CHAPTER I

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“Education is a social process. Education is growth. Education is, not a preparation for life, education is life itself” John Dewey (1859-1952). As cited by John Dewey, education is a process of development from the cradle to graveyard and it is the only means, which refines the characters from barbarian (they torture others for their satisfaction. The lowest stage) to civilized human (they are charitable and compassionate. They lead a happy life and make their environment also happy); and from that to God man (they live for others. Their life is the message for others. The highest stage). Human becomes a true human through education and they alone can be educated while other living organisms are trained; while their life is guaranteed by food, it is glorified by education. Education provides people with skills to develop and manage the economy and related services, and therefore investment in education is an investment in human capital (Lutz Hendricks, 2002). Education not only promotes the standard of living but also enhances the social values by encouraging upward mobility in the society. The chief aim of education is to train pupils to think and reason-out problems in such a way that they approach with an open and unbiased mind and judge on the basis of evidence available.

It is evident from the ancient Tamil literatures (300BC-300AD) that the educated people were given undue importance in every activity of the home and the country as well. They had enjoyed the key position in the government
(kingdom) and they were honoured by providing higher status and even kingdom too. Thiruvalluvar (41 BC), an ancient classic Tamil poet authored the world famous, "Thirukural", stressed the importance of education in one of his couplets as,

"The learned alone have eyes on face

The ignorant two sores of disgrace" - 393

Today, we live in the age of holistic temper. All the aspects of life are sought to be developed and integrated in the individual. In this context, education should not remain only as an enlightener of the mind; but it also refines the characteristics of the learning community towards the desirable needs of the society. The developments in the field of information technology provides the literal information more than sufficient, but they fall short to inculcate the desirable behaviour modifications among the learners. Lowell Monk (2004) too contends that web-based information represents conceptual (explicit) knowledge, and that students can build experiential (tacit) knowledge only through real-world, off-line, tactile explorations and learning. A similar point was reported by Hakkarainen, K. et al (2004). Therefore, schools are but organs of the nation’s life which are ultimately responsible for the development of well-integrated, all rounded, wholesome personalities of the learners along with the literal education.

Rose, Gallup and Elam (1997) found that 86% of the general public believes that support from parents is the most important way to improve schools. The role of parents in their children’s education has long been
recognized as a significant factor in educational success and school improvement (Epstein, 1996; Safran, 1996). Family participation in education was twice as predictive of students’ academic success and family socio-economic status (Walberg, 1984). Research has shown that when schools and parents work together in a cooperative relationship that promotes student’s academic success as well as the student’s emotional health (Brendel, 1998). Hence, it is the fundamental responsibility of the parents to devote the lion’s share of their time and money to provide suitable education in a right place to their children.

School choice depends to a large degree of parents’ choice behaviour. The choice behaviour is mainly influenced by the income of the family (Hastings, Kane and Staiger, 2006), education of parents (Lillard and Willis, 1994; Pal, 2001), academic achievement and teacher quality of schools (Greene et al. 1998; Vanourek et al., 1998; Kleitz et al., 2000), and so on. There is growing empirical evidence that parental preferences are very heterogeneous when choosing schools (Fossey, 1994; Armor and Peiser, 1998; Schneider and Buckley, 2002; Jacob and Lefgren, 2007). The awareness of parents on schools and on their children will definitely help the parents to have better preference on schools.

**Role of Education in the Developmental Process**

Indian education Commission (1964-66) declared that “Education has always been important, but, perhaps, never more so in man’s history than today”. Education in a country is like the nucleus of the atom around which the
economic, social, cultural and religious developments of the country revolves. Education is not a luxury which can be afforded after development has occurred; it is an integral part, an inescapable, indispensable and essential part of the developmental process of a nation. It is widely witnessed that education decides the progress and welfare status of a country (Robert E.H and Charles I. Jones, 1999). Education is the most important means which paves the way for innovation, invention, development and integration in a country (Mark Bils and Peter J.Klenow, 2000). Several scientific studies have proved the positive relationship between the literacy and Gross National Product (GNP) of a nation (Kahn, 1991; Jamison Lau and Lockheed, 1992; Studlar and Moncrief, 1997; Russell and Delancey, 2002).

