

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Baroda District is in the Eastern part of Gujarat State, lying between the two major rivers of Gujarat namely the Mahi and the Narmada, with the Mahi on the North-West and the Narmada on the South. The District boundaries touch the boundaries of the state of Maharashtra on the South-East and the boundaries of the state of Madhya Pradesh on the North-East. The District is thus a meeting point of three regional cultures — the Gujarati, Marathi and the Tribal K.K. The influence of these three cultures can easily be seen in the life patterns of the people of this district. The influence of the tribal cultures of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh on the eastern talukas of the district, which also happen to be tribal area can be easily seen in their language, dress pattern and the cycle of life.

Yet the District is one of the promising industrial districts of the Gujarat State. With its rich mineral deposits and the alluvial soil, it has the potential of rich and prosperous unit in the state.

The District has several historical ^C places and Dahol the oldest of these has been known for its administrative

importance during the Solanki dynasty of Gujarat. Similarly places like Danteshwar, Savli and Karvan — now known as Kayavarohan — have attracted the attention of the Archeologists of India and as such the district has an important place in the archeological map of India.

The Land:

The Eastern part of the district is mountainous and sparsely populated but the rest of the land is plain and fertile. There are several rivers like the Jambua, Suria, Bhodher, Orsang, Heran, Deo and Karjan to name the few, with water all the year round. And thus have the potential of providing sufficient water to irrigate its 559100 Hectares of agricultural land. Also, there are several natural and artificial lakes providing drinking water as well as water for irrigation. The lake at Wadhavan provides water for irrigation while the Ajwa and Pratappura lakes provide water for drinking and irrigation both.

The district has an area of 7783 sq.km., out of which 766.59 sq.km. is a forest area. The forest area is rich with not only the forest products but also with rich and rare minerals like Dolomite, Phelsper, Phlorite and Graphite etc. and is thus an economic asset for the district.

The district has a hot and dry climate having an annual rainfall of 908.3 m.m. Before 1963, no part of the district

has ever experienced famine conditions. But during the period 1963-1970 some parts of the district have experienced famine condition for more than once. The famine conditions during 1968-69 were the worst affecting 282 of the 1665 villages.

Administration:

The district is divided into twelve administrative units. Eleven units having the fullfledged status of Taluka while one unit - Tilakwada - having the status of a Mahal.

There are 1665 villages and 12 urban places. These urban places are well spread out over a wide area of the district and as such the urban influence can be easily seen while travelling through the district.

The People:

The district has a population of 1980065, of which 30.46 per cent live in urban areas while 69.54 per cent living in rural areas. A large majority of them belongs to five language groups namely Gujarati, Marathi, Urdu, Hindi and Sindhi.

Of the total population of the district, 37.58 per cent is engaged in, agricultural labour, cattle keeping, mining, handicraft and construction. All these people are not engaged throughout the whole year and as such a substantial population of the district is under-employed. This fact becomes more important when we look to its industrial growth potentials.

Nearly 30.00 per cent of the population belongs to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST). If we try to link this fact with the fact of under-employment, we can simply come to one conclusion that this is the group which is under-employed and thus economically most insecure.

The easy availability of means of transport can lessen this economic insecurity of the people to some extent, whereby people can seek more secure jobs somewhere else, maintaining their traditionalities with their family and kins and contributing to the familial common pool. But only 365 of 1677 communities rural and urban have the state transport facility available all the year round. While 848 i.e. more than 50.00 per cent of these communities have yet to see a bus. This means that the 'insecures' of these 50.00 per cent villages have either to cut off all their traditional relations with the kin and the community or accept the insecure situation as god given. In the case of a large majority, the second alternative is a reality.

These economic woes of 'insecurity' are in a way related to literacy of the people. The literacy percentage of the district was 40.67 per cent according to 1971 census, which is higher than the state percentage (35.79%). This is mainly due to the higher percentage of literacy in the urban areas which is 61.58. If we exclude the urban areas and consider only the rural areas of the district the percentage is only 31.51. The

literacy percentage among the women of the district has not shown any significant increase. Nearly 80.00 per cent of the womenfolk in the rural areas are still illiterate.

The fact of illiteracy in the district becomes more glaring when we consider the history of education of the district. A major part of the Baroda District which was under the princely state of the Gaekwads of Baroda till 1949, was the first district to have adopted free and compulsory primary education. The then rulers have opened schools in the remote areas of the district and provided educational facilities. The rulers also paid generous grants to educational institutions even before the British rulers accepted the responsibility in educating the people.

The importance of literacy need not be emphasised in a democratic society. With the acceptance of democracy as a way of life, Indian society has been trying its best to make each and every member of the society to participate in its goal directed activities. To have this wider participation the society has also provided for the ideal of equality of opportunities whereby each and every member of the society has equal opportunity to acquire skills and prove his worth and thereby acquire the highest status in the society. In spite of the efforts made by the society in this direction, a few sections of the society have not been able to derive full advantage of the educational facilities given to them.

