

Chapter IV

THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Introduction:

A large number of educational problems of the SC/ST students are mainly the problems of their educational environment. Understanding of these problems, therefore, need the understanding of their educational environment.

What constitutes this educational environment of the SC/ST students? And how can it help or hinder their education? The present chapter tries to answer these questions. The first part of the chapter tries to explain the first question and second part presents the analysis of the existing educational environment.

Part One

Assumptions of the Educational Environment

The term 'educational environment' is selected here in a broad perspective. It is not limited to 'school' only. The parents can also be considered as part of the educational environment. As such their age, education, income and their occupation, their attitude towards education, their assessment of the capabilities of their children and their interest in the day-to-day school work of their children would constitute

one aspect of the 'Educational environment' of the students.

Let us consider each of these parts of the 'Environment' and see how they are meaningful to our problem.

(1) The Parents:

(a) Age of the father/Guardian: Age of the father/guardian can be an important aspect of 'educational environment' from a number of points. The more advanced in age the father/guardian the lesser are the chances for him to take interest in the education of his children. The person who is advanced in age and is on the verge of retirement would expect more from his children to take the familial responsibilities. He would expect more from his children to shoulder his responsibilities and as such would not wish his child to continue his studies. The child would, therefore, not get any kind of encouragement from the father which will enable him to pursue his studies. Secondly the chances of such a father/guardian of being illiterate are more, since the literacy percentage was hardly 10.00 per cent fifty years back. Such an illiterate father would not be able to take any interest in the day-to-day school work of the child and even if he is fortunate to have some schooling he will be of no help to the child today, because, education then was limited to three 'R's' only, while the child today has to learn many more things over and above the three 'R's'.

Thirdly, and this is more important that the father has been brought up in the 'traditional' Indian family where it was almost assumed that 'education' has nothing to do with the traditional occupations. And the parents were averse to modern 'occupations' - the various professions. They thus tried to discourage their children to continue their education. They felt that 'education' would spoil their children. But, younger the father/guardian more are the chances for the children to receive variety of help or assistance from them. They are aware of the needs of the present world, they are fortunate to have some education and also they are ~~are~~ aware of the utility of education.

This way age of the father or guardian can be a favourable or unfavourable educational environment for the child. And this would be more important for the SC/ST students since he has to overcome social as well as economic hardships.

(b) Education of the Father/Guardian: Education of THE FATHER/Guardian can also be an educational environment for the child. If the father/guardian is educated he will be curious to know the development and read about them or try to know about them from whatever sources available. The child would naturally take interest and ^{be} curious about the various subjects being taught in the school which are full of information and ideas. An educated father would

also be confident of himself in guiding his children and would naturally show some interest in the day-to-day school work of the child. A large number of parents in India do not show any interest in the day-to-day school work of their children mainly because they are not confident that they would be able to guide their children. They are afraid of being 'exposed' before the children. And one convenient way of avoiding such a situation is to leave the children to themselves. And this is more true in the case of SC/ST because a large majority of them are illiterate and even the fortunate few have very limited education which hardly enables them to help and guide their children. Added to this is the fact that they have to struggle hard to make their living. But that is another dimension and we will talk more when we consider their income.

(c) Occupation of the Father/Guardian: Even the occupation of the father/guardian can provide favourable or unfavourable educational environment. There are certain occupations which require education. Even some of the traditional occupations need some educational background. So the parents who want their children to join their occupation would naturally expect their children to have some education before they join their occupations. While there are some traditional occupations which require physical rather than mental skills. Such parents would

naturally expect their children to have these physical skills. The parents from the agricultural labour group would expect their children to acquire these skill as and when opportunities are available. Such opportunities are normally available during the agricultural seasons. This is one of the reasons of the greater absenteeism during the agricultural seasons. The students as a result miss some of the topic and thereby find it difficult to follow the teacher, finally resulting into losing all their interest in education. Even the agriculturists they have not realized the importance of education. Agriculture is run on the old patterns and they are not aware of scope for change in the traditional pattern. They also have their own ideas of education a substantial number of them think that 'education' would make the child 'worthless' for agriculture. The parents holding such a view cannot provide any favourable educational environment. And it is something strange and surprising that inspite of these adverse view of the parents some of the students have continued their studies and few of them have reached to the stage of college.

(d) Income of the Father/Guardian: In the Indian society, education is not the sole responsibility of the society. Ideally we say that primary education would be free and compulsory. However we have not been able to

enroll all the children above 'six' and compelled to join the school. One important reason is the society has very limited resources and if the society thinks of admitting all the children above six to school it will require thousands of school buildings and millions of teachers, which is almost an impossible task. In such a situation, where the society is unable to undertake full responsibility of primary education, ~~we~~ cannot expect the society to take the total educational responsibility of its children. The responsibility of secondary and college education is, therefore, partly left to the parents and partly to the private bodies. The government provides certain special financial facilities to the SC/ST children through, scholarship and freeships in high schools and colleges. But there too the students have to prove their worth. So the students of SC/ST in the primary schools and those whose performance is very poor at the high school and college the parents have to provide them if at all they want their children to continue their education. Now the income of these parents is meagre, also it is not ~~constant~~ ^{fixed}, it fluctuates, as a result they have to live under the most economically insecure condition. The tendency of a person in such a situation is to hold on what is earned and would not like to take 'risk'. So the income of the parents can also hinder or help the educational pursuit of these children.

(e) The Parents' Attitude towards Education: If the parents have a favourable attitude towards education, they will try to induce their children to take interest in their education. They will point out series of advantages of education. They will present number of examples of those who have benefited because of education etc. Even if the child has failed the parents would try to induce him and thereby try to boost up his morale, through sympathetic manner. But on the other hand there are other two groups of parents whose attitude can be said to be directly or indirectly unfavourable to education. The first group of parents would always say, 'Education is not meant for us' 'our children will not be able to fair well at examination etc. They would also tell their children that they should not take the failure so seriously, ultimately you are not going to be an officer'. This investigator has come across many such parents saying, don't worry we have enough land which will provide food. Such children are bound to loose their interest in education. There is another group of parents who would scold the children for their failures and would remind them of their poor performance as and when they have opportunity. In this case also the children tend to lose their interest in education. Thus the attitude of the parents can also provide an educational environment for the students which may help or hinder their education.

The attitude of the parents towards education is more meaningful in the case of SC/ST students, since on all the rest of the categories we have considered earlier, these parents have nothing which can provide an educational environment. So the unfavourable attitude of the parents would add to the already unfavourable environment of these children.

(f) Parents' Assessment of the Capabilities of their Children: The parents' assessment of the capabilities of their children would be equally important. If they feel that their children are capable of pursuing further education they would not only encourage them to do so but they would try to find out various other sources to meet the educational needs. They would meet and talk the teachers and the Headmasters and gather information about the facilities available. They would also put in some extra labour to meet the deficit. All these efforts from the parents' side would provide a favourable educational environment for these students.

