Instruction, Andhra Pradesh, No. 455 D2/59, 29 June 1960 and No. 676 D3/62, 2 January, 1962, to Secretary, Association Montessori Internationale, Hyderabad.

43. Letter from Secretary Education Department, Hyderabad, No. 3134/3 614/51/GE, 20 August, 1953, to Secretary, Hyderabad Working Committee of the Association Montessori Internationale.

44. Commemoration of 75 Years of Montessori Education, op. cit.

45. ATC, 6, 1961, p. 84.

46. Ibid., p. 85.

47. Ibid., pp. 85-86.

48. ATC, 7, 1962, p. 76.

49. ATC, 9, 1964, p. 86.

50. ATC, 6, 1961, p. 84.

51. ATC, 7, 1962, p. 73.

52. The Sisters of the Poor Clares of the Third Order of St Francis who had been trained at Hyderabad, took charge of a Montessori House of Children opened in July, 1962, at Bharananganam, Kerala. A Children's House was established in the same year at Bhimaveram, by Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate. Financial assistance was provided by the Bishop of Vijawada. Joosten visited the new institution which he claimed showed great promise and he also addressed the community of the Sisters. Ibid., p. 74.

53. ATC, 6, 1961, p. 85.

54. ATC, 7, 1962, p. 73.

56. ATC, 7, 1962, p. 75.

57. Leena Mangaldas, Interview, C. Wilson, 8 December, 1981. (Hereafter, Mangaldas Interview.)

58. ATC, op. cit., p. 84.


60. ATC, 7, 1962, p. 76.


64. Among the titles were Non-Violence and the Child (1955) - also in Hindi; Peace and Education n.d. The Montessori Movement (1955) - also in Hindi; *The Montessori House of Children (1955); Learning from the Child (1962); *Observation (1965); *Exercises of Practical Life (1968) - also in Hindi; *On Discipline (2nd ed. 1973); *Foundations of Montessori Pedagogy (1978); *The Function of the Montessori Apparatus (3rd ed. 1978); *Errors and their Correction (1978); *Orthographical Difficulties in English; The Decimal System and Parallel Exercises. *Helping One Helping All (I & II) were co-authored with S.R. Swamy. Those marked * were compulsory text books for the IMTCs.


67. A photograph of a gathering of the Bombay Branch of the AMI to celebrate Montessori's 81st birthday which appeared in the Evening News of India, 1 September, 1951, p. 5, showed Joosten wearing Indian clothes. I am grateful to Pareen Lalkaka for this item.

68. These were the Association of Montessorians, Calcutta; the Association of Delhi Montessorians; the Montessori Education Society (Delhi); Hyderabad (A.P.) Working Committee of the AMI; Association of Montessorians (A.P.); Maharashtra Branch of the AMI. ATC, 10, 1965/1966, p. 124.

69. Ibid., p. 51.


71. Ibid., p. 163.

72. Ibid., p. 64.


74. ATC, ibid., p. 65.
75. Mario M. Montessori, cited in ibid., p. 66.
76. Ibid.
77. ATC, 12, 1968, p. 15. This is an account based on Mario Montessori's report to the General Secretariat of the AMI and published in AMI Communications, 1/2, 1968.
78. ATC, ibid., p. 16.
80. ATC, op. cit., p. 17.
81. Due to his commitments at Shishu Vihar, Namle was not able to complete this work. Namle Interview.
82. ATC, op. cit., p. 18. For the establishment of Shreyas, see The Montessori Magazine (Pilani), 2, 1, 1948, p. 61.
83. ATC, op. cit.
84. Joosten & Gupta, eds, op. cit.
85. R. Muralidharan, ed, Re-Discovery of Montessori, Indian Association for Pre School Education, Delhi, n.d., p. iii.
86. Ibid., pp. 164-165.
90. Ibid., p. 109.
91. A.M. Joosten, "Mahatma Gandhi and Maria Montessori", in Joosten & Gupta, eds, op. cit., p. 15.
92. Ibid., p. 17.
94. Hunsaben Mehta, "Chief Guest's Address to the Sixth Annual Conference of the Indian Association for Pre-School Education", in Muralidharan, ed, op. cit., p. 8.
95. R. Muralidharan, "The Presidential Address to the Sixth Annual Conference of the Indian Association for Pre-School Education", in ibid, p. 17.
96. AMI Communications, 2/3, 1972, p. 30.
97. S.R. Swamy, Interview, C. Wilson, 9 August, 1082. (Hereafter, Swamy Interview).


101. ATC, 7, 1962, p. 73.

102. Bashyal, op. cit., p. 162. Sikkim was a separate Kingdom at the time.

103. Ibid., p. 161. When the author visited the IMTC in Hyderabad in 1982, there were students from U.S.A., U.K. and Ireland.


106. Ibid., p. 163.


108. Swamy Interview.


110. See ibid, pp. 5-6.


113. Swamy Interview; K. Taraporewalla, Interview, C. Wilson, 10 August 1982. (Hereafter, Taraporewalla Interview.)


115. In 1982, total fees for Indian students were Rs. 500. The hiring of facilities was expensive. Accommodation and a salary had to be provided for Joosten and later Swamy from the fees. Kira Banasinska, Interview, C. Wilson, 10 February, 1982. (Hereafter, Banasinska Interview.)


117. I am grateful to Dr Jean Miller for drawing my attention to this unpublished speech which was recorded by Radha Raman.

118. Joosten felt the learning of written English could be introduced in the primary school. See Joosten & Swamy, Helping One Helping All, II, op. cit., p. 30.


121. The author observed such rigidity in a number of the Montessori schools visited during the course of this study. There was an absence of "joy" on the part of both teachers and pupils.


124. Mehta, op. cit.


126. Ibid.


128. Amita Verma, "Madame Montessori's Contribution to Pre-School Education", in Muralidharan, ed, op. cit., p. 32.


130. Verma, op. cit., p. 34.

131. Ibid., p. 35.

132. Kulkarni & Kulkarni, op. cit. In a survey conducted by the Child Development Department of Baroda University in 1965, of 45 preschools in the city of Baroda, none were found to be "pure" or "true" Montessori Schools. Verma, op. cit.


134. Tehmi Wadia, Interview, C. Wilson, 11 February, 1982.

135. Joosten & Swamy, Helping One Helping All, I, op. cit., p. 3.

136. Ibid., pp. 3-4.

137. Evidence for this was obtained from interviews with several Montessori Directresses and personal observations in various Montessori schools.

138. Tehmi Wadia, Interview, C. Wilson, 8 August, 1980. (Hereafter, Wadia Interview.)

139. AMI Communications, 2/3, 1972, p. 31.

140. Ibid.


143. Ibid.

144. ATC, 9, 1964, advertised the following schools in Calcutta as being "approved" by the AMI. AMI Montessori Shishu Bhavan; Abhinav Bharati - Montessori Section; Montessori Bal Nilaya; Mongrace Montessori House;
Gokul Montessori House; National Montessori House. (The latter was part of the National High School.) Abhinav Bharat was also used by Joosten as an observation school for the IMTCs.

145. Taraporewalla Interview. Her school is still probably the largest "true" Montessori school in India with four environments (one of which was named after Joosten), and a staff of twelve teachers. It is both a Hindi and Telugu Medium school.


147. Ibid. Joosten also praised the school.


149. Wadia Interview.


152. Ibid., p. 23.

153. Ibid.


155. For example, Miss A.W. Khandekar, who did both her "primary" and Advanced Montessori training with Montessori at Adyar in 1948. She worked in the pre-primary sections of the AMI Shisshu Mandir at Gwalior and also in the primary section of AMI Shishu Vihar at Yeotmal, and worked at Shreyas in the 1970s. Joosten & Gupta, eds, op. cit., p. 175. At the time of the author's visit to Shreyas in 1982, the Co-ordinator and several of the teachers in the Montessori section had been trained at Daxinamurti.

156. Mangaldas Interview.


158. Mangaldas Interview. Joosten's somewhat bland reports of these Ahmedabad courses to the AMI contained no details of the violence or the disagreements with members of Shreyas.

159. AMI Communications, op. cit., p. 37.


161. Banasinska Interview.


163. Ibid.
164. See ibid., pp. 54-57.
166. Banasinska Interview. In 1970 the Biannual Conference of the Federation for the Welfare of the Mentally Retarded (India) was dedicated to Montessori.
167. Banasinska Interview.
168. Commemoration of 75 Years of Montessori Education, op. cit. Due to bureaucratic delays in the granting of the land by the Government and the problem of obtaining finance, the Centre is still not complete.
170. A Trust was established of which Joosten was a member, and it was hoped to start similar schools in the surrounding villages. ATC, 13, 1969-70. A new school, Subba Rao Montessori Illam, opened at Chittor in 1976. Henriette Raven, Interview C. Wilson, 14 February, 1984. She visited the school in February, 1984.
171. Joosten, op. cit.
172. A.M. Joosten, "Ways and Means for Opening More Pre-Primary Schools for Children in Urban and Rural Areas", ATC, 5, 1960, p. 26. (Address read at the annual All-India Conference of Educational Associations, Madras, 1958.)
175. ATC, 5, 1960, p. 89.
177. Chakravarti, p. 54.
178. Kusum Gokhle, Shalini Gokhle and R.J. Deshpande. Interview, C. Wilson, 25 March, 1981. Pay rates for pre-primary teachers were approximately Rs.300 per month at the beginning of the 1980s. Primary school teachers received over Rs.400 per month.
180. Ibid.
183. A.M. Joosten, "Addendum" to ibid, p. 38.
184. Ibid.


186. AMI Communications, 1, 1977, p. 16.


188. AMI Communications, 2/3, 1979, p. 79.


191. In 1974 there was Rs.50,834.75 in this account. The AMI Treasurer's Report noted that, "The Indian assets are blocked in that country and are managed by Mr Joosten. As we cannot dispose of them we have reserved the total amount." AMI Communications, 3/4, 1975, p. 30. According to S.R. Swamy, the current Director of the IMTCs, he has no access to the funds in this account without AMI authorization. S.R. Swamy, Interview, C. Wilson, 9 December, 1986.

CHAPTER SEVEN

"A HYBRID IS BORN"
THE MONTESSORI LEGACY IN INDIA

- Introduction
- The Gram Bal Shiksha Kendra at Bordi
- The Anganwadi Concept and Tribal Education
- The Vikaswadi and Tribal Education at Kosbad Hill
- Teacher Training at Kosbad
- The GBSK and Integrated Child Development Services
- The Kosbad Experiments: Pre-school Education and Community Development
- The Montessori Legacy in India: Some Outcomes
INTRODUCTION

In post-Independence India the Montessori Method continued to be adopted largely by Westernized and urbanized élites as a prerequisite for entry into good schools and later employment in the professions or in commerce. Efforts by the AMI (India) to become involved in the provision of pre-school education among the urban and rural poor, which comprised the bulk of the country's population, had marginal impact.

It will be recalled from Chapter Five, however, that in 1945 Tarabhai Modak, under the auspices of the NBSS, had established the Gram Bal Shiksha Kendra (GBSK), or Centre for the Education of Rural Children, to undertake an experiment in the adaptation of the Montessori Method in accordance with Gandhian principles, at the village level. That experiment was to have far reaching consequences through the development of a model for the provision of basic health care and pre-school education, which has come to play a pivotal role in India's drive against poverty. The fact that the focal point of this scheme, the anganwadi or courtyard pre-school centre has its origins in an Indian hybrid of the Montessori Method is little known outside India.

This chapter proposes to trace the development of the experiment begun by Tarabhai Modak at Bordi and to discuss its significance at both the community and at the national level.