It is the focus of the present study to investigate the causes underlying this problem. The title of the problem therefore, reads as "The Educational Problems of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of Baroda District". It tries to find out these problems in the light of several factors like the sociological, psychological, economic and pedagogical which may influence the educational problems of these sections.

The details of the study the significance of the study, the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes, the problems of education of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes, the rationale behind the study, the statement of the problem, definition of the key terms delimitations, assumptions and objectives of the study and the scheme of chapters are given in the following paragraphs.

The Significance of the Study

Education is as old as the human race. Some confine it to the induction of the maturing individual into the life and culture of the group; others would restrict the concept still further to the conscious and purposeful control of learning by the more experienced members of society; and still others reflecting the popular mind would limit education to the work of certain special agencies such as the teacher and the school, which presumably are devoted exclusively to the two-fold task of teaching and learning.

According to Whitehead (1955), there is only one subject matter for education and that is 'life' in all its manifestations. He further feels that the real meaning of education is nothing less than a total and integrated approach to the life of an individual for harmonious development of his whole personality in relation to the community or society to which he belongs.

Keeping in view the above definition and a comprehensive meaning of education we are at once confronted with the problem of education for all. With the acceptance of democracy our society cannot afford to leave a particular section of its population behind in the field of education. It is with this objective that the society has provided in its constitution the ideal of Equality of opportunities.

The Education Commission (1964-66) also observes, "One of the important social objectives of education is to equalize opportunity, enabling the backward or the underprivileged classes and individuals, to use education as a lever for the improvement of their conditions. Every society that values social justice and is anxious to improve the lot of the common man and cultivate all available talent, must ensure progressive equality of opportunity to all sections of the population. This is the only guarantee for the building up of an equalitarian society in which exploitation of the 'weak' will be minimised".

Our constitution also prohibits discrimination and promotes social welfare by taking care of the educational and economic interests of all.

Article 15 of the Constitution of India, prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds only of religion, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.

Article 29 proclaims that no citizen can be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the state or receiving aid out of the state funds.

Under Article 38, as one of the directive principles of state policy, the state is required to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice - social, economic and political shall inform all the institutions of national life.

Article 46 lays down an important directive principle of state policy and provides that the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitations.

Added to this, the universal declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10th December, 1948, proclaims not only the principle of non-

discrimination but also the right to education, the purposes of which are:-

- (i) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free at least in the elementary and the fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory.
- (ii) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- (iii) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

What counts for the individual is not only the origin — the cause of discrimination — but perhaps even more, its effects. In the instruments adopted by UNESCO, equal importance is given to these two aspects — discrimination and inequality of opportunity.

There is thus hardly any necessity to emphasize the need and importance of education for all. Efforts have been made in this direction in our country too. But a few observations regarding the present position of enrolment in schools, wastage and stagnation etc. would not be out of place.

Our constitution provides for free and compulsory primary education for children in the age group of 6-14 years. According to official statistics 66.10 million children in the age

group of 6-11 years, 16.5 millions in the age group of 11-14 years and 7.9 millions in the age group of 14-17 years were enrolled in the year 1974-75. Thus, in all some 89.24 millions children were on school rolls out of 154 millions in the age group of 6-17 years. Numerically speaking, it was certainly a great achievement as compared to some 26 millions children in school in 1951. The unfortunate fact however, remains that there are millions of children without schooling.

Added to them are the millions who drop out without completing their full education. The rate of drop out varies from state to state and within the state, from district to district and community to community. For instance the incidence of drop out is much higher among the scheduled castes and other backward communities; it is higher in the lower age group with largest in standard I (Jayarajan 1967). Thus 60.00 per cent of the children enrolled in class I drop out before completing class V and about 75.00 per cent before completing class VI. The staggering proportions of drop outs, on the one hand render the task of fulfilment of the constitutional objectives rather impossible and on the other, make the system of school education dysfunctional and contra-productive. It is quite natural, therefore, that the attention of educationists and researchers is drawn to the problem of wastage in education.

The deprived class has not been representing its community in matters of government jobs, examinations and

other competitive issues. Many a times, it has been found that even the reservation meant for them for education and other jobs has not been fully utilised. They have not been able to climb the ladder of progress as well as the others do. This would mean they are lagging behind and have not been able to cope with the challenges like the others. Their handicaps which act as hindrances in their pursuit need a thorough investigation.

Based on the observations made above, it can be said that inspite of the concerted efforts in this direction, there is a section especially the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes which has made but little progress. There is some snag somewhere. This section of the society has not been able to derive the full advantage of all the facilities given to them. A brief overview of the historical background of educational system in India would help to understand the problem more meaningfully.