(g) Parents' Interest in the day-to-day school work of their Children: The attitude of the parents and their assessment of the capabilities of their children are not sufficient. Along with them the parents should also take some interest in the day-to-day school work. A teacher in the class normally adopts his teaching and teaching

techniques taking into consideration the average child in the class. He cannot take into consideration the individual needs of the children. In a class where the majority of the students belong to the category of 'other castes' the students of the SC/ST who constitute a small segment of the class are likely to suffer from these techniques, as they are brought up in a different 'culture'. The class situation is a new experience to him. And as advanced in age and standard he becomes aware of the 'gaps' between his culture and the culture of class. He, therefore, needs someone who can help in lessening this gap in order to keep himself up with class. In such situation if the parents take interest and help him he is sure to show some better results. Of course in the case of the present study where a majority of the parents are illiterate, what type of interest they would take in the day-to-day school work is a problem. However whatever interest they show would be a welcome sign and to that extent it will be a favourable educational environment for these SC/ST students.

(2) The Students:

The second aspect of the educational environment of the students would be their home conditions. A number of things could be included under this category. Some of them would have direct influence over the education of the

students while the others have indirect influence. For the present study we have considered few of these home conditions which can have direct influence. These include: the number of members in the family, number of earning members in the family, number of non-earners in the family, number of handicapped members in the family, the facilities available in the homes and any member of the family living outside the family.

(a) No. of Members in the Family: Number of members in the family can also be one of the factors in hindrance or help of the education of the child. On the one side more members in the family would in a way help the process of socialization of the child, because it will provide more opportunities for the child to interact with a number of persons in the family. And this interaction would enable him to internalize the various expected patterns of behaviour - the social behaviour in particular. In this sense more members in the family would mean that there would always be someone to look after the child, someone to guide the child, someone to socialize the child. But it cannot necessarily provide the essential educational environment to the child. And this is more true if the other members have no educational background. If these members have no educational background they will not be able to socialize the child in the 'educational role'. And in

the case of these SC/ST students the last is more true, since a large majority of them are either illiterate or have very limited education.

Secondly, the pattern of education, that we have in our society where the parents are also required to shoulder some financial burden of education, the SC/ST parents would find it very difficult to do it. They have, on the one side very limited income and on the other there are many members to share this limited income, the result is a greater portion of their income is consumed in the consumption needs of the family and they have almost nothing to spare for the education of their children. In this sense, the presence of more members in the family would be the most unfavourable educational environment for the student of the SC/ST.

Closely related to this, are the other two factors, namely the number of earning and non-earning members in the family.

(b) No. of Earning Members in the Family: More the earning members in the family, greater the chances for the child to have some funds available for its education. The family can, in this situation, be able to spare the child and some fund for ^{its} education. They decide their priorities and can be able to put the education of their children in this list of priority. And to that extent the child will

not face any financial difficulty in continuing his education. But it all depends on the attitude of the members of the family. But there is every possibility that they might show a favourable attitude if they have an earning sufficient to meet their immediate wants. In this manner more earning members in the family would provide a sort of favourable educational environment for the student.

But in the case of SC/ST families, it is less likely to have more earning members, especially members with an assured, secure income, since a large majority of them do not have any specialised skills, the jobs available for them are the jobs of the 'agricultural labour', which always keeps them underemployed. And this is more true in the 'areas' where there are no irrigation or well water facilities available for agriculture, and the farmers have only 'one crop' a year. Thus with this underemployment we are doubtful whether the families would be able to spare for the education of their children even though there are more earning members in the family. Yet we can safely say that the presence of more earning members in the family would at ^{least} not provide an unfavourable educational environment for these SC/ST children.

But this cannot be said about the other factors. The number of non-earners in the family

(c) The Number of Non-earners in the Family: The non-earners are a liability for the family and in such a situation the family cannot provide anything for the education of the children. Children from such families if they attend the schools, they attend it simply because they have no other activity or job available. The parents in such cases have a different view when they allow their children to attend secondary schools or colleges. Education of their children to them provides some assured income. Many teachers and principals have clearly mentioned this fact ~~and principals have clearly mentioned this fact~~ to this investigator. One principal had even pointed out that a father of an UP student had asked the principal that the scholarship amount need not be handed over to his son. Instead the father used to come and collect the amount at the end of every quarter. There are number of instances where the parents consider this scholarship amount earned by their children as part of their income and use it for the use of the family since there are many more members to be fed. The result is that these children, inspite of the scholarships, they have to pull on without sufficient, books, notebooks and other educational requirements. Of course this does not mean that the scholarship amount is sufficient to meet these requirements, but since the amount is used in the family, the students have nothing to purchase even the small amount of books and notebooks. So in this sense were the

number of non-earners in the family greater would be the possibilities for the parents not to provide for the education of their children, or consume a large proportion of scholarship amount for the family's needs.

(d) No. of Handicapped Members in the Family: These non-earners would add to this problem if they are 'handicapped'. So we have two categories of non-earners: the first is of those non-earners who have not been able to secure any job because of the prevailing shortage of jobs. For these people at least there is a hope that this economic condition may improve in future, or they may get a job by way of migration. If jobs are not locally available they can move out and seek some jobs. To that extent theirs is temporary 'non-earning phase'. But this is not so in the case of the 'handicapped non-earners'. Since they are unable to work they are a permanent non-earners and therefore a permanent liability for the family. And if there are more handicapped members in the family the problem would be very serious and would ^{be} a great hindrance in the education of the children.

(e) The Facilities available in the House: More the facilities available in the house the more the child will be spared from the struggle for the satisfaction of it, ^{from} want of these facilities. These facilities for which the SC/ST people in the rural areas have to struggle and

struggle hard would be numerous. But we have considered only few of them, which would affect the education of the children of SC/ST. For example if water is not easily available then the family will have to fetch water from outside. And since children who cannot do any other strenuous jobs would naturally be expected to help in this job. With the result the children are either late to the school or they did not have any time to finish their school work assigned to them. Similarly it is only at night that they can find sometime to attend to their school work, but if the light facility is not available then it is a hindrance in their study. In the same manner lack of bathrooms and lavatories would create number of health and hygiene problems for the children which would ultimately affect their studies. On the other hand those children who happen to have these facilities available in their houses will not be required to face this difficulty and to that extent they will be able to devote some time after their school and school work.

(f) Member of the Family Living Outside the Village: If a member of the family is living outside the village having some stable job, and if he is regularly paying visits to the family, he can induce the children to aspire for similar jobs outside. Thus this inducement from this member would add to the educational aspiration of these children. These

children would take more interest in their school and their education. They will work hard to get the requisite educational qualifications whereby they can offer themselves for such jobs. And to this extent, the member of the family living outside the village would provide an educational environment to these children of SO/SP.

(g) Intra Family Relations: Even the interpersonal relations within the family members can be a good educational environment. The more the child interacts with his parents and other family member the more he will be able to internalize the values and goals accepted and pursued by the family. This will help him in widening his cognitive map which would facilitate him in his school activities. He will feel more free while interacting with his colleagues and teachers, and would respond them with confidence. So the questions like: Do you spend your leisure time with your parents? Do you discuss your difficulties with your parents? Do you take your meals with your parents? The ^{se} questions can throw some light on the interpersonal relations in the family.

(h) Inter Family Relations: Similarly inter-familial relations, in terms of relations with their neighbour can also provide an educational environment. If they have good relations with their neighbours and visit them often, or they visit their families often, there is every possibility of them showing interest in the education of these children

also. And as much their 'Relations with their neighbour' can also provide an educational environment to these students.