THE GRAM BAL SHIKSHA KENDRA AT BORDI

The location of the first experiment of the GBSK, was Bordi, a small coastal town approximately 160 kilometres north of Bombay city. Tarabhai Modak had selected Bordi because of its accessibility to Bombay,
but also because it was sufficiently distant to retain its rural character. There were a number of Gandhian workers already in the locality, who were prepared to assist the project. They were associated with the Adivasi Seva Mandal (tribal service centre), established by the Chief Minister of Bombay, B.G. Kher, as a welfare organization for tribals. Some were also working in the schools begun by the Gokhale Education Society.

Before the experiment could begin, Tarabhai required a census of the pre-school age children in the area. Parents, unfamiliar with this type of education, had also to be persuaded to send their children to the pre-school from the outset. She had already become acquainted with an enthusiastic primary school teacher, Anutai Vagh, who became her assistant. A widow from the age of thirteen, Anutai was a nationalist and supported the introduction of Gandhi's Basic Education Scheme. She approached the Kasturba Memorial Trust seeking employment either as a village teacher or as a welfare worker. The Trust was organizing several training camps for women volunteers interested in educational work among women and children at the village level and Anutai attended one of these camps at Borivili near Bombay in 1945. She soon met Tarabhai who had been invited there to speak on the establishment of village centres for young children.

Tarabhai took the opportunity to ask for volunteers for her own project and Anutai offered her services. It was the beginning of a lasting partnership which would produce radical proposals for rural pre-primary and primary education and which to date have received scant attention or recognition by educational historians outside India.

Tarabhai sent Anutai to Bordi to undertake the preliminary work but immediately there were difficulties as Anutai spoke Marathi while the majority of people in the vicinity were Gujarati speakers. Fortunately, she was able to obtain the services of two women from the Harijanwada ("untouchable's" village), located near the bungalow which was to house the pre-school. These local women were able to facilitate Anutai's house
to house survey and to gain the necessary support of the people for the project. But, ultimately, she found it necessary to learn Gujarati as she was convinced the pre-school could not function effectively if she had to rely on the assistance of interpreters. The necessary rapport with parents could not be maintained if she did not speak their language. It became apparent that the ability to communicate with and gain the confidence of the local community was vital for anyone attempting such educational work at the village level.

By November 1945, through the assistance of local community leaders, Anutai had completed her survey and was ready to begin the pre-school experiment. She was joined by two disciples of Gijubhai, Ramnarian Pathak and Bhagvatiprasad Shelat. Because of her commitments in Bombay, including the running of Shishu Vihar, Tarabhai was only able to spend three days a week with them at Bordi. The experiment proceeded initially on an ad hoc basis, there being no prescribed plan. Anutai had sixteen years of primary school experience but lacked confidence in her ability to teach very young children. She determined to follow Shelat's guidance as his reputation in the field of pre-school education was well known.

The mere provision of a hall filled with interesting brightly painted Montessori materials was not sufficient to attract children to a pre-school operated by virtual strangers. The teachers had to entice their prospective pupils somewhat in the manner of the Pied Piper:

One fine morning they went out singing Gandhi's favourite song 'Radhupati-Rahav-Rajaram' to the accompaniment of cymbals and walked into the Harijanwada. Children readily gathered around them. They joined in the song and their little procession wended its way through various sections of Bordi, collecting more children everywhere. The procession returned to the Gram Bal Shiksha Kendra. Anutai and Shelat drew water from the well, had a wash and asked the children to do the same. The children were greatly intrigued but did as they were told.2

The gathering then entered the hall, a disused rice-husking shed in the
bungalow compound, to hear stories told by Shelat in Gujarati and to learn some songs. Fresh coconut and a lump each of jaggery (raw sugar) were distributed and the delighted children returned to their homes. These activities were repeated for several days and, in addition, the teachers visited the children's homes to persuade parents by extolling the benefits of sending their young ones to the pre-school. Fees were not charged but a request from the teachers for donations resulted in contributions from the wealthier members of the community.

The village pre-school developed by the GBSK pre-school became known as a balwadi. The word was coined by the Gandhian worker and former student of Gijubhai, Jugatram Dave, who visited Bordi to witness the experiment. In the Marathi language, bal means children, and wadi means a garden or orchard. There were many mango orchards in the vicinity of Bordi. The term was eventually adopted throughout much of India to refer to rural pre-schools while the term bal mandir, first coined to describe Gijubhai's Montessori Children's House at Bhavanager, is usually applied to pre-schools in urban areas. 3

With the success of the initial phase of the experiment the Gram Bal Shiksha Kendra's balwadi at Bordi was inaugurated on 24 December, 1945 by B.G. Kher who stated in his address that the opening of the balwadi marked the beginning of pre-school education in rural India. 4 It was an important step in the direction of achieving Gandhi's vision of a cooperative and self-sufficient village society. Kher hoped the GBSK and the people of Bordi would continue to work towards this goal. He advocated the development of education suited to the Indian genius and to the means at the disposal of the bulk of her people, rather than the wholesale adoption of foreign models. 5

With the political support of the Chief Minister, the experiment was able to proceed initially, without the bureaucratic hindrance of the established education system. The teachers were therefore free to function...
creatively in response to problems and needs as they arose. As in Montessori's first experiment at San Lorenzo, Practical Life Exercises were introduced at the beginning involving simple manual tasks with which the children were familiar; for example, clearing grass and weeds in the balwadi compound using khurpis (small sickles). A variety of activities were introduced gradually including clay-work, drawing, painting and finally the various items of the Montessori sensorial apparatus.

The first major problem arose when some of the older children commenced school after the holidays leaving a majority of Harijans among the remainder. The proximity of the Harijanwada and the homes of the Muslims to the GBSK bungalow, whilst the homes of the caste Hindus were some distance away, enabled the children of the former to more readily attend. In accordance with Montessori and also Gandhian practice, Harijans, Muslims, and caste Hindus sat together for the daily nesta or snack, each taking a turn to serve the food. This aroused the opposition of the caste Hindu parents because it violated the observance of strict caste rules concerning pollution and purity, and they withdrew their children. A rigid hierarchy also existed amongst the Harijans of the area and some of these parents withdrew their children when they learned that a few Bhangi (sweeper - the lowest sub-caste amongst the Harijans) children were present. Consequently attendance dwindled to a mere three. Already weakened by an accident, the devoted Shelat, who was emotionally shattered by the apparent failure of the experiment, developed a fever and died on 27 April, 1946.

The work had been hindered by the rigid caste-ridden social structure common to every Indian village, and which had continually undermined Gandhi's community development work. The implications of encouraging children from different caste and communal groups to work, play and eat together can be gauged from the following account of caste relations:
The structural distance between various castes is defined in terms of pollution and purity. A higher caste is always 'pure' in relation to a lower caste, and in order to retain its higher status it should abstain from certain forms of contact with the lower. It may not ordinarily eat food cooked by them. Where one of the castes is very high and the other very low, there is a ban on touching or even getting very close to one another. A breach of rules renders the higher caste member impure, and purity can only be restored by the performance of a purification rite and, frequently, also by undergoing such punishment as the caste council decides upon.7

In the liberal social atmosphere amongst the Theosophists at Adyar, Montessori had seen her Method function harmoniously among the children of caste Hindus, Harijans, Buddhists, Muslims, Zoroastrians and Christians. She had therefore claimed her Method could be universally applied. Montessori and later Joosten, claimed it provided a means of breaking down caste prejudice through the cooperative spirit which the Montessori environment encouraged among children. But such an outcome could not be achieved without parental acquiescence. In India, Montessori and Joosten had been largely preaching to the converted, the Westernized educated elites who already perceived the benefits of her ideas for their children. They made no attempt to grapple with the complexities of the Method's application within a rigid, hierarchical caste structure.

As she had come from a progressive Prarthana Samajist background Tarabhai had also not seriously considered the possibility of such resistance. She had hoped the balwadi would be a means of breaking down traditional prejudice. In Bordi, Anutai tried to persuade the caste Hindus to send their children but they refused. They were not opposed to any efforts for the uplift of the Harijans but did not want their own children to associate with them. Another means of providing pre-school education for all of the Bordi children had to be found. She realized that in order to placate the caste Hindus, cleanliness, especially hand washing prior to eating, must take priority among the balwadi activities. She also felt
that working with small groups of children from the same caste or religious community, in or near their homes might remove the communal and caste opposition of parents. Consequently, a unique new concept evolved in different localities in and around Bordi over the next three years.

In 1946 the Kasturba Memorial Trust had asked the GBSK to provide training courses in the conduct of rural pre-school centres, for Gram Sevikas (village social workers). The trainees came from a number of different regions, presenting a language problem, but they were able to undertake many of the activities which did not require fluency in the Gujarati language. The availability of a group of willing workers enabled Anutai and Tarabhai to experiment with the anganwadi concept in different parts of Bordi. The Gram Sevikas also gained first hand experience of the extent of the "prejudice, poverty and ignorance of child care", in the villages. 8

These raw Gandhian workers managed to keep the germ of pre-school education alive by undertaking propaganda processions, organizing sanitation campaigns and improvising simple and inexpensive teaching aids. They organized the decentralized anganwadi centres wherever there was some enclosed space, usually the courtyard of a house or hut, but, sometimes also in a temple or under a tree. Harijan children were not, however, permitted to enter a temple. Gradually a routine evolved comprising personal hygiene, followed by prayer, and then a variety of educational activities including songs and stories, drama, games, sensory training and free play. Orderly social behaviour was encouraged, especially during the daily distribution of refreshments and on nature study observation excursions. In the process, the first Montessori inspired training programme for village pre-school teachers had also evolved.

The anganwadi concept appears to have had much in common with the open-air nursery schools established from 1913 by Margaret McMillan in England. She worked with impoverished children in urban slums but there
is no evidence that Tarabhai or Anutai were influenced by her work. The songs, stories, drama and games derived from Gijubhai's adaptation of the Montessori Method at Bhavanagar, and the attempt to minimize the use of expensive apparatus was largely Gandhian inspired.

Despite the apparent success of the anganwadi concept, the GBSK workers were none the less dissatisfied as they had ultimately failed to establish a local pre-school centre wherein the children of all castes and religious communities could mix freely. During her regular home visits, Anutai ascertained that the local secondary school teachers and some educated parents were prepared to send their very young children to a socially integrated pre-school. The major obstacle, however, was the distance of their homes from the GBSK balwadi located in the Harijanwada. The problem was later solved by the acquisition of a bullock cart to transport the children.

In 1949, a Balshikshan-Nagar (Child Education Town), established in the compound of the primary school at Bordi, gave an added fillip to the experiment. It lasted for one week and enabled a comprehensive demonstration of the function and practicalities of pre-school education. There were seven exhibition sections comprising groups of children working with sensorial apparatus, participating in craft activities, story telling, singing, drama, and lessons in personal and environmental hygiene. Thousands of villagers from the surrounding locality were lured to the exhibition by the promise of a free medical examination for their young children. When they learned that the children of the local secondary school teachers were attending the balwadi without detriment, the villagers conceded that pre-school education might be beneficial. Gradually they began to take advantage of the availability of this new education. Almost a hundred children were soon participating in the balwadi programme. Pre-school education based on a unique application of the Montessori Method allied with Gandhian principles, had become a success in rural Bordi by
1949.

