

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Independent India introduced free and compulsory education at the primary stage, the age level is being 6 to 12 years with the target of 14 years. As a result, there has been a great rush of students in primary schools. Children from all sections of the public are flocking in large numbers. The rapid expansion in primary schools has brought about the expansion of secondary education. ' Education for all ' is the accepted principle. A frantic rush towards this ideal of equal opportunities for all has led to a mushroom growth, even of secondary schools and colleges in our country. Their number increases by leaps and bounds. Hundreds of secondary schools are being opened even in the remote corners of the towns and villages drawing hundreds of children from almost all strata of the society. All this is a good sign for building up the democratic traditions.

With this expansion, a strange paradox is, unfortunately, observed. It is glaringly pointed out on the day when the results of secondary school certificate examination is out ! Really a day of massacre ! A day when lots of flowers wither ! More than half of the students who appear at the examination, fail. It seems as if the Examination Boards in India bear expenditure of examinations to disappoint students. The study of the results of Matriculation and equivalent examinations in India in general and the S.S.C.Examination results in the State of Gujarat in particular reveals the truth that more than half of the students fail every year. This is really a state of non-plus and stupor ! The results create a feeling of labour wasted in terms of time, energy and money on every front - the pupils, the parents, the teachers and the management. Moreover, such appalling result tells upon the moral and mental health of students. They may be diseased with dissatisfaction, frustration, nervous downfall causing further complicated problems in society. This thing is repeated at least twice a year in the State of Gujarat, and the problem of educational backwardness and wastage in secondary schools becomes conspicuous ! To control this colossal wastage, the critical study of the educationally backward, whatever its

type may be, is a necessary prerequisite.

BACKWARD CHILD - A PROBLEM

Some of the factors, such as, harnessing of atomic energy and conquest of space, the ever broadening spectrum of scientific and industrial advancement, have placed a special premium on the problem of wastage at all levels of instruction. The failing students is a serious loss to the society in terms of their possible development as members of the society. The problem of these educationally backward students has grown to such proportion that it has attracted the attention of the whole nation. It is no longer a purely academic or educational problem to be tackled within the portals of the school. It is becoming more and more a community problem and so, it should receive much greater attention in India today than ever before. Still, however, the teachers cannot completely throw away their responsibilities about it.

In this context a series of questions will arise :

- (a) Why do so many students fail to attain the expected standards ?
 - (b) Are the failing students inferior in abilities to the average students who get through the examination ?
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- (c) If yes, what are the effects of their schooling on their personality ?
- (d) If no, what are the character traits developed in them which lead to educational backwardness ?
- (e) What difficulties the students have in study ?
- (f) What are the teachers' difficulties in dealing with such pupils ?
- (g) What do the parents feel about the children who fail ?

Answers to all these questions require a critical study of the educationally backward children or the failing students.

EFFORTS IN INDIA

During the last 15 years the educationists and those concerned with the training of teachers have been aware of the problem of studying the backward child so as to successfully follow the principle, ' education for all,' according to their abilities. In M.S.University of Baroda there are few dissertations devoted to the study of backward and delinquent students. The Central Government held three symposia to discuss the education of the backward pupils on all India level. All the interested persons are guided by the classical works of Burt and Schonell in this area. However, they express the opinion

that the problem in India has its specific aspects which require independent study.

The problem of studying backward children in India is wide and huge one for any one to tackle single handed. The investigator with his experience of working in a secondary school in rural area got interested in studying the problem of the failing students who have low abilities as compared to the average students. The present inquiry is but a small step in the direction of studying dull students as they study with average students.

PURPOSES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The major purposes of the present study may be listed as follows :

- (i) To locate the dull educationally backward boys and to find out approximately the proportion of such students in secondary schools chosen for the study.
- (ii) To determine what traits may be said to be differentiating the dull students from the average ones.
- (iii) To know the educational difficulties of the backward dull children.
- (iv) To know the teachers' problems in dealing with them.

- (v) To know what the parents think about their failing children.

LIMITATIONS

As the investigator is interested in the rural areas, the study will be delimited to the secondary schools in rural areas.

In the rural areas there are practically no schools for girls alone. The number of girls attending the boys' schools is also very limited. As a minority group is in the school and with all the traditional cultural pressures they also tend to be over shy. Taking into consideration these facts the study is further delimited to the boys only.

With these purposes and limitations in view, the investigator initiated the study.

SUMMARY

Free and compulsory education in India at the primary stage has brought about the expansion of primary schools. The secondary education is also affected thereby. Every year the new secondary schools open even in the interior parts of the rural areas. But with the expansion of education, the wastage has not been reduced. The S.S.C. Examination results are the true index of this colossal wastage. To reduce the wastage to its minimum, a critical study of the failing

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students or the educationally backward students, whatever its type may be, is of ultra importance.

The problem of educationally backward children is becoming more and more a community problem. The teachers cannot be expected to remain aloof from the problem. They have their own responsibilities regarding the problem of backward children. A number of problems have been posed for a conscientious teacher.

Three symposia have been held on all India level to discuss the problems of education of the backward child. This proves that, now-a-days, India's attention has been focussed on the problems of the backward child.

In view of the importance of the problem, the study of the problem of backward children has been decided upon. The main purposes of the study are to locate the dull backward students, to determine the character traits that may differentiate the dull backward students from the normal, to know their educational difficulties, their parents' views regarding their failing sons and the teachers' problems in handling such students.

The next chapter is devoted to the understanding of the basic terms of the problem and the review of literature, research and otherwise, related to the area under study.