This aspect is important in other respect also Indian family is a patriarchal family, where the father is an authority figure. Naturally the children normally show some kind of restraint while interacting with their 'parents'. No doubt this is the norm of higher caste Hindus, but it is equally true for the lower castes which normally try to imitate the norms of the high castes. So the children of the SC/ST would feel more free in talking to their neighbour about their difficulties and seek their help in case of such difficulties.

(1) Time devoted to Study (School homework): The performance of the students at school is equally dependent on the time they devote everyday after their study. The SC/ST students with poor socio-economic background would find very little time to devote after their study regularly. They would be required to assist their parents during the seasons at least. And as much during these seasons these students may not find time to devote ~~time~~ after their studies regularly. So those SC/ST students who have the facility to devote time after their study every day would show better performance. We have no data about their performance but we can infer something concrete from their aspirations and opinion about education.

(j) Availability of Educational Facilities: Education of the SC/ST students is equally dependent on the availability of educational facilities in the house and outside. Availability of facilities would help and non-availability would hinder their education. Facilities like: Room-space for study, availability of books, notebooks and other educational requirements, newspapers in the house and the financial support from relatives or government. So it is assumed here that those SC/ST students who are fortunate enough to have these facilities, would not have any problem in their education which can be reflected in their aspirations, diffidence, rejection and self-conception

To sum up it is assumed here that any difference in the educational environment of the SC/ST students might reflect their difference in Aspiration, Diffidence, Rejection and Self conception.

(3) The Teachers:

The teachers can also be considered as one of the important aspects of the educational environment of these students. During the school years the student interacts more with the teachers next to his parents and peer groups. As a result of this interaction with his teachers, his likes and dislikes, his interests, his perception of the school and his perception of the teacher himself is influenced.

As such the characteristics of teachers in terms of their sex, age, caste, their rural/urban educational background, their experience in teaching, their specialized training and experience in working in schools with SC/ST students, their attitude towards SC/ST students, their opinion about the suitability of the existing school curriculum to the needs of the SC/ST students, their opinion about the capabilities of these students and their opinion about the specific difficulties these students have vis-a-vis the other students in understanding some of the school subjects, would constitute another aspect of the educational environment of the students.

Following aspects of teachers are taken into consideration for the study.

(1) Sex of the Teacher: The dominance in terms of size of the male or female teachers in the school will provide different 'educational environment' for the students. Indian society which is known for its male dominance and authority in every field of life, may not be able to make any headway in education, since education has been 'teacher centered' all these years. The role of the teacher here is not merely to spread education but he has to popularise education. This is possible only through the affectionate and tender hearted ~~the~~ 'mahas' in the Indian society, who are the symbols of restraint and respect, cannot be expected to

provide affection. The result is that the child in the initial stage starts attending the school with some sort of restraint. This 'restraint' hinders him taking any interest in the school. The tendency of the children is to be free from this 'restraint' and be in a 'natural' free environment. This problem is more significant in the case of SC/ST children where the children are too much dependent on their parents and especially the male parents. The higher percentage of drop outs from the school might be due to this 'factor'. In that case the presence of more 'male teachers' in the schools may not provide a favourable educational environment for these children.

Similarly amongst the SC/ST women work shoulder to shoulder with the men in the economic pursuit of life. Among the ST especially the women have almost equal status and they are not *secluded* from the male members. The comment they find that the schools are 'male dominated' they tend to look at the schools with some reservation. This explains the lowest female literacy rate among the ST. So if education has to be popularized in both - boys and girls - of the SC/ST then the proportion of female teachers needs to be substantially increased.

Just as the sex of the teacher can provide favourable or unfavourable environment, in the same manner age of the

teacher can also help or hinder education of the students.

(ii) Age of the Teachers: If teaching has to be a process of adaptation on the part of students as well as teachers, then younger the teachers, the easier it would be for them to adapt and would thereby allow the process of adaptation to continue very smoothly. So the presence of younger teachers in the schools will provide a favourable 'educational environment' for these SC/ST students.

(iii) Marital Status: This process of adaptation can continue well if the teachers enjoy some kind of stability in their lives especially in terms of their marital status. The teachers have to struggle hard in life in order to seek security in life, and most of their energy is lost in this struggle with the result that they are left with very limited or no energy to concentrate on their job. Even those 'unmarried' would look to teaching as a stop gap arrangement and to that extent there would not be any commitment to the profession. This would be more true in the case of unmarried girls. The 'widows' in the Indian society are looked down upon. Their status is considered as lower and as such the 'widow' naturally finds it difficult to make any significant impact in any field of life. She is already frustrated in life because of her natural calamity and naturally she finds it difficult to move in the society

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 with some dignity and honour as other married women. This makes her doubly frustrated. On the other hand those teachers who enjoy some kind of stability in life feel like doing something 'new', since they have sufficient time and energy to devote to their profession and they have no additional worries like the widows. In short the teacher with unstable marital status will find it difficult to interact freely with the students and give them anything in terms of knowledge but frustration. Thus we find that the students who mostly hail from the stable families have different social environment.

(iv) Caste Background of the Teacher: Similarly the caste also provides a 'social environment' which facilitates interaction between the student and the teacher. It also facilitates interaction between teacher and teacher which is equally important in the development in the quantum of knowledge in a society. 'Caste' in Indian society is a homogeneous social group and such it provides 'culture' of its own for the individual member in the caste. Members of a caste feel free in interacting with each other. While members from different caste groups find themselves 'strangers' and as such have limited interaction among them. It is assumed here, that if the teachers and the students belong to the same caste-cultural group then they will not have any difficulty in interacting with each other.

(v) Teacher's Educational Background in Terms of Rural or Urban: Caste as an 'environment' facilitating interaction would largely depend on the 'rural' or 'urban' background of the teacher, since caste norms are more operative in rural areas than the cities - The teachers who have received their education in rural areas naturally tend to conform to the caste norms and as such they are more tradition bound than those who have studied in the urban secular institutions.

The 'rural educated' teacher will still be able to overcome the tradition bound influences if he is aware of the customs and traditions of these groups. The knowledge of their customs and traditions, their aspirations and interests, their likes and dislikes and the knowledge about their aptitude will enable him to know the needs of the SC/ST and would try to adjust his teaching and curriculum in such a manner that the students take interest in their school subject.

Now this knowledge of the customs and tradition of SC/ST can be had, either through experience and as such a teacher who has been working in schools which have predominantly SC/ST student population, ~~can~~ can as well know the customs and traditions of the group if he has attended any specific training programme for teachers to work in such areas.

However, this will all depend on the teacher's own attitudes and prejudices against the SC/ST. The attitude of the teacher and the prejudices held by him will naturally not allow him to take special interest and initiative in inducing these students. Will not bother about their absence; will have certain definite views about their educational abilities and professional capabilities.

Thus we may find that the socio-economic conditions of the SC/ST students, their parents and their attitude towards education and their teachers constitute a kind of 'educational environment' for these SC and ST students.

Apart from the environmental conditions which may help or hinder education of the SC and ST students. These conditions in their turn may influence the psychic aspect of the SC and ST students. These environmental conditions will to a large extent influence their educational or professional aspirations, the socio-economic conditions would generate a diffidence feeling amongst them which in turn hamper their positive educational pursuit. These environmental condition would also most likely to develop rejection feeling among them which may lead them to take less and less interest in school. These feelings of diffidence and rejection in their turn may influence the

SC and ST child's sense of his own abilities. It is very likely that it may lead to lower self concept. Now if the child's self concept is low, if he feels he cannot succeed then this will affect the efforts he puts into the task and thus his chances of success.

