INTRODUCTION
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Education has always been important but never so important as today. 'In a world based on science and technology, it is education that determines the level of prosperity, welfare and security of the people. On the quality and number of persons coming out of our schools and colleges will depend our success in the great enterprise of national reconstruction. 1

Present System of Education in India

The present system of education has been subjected to very great criticism as being wasteful, unrealistic and unproductive. It stifles individuality, encourages memorisation and makes instruction lifeless and mechanical. It is meant for the elite and it prepares the students for white-collar jobs. There is very little provision for manual activity in general education. The failure to provide diversified courses of study makes it difficult for many students to secure employment at the end of the course. The whole system is rigid and inelastic and is characterized by a dull and monotonous uniformity. Above all it does not meet the demands and pressures of

our contemporary society with its manifold scientific and technological development.

**Education and Work Experience**

In the opinion of the Education Commission (1964-66) the existing system of education is not related to the life of the people and the needs of the society. There is a great difference between the objectives of education and the concerns of national development. Therefore no reform is more important than the transformation of education to meet the present requirements of the country. According to the Commission, this transformation is possible 'if education is related to productivity;

- strengthens social and national integration;
- consolidates democracy as a form of government and helps the country to adopt it as a way of life;
- hastens the process of modernisation; and
- strives to build character by cultivating, social, moral and spiritual values'.

In order to relate education to life and productivity, the Commission recommended that work experience should be introduced as an integral part of education.

**Work Experience in Education: A Historical Review**

The concept of work as a tool of education was

2. Ibid., p.6.
recognized even before the advent of formal education. In ancient India, though vocational or professional training did not form an integral part of general education, the disciples had to do a lot of manual work in the 'ashram' of their 'gurus' where they lived and had their education. In these days, education was through observation and work. They had to do every kind of manual work for living and learning. They combined manual work with the education of the mind and spirit. Education was related to the life of pupils and the dichotomy between education and work did not exist.

With the introduction of formal education in our country, education became bookish and mechanical, stereotyped and rigidly uniform, and also tended to withdraw the child temporarily, if not permanently, from participation in community activities and to train him in an artificial environment for his future role in the society. It failed to keep pace with social, political, economic and industrial changes. It was not essentially dynamic and forward looking. This created a cleavage between the world of work and the world of study.

The need to change the over-academic nature of formal education has now been widely recognized. Deploring the ineffectiveness of book learning, Rabindranath Tagore emphasized the role of manual work in imparting
all-round education. He advocated the development of manipulative skill as a part of education. According to him, 'maimed hands and crippled feet and a general lack of manipulative skill and movement, were considered to be the height of gentility till the other day. How wrong and pernicious was this mentality, was not realized until the profession of the white collar came to be overcrowded. Then it was seen how helpless a creature was the educated unemployed. Mere book learning is a poor vessel to take one across the high sea of life'.\(^3\) He also added that 'a man may be eminent in book learning but his education remains incomplete if he has not learnt to put his hands to good and efficient purpose'.\(^4\)

According to Gandhiji, education to be real must be based on activity and experience, and work is the pivot round which learning should revolve and evolve. He made a forceful plea for the introduction of manual work in education. 'He not only strongly opposed a purely literary education because it unfitted youth for the manual work in which most of them would be engaged during the rest of their lives but he believed education through economic work to be a great moral resource as well'.\(^5\)

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In 1957, Zakir Hussain, in a conference at Turkey, remarked thus: 'Education is possible only through educationally productive work which is essentially the work of the mind, be it accompanied by manual work or not.'

Nehru has often stated that work-oriented education alone could resolve the tangle of unemployment among the educated young men. Ramanathan has pointed out that the principle of work experience is a unique gift to the current educational thought of India.

A number of Commissions and Committees also in their reports, have pointed out the defects in the purely literary type of education and recommended the introduction of manual work in the school curriculum. The Wood's Education Despatch of 1854, the Hunter Commission of 1882, Hartog Committee in 1934, all emphasized the vital role of vocational education for the country's economic development. The Hunter Commission recommended that 'in a particular class of high schools there should be two avenues, one leading to the entrance examination of the university and the other of a more practical character intended to

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fit the youth for commercial, vocational or non-literary pursuits.\textsuperscript{8} The Central Advisory Board of Education (1935) envisaged the introduction of gainful experience at the primary stage. It recommended that at the lower secondary stage, some form of manual training should be provided which would aim at the development of practical aptitudes and also would be compulsory. The Wood-Abbot Committee (1937) in their report, stated that 'manual activities should find a place in the curriculum not because the pupils or some of them will earn a living by manual labour but because satisfaction of the desire to make or create is necessary to balanced development. It is indeed often the key to a boy's serenity.'\textsuperscript{9} It also stressed the need for manual activities in education for the sake of harmonious development of personality.