The development of the individual is an index of the nation’s development (Ananth seshadri and Rodolfo Manuelli, 2005). So, people are to be educated so as to develop themselves as befitting members of the society who contribute to the material advancement of the country. Besides economic position of an individual, education encourages to strive harder to enhance his/her stability in the field he/she is. Education is like the beacon light, which actually tends to provide the individual, society and even the whole nation a true knowledge, skills, confidence, craftsmanship, courage, ability and expertise in his/her career. It is very significant in polishing the feelings, concepts, impressions and as a whole; it gives the social recognition to an individual by modifying his/her total personality. The garden of life will be colourless and without fragrance in the absence of education. In short,
education is known as a controlling grace to the young, consolation to the old, wealth to the poor and ornament to the rich.

Even today, it is widely witnessed that an educated person is more comfortable and better in status than an illiterate person in the society (Sampson, 2003; 2004; Carnevale and Desrochers, 2003). Educated persons are tending to receive a wider recognition of the public and society. This is rightly pointed out by the Tamil literature (300 BC) as, ‘educated are honoured wherever they go’ (கற்றிருக்கும் போது இன்னும் மின்னும்). And in Thirukural (41 BC) there are ten couplets stressing the importance of education, one among those says,

“Learning is wealth none could destroy
Nothing else gives genuine joy” - 400

In the same Thirukural, ten couplets stress the evils of non-learning, one among those says,

“Like beasts before men, dunces are
Before scholars of shining lore” - 410

Changing needs of Education

Indian Education Commission (1964-66) expressed that, “In the rapidly changing world today, one thing is certain. Yesterday’s educational system will not meet today, and even so, the need of tomorrow”. Change has become the daily diet of our time and society. Tomorrow will not and should not be like today. If we are to avert future shocks and crisis, we should anticipate changes. The education system which is needed will have to match the increasing
demands arising out of ‘Explosion of knowledge’ and ‘Explosion of population’. The report of the UNESCO on the development of education (2000) has rightly pointed out, “The present-day world is marked by a population explosion, the imperative requirements of economic development and the fight against hunger, the scientific and technological revolution, the multiplication of knowledge, the rise of the masses, the consequences and new expressions of the democratic idea, the extension and proliferation of information and communication media. This world is making and will continue to make many new demands on education”.

Our achievements in this technological age are marvelous. We live in a world of fantastic scientific achievements, we have conquered time and distance, the sea and the sky. We operate push button factories, while electronic computer process the data in seconds. In the human aspects, we are entering an era of the transplanted cornea, the synthetic arteries and perhaps the mechanical heart. The micro-films and cards replaced huge libraries. Closed circuit TV and computers bring the things to our drawing rooms for retrieving things by the simple push of a button. To cope with the demands of this 21st century, as rightly remarked by Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah (1975), “Education must become more than what it is today; it should be both the reflection and the active agent to change, pushing and promoting, essential or desirable changes in man and society and denying the undesirable ones”.

The goals of education are continually changing (Ganzglass et al, 2003). The advancements in science and technology and the concept of globalization
have changed the needs of education throughout the globe. For the benefits of the
growth process to be distributed in a much more egalitarian manner, the
population needs to be mobile around the world. Mobility is one of the
hallmarks of the process of development. Among developing countries, India
stands out in terms of the remarkably low levels of mobility (Gupta, 2004;
Munshi and Rosenzweig, 2009). The lack of mobility means that many sections
of the society are unable to reap the benefits of the economic growth that the
country has experienced. Hence, the main goal of present education may be to
bring the necessary changes in the minds of the learners to move vertically (in
terms of increasing their levels of educational attainment across generations)
and spatially (in terms of physically moving to the location that provides the
best opportunities). This changes in the minds of the learners could be brought
through the schools only.

Meaning and definition of School

is an institution for educating children. It is the place of experience or activity
that provides discipline or instruction, school is to train, discipline or control
somebody” and Lifco Dictionary (1994) defines, “school is the place of
teaching and learning”.

Philosophers and Educationists in India (S.P. Chaube , 1995) have
many different views on schools and its functions. According to them,
“A school is a vibrant community center, radiating life and energy all-round, a
school is a wonderful edifice, resting on the foundation of goodwill of the
public, goodwill of the parents and good will of the pupils. In a word, a well-conducted school is a happy home, a sacred shrine, a social center, a state in miniature and bewitching Brindavan, all beautifully blended into a synthetic structure”.