These environmental conditions also tend to influence the SC and ST student's perception of the school and his perception of the teacher which will also partly affect his educational pursuit.

In the following paragraphs we will try to analyse the actual 'educational environment' of the SC and ST students of Baroda District.

Part Two

Analysis of the Educational Environment

Let us now consider the 'Educational Environment' of the SC/ST students of Baroda District as it exists today. The 'parents' being an important aspect of the educational environment, let us consider their age, education, income, their occupation, their attitude towards education, their assessment of the capabilities of their children and their interest in the day-to-day school work of their children. The data have been collected through the questionnaires from

the sample selected by the investigator.

(1) The Parents:

The table 4.1 shows the age-wise distribution of the father/guardian of the SC/ST students.

Table 4.1

Age-wise Distribution of Fathers/Guardians
of the SC/ST Students

Age in years	No. of Fathers/Guardians	Perce- tage
Upto 35	81	29.45
36 to 45	139	50.55
46 and above	55	20.00
Total	275	100.00

The table 4.1 shows that half of the fathers/guardians belong to the 36 to 45 years of age group. This is the age during which an individual is ready to take any economic risk, since he is in the productive age. To that extent these students (139) are fortunate that their parents can meet the financial responsibilities of their wards. Of course we cannot forget the fact that these 'parents' belong to the SC/ST and the job opportunities open to them are too limited, but still however we can say that since they are

physically sound they can work hard, work more and earn to help their children to meet their educational expenditure. This is also true of the 81 fathers/guardians who fall in the category 'upto 35 years'. The situation would be different in the case of those above 45 years. Fifty-five (20 per cent) fathers/guardians belong to this group.

Because of hard life and struggle for living they appear older than what their age resemble. Naturally even if they wish to work more, work hard and earn more to help their children, opportunities for them would be very very limited. Moreover, they must be worried about their old age and would be thinking of preserving and saving whatever they can to support them during their retirement. They would also be equally eager to see that their children are settled in life before they finally retire from their active life. So we feel that these parents would allow their children to study as long as their education is not a 'liability' on them.

In short, so long as they get scholarships etc. So it is not for education but for the sake of scholarship amount that these parents allow their children to continue their education. This amount of scholarship is considered to be an addition to their income. So naturally the children of these parents (above the age of 45 years) would be the first to force their children to drop out from the school/college, the moment they find that they have not been able to maintain their scholarships.

The education of the father/guardian is equally important. The students were asked to mention the education of their parents or guardians. But children as they are, and moreover, belong to SC/ST would not be knowing the exact educational qualifications of their parents/guardians, the fathers/guardians, therefore, were also asked about their educational qualifications. The table 4.2 shows the educational qualifications of the father/guardians of the SC/ST students as mentioned by them:

Table 4.2

Distribution of the Fathers/Guardians of the SC/ST Students According to their Education

Education	No. of Fathers/Guardians	Percentage
S.S.C. and above	13	4.73
VIII to X Std.	6	2.18
V to VII Std.	30	10.91
I to IV Std.	63	30.18
No Education	143	52.00
Total	275	100.00

The above table 4.2 shows that more than 50 per cent of the parents have no education. We cannot expect any educational guidance from these parents to their children. Same can also said about the parents who have studied

upt IV standard. Thus there are more than 70 per cent of the students who have absolutely no educational guidance in the family. These students belong to high schools and college classes. They need more than mere guidance. We can safely say that these 70 per cent students do not have any educational atmosphere in their houses, in the family. It is surprising that inspite of the absence of educational atmosphere in the house these students have continued their education and they have reached to the high school or college stage. We can safely say that, they have been able to do so because of the influence of something external. Yet, since we have not considered the performance aspect of these students we cannot say anything on that aspect but we do fear that the absence of an educational atmosphere in the house must be affecting their performance at the school/college.

Equally important is the occupation of the parents. Indian society is an agrarian society, where the children are supposed to help their parents as and when they need their help especially during agricultural seasons. So the children whose parents follow occupation other than agriculture or allied occupation would be the most fortunate, in the sense that they would not be taken away from the school during the academic terms.

The following table 4.3 shows the occupation of their fathers as mentioned by them only.

Table 4.3
Distribution of Fathers/Guardians
According to their Occupation

Occupation	No. of Fathers/Guardians	Perce- tage
Agriculture	157	57.09
Service/Business	17	6.18
Daily Wage Earners	101	36.73
Total	275	100.00

The above table shows that only 17 persons follow occupation other than agriculture. Of the remaining parents 157 follow agriculture. These parents would naturally expect their children to be with them helping them during the agricultural seasons - sowing and harvesting when labour becomes scarce and dearer too. The children of the daily wage earners are there in the school because they bring few rupees by way of scholarships in the house and therefore, to them they are as good as earning members in the family. But one can imagine what psychological strains these children would be experiencing in their schools and colleges. And this becomes more significant when we look to the Indian situation where wage earners have the lowest status in the society.

Now pursuit of education especially high school and college education needs sufficient financial backing. So

it will be interesting to see the income of their parents. This will tell us whether the parents would be able to provide these children at least financially to cope up with the educational expenditure. The wage earners, we can safely say, are not employed all the year round and their financial position would not be sound enough to provide for this and to that extent these children would be pulling on without having all the books and other requirements. Where do the other students stand? Do their parents afford to spend after all their requirements? The table 4.4 shows the annual income of the parents.

Table 4.4

Table Showing the Annual Income
of the Parents

Annual Income (in Rs.)	No. of Parents	Perce- tage
Above Rs.2000/- but less than 3000/-	53	19.27
1201 to 1999	22	8.00
601 to 1200	79	28.73
301 to 600	117	42.55
300 and below	4	1.45
Total	275	100.00

The table 4.4 shows that not a single parent has an income more than Rs.3000/- per annum. There are 53 families whose annual income is ^{and Rs.3000/-} between Rs.2000/-. Yet taking into consideration the fact that these are living in villages where the people have limited wants we can say that to some extent these parents can spend at least a small part of their income for the education of their children. But nearly 60 per cent of the parents have an income of less than Rs.1200/- per annum and we cannot expect them to spend anything for the education of their children and yet when we see that they do, it is simply by way of depriving other members from certain other wants. It is a great tragedy in the Indian society that people with such a poor income are required to spend after the education of their children. Many of the parents who stated their occupation as agriculture, have shown their income to be less than Rs.1200/- per annum. This may appear to be strange but the (matter) doubt will be clear when we look to their land ownership.

The table 4.5 shows the land owned by these SC/ST parents.

Table 4.5
Land Ownership of the SC/ST Parents

Land in Acres	No. of Parents	Percentage
Above 10	10	3.64
6 to 9	19	6.91
2 to 5	124	45.09
Less than 2	19	6.91
Ec land of their own	103	37.45
Total	275	100.00

The table 4.5 shows that there are only 10 parents who own land above 10 Acres. Yet these parents have shown their annual income to be less than Rs.3000/-. How can we explain this fact? We should not forget that these are SC/ST parents. All the 10 parents are ST. They are staying in the deep forest areas. The land is neither plane nor fertile. They can hardly take one crop a year. More than 50 per cent of these parents have less than 5 Acres of land. Taking into consideration the size of the family (which is larger in comparison to the other Indian rural families also) we can expect an income sufficient to meet their consumption requirements and ^{does not} show any surplus to provide for children's education.

