CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Education for all children has long been a major goal of Indian constitution, as education is considered a basic requisite for responsible citizenship, for maintenance of our way of life, and for successful entry into today's complicated working world. The democratisation of education was viewed by the educational planners as a means of levelling off the social and economic differences between the different sections of the society.

Keeping in full view the prime importance of education for the tasks of national reconstruction and strengthening of democracy, the makers of the Indian Constitution had enshrined educational provisions in the Constitution itself. (The Constitution of India: 1950). Article 45 of the Indian Constitution 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 fourteen years." (The Constitution of India: 1973, p.18). Article 29 (clause 2), states: "No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the state or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion,
race, caste, language or any of them" (p.11). According to Article 46, "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation" (p.18). Article 15 (clause 4) states: "Nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes" (p.6).

In keeping with the above provisions of the constitution, there has been a fantastic proliferation of educational institutions in the country at all levels. A study of the country's Five Year Plans and the Progress Reports of the Ministry of Education, Government of India will show that the Government has recognised everybody's right of free access to education and made adequate provisions accordingly. The government has also attached great importance to the provision of ancillary services and student support measures like school meals, free supply of textbooks and stationery to scheduled caste/scheduled tribe students (SC/ST students), institution of stipends and scholarships to backward students, provision of hostel facilities to
SC/ST students and conduct of coaching classes for SC/ST students in order to neutralise the effects of poverty.
Despite these conscious and vigorous efforts at equalizing educational opportunities and augmenting education by preventing wastage and stagnation in the country, the overall picture remains, unfortunately, that of pervasive inequality and staggering rate of wastage and stagnation. The principal indices of inequality such as the uneven enrolment rates of deprived social groups and classes, their low transition ratios at different stages of education, their high wastage and stagnation rate, their low level of educational attainment viz., number of years of schooling and the like depict the sorry state of affairs in this regard.

Several factors such as the lack of adjustment between the school and the needs of the local community, the miserable conditions of our schools and poor professional equipment of our teachers, the absence of facilities for part-time instruction and part-time employment, inadequate economic assistance to needy students, lack of basic information amongst parents regarding the advantages of education and the like prevented the poorer and backward classes from taking full advantage of the free educational facilities offered at all levels and the consequent wastage and stagnation.
The problem has all along been discussed not only from the point of view of wastage in man years, but also from the point of view of the resources invested and wasted. The cost of a student in the primary stage of education which was Rs. 54.17 during the year 1966-67 rose to Rs. 419.43 in 1984-85 that of a secondary stage student from Rs. 103.81 to Rs. 721.66 (Economic Review: 1985, p. 66). Jacob (1986) highlights the high incidence of wastage in Indian schools. It is reported that out of 100 pupils, who enter class I about 40 reach class V and only about 25 reach class VII.

The incidence of wastage and stagnation has naturally created a sense of alarm amongst educators and serious efforts are, therefore, being made to reduce the incidence of wastage and stagnation. A study of the strategy and treatments now adopted by various organisations for preventing wastage and stagnation indicates that the attempts are sporadic, scanty and even irrelevant. It also seems that they are not based on a realistic understanding of the basic problem which is responsible for the phenomenon (Kaul: 1971). This situation demands systematic and adequate research studies in the area concerned.
NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Educationists and researchers all over the world have, from time to time, studied the problem of wastage and stagnation; a number of causal factors have been identified and suggestions for eliminating them have also been made (Lichter et al. 1962; Cervantes and Husted; 1966; Sharma and Sapra: 1969; Masavi: 1971; Astin: 1975; Yadav: 1979; Khurana: 1980; Seetharamu and Devi: 1984; Jain and Mathur: 1985).

A few studies conducted in India as those of Chandrasekharan (1978), Vyas (1984), Sharma (1984) and Pangotra (1986) made an attempt to study the effectiveness of certain measures in preventing wastage and stagnation. But a closer review reveals that these studies have not made an adequate coverage of the problem under study.

