1960

Teachers Abroad

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Recommended Citation

Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol40/iss8/5

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Faculty members are

Teachers Abroad

by Laveda Jansonius, H.Jl., 3

Five Iowa State staff members will face a new challenge next summer. They will teach at the graduate level and establish research programs at Baroda University in India.

Dr. Mary Lyle, professor of Home Economics education, is project chairman for the group. Other participants include Dr. Margaret Warning, head of the Textiles and Clothing Department and Mrs. David Wortman, formerly on the home management staff and now living in Des Moines. Her husband will be the administrative assistant on the trip. Dr. Eleanor Barnes, now at the University of Texas, will join the Iowa State staff and work in food and nutrition. A representative from the Child Development Department is yet to be selected.

Dean Helen LeBaron said that the faculty members are outstanding in their subject fields and especially qualified for teaching research. She feels another important qualification is the ability to work well in another culture. The team of teachers and researchers is expected to remain in India for a minimum of two years.

Dr. Warning is particularly interested in seeing a collection of textiles and costumes of India belonging to the dean of Home Economics at Baroda. The collection will give her first-hand information on Indian costumes.

"I am thinking right now of what I'll be able to give rather than what I'll gain from this project," said Dr. Lyle. "However, I know I'll most certainly gain a deeper insight into the way another culture operates. I'm sure I will gain friendships with interesting people and perhaps learn some things that will help us here at Iowa State."

The first part of this international exchange program began last September when five Baroda University faculty members came here to work on Master of Science degrees in various Home Economics fields. The Ford Foundation is supplying the funds to carry out the program, enabling Iowa State to assist in making the science of Home Economics work more effectively for the Indian people.

Research programs to aid Indian families in nutrition, sanitation, child care, clothing and housing are an important aspect of the project, said Dr. Lyle. Extension workers must be trained to go to the poverty-stricken villages of India to help raise the standard of living. The average income of an Indian family is $60 a year. An extension worker in India has a difficult job. She must work with illiterate people, starting with the most fundamental ideas.

Although the curriculum listed in the Baroda catalog seems much like ours, Dr. Lyle said that their program doesn't have as much depth.

One of the biggest drawbacks in the Home Economics Department in Baroda or any other university in India is inadequate texts for study. Dr. Lyle said they use American books which just don't fit the Indian culture. The food and nutrition books have American recipes with cooking principles that can't be applied to the food available in India. One of Dr. Barnes' projects will be to help research and prepare materials that fit the Indian culture. In the area of family relations, the American texts are also insufficient, because the family in India is an "extended" one; that is, the relatives live together. Books written to suit the Indian culture are a desperate need in Baroda and a challenging goal.

Preparation for this project has been quite thorough. The participants have known of the plans for a year and have been reading about India's culture and traditions. Special seminars have been held where the meaning of the Hindu religion was studied in regard to the Indian attitudes and concepts of life. The background and philosophy of American foreign policy and methods of community action have also been discussed. The five Baroda faculty members on the Iowa State campus have also given information to the faculty members.

Dr. Lyle said that one important thing for the faculty going to India to remember is to be cautious. "We can't just step in and say that this is the right and only way to do things," she said. "We can't impose our system on them, because it just won't work. We are to set up a method of study and research that will be most meaningful and helpful to them."