We have so far seen that parents of these SC/ST children in no way show any sign of socio-economic conditions which would help the children to pursue education. Their occupation, their income, their land holding are the unfavourable conditions.

The 'mother' in the family is equally an important position. Her impact on the children would equally be important factor in their education. Let us now turn to the age, education and occupation of the 'mother' as stated by the 'father'.

The table 4.6 shows the age-wise distribution of the mothers in these SC/ST families.

Table 4.6

Table Showing the Mother's Age
of the SC/ST Students

Age in years	No. of Mothers	Percen- tage
21 to 30	81	30.11
31 to 40	133	49.44
41 and above	55	20.45
Total	269*	100.00

Note: * Six ~~respondents~~ ^{respondents} did not reply to this item.

A large majority of the mothers are below the age of forty. We may expect that being young they should find

some time to look to their children and their education. But in the Indian rural conditions most of the family's household responsibilities are to be shouldered by women and this is more true in the case of the SC and ST women. Not only they should mind the household duties but they are also supposed to share the economic responsibilities also as and when these are needed. And looking to the income and occupation of the 'fathers' we can safely say that in the case of these SC/ST women, there is a permanent 'need' of this kind. Taking this fact into consideration, we can say that they have almost no time to look after their children and least to look after their education. This fact will be more clear when we consider the occupation of these 'mothers'. But for the time being let us concentrate on 'education'. These 'mothers' can look after the education of their children, help them, guide them, etc. only when they are themselves educated and realize the fruits of education. To understand this we will have to know their education.

The table 4.7 shows the education of the mothers.

Table 4.7

Table Showing the Education of Mothers
of the SC/ST Students

Education	No. of Mothers	Perce- tage
Above VII Std.	5	1.09
V to VII Std.	6	2.18
I to IV Std.	29	10.55
No education	237	86.18
Total	275	100.00

The table 4.7 shows that not a single 'mother' is in a position to look after the education of her children. Since these are high school and college students. Moreover, 86 per cent of them have no education. Similarly the 29 mothers who have studied upto IV standard, we are doubtful whether they would be able to read or write today. So these SC and ST children are most unfortunate lot, who do not have any kind of help guidance or even encouragement from their mothers. This researcher had an opportunity to meet some of these 'mothers' also. They expressed 'the teacher is our well wisher and we follow him'. These words are clear indicators of the fact that these 'students' have reached to the high school or college stage with the encouragement from outside.

Not only the 'mother' has no education but she does not have the time to devote. The occupation of the mother will make this fact clear.

The table 4.8 shows the 'mother's occupation of the SC/ST students.

Table 4.8

Table Showing the Occupation of the
Mothers of the SC/ST Students

Occupation	No. of Mothers	Perce- tage
Household duty only	65	23.81
House work + some job	208	76.19
Total	273*	100.00

Note: * Two respondents did not reply.

The table 4.8 shows that ^{more than} 75 per cent of the mothers have to mind the household work and plus they have to seek some job also. Of course the job in these areas ~~is~~ for these women are only agricultural jobs during the seasons. That means that once they are out they would come back home only late in the evening once again to take charge of the kitchen only. In such a situation they cannot find any time to ask their children about their school and their study. Even the 65 mothers who are required to mind the

household work only would find very little time to look after the education of their children. The household work goes on in a cyclic manner during the day. The mother gets up early in the morning before the other menfolk and prepares the breakfast. The men folk after their breakfast, they set out for the fields or the job. The mother is then free to attend to other jobs; she then starts to the village well or river for water. After finishing this she prepares the lunch to be sent (or at times to be carried by herself only) to the fields. It is noon by this time and once again she has to attend the household work of washing the clothes. After attending these once again she has to attend to the kitchen to prepare the evening meals. This was almost a routine. She had absolutely no time to look after or say think of her children. And "she is reminded of her children only when they come to her lap at night", one respondent had narrated.

The above narration shows that the parents of the SC/ST students do not provide any educational climate for their children. But so far we have been considering only one aspect of this climate. Let us now consider another but equally important aspect namely the attitude of the parents toward education.

The Attitude of the Parents towards Education:

There are ten items measuring the attitude of the parents towards education, on a three point scale. Parents scoring 30 on these items would indicate a favourable attitude. The mean score of their attitude towards education was found to be 24.22.

The table 4.9 shows the score distribution of their attitude toward education.

Table 4.9

The Distribution of Attitude Scores of
the Parents towards Education

Score	No. of Parents	Perce- tage
Upto 10	Nil	-
11 to 20	77	28.00
21 to 30	198	72.00
Total	275	100.00

The table 4.9 shows that 72 per cent of the parents fall under the category of 21 to 30 score. The maximum score for favourable attitude towards education being 30, this appears to be leaning towards 'favourable' attitude. We can, therefore, safely say that 72 per cent of the SC/ST

parents have favourable attitude towards education. That may be one of the strong points why these students are there in high school and colleges. But it is equally noteworthy that 28 per cent of the parents, who fall in the category of 11 to 20 score cannot be said to have favourable attitude towards education. And 28 per cent is not an insignificant percentage. Can we assume that these parents allow their children to continue their education for reasons other than educational? But we can safely say that in case of some adverse economic conditions these children will be most likely to leave their education before completing their secondary or higher stage.

The parents may not have any favourable attitude towards education, but if they feel that their children are capable of completing their education, in short if their assessment of their children's capabilities are positive, then they would not bring in their 'attitude' in the pursuit of education of their children. These parents belong to the SC/ST and a large majority, of them, as we have seen earlier had no education and as such it is most likely that they might not have any favourable or unfavourable attitude towards education. Such parents are most likely to allow their children to continue their education because they have positive assessment of the capabilities of their children.

There were nine statements to measure the parents' assessment of their children's capabilities, 27 being the score for high assessment. The mean assessment score for all the SO/ST parents was 18.03. This is not a promising score. The table 4.10 will throw some more light on this aspect.

Table 4.10
Parents' Assessment of their Children's
Capabilities

Assessment Score	No. of Parents	Perce- tage
Upto 9	211	-
10 to 18	156	56.73
19 to 27	119	43.27
Total	275	100.00

The table 4.10 shows that 56.73 per cent of the parents have very conservative assessment of the capabilities of their children. It appears that they are not sure whether their children are capable of pursuing their education. One reason for this conservative assessment would be that they are aware of the fact that they are unable to provide the appropriate educational climate. Secondly these parents themselves had never been to the school at least a majority

of them and, therefore, they are unable to assess their children's capabilities. Whatever be the reason this conservative assessment of the parents would be likely to affect the education of these SC/ST children.

The parents' interest in the day-to-day school work is also very important. This will act as an inducement to the children to study more and perform better at schools. There were 11 items to measure the parents' interest in the day-to-day school work of their children. The maximum score thus being at 33 showing 'sufficient interest' by the parents in the day-to-day school work. The mean score for all the parents was 21.26, which is again not a very good sign. The table 4.11 will make this more clear.