The importance of manual work and craft was further emphasized by the Zakir Hussain Committee (1937). According to them, 'the most effective approach to the problem of providing an integral all-sided education, is to educate children through some suitable form of productive work. This work is to be rich in educative possibilities.


The object of this new educational scheme is not primarily the production of Craftsman, able to practice some craft mechanically, but rather the exploitation for educative purposes of resources implicit in craft work.¹⁰

The Sargent Report (1944) also recommended providing of a good all-round education combined with some preparation in the later stages for the careers which pupils pursue on leaving their schools.

The University Education Commission Report (1948) and the Secondary Education Commission Report (1953) went a step further in stressing the need for vocational training in schools.

The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) emphatically pointed out the weakness of the unilateral theoretical type of study in the following words... 'It is narrow and one sided and fails to train the whole personality of the student. For many decades, it has provided only academic instruction which meant teaching him a certain number of subjects which either gave information which the adults considered useful or trained him in certain skills like reading and writing. The non-cognitive aspects of his personality - his practical aptitudes, his emotions, his appreciation, his tastes were largely ignored.'¹¹ Therefore the Commission recommended diversi-

¹⁰. Safaya, op.cit.,p.189.
ification of courses at the secondary stage. This resulted in the creation of multipurpose schools.

The Indian Education Commission (1964-66) has pointed out that the present system of school education is extremely academic, bookish in character and examination-oriented. Therefore the Commission recommended that 'work experience should be introduced as an integral part of all education - general or vocational.'

Not only in India but in other countries also, educationists have recognized the importance of manual work in education. Educational thinkers like Aristotle, Comenius, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Herbart, Froebel, Ottilie Solomon, Dewey and others stressed the importance of work in education. Aristotle was in favour of activities as they helped a person in becoming a better consumer. Comenius was of the opinion that the children should learn the important principles of mechanical arts so that they could understand what was going on around them and might enter the world of work easily. According to Rousseau, agriculture was the best and happiest of all occupations. To him, the child would learn more by one hour of manual work than by a whole day's verbal instruction. 'Instead of making the child stick to his books, keep him busy in the

workshop. His hands will work to the profit of the mind', \(^{13}\) observes Rousseau. Pestalozzi, the father of the manual training movement, also stressed the importance of manual work in education. He was of the opinion that much time and labour could be saved by combining theoretical education with practical work. Herbart emphasized the development of mechanical dexterity.

It is an accepted fact that what children learn through their own experience makes a deep and lasting impression on them and becomes part of their personality and life. In the curricula of most educational systems a place is found for manual work. In the Scandinavian countries, a system was developed based on crafts. 'In order to realize the many contributions handicrafts can make to the optimum development of children, a system, called 'Sloyd training', was introduced in the primary schools. Through the construction of a series of articles of wood of increasing complexity, it was expected that desirable habits and attitudes of work would be formed. At the same time the development of necessary skills for entering further apprenticeship training would be ensured.'\(^{14}\)

\(^{13}\) Mukherjee, \textit{op.cit.}, p.55.

In the Swedish system also 'the emphasis was on a system of manual and mental training, based chiefly on carpentry.'

Two different types of work experience programmes came into vogue in the United States of America. One was entirely based upon the co-operation of outside agencies in providing opportunities for work. This was a part study and part work type of programme. 'The usual procedure allows students to work one half day on school released time and to attend regular classes in the school during the other half day. However, some schools use a 'week-about' or 'month-about' plan in which students work a week or a month full time and attend the school full-time for the next week or month. Students are frequently paired off to give the employer benefit of continuous services of student workers, but in the high school level this is not always true, especially if the split-day procedure is used.' The students in this type of programme were enrolled in the schools in the regular fashion. They selected their own courses and registered for the work experience. In the in-school work experience programme, work was done under the direct supervision of the school. Experience was provided through the school programmes, camps and community service.