THE ANGANWADI CONCEPT AND TRIBAL EDUCATION

The anganwadi, or "open pre-school" had evolved as a means of familiarizing Harijan parents with this type of education and in developing habits of cleanliness and social behaviour amongst their children. This enabled them to attend the balwadi at Bordi without opposition from the caste Hindus. It had also been utilized as a means of giving practical experience to Gram Sevikas during their training. Whilst it had been developed as a 'stop-gap' device, the anganwadi, "revealed immense possibilities as an effective alternative to the sheltered pre-school centre, particularly for children who had to look after their siblings or had only a few hours to spare from their economic pursuits."10

There were many Adivasi or tribal communities in the area around Bordi and the Gram Sevikas had tried to establish anganwadis in some of their villages but without success. Tarabhai decided that they must first make contact with the people and learn something of their culture and social circumstances. Then they would have to devise an appropriate educational programme. The GBSK workers found that the tribal children had resisted the enclosed balwadi at Bordi because they habitually played and worked in the open, caring for younger siblings, tending cattle and goats, collecting fire wood and foraging for food such as edible berries and roots, wild fruit, bird's eggs and crabs.11 Their labour thus provided a vital economic input to the family unit. The poverty of the tribals was such that they relied on the contribution of their children for survival. Often the children had to fend for themselves. Many Adivasis were landless labourers, readily exploited by unscrupulous money-lenders, landlords and contractors. Chitra Naik describes their circumstances thus:
For a full day's work, they would be paid only a few annas. The younger children had rarely any clothing on, while the older boys and girls wore strips of cloth which could barely cover their loins. Babies slept in cradles made of old saris and the other children on tattered pieces of jute matting. The adults usually slept on the bare floor. Covering was mostly dispensed with. It was not uncommon for a family to go entirely without food for two or three days running.12

The anganwadi programme therefore had to be adjusted to the way of life of these children, but without prejudicing the principles of the Montessori Method, which formed its base. According to Tarabhai, the adjustment "could not be in the basic theoretical outlook of pre-school education but in the environmental and social conditions only."13 The decision to establish the anganwadi on a flexible basis, in terms of time and place, according to where the children played and worked, was a radical and probably unprecedented departure from conventional schooling. Rather than asking them to come to a specially prepared educational environment or school, the GBSK workers took some materials and went to the locality of the children. There they also utilized items from the natural environment as educational aids. Montessori had originally devised her Houses of Children, not as schools, but as extensions of the children's homes. In the late 1940s in the Adivasi villages around Bordi, Tarabhai Modak and her colleagues were applying the same principle.

Between 1946 and 1953, some fifteen anganwadis were organized in different locations around Bordi. An examination of the activities which formed the basis of the anganwadi "routine"14 reveals a combination of Montessori and Kindergarten practice. It is not clear whether the children undertook these activities collectively and in an orderly sequence, or were provided with a choice, and worked individually in accordance with strict Montessori practice. The use of the term "routine" suggests a specific order was followed. The anganwadi functioned for approximately two and a half hours daily and began with the cleaning of
an open space on which the children could sit and set out the materials, followed by individual bathing and grooming. The latter were of paramount importance because many children were covered in scabies and sores and their hair infested with lice. Other activities included singing and story-telling, drawing, painting, paper work, clay work, sensory training using natural objects and the distribution of a simple snack consisting of roast lentils or parched rice.  

However, not all the children attending the anganwadis were of pre-school age. The ages sometimes ranged from babies of six months to girls of fifteen years who were caring for younger members of the family. The older children usually had neither the time nor inclination to attend the primary school at Bordi. They preferred the learning activities and the flexible timing of the anganwadi which allowed them to carry out daily domestic chores. Tarabhai decided that more appropriate learning activities would have to be devised for the older children. The teacher-trainees who comprised the bulk of the anganwadi workers were encouraged to separate the children into groups. A programme of story-telling, songs, games and some formal education was devised for the older group. The older girls were also given some instruction in the appropriate handling and care of babies. Tarabhai soon realized that the anganwadi concept provided the potential for further development because it incorporated three different kinds of activities, a crèche, a pre-school, and a primary school. She therefore coined a name for this innovative interdependent yet separate learning complex calling it the Vikaswadi, vikas meaning growth.

The anganwadis were usually conducted in the late afternoon so as not to interfere with the income earning tasks of the children and also so that parents would have some opportunity to witness these educational activities. They would often participate in the dances and singing. Through such contact the teacher-trainees gained invaluable insight into
tribal culture and the tribals also developed a trust in the teachers. With the development of such rapport, Tarabhai felt the time had arrived to establish the new Vikaswadi concept on a more systematic basis at a single convenient location. The first such programme began at Darjiwadi, close to Bordi in June, 1954, in the bungalow of an absentee landlord. Three enthusiastic teachers were appointed to care for the children of the crèche, pre-primary and primary sections but, in accordance with Montessori practice, the children were not completely separated and mingled freely between the various rooms. It was the beginning of what Chitra Naik has described as "the most important contribution of the GBSK to educational thought and practice in India."17

THE VIKASWADI AND TRIBAL EDUCATION AT KOSBAD HILL

Tarabhai believed that the Vikaswadi was the most appropriate means of providing education for Adivasis. Immersed in their own cultural traditions and untouched by any of the benefits of modern science and economic development, the tribals endured the most deplorable living conditions. In the Gandhian tradition, she saw their need to become more self-sufficient and thus narrow the vast gap between their circumstances and those of the sophisticated, Western educated élites who now exercised economic and political power in India. She also wanted to bring an awareness of nationhood to the Adivasis but she felt that all of this must not be at the expense of their own culture. She believed that it would be wrong to impose the values and aspirations of the ruling élite and that formal education which encouraged dependency upon adults until the age of twenty five, was also inappropriate among people whose daily concern was survival.

From the outset, Tarabhai considered that training in health, hygiene, and basic science, and the development of skills which would
enable economic self-reliance among the children, provided the core of an education suited to the needs of tribal communities.\textsuperscript{18} She approached the Government of Bombay and the Central Government for financial assistance to extend the work begun at Bordi further and in 1956 the Government of India allocated funds for the Vikaswadi as a special project for the education of tribal children. The members of the GBSK then sought a new home for the experiment in a wholly tribal location. They chose Kosbad, inland from Dahanu on the coast and south of Bordi. The Gokhale Education Society had moved its agricultural school there in 1949 and had already established contacts with the local Adivasi community called Warlis. The existing institution was prepared to assist the experiment by providing buildings until new ones were constructed, and in helping to develop a farm as part of the Vikaswadi Scheme. The GBSK chose an ideal location on top of a hill with commanding views of the area and adjacent to the agricultural institution. Eventually, 27 acres were purchased.

Anutai Vagh left Bordi in June 1956 to begin the work at Kosbad, accompanied by her assistant, Vimal Save. She had no specific plan but had been given complete freedom by Tarabhai to proceed in accordance with the demands of the local situation. The original submission by the GBSK to the Government had stressed the necessity of undertaking a systematic survey of the tribal area which the Vikaswadi was intended to serve. Its findings and Tarabhai and Anutai's own observations of tribal life determined the future direction of the experiment.

Like most of the Adivasi communities of the region, the Warlis were largely landless and illiterate labourers. But, they seemed unaware of the extent of their exploitation and servitude and did not conceive that they could possibly change the circumstances of their existence. Their traditional belief in magic proved a major barrier to the introduction of new habits of health and hygiene, and also Western medicine as they relied on the services of their Bhagat, or medicine man for the treat-
ment of serious illness. Another obstacle derived from the simplicity of the dialect of the Warlis. It contained only three hundred words and most of these related directly to their immediate environment and way of life. They were found to have very little use for abstract ideas and so there were no words in the language to express them. The uncluttered nature of their existence meant they had no need to memorize extraneous details and would readily forget new information. According to Chitra Naik, "The short-range view of life taken by the tribals is also one of the several difficulties which a social reformer or educator has to face." 

But social relations among the tribals, between men and women, and parents and their children, were found to be much freer and more egalitarian than among other Indian communities. Tribal children did not suffer from oppressive parental discipline or expectations. They led relatively independent lives and, as a result of their hard outdoor activities, were physically sturdy although they suffered from dietary deficiencies and skin ailments, the latter because they seldom washed. An appropriate education strategy had to be devised in accordance with these discoveries. From the outset, Tarabhai and Anutai were determined that the education provided should suit the needs and circumstances of the Warlis, rather than demanding that they conform to the culture of the larger society transferred through the formal school system. As with Montessori's early experiments at San Lorenzo, they had to proceed by "trial and error".

Prior to the completion of the Vikaswadi buildings, Anutai set up a balwadi and tried to entice the Warli children to attend but few came. The situation differed markedly from that at Bordi because the tribals in that area were familiar with the ways of town's people. The Warlis were highly superstitious, extremely shy, and wary of strangers. Chitra Naik describes the beginning of the experiment:
The few children who came to Anutai's Balwadi were extremely irregular. They would wander in and out just as they pleased. Cleanliness was unknown. Whoever came had to be given a bath, tidied up and made-ready for the preschool routines. Clipping the nails, brushing the teeth, combing the hair and applying ointment to scabies seemed a universal need. Nutritional deficiencies were apparent. But nothing that the teachers did for them would make the children either attend regularly or sit in one place even for a short while either to listen to a story or sing or get their scabies treated.20

Anutai found that, in order to gain the trust of the children, she had to meet them in their own environment. One successful strategy was to go into the field and join them eating the fruit of the tamarind tree. She then invited them to complete the meal at the balwadi and devised some interesting educational games with the seeds. It was the time-honoured educational principle of commencing with the familiar and with concrete objects, but in the tiny single-teacher primary schools which dotted the area, was seldom utilized. The education of these children required extremely resourceful and flexible teachers, capable of responding spontaneously to any situation because "the concept of school, of working or playing systematically, was completely alien" to them.21 The GBSK realized such teachers would have to be specially trained so they would understand and be competent to cope with the demands of teaching in an Adivasi region.

The anganwadi programme developed at Bordi was inapplicable at Kosbad, particularly for the older children who were more independent and assumed the responsibilities of adults in many respects. While the crèche and pre-school activities could be introduced with the smaller children, more formal learning tasks for the primary age group were inappropriate. The initial experience at Kosbad confirmed Tarabhai's view that the Warlis "would have to be educated outside the formal school system and by methods which had no precedent."22

The basic structure Tarabhai envisaged for the Vikaswadi at Kosbad
was to comprise a crèche, a balwadi, a primary school and a training centre for pre-primary and primary teachers. Its main objectives were:

1. To spread among the tribals such education as would lead to their all-sided development and would be relevant to their life.
2. To reduce the rate of primary school dropouts in the Kosbad area.
3. To evolve appropriate teacher-training programmes.  

When the GBSK took over the running of the Primary School at Kosbad they found a single-teacher school for grades 1-4 with an enrolment of 38 boys and with an average attendance throughout the year of 9 pupils. No girl had ever gone to school there. Most of the boys had dropped out to seek employment, but some also left because they had been beaten by the teacher or preferred to spend their time in the fields. Anutai visited many Adivasi homes to enrol new pupils, including some girls. A new programme was devised for the school outside the formal primary school curriculum. It was similar to Gandhi's Basic Education in that learning was to be correlated with crafts or vocational training. There was also some resemblance to the Montessori Method in the emphasis upon auto-education through the use of concrete materials; and to Montessori's Cosmic Curriculum with which Tarabhai was familiar, in the attempt to interrelate all aspects of the children's environment in the learning process. The Gokhale Education Society lent some land and provided seeds, equipment, and advice, and Anutai invited the children to help her to cultivate paddy rice. The new type of education appealed and a few children began to attend regularly. There were:

Songs about paddy-cultivation, stories adapted from the Warli folk-tales narrated by the children themselves, reading lessons prepared on the spot (partially using the Warli dialect), dramatizations, nature-study based on the environment, geography with the help of maps and models made of clay by the children themselves, and arithmetic with the help of seeds, leaves, sticks, straws.
and whatever lent itself to uses for computation - innumerable such devices were used for self-learning.\textsuperscript{25}

The Warli children were found to have short concentration spans but Anutai was able to foster their interest and discriminatory abilities through asking them to collect various types of stones, shells, feathers and berries from the woods for the school’s museum.