Table 4.11

SC/ST Parents' Interest in the day-to-day
School Work of their Children

Interest Score	No. of Parents	Percentage
Upto 11	2	0.71
12 to 22	171	62.21
23 to 33	102	37.08
Total	275	100.00

The table 4.11 shows that 62.21 per cent of the 'parents' interest score is between 12 and 22 which clearly indication

that they show very poor interest in the day-to-day school work of their children. They cannot do this because majority of them have no education. Naturally these children have to depend on others who can show some interest and guide them in their studies. Even the other 37.08 per cent of the children whose parents' interest score is between 23^{and}33. Their interest in the day-to-day work is limited to occasional inquiries of attendance and examination performance. The mean score which was 21.26 is a clear indication of poor interest. So here we find that the interest of the parents in the day-to-day school work which would induce the children is very poor and as such one of the most important aspects of educational environment, is poor in the case of these SC/ST students.

(2) The Students:

After considering the attitudes and interests of the parents, their economic conditions, their income and education etc. let us consider other aspects of the students' socio-economic background which are equally important in providing educational environment - favourable or unfavourable - to these SC/ST students. It will be interesting to see whether the conditions at home, especially in terms of (i) Number of members in the family (ii) Number of earning members in the family (iii) Number of non-

corners in the family and (iv) The facilities available in the house, provide any favourable environment to the students to pursue their education. Let us first consider the first namely, No. of members in the family.

The table 4.12 shows the No. of members in the family of the SC/ST students.

Table 4.12

No. of Members in the Family of
SC/ST Students

No. of Members	No. of Students	Percentage
Upto 5 members	68	25.66
6 to 8 members	120	45.28
9 and above	77	29.06
Total	265*	100.00

Note: * Ten students did not reply.

The table 4.12 shows that the SC/ST still continued to have large families. More than 74 per cent of the families of the SC/ST have more than six members in the family. What is more significant is the fact that 29.6 per cent of these SC/ST families have more than nine members in the family. Larger families provide a guaranteed labour to the agriculture. Looking ^{to} the agricultural base of these people it appears that

it supports the agricultural pursuit of these people. But larger families may at times, hinder the educational pursuit of the children, because the available family resources are shared by many of the members. This is more true in the case of Indian SC/ST as they have very limited and poor available resources. Even larger families can be an asset if majority of them are earners and since the income of all the earners are normally pooled together, the pattern of larger families may not be an hindrance to that extent. It will be interesting to see the No. of earning members in these SC/ST families.

The table 4.13 shows the number of earning members in the SC/ST families.

Table 4.13
No. of Earning Members in the Family
of SC/ST Students

No. of Earning Members	No. of Families	Percentage
3 or more earners	93	34.32
2 earners only	104	38.38
1 earner only	74	27.30
Total	271*	100.00

Note: * Four students did not reply.

The table 4.13 shows 34.32 per cent of the families have three and more earning members. Twenty-eight per

cent of the families have nine or more members which means that families with nine or above members alone have three or more earning members but this leaves still a significant dependent members which only consume the meagre family income and as such we can say that large family here in the case of these SC/ST is bound to hinder the education of these students.

The fact of this 'significant dependent members' in the family can also be looked at from the point of number of non-earners in the family. The table 4.14 shows the number of non-earners in the families of SC/ST.

Table 4.14
No. of Non-earners in the Families of
SC/ST Students

No. of Non-earners	No. of Families	Percentage
Upto 2 Non-earners	44	16.30
3 to 5 Non-earners	109	40.37
6 or more Non-earners	117	43.33
Total	270*	100.00

Note: *Five students did not reply.

The table 4.14 supports our previous argument. More than 82 per cent of the families have 3 or more non-earners in the families. What is more perturbing is the fact that there are 117 (43.33 per cent) families where there are 6 or

more non-earners. This clearly points out to one important fact. A large majority of the SC/ST families have many non-earners and as such the bigger portion of their small income is almost consumed by these members and as such there is nothing left to provide for the education of the children.

Families with poor income and large number of dependents are prone to variety of sickness. Some of these can result into some kind of permanent disablement to the individual. With this assumption we asked for the information about the handicapped persons in the families. Fortunately all the 275 students have repliedⁱⁿ negative to our questions. The SC/ST students here we feel are fortunate to have no hindrance on this account in their education.

Along with the income the presence or absence of variety of facilities in the house can also help or hinder education of the children. We consider six basic facilities in the house which would help or hinder education for example availability of electricity in the house would provide an opportunity to the children to do their homework at night. The availability of a running water and the W.C. facility would economise their time and also health. Similarly availability of a separate reading space in the house would be helpful for study. So it will be interesting to know the facilities available to these SC/ST students in their homes.

The table 4.15 shows the facilities available in their homes to the SC/ST students.

Table 4.15
Facilities Available in the House of
the SC/ST Students

Facilities	No. of Students	Percentage
3 or more facilities	32	11.76
1 to 2 facilities	114	41.92
No facilities	126	46.32
Total	272 *	100.00

Note: * Three students did not reply.

The table 4.15 shows that there are only seven SC/ST students who are fortunate to have all the six facilities available. While those with 'one facility' and 'no facility' constitute more than 75 per cent of the SC/ST students. This means for these students life is not so easy and have to face additional strains and as such it is bound to tell upon their studies as well. Most of their energy ~~is~~ ^{is} wasted in availing of these facilities outside their homes, with the result they have almost no energy left or no time left to mind their homework assigned to them by their teachers.

In spite of these hardships they have reached to the secondary and higher education stage. It may be due to

and
variety of other reasons, one immediate reason would be these children must have been influenced by some one in their families who is staying outside the village or their immediate neighbours in whose contact they often come. Let us first try to find out whether they have any relatives staying outside the village.

The table 4.16 shows the relatives staying outside the village.

Table 4.16

Table Showing the Relatives of the SO/ST
Students Staying Outside the Village

	No. of Students	Perce- tage
Relatives staying outside	55	21.15
No Relatives staying outside	205	78.85
Total	260*	100.00

Notes: * Fifteen students did not reply.

The table 4.16 shows that 20 per cent of the students have stated that they have some one from their families staying outside the village. While a large majority of them 78.85 per cent do not have any one from their families staying outside. So here also we find that a very small number of students have favourable conditions to pursue education.

Let us now turn to their relations with their neighbour. To the question "Do you often visit your neighbour?" and "Do they encourage you in your studies?" 239 students replied in affirmation while 7 students replied in negative. One of them (SC student) was frank enough to state that there is no one in their neighbourhood and therefore visiting them or receiving any kind of encouragement from them does not arise. SC in the rural India is still a seclude^d group and the traditional norms are still equally strongly operative in rural India. But there is a large number of students who state that they receive encouragement from their neighbour in their studies.

On the whole we can safely say that the socio-economic conditions of the SC/ST students are not favourable to pursue education. These conditions to some extent hinder the aspirations of the students. It also creates a number of psychological problems which hinder the education of these children. One such common feeling is the feeling of diffidence, and a rejection feeling amongst them. These children do not have a clear image of themselves as well as the school and teacher.

So *it* will now be interesting to know something about each of these psychological and pedagogical aspects of these children.

Under the psychological aspects we have considered the following factors: (i) The Students' Aspirations, (ii) Their feeling of diffidence, (iii) Their feeling of Rejection, (iii) The students' self conception, (iv) Aspirations of the parents, and (v) Parents Attitude towards education of their children.

