The framers of the constitution of Independent India regarded the spread of "Primary Education" throughout the country as an important objective. This can be seen from Article 45 of the Directive principles of State Policy, which lays down that... "The State shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years". (Constitution of India 1949).

Under the 'Compulsory Education Act' notices are issued to all the parents and guardians whose children are five years old and above, and who are not as yet enrolled with any of the Municipal or privately run schools. Those parents or guardians who take no notice of the first "nonattendance notification" are allowed to forward their explanation. This gives the parents and guardians the opportunity of approaching the School Board with any reasonable excuses, such as incurable sickness, blindness, etc. If after reasonable time no notice has been taken of the notification, for not enrolling the child, or even appearing to make any excuses, then the School Board, together with the Municipal authorities prosecutes the parents, and demands their appearance in court to answer the charges made against them. The parents come from the lowest socio-economic groups, and although the fine is not a heavy one, the fact that the parent has to leave whatever work he (or she) may be employed in, plus the expense of transport. But this usually has the desired effect, and the child commences to attend the school.
Primary Education not only forms the most important part of educational career but it also covers the largest period of formal education. It is functioning in villages and big cities. It touches almost all the household.

In Poona city area there are more than 30,000 children in the age group of 6 to 11 years (I to IV standards) who come under the compulsory education act and the remaining are about more than 40,000 who are in the age group of 11 to 14 years (V to VII standards). The primary schools are opened in different paths as per demand and need of the citizens, because the parents from the lower socio-economic group find it difficult to send their children to the better managed schools. The present rate of expansion in enrollment is 3,000 pupils per year. To provide free and compulsory primary education to all the children in the city area has led to phenomenal expansion of primary schools. It has created a number of difficult problems such as heterogeneous grouping of extremely varied socio-economic backgrounds, classes of large size, a growing number of teachers and need to provide some ancillary services like health services, provision of nutritious food, etc. Moreover our expectations of what a primary school should achieve are for beyond the earlier objective of mere literacy. We desire to create a new social order based on democracy and socialism. The attitude and the behaviour pattern which will create and establish such social order have to be built up in the children. In the acquisition of knowledge and skill, the task which primary schools of to-day are expected to perform
has become far more exacting than it was previously. The School Board, Paona Municipal Corporation has been controlling primary education since 1925.

The local authority may be suited to handle primary education in the conditions prevailing in its areas. All the parents even the most uncultured and uneducated have a desire that their children should be properly educated. Poona Municipal Corporation has been dealing with the problems like health, education, transport and housing, etc. Education being one of the important factors, its quality or standard should be scrupulously maintained.

As I have been serving in the School Board, Poona Municipal Corporation, I have felt inclined to trace in detail as to how far the Poona Municipal Corporation has endeavoured, through its school board, to fulfil the directive principle of State Policy laid down by the Indian constitution.

Dr. M.P. Mangudkar's comprehensive report on the progress of the Poona Corporation during a century was published in 1960. It has amongst other activities given in one chapter some facts and figures about primary education in Poona.

A further more detailed study up to the present day was needed about "The progress of Poona city education department (the School Board of the Poona Municipal Corporation) and its contribution to the development of primary education".

The importance of Poona as a centre of education and as a growing industrial city has been dealt with in this thesis.
My study and conclusions may I hope, be useful to those who survey the progress of primary education in other cities and towns.

I have exhaustively discussed with facts and figures, the difficulties in the full implementation of the Compulsory Primary Education Act. My study may be of interest to the Poona Municipal Corporation and the education department of Maharashtra State.

I have also given statistics about parents who are keen or negligent about their children's education. I have discussed the various groups in the society as far as their desire and ability to send their children to school. Therefore my material will also be useful to students of social stratification. My suggestions for further progress in the implementation of Compulsory Primary Education may perhaps be of interest to local and State establishment authorities and also to social workers.

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