Despite such efforts very few Warli children came to the Vikaswadi at Kosbad. By 1960 there were only seven children in the crèche, seven in the attached balwadi and only thirteen in the primary school and their attendance was extremely irregular.\textsuperscript{26} In an effort to overcome this problem, a hostel was built but initially, few children could be persuaded to remain there for any length of time. The GBSK also did not wish to take the Warli children away from their homes. Over the years the number of boarders gradually increased to an average of forty but few of them were Warlis.\textsuperscript{27} Other crafts were also added to the primary school and the GBSK adopted the work-experience component of the Maharashtra State Government’s revised primary curriculum (1966), from the fifth standard. These crafts included carpentry, agriculture, poultry and needlework. A co-operative workshop was established in which wooden toys and the Montessori apparatus were made for the crèche and balwadi at Kosbad and for the anganwadis and balwadis that were set up gradually in the vicinity.

Tarabhai found that transforming the curriculum of the primary school was not sufficient to attract the Warlis. They felt alienated from the hostel children who were provided with free food and clothing and were therefore much healthier and neater in their appearance. The GBSK had to admit failure in their initial attempt to provide education for the Adivasis at Kosbad.\textsuperscript{28} Tarabhai had hoped to make the school an extension of the children’s homes and that parents would take an interest in it. She wrote:
We thought that their parents and guardians would come to look upon the school as a benevolent activity of their own village, if we took interest in their lives, offered them help and guidance and treated their children with affection. Once their hearts were won over, we were confident of making the school popular with the help of modern methods and equipment. 29

Tarabhai believed the Warlis' resistance to education was not due to economic factors but, rather, to their lack of interest in anything that resembled a school. The GBSK workers had found the children preferred to spend most of their time playing in the open fields and woods. But they were also occupied there shepherding the goats and cattle of absentee landlords, for which they were paid a small wage. 30 This suggests that poverty was an important factor. The continued exploitation of the Warlis over generations had resulted in the evolution of a particular life-style in which the economic contribution of the children was essential.

Alternative means of providing education for these children were sought by the GBSK. One attempt involved the provision of a Night School at Kosbad which attracted boys and also about 26 girls, some of whom slept on the campus and returned home the following day. The GBSK workers found that it had the added benefit of preventing the children from engaging in drinking and gambling, both of which were widespread among the Warli community. In later years, once the balwadi children began to attend the primary school, the numbers were reduced and the Night School was converted into an adult education centre providing literacy classes and training in various skills aimed at improving the economic and social conditions of the Warlis. Such training included health, hygiene, improved farming techniques, sewing and tailoring. 31

Another more radical innovation which also gave recognition to the need for the Warli children to contribute to the family economy was the "Meadow School" experiment. In the spirit of the anganwadi pre-school,
Tarabhai and Anutai decided to take education to the children in the fields. Anutai spent some time observing their daily activities and Tarabhai consequently devised a simple learning programme comprising the promotion of physical exercises, nature study, the promotion of language development by oral stories, songs and conversation and the grasping of number concepts through the selection and utilization of objects from the environment. But no set routine or time constraints were imposed.

The teachers were encouraged to use their own initiative, to respond to the interests of the children and to changes in the surrounding environment. Different events in the life-cycle of the flora and fauna observed by the children were selected by the teachers for closer examination and discussion. The children were invited to visit the museum at the Vikaswadi campus and to collect specimens for it. A game was introduced in which the Warli and the Marathi language names for various objects were compared. They learned to describe the habits and life-cycles of the animals and plants around them and wanted to label the specimens they had collected, like the ones they had seen in the museum. In a Montessori school this activity would involve the matching of picture tablets with an appropriate prepared written label. In the Meadow School, the children collected real objects and those who wanted to make labels were taught to write the names. There was never any attempt to force them to learn to read and write.

The Meadow School was not restricted to any particular age group. Many of the children were very young and were habitually left in the care of older siblings. Despite the presence of the balwadi and crèche at Kosbad, Warli parents were initially distrustful of the strangers and did not wish to leave their young ones there. Although these little children did not have access to the Montessori materials and activities provided in the balwadi, many of the learning techniques utilized in the Meadow School were derived from the balwadi. They were thus encouraged to
participate in the activities of the older children as much as possible. Significantly, during the same period, American educator, Jerome Bruner, was postulating that "any subject can be taught in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development."\(^{34}\)

As with the anganwadi experiment at Bordi, the GBSK had once more found it necessary to take education to the children, rather than forcing them to come to a central institution or school. The Meadow School concept recognized their economic circumstances and adjusted accordingly. It provided minimal structured learning experiences relying instead upon the informal learning of daily life to provide a basic education for the Warli children. The experiment is of historical significance "because it was attempted at a time when such terms as non-formal education, school without walls, de-schooling etc. had not even appeared on the educational horizon."\(^{35}\)

During the 1950s and 1960s, most developing countries including India sought to encourage economic growth by investing in formal education systems, in imitation of the industrialized West.\(^{36}\) It was not until the beginning of the 1970s, that dissatisfaction with the formal system caused ministries of education in developing countries to seek alternatives and "nonformal" education programmes of the kind adopted at Kosbad by Tarabhai Modak in 1960, attracted interest as a means of catering for the failures and inadequacies of the formal system.\(^{37}\)

Although Tarabhai and Anutal had certain aims from the outset in wishing to provide an education for the Warli children which would enable them to improve their economic and social circumstances, they were determined to rid themselves of preconceived notions of what that education should comprise. In the same manner as Montessori, they followed an empirical approach fashioning a new type of school based on their observations of the aptitudes and needs of the Warli children. They noted the continued resistance of these children to conventional schooling and con-
cluded that it was inappropriate. In 1962, when the Meadow School had been functioning for over twelve months, Tarabhai wrote:

After a long period of observation and earnest thought I am convinced that mere multiplication of the type of school considered or reckoned successful in towns and cities will do no good to the backward areas. The average teacher today is not equipped to deal with rural conditions and village emergencies.... On the other hand, I feel that we have definitely found the direction in which to proceed if ... education is to succeed.38

The provision of such education, however, required pre-primary and primary school teachers who had also undergone a radical type of training and been exposed to nonformal methods.

TEACHER TRAINING AT KOSBAD

Teacher training was the third major element of the Vikaswadi at Kosbad and in 1957 a pre-primary and primary training college was incorporated. The forty students who commenced the training were initially housed in a makeshift building until the campus construction was completed. From the outset there was some strong resistance among the trainees, most of whom were from urban areas, to courses designed specifically for teaching in Adivasi locations. They required assurance that their training would also prepare them for placement elsewhere. Another early difficulty was the small size of the Kosbad Primary School which had only three grades and could not adequately provide for practice-teaching experience. The problem eased when the school expanded with the establishment of the hostel, and with the addition of the Meadow School experiment, which provided non formal teaching experience.

In setting up the teacher training college, the GBSK had to make a number of concessions to conform to the less flexible Government prescribed curriculum and examination requirements. Such compromise was
necessary for the teacher trainees to receive qualifications which would equip them to teach in ordinary schools in rural and urban areas. The GBSK thus experienced the first taste of the resistance of the formal system of education to an innovation.\textsuperscript{39} It proved a hindrance to the success of the whole project because the students had to be given training in formal curricula and classroom practice. As their own training was also largely formalized, this tended to undermine efforts to encourage spontaneous initiative on the part of the trainees. Tarabhai had intended that the Vikaswadi at Kosbad should train teachers who would further extend the experimental work begun there, throughout the rural and tribal areas of the State. They were expected to be innovative and to inform the GBSK of any initiatives they had undertaken so that the project remained dynamic.\textsuperscript{40}

Few candidates were attracted to Kosbad in the early stages of the College and only those who had failed to gain entrance elsewhere enrolled. But the numbers increased in 1964, when a Government sponsored orientation programme specially devised for teachers destined to be employed in tribal areas, was introduced at Kosbad. The trainees selected were highly motivated and the programme met with considerable success. They were placed in single-teacher schools in interior regions for fifteen days and were expected to prepare their own teaching aids from local waste materials. This innovative course was replaced in 1968 by a new Diploma in Education course introduced by the Government of Maharashtra. A valuable feature of the new course, was the introduction of pre-school methods into primary teacher training. Two separate sections for primary and pre-primary teachers were then incorporated into the training college at Kosbad.\textsuperscript{41}

Apart from training pre-primary and primary school teachers, the GBSK also conducted three month training courses for social workers or Gram Sevikas to work with women and young children at the village level.
The work at Bordi had received considerable recognition amongst educators and by Government, and the Central Social Welfare Board consequently assigned a Welfare Extension Project to the GBSK in 1958-1959. Its aim was to improve the nutrition, health and education of women and young children in rural and tribal areas. Much of the work over the two year period was undertaken by Anutai in the form of a village based "action-research project". The experience increased her knowledge of tribal localities and their problems, and her relationship with the people was strengthened. She was able to direct the attention of tribal leaders to the need for improvement in the welfare, particularly the areas of health and education, of their people and to publicise the Vikaswadi at Kosbad. A Gram Sevika Course was conducted concurrently with the Welfare Extension Project and the trainees organized Mahila Mandals (women's clubs), crèches, youth clubs and balwadis, to develop their contacts with the tribals and to introduce new health, hygiene, environmental sanitation, and child care practices.42

The multipurpose function of the Welfare Extension Projects, however, inhibited their ability to provide adequate services for young children, and it was recommended that specially trained workers, or Balsevikas, should be introduced to cater also to the educational needs of the pre-school child.43 Prominent child welfare worker, Tara Ali Baig, writes in this regard:

Our own Indian adaptation of the Montessori principles led to the expanded Balwadi programme organized by the Indian Council for Child Welfare and the Central Social Welfare Board after 1960, when the Planning Commission accepted the creation of a new cadre of teachers for nursery schools, called the Balsevika.44

In 1964, the GBSK undertook one such training programme for Balsevikas on behalf of the Indian Council for Child Welfare. This course provided the trainees with extensive field work and brought them in direct contact with
tribals through home visits. One of their tasks was to encourage Adivasis to start balwadis in their villages and to assist them.

The original idea behind the Vikaswadi at Kosbad, was to focus upon the child as the centre of community based development. The balsevika training programme exemplified this concept with Anutai's trainees organizing composite education centres in different villages. These comprised crèches, balwadis, primary schools, recreation clubs, adult education, and health care facilities. It was a practical and inexpensive approach to village uplift. The Balsevikas also conducted a pre-school centre and crèche at annual religious festivals and fairs at the Mahalaxmi Temple near Dahanu. Adivasis generally flocked to these occasions bringing produce from their forest locale to barter in exchange for commodities such as salt. Often they were exploited by traders as they had little idea of the value of the items they brought with them. Anutai entrusted the Balsevikas with the task of mingling with the tribals and reporting any incidence of cheating to the Adivasi Seva Mandal. This action increased the trust of the tribals in the GBSK workers. The Balsevikas were also engaged in popularizing the notion of pre-school education and familiarizing the villagers with its activities and their benefits. By 1978, more than seven hundred Balsevikas had been trained at Kosbad.

THE GBSK AND INTEGRATED CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The major focus of the GBSK in its community development work at both Bordi and Kosbad, had been the provision of appropriate education. In 1969, as a consequence of the visit of a UNICEF official to the nearby Agricultural Institute, its Director, Dr Jayantrao Patil, suggested to the GBSK that a nutrition programme for tribals be undertaken. Such a scheme had not originally been envisaged as a major component of the
Vikaswadi but its value as a means of furthering contacts with the tribals and reducing the level of malnutrition among them, was recognized, and Anutai undertook to organize a programme.