Under the pedagogical aspects we have considered (i) children's perception of the school, (ii) their perception of the teacher and also (iii) the teachers' attitude towards the SC/ST students.

There are a number of items which measure the psychological feeling of these children on a three point scale. The total score for each category shows where the individual stands in each of these categories.

In case of the students' aspiration the highest score is 35 and the lowest score is 3. The mean aspiration score for all the 275 SC and ST students is 25.34.

In the case of the feeling of diffidence the highest score is 33 and the lowest score is zero. The mean score for all the students is however 25.32.

In the case of Rejection the highest score is 48 and the lowest is 8 while mean for all the students (SC and ST) being 40.96.

In the same manner the highest score for Self conception is 30 while the lowest score being zero. The mean self conception score is 24.36 for the whole group.

The above figures point to two facts significant to the SC and ST students. The first thing which we notice here is that there is a wide variation among these students in terms of their psychological make up. Secondly though these students have almost similar cultural background there are certain students whose score in all these psychological categories is higher than the mean for the whole group. This difference needs to be explained in terms of certain advantages which they have while the others are deprived of.

In case of children's perception of school the highest score is 75 and the lowest score is 35 while 64.21 is the mean for the whole group.

In case of children's perception of the teacher the highest score is 45 while the lowest score is zero. The mean for the whole group is 35.72.

It is clear from these figures that on the pedagogical aspects too the figures tell us the same story.

The variations in the scores on all these aspects will be better explained when we classify these students in terms of their socio-economic background. This we will consider in the next chapter.

(3) The Teachers:

There are 53 teachers in the sample. Out of these 53 teachers 49 are teachers from fifteen high schools and four are college teachers.

According to their status we have 16 principals (one college principal and fifteen Head Masters/Principals of High schools) and the remaining 37 are assistant teachers.

The table 4.17 shows the sex-wise distribution of the teachers.

Table 4.17
Distribution of Teachers According to
their Sex

Sex	No. of Teachers	Percentage
Male	45	84.91
Female	8	15.09
Total	53	100.00

The table 4.17 shows that the rural schools are still male dominated. There are only 8 female teachers. The lower percentage of girls in the schools is the most common feature in the rural schools. Various studies have tried to explain this fact. There are number of explanations but I think that these studies have not taken into consideration the fact of

very few or in some schools no lady teacher. With the presence of a lady teacher in a school the girls feel secure, they feel that there is someone in the school whom they can approach for their problems. The parents are also less worried and they are induced to send their (children) to the *daughters* school. Also the children of the SC/ST have a number of difficulties in the school. These difficulties need a tender hand to handle. This can be expected only from the lady teacher. Lower percentage of lady teachers would mean that for some years to come, the percentages of girls in schools will not pick up.

Let us now consider the age of the teachers. The table 4.18 shows the age-wise distribution of the teachers.

Table 4.18

Age-wise Distribution of the Teachers

Age in years	No. of Teachers	Percen- tage
18 to 27	7	13.21
28 to 37	38	71.70
38 to 47	7	13.21
48 and above	1	1.88
Total	53	100.00

The table 4.13 shows that a large majority of the teachers belong to the 28 to 37 years of age group. There is only one teacher above the age of 48. This means the teachers are young. They have the zeal to put in something concrete. At least they can do it *if* they mean. All the school teachers are trained. It means they acquired the skill in teaching too. So the presence of young and trained teachers is the most favourable situation so far as the SC and ST students are concerned.

Stability or instability in life also affects one's work-job-performance. It is interesting, therefore, to know the stability or instability in life of the teachers in terms of their marital status. All the teachers except one are married. The one teacher, who is a lady teacher, is a widow. Only few years back it was the practice that widows would go to teaching or nursing. It appears that the trend is now in the different direction. Also some people believe that the females turn to teaching as a stop gap arrangement. They take up teaching in between the period after completion of their education and till they are married. Seven of the 8 lady/teachers are married and yet they have continued in the profession. This means that more people especially ladies with stability and also some security in life come to this profession. Since they are stable and secure they can devote more time and energy to the problems of their profession.

Similarly education in the Indian society was limited to the upper castes only in the recent past. Naturally people would come to the profession from this group only. Each caste group differs from the other caste groups in terms of its specific character. To this some name as sub-culture. So the teachers having a sub-culture of their own, while the students coming from different caste groups having their own sub-culture. These two naturally could not interact with each other on a common plane. Naturally there was very limited interaction between the teacher and the student belonging to different caste. This led to a situation where the teachers had certain prejudices against students of the certain castes and the students also felt that the teacher had a double standard in dealing with students of their own caste and those belonging to a caste other than their own.

It will be interesting to know, therefore, how far this situation has changed.

The table 4.19 shows the caste-wise distribution of teachers.

Table 4.19

Caste-wise Distribution of Teachers

Caste	No. of Teachers	Percentage
Upper caste	42	79.25
Middle caste	9	16.98
Lower caste (SC/ST)	2	3.77
Total	53	100.00

The table 4.19 shows that the upper castes - The Brahmins, the Banias and the Patels, still dominate the teaching profession. Forty-two of the 55 teachers belong to the upper castes. There are nine teachers belonging to the middle caste. The middle castes include all the castes except the upper three castes and the notified SC and ST. Thus the middle castes include a wide range of caste artisans in the village. The presence of nine teachers from this group is also a significant thing. There are only two teachers belonging to SC/ST. The society which has prescribed the norm of Reservation of Jobs, it appears has not been institutionalized in the society. Another reason can be that a large number of SC/ST students leave their schools or colleges before they clear the S.S.C. or graduation. No school or college can find suitable teachers from this group and hence there are very few teachers in these schools/colleges from SC/ST. But will the absence of SC/ST teachers and the numerical dominance of the upper caste teachers influence and also strengthen the caste prejudices? We will have to wait to get the answer to this question. One thing we can say here that this factor goes against the previous favourable conditions of education of the SC and ST students.

The caste norms are more effective in the rural areas. So the teachers who have completed their primary and secondary education in rural areas would be inclined more

to conform to the caste norms than those who have their primary as well as secondary education in cities or towns.

The table 4.20 shows where they have studied.

Table 4.20

Table Showing the Teachers' Primary and Secondary Education in Rural or Urban Schools

Education of the Teachers	No. of Teachers	Percentage
Primary and Secondary Education in village.	22	41.51
Primary and Secondary Education in city/town.	12	22.64
Partial in village and town	19	35.85
Total	53	100.00

The table 4.20 shows that substantive number of teachers (22) have their primary and secondary education in villages only. Since they have ^{been} in villages all these years we can expect them to know the problems of the villages. But in reality this is not so. What appears to be a problem for a stranger or an outsider may not be realized by the local people. Certain problems are taken as natural and people may not consider it to be problematic. This researcher has observed that even in the high schools the SC/ST students occupied the last benches in the class. More surprising, was

a situation in one of the classes visited where they were required to sit leaving one bench in between totally idle. Of course the teacher has explained that seats are not assigned by him, the students occupy seats according to their convenience. Yet the seclusion and isolation of a group of SC/ST in the class was a strange and significant situation for the researcher. It is here we find the strength of the traditional rural norms. Education is said to be secular institution. Yet it appears that the norms of secularism have not taken their roots in the rural secular institutions.

