CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Nature of Scholastic Backwardness

The problem of backwardness in studies is now-a-days coming to the fore-front of our educational discussions and conferences. To all concerned with teaching, specially at the secondary level, the question is a burning one. It is a general problem of almost all countries of the world, though more specifically to the under developed and developing countries. The incidence of students who fail in the same class once or more or who cannot achieve up to a satisfactory level may be termed as 'scholastic backward' or in the word of Heck it is "non acceptable work in a grade or course in consequence of which it must be repeated". It is observed that all students who enter class I, do not complete primary education within the prescribed limit of time. Rawat and Gupta in the field of primary education observe, "It is a common experience of primary teacher that all children who are admitted to Class I are not able to complete the primary education within the prescribed minimum period".

1. Heck, J Arch O - Administration of pupil personnel, Ginn 1929, p. 479
To-day the large scale scholastic backwardness in the educational system is a matter of grave concern for all people including teachers, educators and educational administrators, who are quite naturally in hot pursuit of this problem.

Why does a student become scholastically backward? Does he or she become scholastically backward due to his or her low general mental ability? Or due to poor achievement in the earlier classes? Or due to faulty study habits? Is he or she less interested in study and more in other forms of work? Is his or her general health condition responsible for backwardness? Is the cause of his or her backwardness associated with socio-educational background or some personality dimensions? Or due to poor understanding of school courses? Has he or she any behavioural problem at home as well as in school that may affect his or her study and achievemental targets? A close look at the problem of failure unwinds many questions the answers to which are not yet very clear to the inquirer of this vexed problem of education. For this educational backwardness children lag behind in schooling and the rate of their dropping out is very high particularly when the girl students are concerned. There are statistical evidences that from class I to Class VIII that rate of drop-out is 60% in India. In case of girl students the picture is more bleak.

3, NCERT - 1982 - page 73.
It can be more clear if the results of Secondary Examination in West Bengal is thoroughly observed.

Record from West Bengal Board of Secondary Education for half a decade is given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male (Failure)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female (Failure)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(F-M)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>4,6630</td>
<td>37.73%</td>
<td>2,7597</td>
<td>42.27%</td>
<td>-4.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>4,8423</td>
<td>38.16%</td>
<td>2,7112</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>-3.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>3,9498</td>
<td>28.98%</td>
<td>2,6432</td>
<td>40.34%</td>
<td>-11.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>5,2927</td>
<td>37.67%</td>
<td>3,0627</td>
<td>43.38%</td>
<td>-5.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>5,0112</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>2,8257</td>
<td>37.64%</td>
<td>-3.34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table it is evident that the percentage of failure of girl students always exceeds that of the boys. Girl students are proverbially underachievers in Indian context.

Apart from this many children are found quite incapable of coming up to the standards laid down by the authority. They are in fact educationally sub-normal, indeed in view of many medical personnel they are certifiably defective. These children are quite incapable of making normal educational progress under normal school conditions. At that time it is 4. Record of the results of secondary education, West Bengal Board of Secondary Education.
wisely supposed that those who fail to respond in the normal way to the normal methods of instruction must form a pathological type standing quite apart from the ordinary normal school population. Some of the experts are of opinion that the conditions is a kind of temporary mental retardation due to physical and intellectual malnutrition and that with special care and attention the greater portion can be restored to normality.

Scholastic backwardness appears to be a common phenomenon in the country's educational system. In spite of rapid expansion in secondary education, a large proportion of people of most countries is still being denied of its benefits. In the developed and underdeveloped countries it is most essential that all its resources are fully utilised with little failure or under achievement and wastage. It is quite clear that the nation's resources are not fully utilized when a large number of pupil's achievement is poor. Discussing the problem of failure in connection with higher education Sinha rightly points out "Apart from the human cost of failures and underachievements, if a considerable number of people do not benefit fully from higher education and their achievements are poor, it is obvious that full utilisation of the meagre resources is not taking place." It is, therefore, the responsibility of every country to take necessary steps.

for preventing backwardness or wastage and to ensure student's proper achievement.

Scholastic backwardness represents not only the actual cases of non-promoted students in any stage of education, but also a large number of underachievers who just secure the pass mark on a grace principle and succeed in the lowest class or division.

As a teacher in Secondary and college level for a pretty long period, it has been observed by the investigator that these children deviate from their classmates in school achievements at a high rate.

Moreover in our state, students mostly come from lower middle class and poor strata of life. The percentage of drop-out and stagnation among these students is also 60% as mentioned earlier. This backwardness in scholastic achievements have many reasons behind it. This fact can be supported by many relevant literature in abroad and India.

