

Reading -9

The Boy Scout movement was established in 1908 in the British Isles by Sir Baden Powell. Today the movement extends to every civilized country including India. From a trial experimental camp in 1907, the movement has spread with remarkable speed to almost every part of the world. In 1908, the handbook SCOUTING FOR BOYS was published. Over 1, 00,000 scouts served in His Majesty's force during the First World War. 1,000 of them gave their lives. These scouts who were under age for active service performed public duties at home, one notable service being coast watchers. When the war broke out again in 1939 thousands of scouts once more joined the armed forces. During this war too, those scouts who were under age for active service carried out work of national importance for the government departments and civil authorities admitted that scouts had rendered particularly good service. Many of them were recommended for gallantry.

The aim of the movement is the development of good citizenship among the rising generation. Active self-expression is encouraged among the scouts and emphasis is laid upon their natural desire to learn rather than their passive reception of instructions. There are absolutely no distinctions of class, creed or color among scouts. The movement is non-military, non-class, no-sectarians, non-political and non-denominational. Honor is the ideal. The scout law, which forms the basis of ten events and which every scout has to obey. It was taken from THE CODE OF THE KNIGHTS and as such has its roots in the code of honor and gentlemanliness.

The movement is sub-divided into three groups, viz., reserve, i.e. scouts of 17 years and above, boy scouts from 11 to 17 years and WOLF CUBS juniors from 8 to 11. The training is carried out generally four main features....namely character and intelligence, skill and handicraft, physical health and self-care and the practice of service to others and to the state. In other words scouts are trained with a view to developing their individuality and making them loyal members of the state. The training precedes mainly through open air activities and scouts are encouraged to follow the examples of frontier men, tribesmen and explorers in daring and initiative. There is an elaborate system of badges for proficiency which serves to stimulate the boys to develop their natural gifts and become all round handy men.

It is obvious from the above that the aims, objects and programs of scouting deserve the highest praise. The movement is praiseworthy on account of its wide scope and humanitarian motives. Scouting develops both the physical and moral attributes of boys through practical training. As such it should be regarded as a necessary part of education in schools and colleges. Education had never been confined solely to the teaching of books. It should aim at developing the whole personality of the student. The place of scouting in educational institution is therefore very high. It is for this reason that almost every good school now-a-days has its scout master and its group of scouts. But it is necessary to widen and accelerate this movement especially in India where its progress has not been satisfactory.