Now these SC/ST students belong to a particular group of society which needs a different approach. They have some very specific and to some extent unique problems which the teachers from the other caste groups especially from upper castes might not be aware of. The teachers are to be made aware of their problems, their customs and traditions, their specific needs and aspirations in short the whole social climate within which they are brought up. This will help the teacher in appreciating their needs and conditions whereby he would be able to adjust himself and his teaching in such a manner that the students do not feel the 'school' as an alien institution. Even those teachers who have worked with such students can learn few of these through their experience and through their interaction with them during this period. So the teachers were asked whether

they had any previous experience of working in backward areas, whether they have any knowledge of the customs and traditions of these people.

The table 4.21 shows whether the teachers had any previous experience of working in backward areas.

Table 4.21

Table Showing the Teachers' Specific Experience
in Backward Areas

Experience in Backward Areas	No. of Teachers	Perce- tage
Having some experience	47	88.68
Having no experience	6	11.32
Total	53	100.00

The table 4.21 shows that most of the teachers have said that they have experience in backward areas. Most of the teachers have started their teaching career in the same school and are there for seven or more years. This is one of the reasons why they say they have some experience in backward areas. But when they were asked whether they have any knowledge of the customs or traditions of these SC/ST groups. They presented a different picture.

The table 4.22 shows the number of teachers having any or no knowledge of customs of these people.

Table 4.22

Distribution of Teachers having Knowledge of the
Customs and Traditions of SO/ST Groups
of the Region

Knowledge about the custom	No. of Teachers	Perce- tage
Sufficient knowledge	24	45.28
Some knowledge	27	50.95
Little knowledge	2	3.77
Total	53	100.00

The table 4.22 shows that only 24 teachers (i.e. less than 50 per cent) say that they have sufficient knowledge of the customs and traditions of these SO/ST. At least two teachers were frank enough to say that they have very little knowledge while 27 say that they have some knowledge. This means that all these 29 teachers are not aware of the importance of the knowledge of the customs and the traditions of the children. These teachers are supposed to mould the character of these students. This job can be best done only after knowing the salient favourable features of the customs and traditions of the people. Appealing them

through these favourable customs and traditions. Most of the activities of life in the case of these people are carried out outside the four walls of the house. A teacher who is not aware of this fact would insist to keep the students in the classroom, he would feel he could carry out his teaching activities only in the classrooms. The children who are not used to such a situation naturally tend to develop aversion for the school. The result is that they try to keep themselves away from the school on any small pretext.

The teachers were also asked whether they have received any special training to work as teachers in the backward areas. All the teachers replied to this in negative. It is strange that the society is also not aware of the need to include some of the specific problems of these people in the training curriculum of the teachers. The problem is more serious in the Indian society since more than 20 per cent of the population belongs to SC and ST.

The teachers were also asked to mention few names of bright, dull, the would be drop outs, those with leadership qualities, those who could be trained for higher skilled jobs and those who could be trained for lower skilled job. The names of the students they have given was a clear indication of the caste prejudice influences. Of course a majority of the teachers have refused (29) to mention any names of

the student. I think these teachers are honest in doing so. In the present school situation and a very crude tool of assessment with the teacher a teacher cannot say anything about the variety of the latent potentials of the student. He can at the most say that these are bright students and those are dull students. But here too, he can say only with specific reference to his own subject. Since the practice in the high schools and colleges is to have different teachers for different subjects.

However those teachers who have mentioned the names, their list shows that students of the upper castes are bright and the SC/ST students as dull. To them the likely dropouts are again the SC/ST. Similarly they feel that the students of the upper castes could be trained for higher skilled jobs etc. It is significant to note here that a large majority of these teachers (42) belong to the upper caste. We feel that their prejudice must have biased their view which is very clearly seen in their response to this kind of information. Otherwise the teachers could have rated these SC/ST students, who inspite of all odds continued their studies, This could not have been possible without some inherent potentiality of the students.

It will be equally interesting to know their opinion about the difficulties faced by the SC/ST students in various aspects of some of their school/college subjects *as against*

the difficulties faced by other students. Four major subjects namely, Gujarati, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies were considered for this matter. The details of the aspects of the subjects along with the total number of items shown against them are as under:

I. Gujarati:					<u>Items</u>
(a) Pronunciation	....	....	....	...	7
(b) Reading.	....	...	....	...	5
(c) Writing	....	....	....	...	8
(d) Comprehension	....	....	....	...	5
					<hr/> 25
II. Mathematics:					
(a) Understanding the Numerical concepts.	...				3
(b) Understanding the concepts of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division..					4
(c) Practical use of the mathematical concepts.	....	....	....	...	3
					<hr/> 10
III. Science:					
(a) Understanding the theoretical concepts....					4
(b) Knowledge and use of simple apparatus.....					2
(c) Personal Health and Hygiene. ....	...				2
(d) Social Health and Hygiene....	....	...			2
(e) Knowing the living environment. ....	...				2
					<hr/> 15
IV. Social Studies:					
(a) Understanding the importance of social living. ....	....	....	....	...	5
(b) Knowledge of agricultural activities. ...					2
(c) Understanding the means of communications.					2
(d) Development of the habit of self reliance.					1
					<hr/> 10

These items were scored on a three point scale (higher score indicating lesser difficulties and vis-a-vera). The details of the scores, their analysis interpretation etc. has been presented in the next chapter.

Summary

The socio-economic background of the SC/ST students, as part of their educational environment, does not seem to be favourable to education. Especially the parents are not educated, are engaged in agriculture, are daily wage earners, have larger families, more dependents than the family can maintain, all these aspects are bound to affect the education of the SC/ST students.

The parents of the SC/ST students have a positive attitude towards education but are doubtful about the capabilities of their children and also they are unable to take interest in the day-to-day school homework of their children because of their own limitations. Thus the positive attitude becomes ineffective in bringing about the expected results.

The socio-economic background of the SC/ST students also shows some impact on the students' psychological make up in terms of their aspirations, diffidence, rejection and self conception. There is a wide variation in the 'mean score

expected' and the 'actual mean score' which was 25.34 as against 36 for aspiration; 25.92 as against 33 for diffidence; 40.96 as against 48 for rejection; and 24.76 as against 30 for self conception. These figures indicate, ^{that} these SC/ST students are not clear about their aspiration, they have some diffidence feeling but this feeling of diffidence has not gone to the extent of developing a kind of rejection feeling amongst them. They have not lost their faith in themselves. They have, to some extent, clear image of themselves and these are the positive signs.

The teachers, who constitute another aspect of the educational environment of these students, it appears, do not present a 'favourable environment'. The dominance of male teachers indicates that the education amongst these groups will not pick up in the immediate future. The slow progress shown in the girls' education in this section is a glaring example. Moreover these teachers belong to upper caste groups, have no specialized training in working in backward areas, have received their education in the initial years in rural areas suggest that the teachers are likely to be influenced by the traditional attitudes towards SC/ST people.

This fact of attitude of the teachers toward SC/ST has been clearly indicated in 'perception of the teacher' by these students. The mean score for this is 35.92 as against

48 which was expected. However this ^{has} not affected very much to their perception of the school the mean score for which was 64.21 as against 76 which was the expected mean score. This means that the 'teachers' here cannot be said to have been presenting a 'positive educational environment' for the SC/ST students.

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