The scheme was applied in ten villages and incorporated kitchen gardening, nutrition for mothers and children, and the improved utilization of local food resources. Because of the established rapport between the GBSK and the tribals the latter were receptive to the programme and Anutai took the opportunity to demonstrate improved child care techniques and to further publicise the Vikaswadi programme. A course in applied nutrition was also added to the Balsevika training programme. As a consequence of the applied nutrition project, the GBSK developed valuable contacts with State Health Department officials and professionals working in the area of health and nutrition. They encouraged the training of extension workers from the villages to assist the scheme. By 1977, 416 women had been trained and the project was expanded further enabling the GBSK to extend its influence over a wider area.47

The new focus on health and nutrition by the GBSK coincided with a change in emphasis in development strategies at both the national and the international level. In 1973 it was revealed that 800 million people or 40 per cent of the population in developing countries, were living in absolute poverty. Despite economic growth in many of these countries, including India, measured in statistical increases in their GNP, and increases in educational enrollments and participation rates, huge disparities remained, particularly between urban and rural areas.48 Consequently, there was a shift among governments and the multilateral and bilateral organizations working in the field of development, towards a more qualitative focus and an emphasis on the satisfaction of basic human needs.49

In 1975, as part of the human resources development focus of the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-1978), the Government of India proposed to
expand pre-school services more rapidly and adopted the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme. This involved giving village women a three to four month condensed Balsevika training course and then paying them a small wage to return to their villages and provide basic care designed to "increase child survival rates among the poorest and enhance the health, nutrition and learning opportunities of pre-school children and their mothers."  

The anganwadi model developed by Tarabhai and Anutai at Bordi was chosen as the most cost-effective structure for implementing the scheme. The Government requested the GBSK to provide training for ICDS anganwadi workers. Health, nutrition, family planning, and child care and education formed the major components of the programme and it became a model for others working in this field. In 1975 there were 33 ICDS of which 19 were in rural areas, 10 in tribal areas and 4 in the slums of the major Indian cities of Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. According to Chitra Naik,  

The Anganwadi concept and programme so painstakingly evolved and nurtured by Tarabhai Modak and Anutai Vagh had finally received its well-deserved recognition as an effective vehicle for the educational and social development of children from the weaker sections of society.

These developments reinforced recognition on the part of the GBSK, of the importance of the health component in child development. The isolation of many of the tribal padas (hamlets), the lack of easy access to public transport, the Warlis' poverty, and their distrust of outsiders, ensured a continued reliance on traditional medicine. Anutai Vagh was aware of the extent of the problem, but the GBSK did not have sufficient funds to embark on a specific project of its own. Eventually, however, an overseas donor provided the requisite funds and in June 1980, the Vikaswadi again demonstrated its dynamic character with the incorporation of a Community Health Project.
The main aim of the project was to supply simple medical treatment, including immunizations, and to provide education in general health, sanitation, and nutrition, for the tribals. A unique innovation, however, was the decision to train balwadi teachers as health workers to implement the scheme and to reduce costs by using balwadi buildings. Five health centres were therefore opened in five padas where balwadis had been functioning for a period. The GBSK believed that the project would have greater initial impact if teachers who had been working in a hamlet for some time were utilized because they had already established a rapport with the people and were familiar with their life-style and their needs.

After the conclusion of the balwadis each day, the health centres were opened for two hours and the workers carried out medical examinations of pregnant and lactating women, babies, and pre-school age children and maintained records of any illnesses. Essential vaccinations were administered and medicines dispensed. A Doctor working in the region was invited to become Project Officer and to visit each village one day per week in an advisory capacity. From January 1982, the scheme was extended with the introduction of a preventative health services component in which the health workers were asked to make regular home visits and to record births and deaths on the appropriate registers.

To increase community participation, regular meetings for parents were introduced which provided basic health and nutrition education using charts and other simple visual aids. More intensive procedures for the care of pre-school children were also adopted including a regular medical examination of children attending the crèches and balwadis and the maintenance of appropriate records including growth measurements. An assessment of the nutritional status of each child and the provision of appropriate dietary supplements through a food programme, was also introduced. A nutritious meal was provided as part of the balwadi activities in each village. Five more such health centres were also introduced into existing
balwadis in the region making a total of ten, and a central dispensary was opened at the Vikaswadi at Kosbad. Medical supplies were stored there and the Doctor was in attendance on a daily basis to examine more difficult cases referred to him by the village health workers.

In the fourth year of the project the GBSK was able to introduce a nominal fee for curative services which the Warlis were willing to pay. This indicated their acceptance of the health scheme and the value they placed on its services. The GBSK could thus claim success in that they "kept the goal of health for each and every person covered under the project."54

With the concept of training pre-school teachers as health care workers, the GBSK had gone beyond Montessori. Although she had always been concerned with the total development of the child and measurements were made in the Casa dei Bambini, of the children's growth, she apparently never envisaged the Montessori teacher taking on the role of community nurse. As most Montessori Houses of Children were located in urban areas where medical facilities were more accessible, this was not necessary. In the isolated rural and tribal areas of India, however, health services were and continue to remain largely inadequate.

The training of pre-school teachers as health care workers is a radical innovation with far reaching benefits. Apart from being highly economical by minimizing the duplication of community services, it also enables additional training and employment for balwadi teachers who usually work on a part-time basis for a meagre wage. Ultimately it also provides an incentive for tribal girls to complete their education, at least to the seventh standard, when they are eligible to take Balsevika training, and to return to their hamlets to work in a pre-school and health centre. More importantly, it encourages a balwadi teacher to be concerned with all aspects of the child's growth and development and to take appropriate action in the vital areas of health and nutrition which
not only determine survival, but can influence educational attainment. The Vikaswadi concept at Kosbad had thus continued to evolve so that it integrated all areas of the child's developmental needs.

THE KOSBAD EXPERIMENTS: PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Tarabhai Modak had gone to Bordi in 1945 in the belief that pre-school education based on the Montessori Method but allied to Gandhian principles, would be beneficial for an economically and socially "backward" rural community. Like Montessori she believed that any attempt at human advancement should begin with the young child. The work at Bordi, and later at Kosbad, had placed pre-school children at the centre of educational action directed towards social and cultural change. Consistent with the widely held view at the time, it was also assumed that there would be a consequent improvement in the economic circumstances of the people. The success of the GBSK in achieving these goals among the Warlis at Kosbad over the past thirty years, has, however, been limited.

With regard to pre-school education, Tarabhai was satisfied that the central balwadi and crèche at Kosbad had a positive influence on the future enrollment and performance of the Warli children in the primary school. She wrote:

We have noticed the marked difference that exists between the children promoted to the first standard from our Balwadi and those who are admitted directly from the village without initiation in the intellectual or craft activities or manual skill. We have, therefore, come to the conclusion that to make the rural primary education effective, we must not neglect the pre-primary stage. Children under 6 too must get opportunities of unfoldment that are provided in a Balwadi....

While the balwadi appears to have had a beneficial influence on the Warli children's adjustment to and their performance in the primary school, the
extent to which it succeeded in expanding school enrollments, and reducing
the problems of wastage and stagnation in the Kosbad Primary School is not
clear as no systematic records of the school history of balwadi children
over a thirty year period have been maintained.\footnote{56} Enrollments in the
Primary School certainly increased, particularly the number of girls. In
January, 1978, there were 348 students on the roll, 245 boys and 193 girls.
Of the total, 295 were Adivasis. However, very few Adivasis were trained
as balwadi teachers and by 1978, only one had taken primary-training; he
became the Meadow School teacher.\footnote{57}

One important success of the Vikaswadi experiments at Kosbad has
been the attitudinal changes among the Warlis, particularly in the reduc­
tion of resistance on the part of the women bringing their children to
the crèche and balwadi. The value of pre-school education has been
appreciated by the tribals in the region and they have expressed a desire
for the provision of such facilities in villages which lack them. In 1977
the residents of Dhakpada, a tribal hamlet some distance from Kosbad,
applied in writing to the GBSK to establish a balwadi in their village.
Most of the ten signatories were former students of the Kosbad Vikaswadi
indicating its success not only in achieving a high level of literacy
but also in promoting awareness of the importance of a balwadi for their
community.\footnote{58}

Despite such apparent enthusiasm for balwadis the numbers actually
established in the region over a period of thirty years was relatively
small. Between 1960 and 1976 only eight additional balwadis were opened.\footnote{59}
In 1983, there were eleven balwadis run by the GBSK, one at Kosbad and
ten in the vicinity providing for 440 tribal children. There were also
only five crèches including that at Kosbad, with a total of 125 children.\footnote{60}
This slow development was due mainly to the reliance of the GBSK upon
private donations to expand its programmes. The community resources of
the Warlis remained too meagre to establish balwadis without outside
assistance. The GBSK had also channelled resources into the establishment of the more expensive balwadi, rather than the anganwadi model, because of the need for practicing pre-schools in which to train Gram Sevikas and Balsevikas. In its balwadi model, the GBSK attempted to adopt the major items of the Montessori sensorial, number and language apparatus. In the anganwadis educational aids were made from waste materials and items collected from nature.

In 1958 the cost of establishing a village anganwadi in a temple or courtyard for thirty children was Rs.700 of which Rs.600 comprised annual recurring expenses including the teacher's salary of Rs.35 per month and a helper's wage of Rs.5 per month; Rs.100 was allocated for the purchase of simple materials. It was expected that the teacher would conduct two anganwadi centres per day for three hours each or provide craft courses for women. A fully equipped balwadi, however, cost Rs.4,000 of which Rs.2,500 were annual recurring expenses including the salary of two full-time teachers, paid Rs.150 per month each, and one full-time helper paid Rs.25 per month. Rs.1,000 was allocated for the construction of a building, and a further Rs.1,000 for the purchase of equipment including the Montessori apparatus.

By 1980 costs had risen substantially. The GBSK attempted to establish Vikaswadi composite centres in tribal hamlets around Kosbad. The total cost of a Vikaswadi comprising a crèche (twenty-five children), balwadi (thirty-five children) and the first two grades of a primary school (forty children), was Rs.37,000 of which Rs.7,000 consisted of non-recurring expenses; mainly simple furniture and educational materials. The remainder was allocated for salaries of a staff of seven including two local helpers, and for a supplementary food programme for the children.

Apart from the problem of cost, pockets of resistance to the GBSK's programmes also remained among the parents. Often the Balsevikas
had to collect the children to take them to the balwadi and despite health and hygiene education programmes among the Warlis, children continued to arrive unwashed and unkempt. They knew their children washed and groomed themselves at the balwadi, so Warli parents came to believe that the children's personal hygiene was the responsibility of the teachers.63

Another major problem concerned the teaching methods and learning activities utilized in the balwadis. Naik notes that,

... many trainees who complete the training course pay insufficient attention to the sensory training of the children though the GBSK gives them plenty of theoretical and practical knowledge about the preparation and use of sensory training equipment.64

Although locally made copies and adaptations of the Montessori apparatus were available to the teachers, these were often not utilized.65

The failure to put the knowledge they had obtained in training into practice was not confined to the GBSK balwadis. The problem had been evident from the late 1950s when there was a proliferation of balwadis established by both Government and non-governmental organizations.66 In 1958, Tarabhai Modak observed that many of them were far from satisfactory, particularly because of the absence of a universally accepted balwadi methodology. She attempted to remedy the situation by producing, with Government support, a booklet, Balwadis in Rural Areas, which would serve as a text book and guide for Balsevikas and teachers.67 But the problem persisted, and the development of sensory discrimination, and other cognitive skills given emphasis in the Montessori Method and in the GBSK training courses, were often neglected in balwadis, in favour of group activities, such as singing and story-telling.