Historical Background

In a rigidly stratified society like India, the growth of education in its initial phases was limited to the upper castes. Certain religious sanctions prevented the lower castes from attaining literacy for quite a long time. A number of social reform movements dealing with the religious revivalism professing to eradicate inequalities did not achieve any

significant results as regards the educational advancement of the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes. During the period of the East India Company's rule education was mainly designed for the upper classes keeping in view the economics involved. It was thought that the upper classes who received their education in English would educate the lower classes in the vernacular language. This led to the continued dominance of the upper caste who were the first to take up Western Education. The Maya Perumal Committee on 'Untouchability, Economic and Educational Developments of the Scheduled Castes' commented, "No serious attempt was made by the former princely states and the British Government in the matter of welfare of the backward communities".

In this way, the educational system confirmed and held in place, the differences in status which were hereditarily determined. In a country like India where society is closely stratified, the education of the socially and culturally deprived should have been regarded as a problem needing immediate attention at the hands of the educationists and administrators. Unfortunately, this problem was largely neglected during the British rule and has attracted the attention of the society only very recently.

The modern system of education introduced by the British administrators, was first started in state capitals and slowly descended first to district headquarters and finally to big or

easily accessible towns and villages. The educational institutions which exist in rural areas are hardly planned to meet the rural needs and as such are rarely in harmony with rural environment and rural life cycle. The modern school in India — primary or secondary — was first evolved in towns as a means of educating a class in society and it was, therefore, distinctly urban in character and biased towards the needs and capacities of a small minority of the people whose loyalties the rulers were interested in annexing. Obviously, this model was unsuited to the needs of the masses and to the conditions of life in rural areas. Yet when the pressure of awakening public opinion demanded the extension of education to rural areas, the urban school was just transferred into the new environment without any attempt to study the rural conditions or to modify the school curriculum and teaching methods to suit the rural needs and rural way of life.

The problem of education in rural areas has suffered in the past for several reasons, the chief among which are (i) the failure of university education departments or private bodies to organize and undertake research and experiments in rural areas, (ii) the failure to differentiate between urban and rural education at any stage, (iii) the wrong assumptions that the rural education is equal to the primary and finally (iv) the failure to provide well planned training to rural teachers.

To make up these existing deficiencies, the inherent problems faced by the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe have to be understood, to begin with. Later on, systematic and deliberate efforts can be made to abolish these difficulties that came in the way of their education.

Despite our system of free schools, poverty can still be a profound handicap. Our present day education presupposes a few things - that every student is free to devote most of his time to books, that every student has got the means to meet the expenses of education and such other things. But in the context of a child of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe, we find that he has neither so much time for books nor has he the facilities required. The result is, more than half of the students of the Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe attending schools have to give up studies in the middle. These are the students whose early experiences in the home, whose motivation for present school learning and whose goals for the future are such as to handicap them in school work. The roots of their problem in large part can be traced to their experiences in homes which do not transmit the cultural patterns necessary for the types of learning characteristics of the schools and the larger society. A large proportion of these children come from homes in which the adults have a minimal level of education. Many of them come from homes where poverty, large family size, broken homes, discriminations and slum conditions further complicate the picture.

In a society in which there are great differences in wealth, learning and concern for education, free schooling can never compensate for the tremendous variations in opportunities represented by home background. What is required now may not be equality of access to education, but a system of compensatory education, which can prevent or overcome earlier difficulties in the development of each individual.

The education department, in order to produce the maximum number of literates in shortest period of time, isolated it from life, made literacy a process of mental drilling, mechanical, dry and superficial and hence it is easily lost. The result is that the poor is neither able to improve his productive capacity and participate in the economic growth of the society nor can he remove ignorance and illiteracy.

Thus there is no coordination between the departments to make a person literate as well as help him in his economic growth. To break this cycle of illiteracy and poverty a co-ordinated and integrated effort is necessary. In order to banish poverty, illiteracy must be destroyed and in order to destroy illiteracy poverty must be banished. If one remains other will also remain.

Hence the question arises - what type of education should be imparted to these SC/ST students? Will the nature and method of education they need be similar to or different from that given to the advanced social groups? But before we

take up this question let us consider whether the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in India, who are backward in many respects, have really any innate limitations. Are they inferior to the others in intelligence and other mental traits, which are important factors in determining the nature of education that they should receive? Do they possess any special interest or the attitudes which may help or hinder their educational pursuit? These considerations are important in the sense that they will assist in formulating a programme of education commensurate with their economic and social needs. It is in this context that the present study has been undertaken.

The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes

In every society some degree of differentiation operates to divide the population into categories of (Unequal) functions and values. The sociologists term this as stratification. Stratification denotes a hierarchy of inequality - a system in which the population is assigned differentiated statuses of superiority or subordination. Stratification in each society varies in terms of its dominant values supporting this inequality and the rigidity attached. For instance 'Race' has been the basis of stratification in some of the Western societies, while we have 'Caste' in India. Though caste division was based on occupation in the initial stage, it has

led to other indices of stratification as well like poverty, isolation, deprivation etc.