15. Ibid., p.12.

In the Socialist countries, the concept of work experience is based upon the educational and political ideas of Marx and Lenin. Marx was of the opinion that part-work part-study system of schooling was more suitable for children than full time study. He also recommended that 'the children between the ages of 9 to 12 should do two hours' work daily at home or in a workshop, those between the ages of 16 and 17, six hours.' 17

The Soviet concept of polytechnical education means an education organized around the basic productive forces of an industrial society. It covers the entire school education, both primary and secondary. The purpose of the programme is to make the pupils familiar with the scientific bases of modern production. It is also considered as 'essential for those who will enter institutions of higher learning as for those who will take a vocation.' 18

In China also, production became an integral part of education and covered a wide range of activities. For this, half-work half-study schools came into existence and productive work was introduced in the full-time schools

17. The Concept of Work Experience, op.cit., p.20.
18. Ibid., p.25.
also. In these schools, education and production received equal attention. In insisting on productive labour, the communists believe that the purpose of education is an all-round development of the students. According to the Communist interpretation, education should help a person develop morally, intellectually and physically and make him a cultured, socialist minded worker. A cultured, socialist minded worker is interpreted as 'a man who is both politically conscious and educated. He is able to understand both mental and manual work. He is what we regard as developed in an all round way, qualified both politically and professionally. He is a worker intellectual and an intellectual worker.'

Work Experience and Basic Education

Basic education, as conceived and explained by Gandhiji, is essentially an education for life and an education through life. 'It aims at creating eventually a social order free from exploitation and violence. That is why productive, creative and socially useful work in which all boys and girls may participate irrespective of any distinction of caste or creed or class, is placed at

the very centre of Basic education. 20 He attached the highest value to the imparting of all round education to children through creative and productive activities and promoting in them the qualities of self-reliance and self-help. It was stated that the fundamental objective of Basic education was nothing less than the development of the child's total personality which would include productive efficiency as well.

The concept of work experience is closely related to the philosophy underlying basic education. Both systems aim at linking education with productive techniques. The Commission also clarified that the concept of work experience was essentially similar to the philosophy of basic education as propounded by Mahatma Gandhi and it might be described as a redefinition of his thinking in terms of a society launched on the road to industrialization. It was further observed that the essential features of basic education, viz., productivity, correlation and integration of the school and the community were present in work experience also. Consequently great emphasis was laid on work experience in the new 10+2 pattern of education.

But work experience differs from Basic education in certain aspects. Work experience is a more comprehensive concept than Basic education. Basic education is woven round the primary stage and work experience extends the same principles to the higher stages also. Basic education always stress the importance of relating education to productivity, but it has very limited potentials. Work experience, on the other hand, aims at fulfilling the needs of the present society that has to be transformed with the help of science and technology. In basic education the emphasis has been on simple craft work but work experience encourages the use of modern machines driven by electricity and other sources of power in keeping with the requirements of the current technological age.

Though the Government of India accepted the idea of Basic education, it is sad to note that the scheme failed because of the negative attitude to work of several participants in the educational process. Now Gandhiji's ideas are coming back in newer dimensions to make education relevant to our times.

The Indian Education Commission (1964-66) has eschewed the term 'craft education' for another term of wider connotation viz., 'work experience'. 
Objectives of Work Experience Programme

According to the Indian Education Commission (1964-66), work experience can

(1) relate education to life and productivity,
(2) reduce the cleavage between the world of work and the world of study and also the social stratification based on it,
(3) acquaint pupils with the world of work and make employment easier,
(4) help to increase national productivity, and
(5) help social and national integration. 21

Need and Importance of the Study

It is on the basis of the recommendation of the Indian Education Commission that the Government of Kerala have introduced work-experience as an integral part of the curriculum in all the schools in the state in a phased manner from the academic year 1969-70. In the beginning it was implemented in a few selected schools and gradually expanded to cover the entire schools in a reasonable period. In 1976, the programme has been in effective operation and a very pertinent question that needs to be answered in this connection is: to what extent has the programme succeeded in realising its set objectives?

An objective assessment of the programme will definitely throw light on both the strength and weaknesses of the programme and provide adequate guidelines for making the programme more effective and significant.

The problem

The problem selected for the study is: 'A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF KERALA.'

Definition of terms

Critical: Barnhart defines the term critical as 'involving skilful judgement as to truth, merit' etc.22

Funk defines critical in the New Standard Dictionary as 'a thorough treatment of a subject.'23

'Critical' in this study means a thorough study of the programme to find out the adequacy of the programme, the problems concerning it and the improvement needed for the effective functioning of the programme.