Tarabhai had hoped that at the very least, the basis Montessori sensorial, language and number apparatus would be available to most rural balwadis. But she recognized that many villages could not afford such materials and therefore expected the teachers to prepare them. She also
expected that if the Montessori apparatus was available Balsevikas and Gram Sevikas should be properly trained in order to obtain the "special benefits" attributed to its use. This was not always the case, however, although the laboratory balwadi at Kosbad remained an exemplary model for the trainee teacher to imitate. It contained a full set of Montessori apparatus as well as a number of indigenous cost-saving innovations. Among them was a low dividing wall constructed of clay bricks, hand-made by the children. The wall was smeared with a layer of pink clay, similar to that in the huts of the tribals. The wall was used for painting by the children using brushes made from bamboo twigs with one end crushed, and a white wash mixture. At the end of the day it was covered again in a coating of clay in readiness for subsequent use. The innovation obviated the need to purchase paper which was both expensive and in short supply. Other innovations suggested by Tarabhai included the use of measured lengths of bamboo instead of the painted wooden rods which comprise Montessori's Long Stair, and the use of shells and seeds for numberwork.

Few Balsevikas and teachers emulated such ingenuity in their own balwadis. On the occasion of her 78th birthday in May 1969, Tarabhai wrote in Shikshan Patrika, the journal of the GBSK, that they had hoped to "produce a new breed of teacher who, taking inspiration from this experiment and like one candle lighting another, could set up a continuous process of preparing a new type of rural teacher", but she was forced to concede that the GBSK had failed in a vital component of the Vikaswadi project.

As Naik has noted, the acceptance of formal curricula and methodology in the training programme, had to a large extent, undermined the project. Tarabhai had sought sudden and radical change within an education system that had evolved over a period of more than a century and had become firmly entrenched in India. Gandhi's attempt to provide an indigenous alternative to that system in his Basic Education Scheme,
had also largely failed. Whilst experimenting with a new scheme, the GBSK has been forced to accept significant aspects of the State system, particularly in the area of teacher training. According to Chitra Naik,

> If educational administrators could have encouraged experimental patterns of teacher education as equivalent to the official teacher-training programmes and suitably adapted the service-conditions of teachers, the Vikaswadis experimental base would have remained unsullied.

But there were also other reasons for the failure of many balwadi teachers to meet expectations. To attract teacher trainees initially, the Vikaswadi had to accept many with low qualifications and a dubious commitment to teaching in tribal areas. The low salaries paid to pre-primary teachers also appears to have restricted the attraction of high quality students prepared to endure personal hardship for the sake of bringing education to rural children. As ardent nationalists, Tarabhai and Anutai had embarked on their rural pre-school education project in the pre-Independence spirit of active service, to achieve Gandhi's Antodaya (uplift of the poor). In the new India, the Gandhian approach was only kept alive by a few aging devotees like themselves, scattered in isolated Ashrams around the country. The task of community development had been taken over, in a plethora of programmes managed by bureaucrats largely isolated both geographically and culturally, from their recipient clients. Tarabhai was the relic of an age which produced a group of extraordinary men and women in India. She had grown up during the period of the renascence of Hinduism in a reformist Prarthana Samaj household and had become an active participant in Gandhi's nationalist movement. It was naive to expect a post-Independence generation concerned more with their own material advancement, to share her idealistic commitment to community uplift and the cause of the rural and Adivasi child.

Although Tarabhai was disappointed with the Vikaswadis, she and Anutai, received wide acclaim for their work at Bordi and Kosbad. They
had been eclectic in their selection of Gandhian, Montessorian, and Froebelian ideas, and had combined these with their own perceptions to produce a new hybrid appropriate to the needs and circumstances of India's rural and tribal children. The Vikaswadi project at Kosbad provided the inspiration for the development of a basic rural pre-school model. The simplicity of the balwadi methodology and the appropriate but low-cost materials appealed to both educators and administrators, as did the Balsevika training programme which was approved by bodies such as the Central Social Welfare Board as a practical and inexpensive means of training pre-school staff. According to Naik,

\[
\text{The Balwadi has been accepted as an essential part of the educational system. Its efficacy as an entry point into community education and particularly into the educational efforts designed for rural women, has been proved.}^{77}
\]

The idea of using simple and improvised teaching aids produced from local materials, has been widely accepted in the field of pre-primary education in India and has also been adopted in the primary school at Kosbad and elsewhere.\(^{78}\) Naik argues that this was an improvement upon the original Montessori Method,\(^{79}\) particularly in terms of its application at the village level in India. In this regard, it is significant that Tarabhai and Anutai began their experiments using waste materials and objects from the natural environment to produce imitations of the Montessori apparatus well before the AMI Help the Children Projects discussed in Chapter Six, had begun.

Tarabhai, Anutai, and their fellow GBSK workers, had thus made a significant contribution to the development of pre-school education in rural India, largely inspired by the Montessori Method. Their effort to bring about a major change in the social and economic circumstances of the Warlis at Kosbad, did not, however, achieve any measure of success. As Chitra Naik observes:
By and large, a broad review of the attempts at educational and social transformation undertaken at Kosbad Hill generates the feeling that social change cannot be effected by educational remedies alone. Tarabhai and Anutai had largely adopted a "paternalistic" approach to community development in the belief that the provision by outside agencies of education provided the answer to the problem of rural poverty. The GBSK did not attempt to attack the economic foundations of the Warlis' poverty - their position as landless labourers and their vulnerability to exploitation by contractors, money-lenders, absentee landlords and petty officials. Naik refers to the determination of "vested interests", to obstruct any efforts, such as Government legislation outlawing bonded labour, or the introduction of minimum wage levels, designed to improve the circumstances of the tribals and other low caste groups. The GBSK also did not directly confront the problem of the psychology of poverty, the ingrained acceptance by the Warlis of their social and economic circumstances and their belief that these could not be improved. Although the GBSK has more recently sought to develop more community based programmes like the Community Health Project, there was no attempt, initially, to directly involve the Warlis in decisions concerning the kinds of programmes to be introduced at Kosbad and in the running of these programmes. Nor was there any effort in the later years to introduce the "conscientization" advocated by Paulo Friere, in the adult education programmes of the GBSK. Government opposition to the politicization of such programmes and the GBSK's reliance on its various grants, may, however, have had some influence.

The GBSK's programmes directed towards pre-school age children have been its major successes. It has been able to directly involve tribal women and girls in the running of these programmes and has provided some with vocational education and employment as Balsevikas and Gram Sevikas. The provision of anganwadis, balwadis and crèches has
released older children and women from the responsibilities of child care enabling them to attend school or to contribute to the family income. More significantly, it has been concerned with the total welfare of the pre-school age Adivasi child. Tarabhai Modak had taken the Montessori Method to rural India and adapted it in accordance with Gandhi's insistence on the use of appropriate low cost, locally made materials. In the process a hybrid method was born which has been adopted throughout India, although not always in accordance with the guidelines she set down. Montessori purists might disapprove, but in the words of Chitra Naik:

She had taken education to the doorstep of the tribals, thus preventing the cultural alienation of their children. In this respect Tarabhai's contribution to the development of tribal child-education is so outstanding that it is assured a permanent place in our educational history.86

Through the Kosbad experiments the Montessori Method became "Indianized" in the sense of being modified to suit the social and economic circumstances of the Indian village. Although the materials were simplified, Tarabhai had attempted to retain the main tenets of the Method and had always endeavoured to follow Montessori's basic principle of the observation of and respect for the child. In the process she and her fellow workers had adjusted the model according to their perceptions of the needs of the child.

THE MONTESSORI LEGACY IN INDIA: SOME OUTCOMES

Earlier this century Maria Montessori claimed that the early childhood years, from birth to six, were the most important in terms of the child's future development and that claim has remained undisputed.87 The GBSK had begun their community development work by focusing on the provision of education for the basic "building blocks" of human development, pre-school age children. In accordance with Gandhian principles
they adapted the Montessori Method to suit the economic and social environment of poverty-stricken rural communities. They realized, in the process of their experiment, that the mere introduction of appropriate education for young children was not sufficient and that they must pay attention to other vital life necessities for the child's survival and growth.

These basic necessities include adequate food, clean water, safe sanitation, and competent health care, as well as education. In 1975 the Indian Government introduced the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), which adopted the anganwadi pre-school model developed by the GBSK, as the focus of delivery for services designed to cater for such vital needs amongst the nation's poorest communities. Within ten years India has now been recognized as a pioneer in the provision of such outreach services. The ICDS alone provide basic care for 10 million children and UNICEF reports that,

In some areas, the results of the ICDS are already evident in lower rates of malnutrition, falling rates of low birth-weight, higher levels of immunization coverage, and fewer child deaths. Sample studies in 15 states have shown that 85% of malnourished children gain weight through the ICDS scheme and the Chairman of the ICDS Technical Committee estimates that almost 100,000 children's lives have already been saved.

Infant mortality in ICDS areas has dropped to less than 90 per 1,000 live births compared with a national average of 114. In 1984 there were 51,078 anganwadis, of which 23,063 provided functional literacy programmes to 461,480 women. More than 200,000 people, most of whom are women, are involved in the provision of ICDS which reach 20 per cent of the nation's most impoverished families. By 1990 it is expected that the scheme will double in size and by "the turn of the century, it is scheduled to serve the poor in every village and neighbourhood of India." The anganwadi model has already provided a powerful means of improving health and nutrition amongst India's poorest communities. Its
success in enhancing the cognitive, social and emotional development of children, is less clear, although it has been reported that in ICDS areas, school enrollment levels are usually higher and drop-out rates are lower. These findings are important in a country where it was recently noted that more than half of those who enrol, leave school before reaching the fifth standard.

The quality of the pre-school education provided in anganwadis has, however, received strong criticism. In one study of 25 randomly selected anganwadis from various parts of India it was reported that they were poorly attended for a number of reasons including the lack of satisfactory pre-school activities, the absence of teaching aids and equipment, late arrival of the anganwadi workers and helpers, their failure to undertake home visits regularly, and inadequate supervision of the anganwadi workers by the Child Development Project Officers.

Many of these problems stem from the poor training of the anganwadi workers some of whom are barely literate village girls. Although the basic anganwadi model developed by the GBSK has been adopted, there is no single body which coordinates the Anganwadi Training Centres, of which there are over 300 throughout the country run by various government and voluntary agencies. It is thus difficult to maintain a single standard of training. The low salaries of the trainers and lack of job security often results in a high staff turnover and a failure to attract suitably qualified staff. There is also a dearth of instructional material in the various vernacular languages. The provision of practical experience prior to placement is difficult as many of the training centres, unlike the one at Kosbad, are located in urban areas.

The expectation that anganwadi workers will perform a multiplicity of tasks including the provision of nutrition, health care, family planning and basic literacy classes for adults, in an attempt to minimize costs, has also resulted in the neglect of early childhood education. The high priority
given to the ICDS by the Government of India has resulted in the recent implementation of strategies to alleviate some of these problems, including the introduction of in-service training and refresher courses for anganwadi workers, and the employment of more supervisory staff.98

At Bordi, and later at Kosbad, Tarabhai Modak and Anutai Vagh developed an Indian hybrid of the Montessori Method. They abandoned the obsession of many Montessorians in India with the costly precision-made educational apparatus and its ritualized presentation to the child, and devised simple inexpensive aids utilizing waste materials and items collected from the environment. The impoverishment of the villagers meant that the health and nutritional needs of the children and their families subsequently became the focus of balwadi and anganwadi programmes. Although it was not a panacea for improving the lives of the Warlis, the enormous potential of this indigenous pre-school strategy in contributing to community development through the alleviation of poverty, has been subsequently recognized by welfare bodies at both the national and the international level. A recent UNICEF report states in this regard:

"Of the thousands of projects started every year in the developing world, few can ever claim that they have permanently and significantly affected the life of a nation. But that is what the integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme is now beginning to achieve in India.99"

As the focus for delivery of the ICDS, the anganwadi model is thus a significant legacy of the Montessori Method in India.
NOTES


5. Times of India (Bombay), 19 January, 1946, p. 5. (Hereafter, TI.)


7. M.N. Srinivas, Social Change in Modern India, University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1966, p. 120.