A Brief History of Caste:

A brief history of caste will not be out of place here. It will help us in understanding the problem in a meaningful way. To trace back the history of Indian society — the society was divided into four 'varnas' — The Brahmin — The Kshatriyas — The ^{Vaishyas} ~~Vyashas~~ and the Shudras. This division was mainly based on occupations. The Brahmins represented the intellectual and spiritual interests of the society. Similarly the normal duties of the Kshatriyas were administration and war. Agriculture was the chief pursuit of Vaishyas. They were also supposed to look after the 'trade'. The Shudras received training in agriculture, pasture, cattle rearing and arts and crafts. The education — training — was necessarily determined to a large extent by the particular occupations and functions assigned to it in the society, and therefore, the privilege of gaining knowledge was the monopoly of the Brahmins. Yet there was no differentiation between the castes and they were treated equally indispensable as member of the social organism, like the limbs of the body. But gradually the differences started creeping in among the castes. Since Brahmins have access to education, they claimed superiority over the other castes especially the 'Shudras' who were completely deprived of education. This deprivation

made them backward culturally and socially which is continued till now.

The education of the SC/ST was neglected for a pretty long time even during the British era since their main aim was to educate the classes and not the masses. With the dawn of independence the country entered into a new era, where the aim was to treat everyone equally. Therefore, the group which was deprived of education since time immemorial has been scheduled to be a caste requiring more attention and facilities to make up the loss. It is in this connection that the scheduled caste is included in the present study.

Apart from the scheduled castes, there is another group - section - of society - the scheduled tribes - which also needs immediate attention as far as education is concerned. These are the people - a territorial community the bulk of whom live in relative isolation of hills and forests. Their partial isolation has kept them apart from the main stream of society and culture. Their access to education is hindered by lack of facilities and the norms and values observed which is peculiar to them. Much is spoken of their education of late and concerted efforts are being made in that direction. Yet, the results have not been very satisfactory. The causes underlying this lag in their education needs a thorough investigation. Hence they have been included in the study.

Every state government recognises a number of castes as belonging to scheduled caste and scheduled tribes only. The members born in any of these approved castes is entitled to have certain privileges. For the present study we have considered only the approved SC and ST castes in Gujarat.

The Educational Problems of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes

The educational problems of this 'section' of society have been reviewed here from two angles (i) The problems in general and (ii) Educational problems.

The problems in general deal with the difficulties faced by both the groups: the Scheduled caste and the scheduled tribes.

The educational problems are examined in the light of different studies conducted in this area. The details of their problems are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Problems in General:

The socio-political goal of the entire world in the second half of the twentieth century is to create an equalitarian society in the near future. In addition to the various social and economic measures taken in this direction, equalization of educational opportunities for all the sections

of the society - the rich and the poor, the urban and the rural, the socially advantaged and the socially disadvantaged has been envisaged as one of the major instruments for the upward social mobility of the disadvantaged. But the problems and obstacles in creating the conditions for equality of educational opportunity are stupendous, for the education of certain sections of society i.e. the SC/ST of the society, would remain as ever. The very subtle psychological, social and cultural problems of theirs will stand in the way of their integration to the main stream through educational processes.

The causes which are responsible for creating the conflicting situation for the children of the SC/ST can be examined under the following heads:

- (1) Untouchability and the lower position given to the people belonging to the scheduled castes in the caste hierarchy resulting in their social and psychological disabilities.
- (2) Isolation of the people belonging to the scheduled tribes resulting in a wide gap between the tribal people and other sections of the population.
- (3) Extreme poverty faced by these people resulting in a continuous struggle for mere existence.

The above mentioned causes are typical of each category of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Nevertheless,

there are many other problems common to all, such as, inadequate housing, overcrowding, highly insanitary conditions, unemployment or low paid jobs, diseases, frustrations, insecurity, low aspirations, rejection and the like. Besides superstitions of various types, position of women, taboos on food, defective economy and narrow philosophy of life would be the hindrance in their education.

Chapter Scheme

In order to answer these questions the following is the chapter scheme.

Chapter II deal with the review of related literature national as well as international.

Chapter III of the study presents the statement of problem, its objectives, the methodology adopted, the sample, the tools and techniques used for the analysis of the data.

Chapter IV presents the analysis of the educational environment of the SO/ST students.

Chapter V deals with the analysis and interpretation of the difference between the socio-economic background of the SO/ST students on the one hand and the aspirations, the feeling of diffidence, rejection, self conception and their perception of the school and the teacher.

Chapter VI presents the summary, conclusions and suggestions for further research.