The school is said to be an active and formal agency which not only provides literal knowledge from books for the sake of examination, but also inculcates values, transmit the culture, provide training on desirable habits and refine the minds to shape the total personality of the individuals towards the socially acceptable direction. School is the only agency that provides both the conceptual (explicit) knowledge along with experiential (tacit) knowledge to its learners to make them fit for the society. Though the field of education is invaded by the modern technologies to provide information in scholastic aspects, schools have taken over the technologies by having a special environment, where certain quality of life and certain types of activities and occupations are provided with the object of securing the child’s development along with desirable lines.

Need of school

In ancient times the life of human was very simple. Their needs were limited and they could be easily fulfilled by the informal agencies like the family and the community. Gradually, with the rapid growth of population (explosion of population) and the explosion of knowledge in different fields the needs of mankind have increased. The form of culture and civilization also became complex and complicated. It became almost impossible for parents to
transmit them to their children. Further, most of the parents and other members of the family were busily engaged in their own vocations or other professions that they were not capable enough to educate their young ones diverse subjects of the curriculum. Hence an agency is needed to impart knowledge and shape the personalities of children to fulfill the gap created in the modern times.

The Kothari Commission (1964-66) on education pointed out, "The destiny of the nation is being shaped in her classrooms". Schools are undoubtedly and essentially the knowledge imparting sources and character building centres. It enhances the learner to acquire knowledge with skills in a very positive and conducive atmosphere.

The UNESCO committee on education (2000), headed by Prof. Dellor, specified the four basic functions of education namely **Learning to know**, **Learning to do**, **Learning to live together and Learning to be**, these are also known as four pillars of education. Among these four functions, the first two, learning to know and learning to do can be attained through the modern system of education namely, open learning, distance learning, e-learning etc., with the help of the modern technological devices. But the other two namely, learning to live together and learning to be could be done only through formal agency of education, i.e., the school. Apart from character building, schools help to preserve, transmit and develop the cultural heritage of a country.
Besides the fundamental duty of information dissemination, schools are also performing the activities such as:

1) **Transformer of cultural heritage:** Every society has cultural heritage of its own. The cultural treasure should be conserved and transmitted to the younger generation. The culture of any society gives the design and determines the framework for the development of the personalities of its members. It fixes such a framework, though it is not a fixed force by itself. Promotion of cultural transmission through its conservation has been considered from a long time as one of the chief functions of the school. Though much of social learning takes place during the contact of young children with the members of the peer group, cultural conditioning only takes place after one’s admission into schools.

2) **Connecting link between home and the society:** The family develops in the child various qualities and values namely love, sympathy, sacrifice, co-operation, tolerance and service. But all these qualities remain connected with the members of the family and its four walls. School is a connecting link between the family and the external world. In school, the child comes in contact with children belonging to different families. This contact widens his outlook with the result that the child becomes capable enough to face the challenges and multifarious problems of life and the wider society outside. So, The school is a half way house between the entirely domestic life of early childhood and the larger life that awaits the youth when he quits his parental roof.
3) **Provision of a special environment:** Informal agencies do not impart education according to a pre-planned scheme. Hence, the effect of such indefinite environment may affect adversely upon the growth and development of the child. On the other hand, school provides a simple, pure, interesting and well-organized environment before the child according to a pre-planned scheme which ensures the physical, mental, emotional and social development of the child in a natural way.

4) **Harmonious development of personality:** The family, the community and the temple, mosque or church together with other informal agencies do not have set aims and objectives of education. Their plans and schemes of education are also indefinite. Sometimes the vagueness of activities may affect the personality of the child adversely and develops in him undesirable habits and attitudes. On the contrary, the aims and activities of school are pre-planned and this ensures the harmonious development of the child.

5) **Development of cultural pluralism:** In school, children belonging to different religions, castes, creeds and social hierarchy come together and mix up freely with each other in friendly atmosphere with the result that they develop sympathy, co-operation, tolerance and respect for the views and cultures of others in a natural way.

6) **Propagation of ideals and ideologies of state:** The School is an important agency for the propagation of ideals and ideologies of each
state in the shortest possible time. This is why all the democratic, fascist and communist states have assigned due importance to schools today.