8. Ibid., 17. Nine women completed the three month training in balwadi education (Montessori course).


12. Ibid., pp. 31-32. Some idea of the exploitation of the Warlis can be gauged from the fact that an anna is equivalent to one sixteenth of a rupee.


15. During the 1970s, high protein foods were introduced as part of a nutrition programme aimed at reducing the dietary deficiencies in the children. They learned to prepare the snacks themselves as part of the Exercises of Practical Life. Ibid., p. 25.
16. For an account of the failure of primary education at Bordi, see ibid., pp. 26-29.

17. Ibid., p. 30.

18. Ibid., pp. 33-34.

19. Ibid., p. 38.

20. Ibid., p. 40.

21. Ibid., p. 41.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid., pp. 41-42.

24. It will be recalled that Tarabhai had visited Montessori at Kodaikanal and attended some of the lectures on Cosmic Education. She also attended the AMI Conference at San Remo in 1949 and visited numerous pre-primary institutions in Europe. Ibid., p. 107.

25. Ibid., pp. 42-43.


29. Ibid., pp. 8-9.

30. Ibid., p. 9.


32. Ibid., p. 54.

33. Ibid., p. 57.


35. Naik, op. cit.


40. Ibid., p. 55.

41. Ibid., pp. 68-69. According to Chitra Naik, the College is now the best of its kind in Maharashtra. She writes, "The competence of the GBSK to prepare teachers for the preschool stage has now received full recognition both by educational experts and Government." p. 69.

42. Ibid., pp. 69-70.

43. Aruna Thakkar, Perspectives in Pre-School Education, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1980, p. 34.

44. Tara Ali Baig, Our Children, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi, 1979, p. 129. In 1948, Maria Montessori assisted Tara Ali Baig in establishing the first pre-school in the then French territory of Pondicherry. It was run by a woman's organization she had founded called Megalir Kajagam. Ibid., p. 300.

45. Naik, op. cit., p. 70.

46. Ibid., p. 72. At the same time a total of 9,000 Balsevikas had been trained throughout India and 6,174 were employed in balwadis. Baig, op. cit., p. 130.

47. Naik, op. cit., pp. 74-76.


49. Ibid., p. 19.

50. ICDS Integrated Child Development Services in India, UNICEF, New Delhi, 1984, p. 3. (Hereafter, ICDS)

51. Naik, op. cit., p. 73.

52. Ibid., p. 74.

53. The doner agency was Terre Des Hommes (Germany). See H.P. Jain & A. Vagh, "Community Health Project", Mimeograph, GBSK, Kosbad Hill, 1983.

54. Ibid., p. 6. The writer visited the health centre in the composite school at Dongripada in September 1980. See Wilson, op. cit., p. 34.

55. Modak, op. cit., p. 44. This was also supported by Despande, et al., op. cit., p. 66.

56. G.L. Koske, Interview, C. Wilson, 24 September, 1980. (Hereafter, Koske Interview.) Koske is Deputy Director of the GBSK.

57. Despande, et al., op. cit., p. 60.


63. Naik, op. cit., p. 95.

64. Ibid.

65. The writer observed this problem on a visit to the Vikaswadi composite school at Dongripada Hamlet in 1980. The teachers were using formalized teaching methods for arithmetic in the first two standards of the primary school, although the cupboard contained a locally produced version of the Montessori bead material as well as other Montessori inspired equipment for the development of language and number skills. The children were seated in rows in front of a blackboard and all were occupied in copying algorithms onto slates for computation.

66. By the end of the Second Five Year Plan (1956-1960), some 3,700 balwadis had been established. The expansion of the balwadi projects in association with other integrated social services, formed the basic thrust of the expansion of pre-school education under the various Five Year Plans in India. Thakkar, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

67. Modak, op. cit., p. 7. Anutai Vagh later also produced a number of booklets for this purpose, including How to Run a Balwadi.

68. Ibid., pp. 38-40.

69. The writer visited the central balwadi and crèche at Kosbad in September, 1980. See Wilson, op. cit., p. 33. See also Naik, op. cit., pp. 81-85.

70. Modak, op. cit., p. 50.

71. Tarabhai Modak, cited in Naik, op. cit., p. 89.


73. Naik, op. cit., p. 90.
The writer visited the balwadi in the Gandhi Ashram at Sevagram in 1981 and found it neither Gandhian, Montessorian, nor Froebelian. Nor was it following the GBSK’s balwadi method. After commencing with group singing the children were dispersed to play with an assortment of wooden toys, mainly building blocks, under the supervision of the helper, whilst the teacher practised draughting patterns for her sewing course that evening. She hoped to supplement her meagre salary of Rs.175 per month by making clothes.


Ibid., p. 94.

Chitra Naik, Director of the State Resource Centre for Nonformal Education, at the Indian Institute of Education, Poona, is utilizing Montessori inspired materials of the type developed at Kosbad to provide basic literacy and numeracy education for out of school children and youth. Chitra Naik, Interview, C. Wilson, 27 January, 1984.

Naik, ibid.

Naid, ibid., p. 95.


Naik, op. cit., p. 65.

Despande, et al., op. cit., p. xi. They note, however, that more recently the GBSK has attempted to develop more community based programmes, ibid., p. ix. This has particularly been evident in the establishment of the Community Health Scheme.


Koske, Interview. For the Indian Government's opposition to conscientization in nonformal education programmes, see TI, 30 January, 1979, p. 5.

Naik, op. cit., p. x. Tarabhai Modak died on 31 August, 1973. The work at Kosbad is still carried out by Anutai Vagh and her staff of the GBSK. Although she is in her later 70s she continues to train teachers for rural and tribal regions and has trained several excellent teachers from among the Adivasi community who work in balwadis in and around Kosbad, and whom she hopes will continue the dynamic nature of the work that she and Tarabhai began. Anutai Vagh, Interview, C. Wilson, 1 February, 1984.

Coombs, op. cit., p. 61.


90. Ibid.


92. Grant, op. cit.

93. ICDS, op. cit., p. 31.

94. Grant, op. cit.


98. R. Muralidharan, Interview, C. Wilson, 27 November, 1986. Professor Muralidharan is head of the Department of Preschool and Elementary Education, NCERT, New Delhi.

99. Grant, op. cit.
CONCLUSION

The history of the Montessori movement in a number of countries saw its virtual eclipse after an initial period of enthusiasm, followed by a renewal of interest in the 1960s and 1970s.¹ There was no need for a revival in India, however, as the Method remained in vogue from the time of its inception. It has been applied in its various forms uninterrupted for more than seventy years.

The continued appeal of the Method in India can be attributed to a complexity of factors. Education, as with other social activities, is subject to the influence of prevailing social and political forces, a fact which Maria Montessori would scarcely acknowledge. This thesis has argued, however, that the history of the Montessori movement in India was greatly influenced by the wider social and political events of the period and by the actions and ideology of some of the major protagonists, particularly Gandhi and, in the early years, by Annie Besant. The receptive welcome the Method received in India derived from its introduction during a crucial period in the nation's history when certain forces were clamouring for social and political change.

From the outset, the Method was taken up by private initiative and was never adopted as part of the education system specifically established by the British Raj. Nonetheless, its adoption was influenced by the colonial situation. The majority of those who played significant roles in the application of the Method came from élite groups in Indian society. Most were from the traditionally literate higher castes who had also received an English education and thus had been exposed to Western ideas. Many were also affluent and could afford the expensive apparatus and the training courses. Montessori education appealed to
members of the Westernized élite who had profited from the British presence through trade, particularly amongst the Parsi community. Moreover, it was regarded as an educational method which promised the teaching of reading and writing from an early age thereby securing a competitive advantage at successive levels of education and later in employment.

The impact of colonialism in India had been such that many aspects of traditional culture were disparaged and, in response, various forces for change emerged. The culture of the conquerors was viewed by some as superior and therefore to be emulated. Western science and technology were favoured as a means to industrialization and modernity. Although it was not British, the Montessori method had been popular, initially, in Britain, and it was the latest in Western educational practice. It was perceived to be modern, scientific and progressive and, therefore, appealed to English-educated Indians who sought the advancement of their country by copying Western ways.

The emphasis upon liberty and independence through auto-education in the Montessori Method was appealing in a colonial society where certain charismatic figures had taken charge of a growing nationalist movement and were seeking to divest India of foreign rule. The fact that the first Montessori school in India was established the same year that Gandhi returned to India from South Africa to establish an ashram community from which to launch his programme of political and social reconstruction, is not merely an historical coincidence. Both events were bound up with a general push for reform which had begun the century before in response to British imperialism.

The early protagonists in the Montessori movement largely spoke Gujarati which was also the mother-tongue of Gandhi. His return to India coincided with a literary renascence in that language and with a resurgent pride in the traditions of the region. Gandhi's emergence as a nationalist leader inspired many of his fellow Gujarati's to embark on the path
of social service. Education had traditionally provided such a path and the role of teacher had always been revered. A new pedagogy which promised the development of individuals capable of independent thought and action and which had already demonstrated its remarkable effectiveness amongst the slum children of San Lorenzo, was adopted by those seeking to make a contribution to social uplift. The most prominent was Gijubhai Badheka whose contribution to the expansion of the Method in Western India prior to Montessori's arrival in India, was probably greater than that of any single individual.

Gandhi was not the only nationalist leader who inspired those who adopted the Montessori Method. The role of Theosophical Society leader Annie Besant was also significant. Her Home Rule League had made considerable impact in Western India where the Theosophical Society was strongest, and she was a powerful and charismatic orator. Her support for the Method, indeed the support of the Theosophical Society in general, played an important role in encouraging its adoption in India. The desire to serve humanity in the pursuit of self-realization was important for Theosophists as well as Hindus, and many young men and a sprinkling of women answered Mrs Besant's call to service. Under the tutelage of George Arundale they became teachers and, consequently, as a result of the Society's advocacy of the Montessori Method, became active participants in the movement and remained keen supporters of the Method throughout their lives. Among them Sankara Menon, G.V. Subba Rao, Vaideshwaran and his sister, Devyani, K.J. Sharma, and members of the Vyas family. Various European Theosophists also ran Montessori schools and gave support to the movement in India.

The nineteenth century renascence of Hinduism and opposition to the examination oriented education system with its attendant rote learning methods introduced by the British, had encouraged a revival of the ancient religious tradition in education in which the superior teacher was the
The education provided was holistic, encompassing all facets of human development and it was pursued as part of religious life. The gestalt approach of the Montessori Method was consistent with this view. Indeed Hindus and Theosophists found many similarities between Montessori's "unfoldment" view of education through which the spirit of the child is incarnated, and their belief in reincarnation. The emphasis upon non-violence and reverence for the child accorded with the Hindu/Jain notion of Ahimsa which had inspired Gandhi. The concept of auto-education in the Method appealed in India because it was consistent with the belief in Karma Yoga, the way of action. The emphasis upon sensorial development and manual activity was also consistent with the ancient gurukul tradition and was evident in the educational ideas of Gandhi, Tagore and the Theosophists. Moreover, the spiritual imagery in Montessori's writings appealed in a deeply religious society and the Method was able to take root and flourish.

In England, Australia and in the United States, the Montessori Method had encountered trenchant opposition from the professionalized kindergarten movement which saw the new education as a threat to its survival. In India, however, the kindergarten had not become as firmly established and did not have a monopoly on the fledgling pre-school movement. There was some criticism of the Method from those within the Indian educational fraternity who followed Dewey and Kilpatrick but it did not deter the Montessori enthusiasts. The major problems inhibiting the new movement were the paucity of teacher training in the early years, and the resistance of parents unfamiliar with pre-school education.