Some studies conducted in Kerala also threw light on the probable causes of wastage and stagnation (Kuruvilla: 1963; Wahab: 1967; Government of Kerala: 1980; Sudharma: 1982 and Moniamma: 1983). However, the wastage and stagnation have continued to be unabated. In fact, studies did not seem to have contributed much to is reduction. It is argued that the problem has been investigated superficially and recommendations made, without making any real attempt for evaluating the existing measures for
preventing wastage and stagnation. This makes it all the more difficult to translate the recommendations made by the researchers into actions. It may, therefore, be fruitful to take up a study which aims to find out answers to the following questions:

(i) What are the different measures adopted by the government for preventing wastage and stagnation in the Secondary Schools of Kerala?

(ii) Are the different measures effective in reducing wastage and stagnation among the recipients?

(iii) What suggestions can be offered for effective prevention/reduction of wastage and stagnation in the Secondary Schools?

Answer to these vital questions may be helpful for utilizing the available resources in a more fruitful manner, thereby yielding maximum qualitative and quantitative returns in education. The arguments made above points to the need for the present study.
PROBLEM STATED

The problem for the present study is to evaluate certain measures adopted for preventing wastage and stagnation in the Secondary Schools of Kerala. The study is entitled "A STUDY OF THE EFFICACY OF CERTAIN MEASURES ADOPTED FOR PREVENTING WASTAGE AND STAGNATION IN THE SCHOOLS OF KERALA".

DEFINITION OF TERMS

In developing the study, a number of important educational terms have been used. The important terms which need to be clarified are defined below:

Efficacy

'Efficacy' is the state or quality of being efficacious (Funk and Wagnalls: 1957, p.792). Here 'efficacy' means the power of a measure to produce an intended effect.

Measure

The word 'measure' refers to 'a specific act or course of procedure designed as a means to an end' (Funk and Wagnalls, p.1534).

Here 'measures' stand for the means like financial assistance schemes and coaching classes adopted by the
Government for preventing wastage and stagnation (total educational waste) among the secondary school pupils.

Stagnation

"Stagnation", according to Indian Planning Commission (1965), is "the prolongation of the period of study in the same class longer than the normal period of one year". By 'stagnation' we cover 'the cases of those students who complete the prescribed course but only after a delayed progress; they take a longer time to complete the course than the prescribed minimum period' (Kamat and Deshmukh: 1963, p.43).

In the present study stagnation is taken as 'the retention of a pupil in a class for more than one year, on account of unsatisfactory progress'. Pupils who fall in this category are also designated as 'repeaters'.

Wastage

Student 'wastage' is the rate at which students drop-out from schools. "The school drop-outs are those who got into the school but dropped-out before or after completing the primary, middle and secondary school education" (Reddy and Bhat: 1977, p.33)
Total educational waste

Educational wastage, as accepted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training, has two components - (i) Failure or grade repetition, and (ii) Drop-out, which means premature withdrawal (Rawat and Gupta: 1970).

Total educational waste is considered to arise in two kinds of situations - (i) when a pupil, who is enrolled in a particular class at school and has spent a year in it, is made to remain in the same class for a further year repeating the work, and (ii) when a pupil who is enrolled in a school ceases attendance by dropping out of school without completing a defined school course and without enrolling in any other school to complete it. The first situation is generally referred to as 'grade repetition' or 'non-promotion' and the second is referred to as 'early (or premature) school leaving' or the 'school dropout' (Jayasuriya: 1971).

Secondary School

Secondary school is the third stage of school education in Kerala, where 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 focus of the present investigation is to study the efficacy of certain measures adopted for preventing wastage and stagnation in the secondary schools of Kerala. The following are the specific objectives of the study:

I. To study the details of the following aspects with respect to the Secondary School children under study:

(a) Enrolment rate of secondary school children during the five year period under study (1979-'80 to 1983-'84).

(b) Promotion rate of secondary school children during the five year period under study.

(c) Incidence of wastage (drop-outs) among secondary school children of Kerala.

(d) Incidence of stagnation (repeaters) among secondary school children of Kerala.
II. To find out the incidence of Wastage and Stagnation (total educational waste) with respect to the sub-samples under study.

III. To find out the proportion of students enjoying the different measures adopted for preventing wastage and stagnation in the secondary schools of Kerala.