7) **Perpetuation and development of society:** Society reviews and develops itself through the active co-operation of school. All social problems and needs of society are flashed in one way or the other in school which provides the desired solutions for all the problems of society. In this way, social progress goes on with the help of school.

8) **Encouragement of corporate life:** Individual life needs socialization. The child should be encouraged to be more and more social in his outlook and behaviour. School provides these experiences for the child to understand social behaviour and develop in him a sense of social responsibility and corporate life.

9) **Creation of educated citizens:** In democracy, school has a special importance. Children learn their rights and duties and develop love, affection, sympathy, co-operation, tolerance and responsibility in school. With the development of these socially desirable values they prove useful citizens when they become adults.

10) **Providing better social life than home:** Under the influence of group life in school a child learns many social qualities and courtesies. Since the physical surroundings of school are healthy, there is an ample provision for games, sports and various kinds of cultural activities. A family cannot provide all these facilities.
11) **Co-operation of different agencies:** The School is the only agency through which co-operation of different agencies namely the family, the community and the state may be successfully achieved. It’s why all these agencies try to extend their full co-operation in all the activities of school. Without the active co-operation of these agencies school can not achieve its objectives.

12) **Agent for national integration:** The schools play an important role in creating a national vision, feelings of national cohesion, social breath and cultural understanding among the pupils of different ages and places. They help in integrating the feelings, thoughts and actions of the pupils through their varied activities and programmes both curriculum and extra-curriculum. Schools are but organs of the nation’s life which are ultimately responsible for the development of well integrated, all round, wholesome personalities of its pupils physically, socially, morally, emotionally and intellectually. They have to develop moral character as well as national character.

Hence the school is the place where the learner not only acquires the literals and numerals, but also the socially desirable qualities such as obedience, good manners, good habits, cleanliness, character building, punctuality, orderliness, citizenship, courage, social feelings, social consciousness, moving with others, confidence, responsibility, etc. Hence, it is apt to say that it (school) is the sacred place where a holy plant (a child) is grown under the care taking gardener (teacher). He weeds out the evil things,
put good manures, water it, apply pesticides where pests (evil habits) attack, broom and prune the plant and enjoy the positive growth and good yield, development and progress of the plant (student). Thus the schools can do miracles not only in the education process but also in building the qualities pertaining to development and integration.

In a nut-shell the experts view that an ideal school should have,

- Academic excellence
- Continuous updating their infra-structure to meet with the recent developments
- Avenues for teachers’ progress.
- Personality development programmes.
- Adequate facilities for extra curricular activities
- Facilities for Co–curricular activities
- Standard curriculum and syllabus
- Well constructed buildings with required space
- Qualified, trained and competent teachers and administrators
- Pleasing environment and pleasant behavior of teachers
- Good evaluation system
- Guidance and counselling cell
- Effective management and managers
The Role of Parents in Educating their Children

The investment in human capital through education is universally recognized as an essential component of economic development. While education endows individuals with the means to enhance their skills, knowledge, health and productivity, it also enhances the economy’s ability to develop and adopt new technology. Not surprisingly therefore, increasing education levels is an important policy concern in most countries (Pushkar Maitra and Anurag Sharma, 2009). But at the same time, the introduction of new information and technology for receiving the knowledge, the cultural transfer between and within the countries shocked the minds of the orthodox parents. In this situation, they had the conflict that they can neither cut themselves away completely from the culture and tradition of the bygone times, nor can they bury themselves in the present, forgetting the future. This situation is rightly remarked by Kothari Commission (1964-66) as, “we stand at a critical cross-road of history where the choice is between education and disaster. We must either build a sound, balanced, effective and imaginative educational system to meet our developing needs and respond to our challenging aspirations or be content to be swept aside by the strong currents of history”.

Education has been recognized as a basic human right since the 1948 adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The UNESCO and UNICEF report (2007) also addressed the issue of education from a right-based approach. Hence, almost all the people in the country not only recognized their
right to education but also witnessed the implementation of this long recognized right to learn. It has been lucidly understood and emphasized by educationists, administrators and economists that the development of a nation is the “function” of education. It is a well known fact that investment in human resources in large part determines the future prospects of mankind (Becker and Tamura, 1990). Increases in the acquired abilities of the people throughout the world hold the key to future economic productivity and to its contributions of human development and welfare. The rates of return on such investments, although calculated very approximately and sometimes arbitrarily, were shown to be as high as, if not higher than, those on other kinds of investment (Psacharopoulos G. and Patrinos, 2002). Thus more money has been invested in education of the children.