The arrival of the Method's founder in India and her continued presence in the country over a period of almost nine years, did much to alleviate these problems and gave a tremendous stimulus to the expansion of the movement. Her international renown encouraged great interest in her courses and public lectures amongst the Westernized élite, and the
power of her charismatic personality inspired many of those who flocked to hear her message. Although the national upheavals caused by the Second World War and the "Quit India" movement greatly reduced enrolments, the courses were not interrupted. By the time of her final departure, Montessori had trained over 1,000 teachers and her schools were in evidence in all the major cities and towns. Her presence had enabled the establishment of several associations, officially recognized and affiliated to the AMI which attempted to take control of and give direction to the movement.

During the period of her visit, the movement was largely dominated by the personality of "Mother" Montessori. It was many years since she had the ear of so adoring an audience and in the rarefied religious atmosphere at Adyar, Montessori gave full voice to the spiritualism inherent in her work. Although much of her imagery was Catholic, her cosmology was consistent with Hindu and Theosophical belief. Her charisma and the power of her message of human regeneration through the child, was such that some regarded her as a guru, whilst others claimed she was a Rishi, the reincarnation of an ancient sage. Although she claimed to be a scientist, Montessori was firmly in the tradition of the religious educator. In the West, rationalist thought and the neo-Behaviourists who followed John Watson, opposed her. She was considered eccentric and out of date, but in India, the land of the guru, her message was recognized.

Montessori belonged in the indigenous tradition of the religious personality in education which had been revitalized in the nineteenth century and had been reinforced with the emergence of a number of significant and revered religious teachers including the Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghose, Tagore, and Gandhi. The fact that Montessori was a woman was inconsequential as there were female Rishis in ancient times and she appeared to be in the mould of several Western women who had come to India, become inspired by its millenial civilization, and had been
revered as great teachers, the most prominent being Annie Besant and Sister Nivedita. Moreover, the British and the religious reform movements of the nineteenth century had worked to remove many of the practices which oppressed women and had encouraged their education and greater participation in public life. Gandhi's nationalist movement gave further stimulus to this process and by the time of Montessori's arrival in India, numerous women, at least amongst the high caste and more affluent groups, were playing prominent roles at the national level. Significantly, the Montessori movement benefited greatly from this process of emancipation as more women were able to undertake teacher training.

During her stay in India, Montessori enjoyed the patronage of rich and powerful Indians like the Sarabhai, Birlas, and Scindias, as well as the generous hospitality of the Theosophical Society which placed all possible resources at her disposal. Her reception probably surpassed that with which she had been greeted on her early visits to the United States and in England in 1919. She took on the role of the sage that had been ascribed to her, and gathered a coterie of devoted disciples who would carry on the movement after her departure. Although her reputation became somewhat tarnished, especially amongst Gandhian nationalists, by charges that she was a business woman who exploited Indians through her courses, and by the rupture with Rukmini Devi Arundale and the Theosophical Society, this did not diminish the fervour of many of her converts, nor their faith in the truth of her educational message.

The fact that the Method was firmly established in India prior to Montessori's arrival by those, like Gijubhai, who had no personal contact with the Dottoressa, was also important in its continued survival. The response of many to the new education, particularly nationalists, was to produce indigenous interpretations of the Method. Consequently, Montessori education took various forms. Inspired by Gandhi, Gijubhai and his co-workers had attempted to "Indianize" the Method and under the
auspices of the Nutan Bal Shikshan Sangh (NBSS), they established a network of schools and several training colleges which followed the Montessori approach although not strictly adhering to the gospel. Gijubhai's role in popularizing the Method was later acknowledged by Montessori and his son attended one of her training courses at Adyar.  

As members of the NBSS did not attempt to use the name Montessori, and called their schools Bal Mandirs or Shishu Vihars, she could not criticise them. The influence of Gijubhai, and later Tarabhai Modak, was such in Western India, however, that the institutions of the NBSS received recognition by the Government of Bombay, and later in the new States of Maharashtra and Gujarat. Albert Joosten, who took over the Indian Montessori Training Courses (IMTCs) from the Montessoris, was not able to compete with this influence in a country where caste and communal ties were important in acquiring political patronage. Joosten was a devout Catholic and, under his leadership, many of those who responded to the Montessori call were Christians.

The choice of a foreigner as Director of the IMTCs and as Personal Representative of Madame, and later Mario, in a newly independent India alienated some staunch advocates of the Method. Joosten's expertise, however, was undisputed, although many found him rigid and autocratic. His doctrinaire approach, and that of the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), had unfortunate consequences for the Indian movement, particularly in the later phase, as it had elsewhere. Although the intention was to protect the Method and to prevent abuse of the name Montessori, the over-zealous pursuit of this aim alienated many and actually exacerbated the problem. Few schools sought AMI affiliation because the requirements were so strict and because they were required to pay Joosten's travel and accommodation costs. The relative shortage of trained teachers and the expense of employing those with recognized qualifications, resulted in the "illegal" in-service training of assistant
teachers who received instruction in the presentation and purpose of the apparatus but not necessarily in the essential underlying philosophy.

One important outcome of the introduction of the Montessori Method in India was the increased recognition of the value of pre-school education. But with the expansion of demand for such education it became a lucrative business and there was a proliferation of schools that were Montessori in name only. In such schools children were often forced to learn to read and write because parents and untrained teachers had no understanding of the vital Montessori concepts of "sensitive periods" and "readiness" in the learning process. Many schools were overcrowded, with morning and afternoon "shifts" so that the ability of teachers to adequately observe children and respond to individual needs was inhibited. The emphasis on liberty which had so inspired many of the early protagonists of the movement was missing.

Both before and after Independence, the Montessori Method had been mainly applied amongst a relatively small Westernized and urbanized élite. For many it was utilized as a means of ensuring their children gained entry into prestigious schools and received a quality education which promised employment in commerce and the professions. The cost of the precision-made apparatus had prevented its widespread application at the village level. Montessori's preoccupation with the élites left her little opportunity to respond to Gandhi's request to devise materials appropriate to the economic conditions of India's villages in which the majority of the country's vast population resided in abject poverty.

However, experimentation by Tarabhai Modak and her co-workers of the Gram Bal Shiksha Kendra (GBSK), had produced an inexpensive Indian hybrid of the Montessori Children's House, called the balwadi, and its cheaper version, the anganwadi, which have been widely adopted by a number of agencies working in the field of child welfare in India. The utilization over the past ten years of the anganwadi by the Indian Government as the
vehicle for the introduction of a number of child and maternal health and education programmes, in its fight against poverty in the villages and in urban slums, has already had some impact on levels of child mortality and school retention rates in the areas served by the programmes.

Montessori had always insisted on the use of the special apparatus she had developed. However, towards the end of her stay in India she agreed to the use of natural objects from the environment for sensorial, number, and language development. The AMI has also accepted, belatedly, the need for such modification to suit the needs of developing countries through its Help the Children Projects. However, the work undertaken by the GBSK was well in advance of it. India has been a pioneer in this area and the contribution of the GBSK has been an important legacy of the Montessori Method in India.

The Montessori movement in India has had a long and eventful history. Its significance lies not only in the fact that the Method survived in India longer than anywhere else, but also because it is one of the few countries in the world where the Montessori Method, in its various forms, has had a major impact on pre-school education. Indeed, India has the basis for one of the best developed systems of pre-school education in the world, although there are marked variations in the quality of the education provided. 6

It will be recalled that in 1951 the number of recognized pre-primary schools was 303. By 1983 the number had risen to 12,716. 7 While not all Montessori schools in India follow the Method in accordance with AMI criteria, it is safe to say that most possess some items of the apparatus and that the teachers receive some training in the principles and practice of the Method. In India the name Montessori has been popularized to such an extent that it is used as a synonym for pre-school education.

The presence of the Method's founder in India for an extended period undoubtedly had a significant impact on the popularization of the Method.
There is evidence that the protracted stay of Madame and Mario in India was not due simply to their Italian origins, but because Mario was believed to be a security risk. Had they been permitted to return to England following Mario's release from the internment camp, a vital chapter in the history of the movement in India would not have been written. Montessori's internment in India also had a crucial influence on the evolution of her pedagogy because her sojourn in the hills at Kodaikanal provided her with the opportunity for further study and for writing. She was not only able to publish a number of books, largely derived from her lectures in India, but to achieve the culmination of her life's work in the "Cosmic Curriculum" for children from six to twelve years of age and in the concept of the "Absorbent Mind" which applied to the period from birth to three years.

This thesis has been primarily concerned with Indian responses to the Montessori Method and has, therefore, not made any significant attempt to explore the impact of the Indian years on the development of her thought. Lawson has made a start in discussing the similarity of much of Montessori's speeches and writings during the Indian years, to Theosophical ideas. The contribution of this study has been to give further substance to his work in confirming that Montessori had in fact joined the Society, thus suggesting a further avenue for research in the form of a comprehensive reassessment of all her writings. Sister Trudeau has discussed the Cosmic Curriculum. As a Catholic she has focussed on the Christian imagery and what she claims to be Montessori's "Renaissance Humanism".8

Another avenue for research lies in an examination of the Absorbent Mind concept, taken up after the Montessoris returned to Europe in 1949 by Miss Costa Gnocchi who had attended the first training course at the foundling hospital in Rome where a special Montessori department was established to cater to the developmental needs of children from birth to three years.9
The Montessori movement continues to make history in India. While the AMI (India) has lacked strong leadership since the death of A.M. Joosten and is struggling to survive, the Indian Montessori Training Courses (IMTCs) continue under the direction of S.R. Swamy, and a much sought after pedagogical centre in Hyderabad is still planned. There is a proposal to hold a new Montessori training course at Kalakshetra in Madras, and the possibility of a teacher training course in Bombay, as an Indian has recently been sponsored by the AMI to attend one of its special courses for trainers in Europe. In Hyderabad, a Montessori directress who has undertaken the requisite training in Munich under Professor Theodor Helbrügge, is attempting to integrate mentally handicapped children in a Montessori environment with "normal" children. Montessori education, although not always practised faithfully, remains part of the mainstream of pre-school education in India and its contribution continues to be recognized at the national level.
NOTES


2. K. Sankara Menon, Interview, C. Wilson, 13 December, 1986. (Hereafter, Sankara Menon Interview.)

3. Petersen, op. cit., p. 244.


10. Sankara Menon Interview.


12. Ibid. This is at the Thakur Hari Prasad Institute of Rehabilitation for Mentally Handicapped Children, Hyderabad.

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   - (a) Archives
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   - (a) Newspapers, Journals and Magazines
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B. SECONDARY SOURCES

I. Published
   - (a) Books and Pamphlets
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APPENDIX I

Institutions Visited During the Course of the Study
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3. AMI Bal Mandir, "Uma", Rastapeth, Pune 28/1/1984
5. AMI Shishu Vihar, Gwalior 30/11/1986
7. Besant Arundale School, Montessori Section, Kalakshetra, Madras 18/8/1982
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14. Fellowship School, Montessori Section, Gwalior Tank, Bombay 25/2/1982
17. Harijan Ashram Bal Mandir, Ahmedabad 12/1/1984
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<th>Number</th>
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<td>11/1/1984</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>Shrimati Maneka ba Vidya Vihar, Shishu Vihar, Ahmedabad</td>
<td>19/3/1981</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>St Columba's School, Montessori Section, Dr Kashibhai Nowrange Rd, Bombay</td>
<td>10/9/1981</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>Thakur Hari Prasad Institute of Rehabilitation for Mentally Handicapped Children, Balwadi, Hyderabad</td>
<td>10/12/1986</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Some of these schools barely attempted to follow the Method. In one, the Montessori apparatus was stored in a cupboard and rarely used. Some had "adapted" the Method by separating the apparatus in different rooms or dividing the children according to age. Others used indigenous approximations of the materials. Only eight of the above schools strictly adhered to AMI criteria in the establishment of the Montessori environment and utilization of the materials.