Study: Websters defines the term 'study' as 'an act or process of acquiring by one's own efforts, knowledge or information of a particular subject.'24


Work Experience: 'Work experience has been defined as 'participation' in the actual productive situation in work in its natural setting. This participation does not merely involve 'doing'. It is not vocational education. But it prepares the mind for vocations. The participation provides pre-vocational experiences.' 25

It is 'practical activity in the production of goods or services exercised in a normal way in business, industrial, professional and institutional fields.' 26

It is 'participation in productive work in school, in the home, in a workshop, on a farm, in a factory or in any other productive situation.' 27 Mason and Haines explained the term in the generic sense 'as experience in a productive work setting to derive desired educational outcomes.' 28 In a wider sense work experience means 'actual experience in an occupation before a person begins a full-time job.' 29


Secondary School: It is the third stage of school education in Kerala. In Kerala every pupil has to undergo four years of lower primary education and three years of upper primary education to reach the secondary school level. This stage consists of three standards, viz., Standards VIII, IX and X.

Objectives of the Study

The major objectives are:

(1) to study how the work experience programme is organized in secondary schools of Kerala and the difficulties experienced in its organization,

(2) to study the details regarding the working of the work experience programme and the difficulties experienced in its working,

(3) to study the advantages the pupils get if they participate in the programme and the difficulties they have in participating in the programme,

(4) to study the general nature of the attitude of secondary school pupils towards the work experience programme,

(5) to compare the attitude scores of sub-groups of secondary school pupils classified on the basis of (a) Sex (b) Area of residence (c) Management of schools (d) Standard (e) Age (f) Achievement (g) Socio-economic status and (h) Community,
(6) to study the general nature of the attitude of secondary school teachers towards the work experience programme,

(7) to compare the attitude scores of various sub-groups of secondary school teachers classified on the basis of (a) Sex (b) Area of residence and (c) Management of schools,

(8) to study the general nature of the attitude of parents towards the work experience programme,

(9) to compare the attitude scores of sub-groups of parents classified on the basis of (a) Sex and (b) Area of residence,

(10) to study the interest in the work experience programme of secondary school pupils,

(11) to compare the interest scores of various sub-groups of pupils classified on the basis of (a) Sex (b) Area of residence (c) Management of schools (d) Standard (e) Achievement (f) Socio-economic status and (g) Community, and

(12) to find out the improvement needed for the proper functioning of the work experience programme in secondary schools of Kerala.

**Hypotheses**

Based on the related literature and studies the following hypotheses were formulated for the study.
(1) Since work experience is a programme recently introduced in the schools of Kerala, there will be difficulties in its organisation and working and it requires improvement.

(2) Sub-groups of secondary school pupils will differ in their attitude towards and interest in the work experience programme.

(3) Sub-groups of secondary school teachers and parents of secondary school pupils will differ in their attitude towards the work experience programme.

**Sample**

This study is based on a sample of 120 heads of secondary schools, 282 secondary school teachers, 520 secondary school pupils and 242 parents of pupils studying in secondary schools of Kerala selected by the stratified sampling procedure.

**Tools used for the study**

(1) Questionnaire for (A) heads of secondary schools
(B) pupils in secondary schools.

In order to study the details regarding the work experience programme in secondary schools of Kerala two questionnaires were prepared, one for heads of secondary schools and another for pupils in secondary schools.
(2) **Attitude Scale**

Separate Attitude Scales (Likert-type) were prepared for studying the attitude of parents of secondary school pupils, secondary school pupils and teachers towards the work experience programme.

(3) **Interest Inventory**

In order to study the interest of secondary school pupils in the work experience programme, an interest inventory was prepared following the pattern of 'Kuder Preference Record'.

Interview and observation were also used to supplement the data collected through the above tools.

**Statistical treatment of data**

The data collected through the administration of the different tools prepared were analysed by applying appropriate statistical techniques to get an objective assessment of the programme.

**Organization of the Research report**

This report has been divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introductory chapter which includes present system of education in India, education and work experience, work experience in education - a historical review, work experience and basic education,
concept of work experience, objectives of work experience programme, need and importance of the study, statement of the problem, definition of terms, objectives of the study, hypotheses and methodology in brief. Review of related literature and studies are depicted in Chapter II. In Chapter III, the methodology of the study is described. Analysis and interpretation of the data are given in Chapter IV. Findings and conclusions drawn from the study are given in Chapter V with suggestions for improvement.