It is widely acknowledged that the parents are the first teachers and teachers are the second parents of a child. It is true, because before formal schooling, a child learns many things from his/her parents and family members and later he/she learns from its environment and finally he/she goes to school for formal education. Hence, the role, rather than ‘a role’, it is ‘the responsibility’, of parents and family members in educating their children is of greater importance than any other members in the society. Research studies have stressed the importance of parental involvement in children’s education (Cotton, K., 1992; Epstein, 1996). Rose, Gallup and Elam (1997) found that lack of parental involvement is the biggest problem faced by the public schools. So, parents are the real care takers to see whether their wards get the
maximum educational benefits with higher standard of knowledge which suits to the present style of living or not. An ancient literature (100BC) expressed the role of the father in educating their children as,

“Education will come to an end with father
Delicious food will come to an end with mother
Everything will come to an end with the wife”

And Thirukural (41 BC) also pointed out the responsibility of the father in educating their children as,

“A father’s duty to his son is
To seat him in front of the wise” - 67

In this ever changing world we need people of creative talents who do things differently rather than doing different things. To cope with the challenging needs and demands of the present technological world, young ones are expected to learn more, have better awareness on the environment, analyze the situation, and act creatively. So, the parents have now become the part and parcel of the education of their children as well as their physical, mental, moral and social developments (Williams and Chavkin, 1989; Plunkett S.W., 2003). Parents are also aware of that mere literal education (getting degree or diploma) is obsolete today, so they not only tend to care for better literal education but also give due care and have more attention on imparting culture, inculcating desirable characters, developing career and bringing out the unique talents of their wards to suit to the needs of the present times.
The Indian constitution (1950) guaranteed the right to education under Article 41 and Article 45 provided for free and compulsory education for all children till they reach the age of 14 years. Though the government formulated the constitution, it is the responsibility of each and every parental community to adhere to it and admit their children in schools. But due to various economic, social, cultural and religious factors many parents do not pay due attention to the constitution and put their future generation (children) in dark. It is rightly pointed out by Kingdon (2007) that, India has a paradoxical co-existence of the world’s third largest reservoir of scientific and technical personnel and the world’s largest number of illiterates.

Besides the above cited factors, the *family norms* of present day, (majority of the families in India are practicing the nuclear family norms with one or two children. This practice has paved the way for having over concern and care on their wards than the parents of the past) and the *expectation of parents* are influencing more on the education of the children. The over expectations of parents from their children, beyond their capacity, and on schools, beyond its capability, have sometimes given an adverse effect on children. Out of over concern on their wards, parents admit their children in schools where the curriculum is an over-doze or the beyond the capacity of the children and vice-versa. It is the *oppression* (it refers that, being treated the children with continual injustice) from the parents who want every one of their sons and daughters to be either a doctor or an engineer irrespective of the child’s aptitude or mental caliber. On the other hand, it is the *suppression*
from the teacher who tailors the students’ area of wisdom to suit his own limited sphere of knowledge. Sandwiched between these two forces the student is finally ‘cured’ by the depression (it refers that, being sad and without enthusiasm) system of examination also. Thus the poor boy and girl becomes the victim of the triangular forces of oppression, suppression and depression.

**Awareness of Parents on Schools**

The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2005) describes awareness as “that knowing something; knowing that something exists and is important; being interested in something”. Awareness is the base for making a choice or preference on something or someone. Taking decision without awareness is like diving into the sea without knowing swimming. To admit the children in schools, parents must have thorough awareness on schools, awareness on their children’s ability and attitude, awareness on their family financial position, and so on. A study by Epstein (1995) revealed that most students at all levels—elementary, middle, and high school—want their families to be more knowledgeable parents about schooling and are willing to take active roles in assisting communications between home and school. But, the reality says that 46% of parents claimed that they were unaware of choice policy of the school (Wilson, Harold E. et al, 1992). Another study by West, A. et al. (1995) revealed that a significant proportion of parents do not have the necessary information or knowledge to be able to exercise their power in relation to choosing schools. Ruth Curran Neild (2005) found that most parents were
hungry for information about schools but lacked specifics on academic performance or children’s chances of admission. The study also suggested that more detailed school information and a district commitment to counseling parents were essential for making well-informed choices.