Sir Cyril Burt, in pointing out the causes of backwardness says, "Backwardness is only a symptom. To rest content with just palliating symptoms by superficial treatment - a little extra pressure here, a little extra coaching there - is as disastrous in the school as in the hospital. With mental disability as with physical, we must find and fight not symptoms but causes."
What, then, are the causes of educational backwardness? In seeking an answer to this question, it is natural to begin by inquiring in what places or circumstances backwardness is predominantly found.

Educational backwardness has no one specific cause. It is merely a superficial symptom, a complex resultant attributable to a variety and usually to a multiplicity of alternative and converging influences. It is this plurality of causes that stultifies our simple, rough and ready remedies. It is not the last straw, but the accumulation of straws, that breaks the camel's back. We must unload everyone.

Sir Cyril Burt described the causes of educational backwardness as (i) Social and Scholastic conditions the result of which are: (A) School conditions and (B) Home conditions.

(A) School conditions depends on -

(i) Irregular attendance,

(ii) Inefficient teaching,

(B) Home conditions can be described as-

(i) Poverty

(ii) Material conditions of the home

(iii) Intellectual conditions of the home

(iv) Emotional and moral conditions of the home

(v) Conditions of the neighbourhood

6. Burt, Sir Cyril - "The Backward Child"
The Indian Teacher is constantly worried of the achievement of the learner and the educational researcher is to find the answer for his or her problem in term of certain factors associated with the learner like intelligence, classroom behaviour, different aspects of their personality, socio-economic status etc. which directly or indirectly influence academic achievements. There are half a dozen studies in India which attempted to find out the effect of a number of independent variable on academic achievements. Two studies are worth mentioning Rao (1965) has studied the relationship of intelligence, study habits, attitudes of pupils towards school and socio-economic status with academic achievement. He has found that the first three variables jointly contribute 66% of the predictability of scholastic achievements, while the contribution of socio-economic status has not come out to be significant.

Singh (1965) has focussed his attention upon some non-intellectual correlates of academic achievements. He has found that academic achievement is related positively to restraint, thoughtfulness, parent's education home and health adjustment and N-achievement and negatively with ascendancy anxiety, social adjustment and extroversion.

Education is one of the world's largest businesses, in so far as the nation's resources, involvement, and expenditure are concerned. It is the principal instrument of planning for economic advancement and social cohesion. World expenditure on education is rising day to day.

Though the expenditure made in favor of education has been increasing, still, it is not in a position to eradicate the traditional school system which displays same marks of inefficiency. One of the most important marks of inefficiency is the scholastic backwardness. Thus it is observed that scholastic backwardness is common in almost all parts of the world.

Backwardness is a matter of serious concern in India. The distribution of pupils over the different classes should be as far as possible uniform in a well-designed system of school education which was not so in the country when the last commission on education examined the problem. As against 1000 pupils in Class I, there were 15 pupils in Class VIII and the extent of stagnation in the system was very large.

The average rate of stagnation in nine states viz. Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Mysore, Kerala and Orissa shows a clear picture of the following table :- (Table on the Next Page)

TABLE 1.1
Stagnation Indices for Class I to VIII (1965)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
<th>VII</th>
<th>VIII</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here it is observed that the backwardness in different classes among girls is found to be somewhat higher than that of the boys. It can, therefore, be affirmed that backwardness in scholastic affair is a common feature in Indian Educational System.

1.2 Effect of Scholastic Backwardness

Scholastic backwardness is a colossal problem and it stands as a hindrance not only in the personality development of the individual, but in the uniform development of the country also. Great encouragement comes to the candidates along with the guardians, teachers, and the well wishers to hear the successful result and in contrast, they become grievously disappointed as soon as it turns out to be unfavourable. This affects the aspiration of the individual as well as the society. The individual and the society have to bear the burden of a huge wastage of labour, money and resources. This scholastic backwardness has manifold consequences which can be classified into two broad categories viz.

11. Ibid. p.156
(I) Individual effect
(II) Social effect

INDIVIDUAL EFFECT : It includes —
(a) Frustration (b) Suicide (c) Anti Social Activities

SOCIAL EFFECT : Scholastic backwardness results in —
(a) Wastage (b) Stagnation

From what has been discussed above it is evident that Scholastic backwardness affects the school system which sets some standards for a particular period.

We understand that a thorough investigation into the factors leading to backwardness is very likely to throw abundant light on its proper remedies and this is why the present investigation is undertaken.