

### **The Help-book Issue**

The school text-books written in accordance with the changed curriculum that has been in force for the last several years stand in the way of proper education of our children. Most of these text-books have been so written as to make young minds boggle at their contents. Books of social study, (Samaj), science, mathematics and Arabic deserve special mention in this context.

It is commonly felt by the guardians that a child cannot be expected to do well unless it gets help outside the school hours. In the past, books were easy to follow. If a student were serious in his studies he could do well in the examination. Today, a student cannot comprehend much of the contents in the books on his own. The topics have been treated in a very specialised manner and only subject-specialists can really help the student in understanding the topics taught. Even guardians with average education are often embarrassed when they are approached by their wards to help them with their home tasks. For, a guardian, however educated he or she may be, is not supposed to have specialised knowledge of several subjects. And, of course, most guardians in our society have little or no education.

Because of the difficult nature of the text-books, the affluent guardians engage more than one private tutor for their wards, since it is difficult to find a tutor who can confidently teach more than one subject. Even less affluent guardians are often compelled to seek help of private tutors squeezing their family budgets. And the majority of the students come from poor families with no means to engage private tutors. Such students turn to help-books which are available in the market in spite of the ban imposed on them.

Help-books for students upto class VIII have been banned for the last several years, though this ban has not been effective because of the demand for them. As long as we fail to ensure proper teaching in the class-room and properly written text-books for the students help-books cannot be done away with. Let us create ideal conditions first and then ban the help-books. Meanwhile, let us work out a device to ensure that help-books of an acceptable standard are produced in the country.