Preferences of Parents to admit their children in schools

There are number of studies focusing on determinants of child schooling. Pal (2004) analyzes child schooling data for Peruvian households and reports that parents’ education positively affects child schooling at primary and secondary levels, but not at post-secondary levels. Dreze and Kingdon (2001) find that probability of participation of children increases with parental education. Evidence from Pakistan suggests that parental education significantly increases the education of their sons (Holmes 2003).

Several studies showed that the parental choices at entry to primary level are: the proximity, safety, and care, a major emphasis was given to the ‘happiness of the child’ (Alison Petch, 1986; Bristol Lea, 1995; Hugh Foot et al, 2000; Rebecca Theobald, 2005). But at secondary level the preferences of parents differs significantly than that of primary level. The parental choices at entry to secondary level are: good discipline, good examination results, good teachers and good teacher-pupil relations (West and Varlaam, 1991; John Williams et al, 2001; Buckley and Schneider, 2002; Onuka and Arowojolu, 2008).
Need for the study

Immediately after independence, India faced so many problems like over population, hunger, poverty (three out of four), low literacy rate (18.33%), communal disharmony, racial difference, Low GNP and other vices. So, it was the prime responsibility of the then government to concentrate on the most crucial problems such as poverty, religious clashes and so on. People were striving hard to eke-out their lives with daily bread and butter and the children were assigned to perform their family occupations only. In those days, schools in India were limited and were situated in towns only. Majority of the schools were run by the government, local bodies and a few private organizations with inadequate infrastructure. The government was the monopoly in designing the curriculum, framing syllabus, finalizing the fee structure and preparing the pattern of evaluation in the final examination. People felt that acquiring education was to fit for none other than the white collar jobs to lead a simple and comfortable life. So, only little importance was given to education by the parents. Hence to improve the literacy rate of the country, the government set up an education division in the planning commission (1951-1955) which worked out the objectives, priorities, requisite manpower and estimated the financial resources.

The life in modern times is complex and complicated. Education is now became a device which helps in modifying the skills and behaviors of an individual to be creative and productive and to suit to the needs of the present demands. In recent years, there has been an almost world wide interest in the
possibility of making human resources as engines of economic growth (Barro, 2001; Huggett, Mark et al, 2006). In the production process, human resources, in association with other factors of production like land, capital and organization contribute to the wealth and health of the nation (Ananth Seshadri and Rodolfo Manuelli, 2005). So, education is viewed as the human resource development and it provides people with the skills to develop and manage the economy and related services, and therefore investment in education is an investment in human capital, that is, in the productive capacity of the people (Hall and Jones, 1999). Education not only provides skills for performing vocational tasks but also promotes social values by encouraging upward mobility in the society, and thus it acts as a screening device to select the ablest people for the best job. They are to be educated so as to develop themselves as befitting members of the society who contribute to the material advancement of the country. Hence the modern education aims at preparation of youngsters for their vocation, profession or occupation and value developments to practice a happy and prosperous career throughout their life period by reducing the gap between the haves and have-nots.

In India there has been a significant increase in educational attainment of individuals over the last 70 years or so with women gaining the most in terms of increases in educational attainment (Pushkar Maitra and Anurag Sharma, 2009). In the recent past the awareness on education has been increased and parents are preferred to educate their children in the schools where their wards can attain good academic records and develop the socially
desirable characters. Apart from the schools run by the government, government has also encouraged the privates to start new schools to cater the needs of the society. Private institutions have permitted to design their curriculum, fee structure, appointment of teachers, teaching methods and other infrastructural facilities. So, many private organizations have started new schools and have made a perfect competition in the educational market with that of government schools. The quality speaks the survival of the schools. Therefore they have introduced many innovations in their curriculum, techniques in their methods of teaching, technological facilities in their schools and so on to attract the parents through which they are trying to increase their admission. As inferred by Power S. and Clark A. (2000) in general, schools were largely positive about what they were doing. However, interviews with parents revealed that schools gave a very different impression. Hence a study is needed to find out the awareness of parents on schools and on their children and to identify their preference for admitting their children in schools, which will help the school organizations to make their institutions suitable to the expectations of the parents.