IV. To study the efficacy of the following measures adopted for preventing wastage and stagnation in the secondary schools of Kerala:
   (a) Lumpsum grant for SC/ST students.
   (b) Monthly stipend for Scheduled Tribe students.
   (c) Meritorious scholarship for SC/ST students.
   (d) Muslim girls' scholarship.
   (e) Nadar girls' scholarship.
   (f) Upper secondary scholarship.
   (g) Physically handicapped pupils' scholarship, and
   (h) Coaching classes for SC/ST students.

V. To study the opinions of the different groups under study viz., teachers and administrators, pupils, parents and drop-outs regarding the efficacy of the different measures adopted for preventing wastage and stagnation in the Secondary Schools of Kerala.
METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF

For the present study, the investigator selected the survey type of research, this being the most appropriate one for tackling the problem. The details regarding the tools and technique used, the sample for the study and the procedure adopted are noted below.

Tools and technique used

Taking into account the objectives of the study, the following tools and technique have been used for collecting data required for the study:

(i) Information Blanks A and B.
(ii) Questionnaire (for secondary school teachers and administrators).
(iii) Interview schedule for students.
(iv) Interview schedule for parents.

The sample

The study has mainly been based on a representative sample of 152265 secondary school pupils from 35 schools selected on the basis of stratified random sampling technique. A sample of 408 high school teachers and administrators, 192 parents and 100 drop-outs were also included in the study for collecting relevant information regarding the efficacy of the different measures adopted for preventing wastage and stagnation in the secondary schools of Kerala.
Procedure

The data relevant for the study were collected from the school records. In addition to this, a questionnaire was administered on the sample of teachers and administrators. Interviews were conducted with the recipients of the different 'measures' under study, their parents, and also the drop-outs. The data thus obtained were subjected to statistical treatment such as the computation of percentages, critical ratios (percentages), and chisquare ($X^2$) test of significance.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is exploratory in nature. Its major aim is to find out the efficacy of different measures adopted for preventing wastage and stagnation in the Secondary Schools of Kerala. The sample is representative of the adolescents in the Secondary Schools of Kerala in respect of the extent of wastage and stagnation, the recipients of the different measures adopted for preventing wastage and stagnation and the like. As such, the findings could easily be generalized to other samples of the reference group.

As the study is mainly dealt with the efficacy of the different measures adopted for preventing wastage and stagnation, the responses of teachers and administrators,
the recipients of different measures, the parents of the recipients and also the drop-outs were analysed, so as to study their opinions regarding the problem under consideration.

All possible steps were taken to see that the data collected were as objective as possible. But, despite the care taken in doing so, certain limitations have crept in and the following are the major ones:

(i) Only seven districts in Kerala could be covered for the present study, as it was too difficult to include all the fourteen districts in the state for the purpose. However, it should be pointed out that the data collected is representative in nature, as the schools in almost all the districts in the state work under identical conditions.

(ii) While listing the 'measures' for the study, only the major ones that were available in school records were taken into consideration. Other measures such as the practice of conducting minimum essentials test for 'failed students' and giving vocational guidance to students are not brought under the scope of the present study, as these practices were either discontinued for the time being or have existed only in a few schools. However, care was taken to study in detail the different aspects of the various
measures adopted for preventing wastage and stagnation in the secondary schools of Kerala. It is hoped that the findings of the present study would throw more light into the nature of the problem under study and would be helpful for the administrators and policy makers for evolving better strategies for preventing wastage and stagnation in the schools of Kerala.

ORGANISATION OF THE REPORT

The report has been divided into six chapters. Chapter I contains a brief introduction discussing the need and importance of the study followed by the problem stated, definition of terms, specific objectives and the scope and limitations of the study. A short discussion of the concept of wastage and stagnation is attempted in Chapter II, whereas in Chapter III, a brief survey of the literature pertaining to the area of the study has been attempted. Chapter IV gives a description of the tools and technique used in the study, the sample, the procedure adopted including the identification of the measures adopted for preventing Wastage and Stagnation in the Secondary Schools of Kerala and also the statistical techniques employed for analysing the data collected. Chapter V deals with the analysis of data in detail. Chapter VI contains the major findings of the study followed by the conclusions and suggestions.