Statement of the problem

As remarked by the Kothari Commission on Education (1964-66), “The destiny of the nation is being shaped in her classrooms”, the schools play a predominant role to fulfill the objectives of education and help the students to acquire knowledge and skills to the possible extent. An ideal school provides the platform for its learners to keep them abreast with knowledge, skills,
socially desirable habits and worldly experiences that needed to mould his/her personality. Schools are not the buildings made up of stones and mortars but they are the temples made up of knowledge and wisdom of the younger generation. The technological advancements, the need for quality education, the changes in the lifestyle, and the globalization have created better awareness on education and it drags the attention of the parents to take effective initiation in the education of their children.

The concept of globalization has created a vacuum in the midst of educated people. Creative and productive personnel are demanded throughout the world. So as to fill up the vacuum, the government of India and the various state governments in India have focused their attention towards quality education. Tamilnadu has performed reasonably well in terms of literacy growth during the decade 1991-2001. The state's literacy rate increased from 62.66% in 1991 to 73.4% in 2001 (Venkatesh Athrey, 2001), which is above the national average. The state has witnessed phenomenal success in its policy of expanding educational opportunities. Towards this, significant contributions have been made by the programmes like school enrollment, midday meals, school improvement and community support, and parent-teachers associations. So, Tamilnadu top among Indian states with about 100% Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in primary and upper primary education (National Network of Education, 2008). The community awareness and participation in educational affairs help to equalize educational opportunities among different sections of people.
Besides this, Tamilnadu has attempted a series of quality programmes, one among them was the liberalizing the clenches on private schools. This liberalization has paved the way for emerging more number of private schools in Tamilnadu which has made the educational market a competitive one. Quality decides the survival of the school in this market and it not only decides the survival but also distinguishes the nature of one school from the other. The profile, the curriculum and the method of transaction, the quality assurance given by school, the personality development programmes and other related announcements made by the schools have confused the parents in selecting the schools for their children. Indirectly, parents are directed to have a thorough knowledge on schools and on their children to get-rid of the confusions caused by the mere advertisements and hearsays.

Hence the investigator has planned to study the awareness of parents on schools and on their children and the preference of parents in selecting a suitable school for their children to make them fit to the present world of competition and for better survival. Therefore the study is entitled as, "A Study on the Awareness and the Preference of Parents on Admission of their children in schools".

Definition of the terms used in the Study

Educational terminologies have different interpretations. In any research on education, it is desirable to define the key terminologies used so that there is no misunderstanding of the theme as well as the results of the study. The following key terms are used in the study and defined for classification:
Awareness

The great Lifco dictionary (1994) explains awareness as "state of being aware or conscious" and the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005) describes awareness as "that knowing something; knowing that something exists and is important; being interested in something".

Above these definitions, the investigator used awareness to denote the knowledge of knowing and understanding something or somebody as important to see and sense and to judge. It is that having knowledge or realization of somebody or something with practical insight.

Preference

The Webster's New Dictionary and Thesaurus (1989) defines preference is the act of choosing, liking, or favouring one above another; higher estimation; the state of being preferred; that which is preferred; advantage given to one person, country, etc. over others.

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005) preference is a greater interest in or desire for somebody/ something than somebody/ something else: a thing that is liked better or best. It is a liking for something more than something else.

In this study the investigator had used this term to denote the choice, liking, or selection. It is the interest for our better or best selection among the available items/ ones.
Admission

The *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (1989) meaning of admission is ‘the entering or being allowed to enter a building, society, school etc’.

In this study the investigator had used the term admission to denote enrolling the child in schools for imparting education and inculcating socially desirable qualities.

Parents

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1984) defines, Parents as, “one who has begotten or borne offspring, father or mother; forefather. One who has adopted a child; animal or plant from which others are derived”.

The *Webster’s New Dictionary and Thesaurus* (1989) defines parents as “a father or a mother; plant or an animal from which others are derived; an author, cause, and source”.

The *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (1991) defines parent as “father or mother; animal or plant from which others are produced”.

In this study the investigator has used the term “parent” as either the father or mother from whom the young ones are begotten and rising. They are the ancestor or origin of the young ones.
Schools

The Webster's New Dictionary and Thesaurus (1989) defines school as “a place or institution, with its building, for instruction and learning, all of its teachers and students a regular session of teaching; formal education”.

J.S.Ross (1992) defines, “Schools are institutions devised by civilized man for the purpose of aiding in the preparation of the young ones for well adjusted and efficient members of society”.

In this study the investigator could see that school is a building or institution for educating children, a place of teaching and learning or for giving and getting instruction, discipline, training and controlling one’s mind. It is a place or institution with all of its teachers and students.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of this research study are as follows:

- To explore the awareness of the parents on schools in relation to the variables such as educational qualification of the parents, income of the parents, class of admission of the child, type of management of school, distance from their home to school, mode of transportation to school, locality, gender of the child, and pattern of education.

- To find out the differences, if any, among the awareness of the parents on schools based on the variables specified.

- To identify the preferences of parents in admitting their children in schools on the basis of variables specified.
• To find out the differences, if any, among the preferences of parents on admission of their children in schools in relation to the variables specified.

• To find out the relationship between the awareness of the parents on schools and the preference made by them on admission of their children in schools.

Scope of the study

The purpose of any research in education is to contribute a valuable suggestion to the problem studied and the research topic should be selected in such a way that the result has direct or indirect impact on the present educational scenario. The study might help the parents, management of schools and the government to plan and cater to the needs of the society and provide better schooling experiences to students in the most possible way at all levels and standards. The present study aims at exploring the awareness and the preference of parents on admission of their children in schools. In the present educational set-up, where mushroom growth of private schools have emerged, the preference made on schools, plays a vital role in their survival. Hence the presence of preference made or the absence of the same may have profound implication in the part of parents, schools, government and student.

The result of the study could provide the required requisites like curricular, co-curricular, extra-curricular and infrastructural facilities of schools through them parents can analyze, compare and select the suitable schools to the level and calibre of their children. It would reveal whether the school is just
the choice for their expectations or it is the right choice for a constructive process towards the total development of the child as recommended by the UNESCO Committee on Education (2000). This study might help the parents in identifying their ignorance on schools and on their children. The study might also contribute to the better planning of need-based selection of schools that suits the current challenges in the field. It could also help the parents to compromise themselves with the available schools and its qualities and plan for providing the extra courses or classes, if needed, which are not provided by the school.

This study might help the administrators of schools in identifying the lacuna in their schools and make them fit and suitable to the expected level of the society. It could also help the schools in redesigning their curriculum, modifying their teaching-learning techniques, restructuring their physical facilities to attract the parents by providing better education. The results of the study might be of immense use in providing the expected curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and expected physical facilities to the organizations those who want to start new schools.

The preference made by the parents might also help the government in monitoring the existing private schools, in taking decisions on whether or not the continuation would be given for the existing school and giving the permission for new schools. It could also help the government to identify the status of the schools run by the government and local bodies and make them fit with the expectations of the society and to cope with the changing scenario.
It could help the government to encourage new private schools by liberalizing the clutches on them and also decide up on providing the autonomous status to the deserving schools.

Students are the benefactors of the educational system. This study could help them to have better awareness on quality factors and judge the status of the schools where they are admitted. This awareness might help them to schedule their academic activities for their betterment. In short the research study has direct implication on the government, parents and students. Therefore, the scope of the study is evident from the broad application aspects which are expected to be highlighted through the analysis of response.

**Delimitations of the study**

Research studies generally may have limitations due to many factors. It is the responsibility of the researcher to see that the study is conducted with maximum care in order to be reliable. However the following limitations are inevitable in the present study.

The present study is confined to the parents in the selected schools in Coimbatore district only. Time permitting this would have been conducted in the whole state of Tamilnadu or in India.

School learning involves the active participation of students, teachers, school authorities and the parents. This study takes the awareness and the preference of parents only.

Many factors may influence the preference of the parents on admission of their children, but only selected factors were taken for this study.
Despite the above cited delimitations, sufficient care has been taken in selecting the sample, constructing tools, gathering suitable data and making appropriate analysis etc.

**Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter, which has been just concluded, dealt with the introduction, objectives and statement of the problem. The second chapter deals with the review of related literature. The third chapter describes the methods and procedures of the study. The fourth chapter presents the statistical analysis, results and interpretations. Finally the fifth chapter gives the findings, suggestions, recommendations and conclusion followed by bibliography and appendices.