CHAPTER IV

THE METHOD AND INSTRUMENTS OF WORK

I. THE METHOD

The Field of Investigation. The pilot study had paved the way for the investigation proper. The method chosen to conduct it had been useful in revealing the main causes of wastage and stagnation in college education, and so it was decided to adopt it for the rest of the enquiry, although some changes seemed necessary. Originally it had been desired to study the various faculties of the Gujarat University. However, it became very clear from the outset that the field of investigation would have to be reduced. The somewhat erratic progress of a single class of Arts freshmen selected for the pilot study had shown that the difficulties involved in following up students of other faculties, such as Science and Technology, would make the enquiry unwieldy. Therefore, the investigation was restricted to the Faculties of Arts and Commerce as both of them have a similar four-year course, the completion of which is a necessary requirement for further studies in the same or in other faculties. The only exception to this rule is offered by the students of Law. An Arts student can join the Faculty of Law either after graduation in Arts or even after passing the Intermediate Examination.
The few students of this enquiry who joined the Faculty of Law before graduation in Arts have been considered as cases of discontinuance and so as contributing to clear wastage in Arts.

A further limitation of the field was considered necessary. The colleges affiliated to the Gujarat University throughout the whole State of Gujarat are many and spread over a large area. A coverage of all these institutions was beyond the limits of the present investigation and so only the Arts and Commerce colleges of the Ahmedabad Centre were selected for the enquiry.

In the pilot study an attempt had been made to follow up the progress of the students year by year up to their graduation or eventual withdrawal from college. Again this ambitious plan needed revision for, although most of the institutions approached welcomed the investigation and cooperated generously by making available for the enquiry all the records, yet they were unable to offer further assistance for lack of personnel; and without this assistance it was out of the question to follow up all the students. In the impossibility of adopting the original plan it was decided to ascertain at least one fact, the number of students from the original class of freshmen who would graduate in four years from the faculty of first registration.
The Subjects of the Investigation. In order to find out the number of students who graduated in four years, lists were made of all the freshmen who entered the colleges of the Ahmedabad Centre during the five-year period from 1952 to 1956. Students who repeated the F. Y. course or had transferred from other faculties were excluded from the lists of freshmen. A peculiar problem was posed by the students who migrated to other universities either inside the country or outside it. Normally these students should not be considered in a calculation of wastage and stagnation in a university. But since their migration was not known until their replies were received, a special procedure was adopted. Students who transferred to Indian Universities were considered as normal students if they had transferred to the same faculties of original registration, exactly as if they had remained in the Gujarat University. While the names of the students who reported migration to other universities outside the country were cancelled from the lists.

The Data. The lists thus prepared were checked against the university results of the B. A. and B. Com. Examinations held four years after the admission of these students to the F. Y. course. The names of the candidates who had graduated in four years from the same faculty of registration were separated and tabulated according to
the class obtained in the examination.

Although care was taken to prevent errors, the method did not turn out to be fool-proof. Besides the inevitable errors due to the handling of such a large number of names, other errors crept up on account of various factors such as the incompleteness of the data found in some college records, changes of name in the course of years, freedom and variety in transliterating the vernacular names into English etc. etc. In the course of the enquiry there was evidence of all these cases.

Of the total number of respondents to the enquiry 52 men and 6 women reported graduation in four years. Of these students 46 were from the Faculty of Arts and 12 from the Faculty of Commerce. Even assuming that all these 58 cases were downright errors they would be representative of an hypothetical total of 232 errors, as the rate of response to the enquiry was 25 per cent. This would mean that the percentage of errors in the whole enquiry would be less than 3 per cent. However, the total number of actual errors must have been much lower for there was evidence that some students who had graduated with a delayed progress of six months or one year had considered themselves as normal students and therefore outside the field of the enquiry; and there is every reason to believe that students who successfully completed their course of
studies in normal progress would be most eager to exonerate themselves of the "charge" of failure in the examinations, all the more when, as it was the case in the present study, students were requested to report their possible graduation in four years.

II. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The Tryout. Based on the findings of the pilot study a tentative questionnaire was prepared in English. This questionnaire was sent, together with an accompanying letter endorsed by the principal of the college of their first registration, to a sample of 83 students chosen at random from a freshmen class two years senior to the one selected for the pilot study. Thus not only the questionnaire but also the response of the students could be tested. Only five questionnaires were returned duly filled. Analysing the causes of this low rate of response it was found out that the main one was the language. Students did not understand the English of the questionnaire although it had been worded in the simplest possible way. This factor was going to lower considerably the rate of response and, what was more, it might even endanger the reliability of the whole enquiry. The questionnaire was, therefore, translated into Gujarati, the sections were enlarged and a new one, on the subjects failed - was added. This new form was shown to non-graduates and educationists with
experience in college student problems and on their advice some changes were introduced. Cyclostyled copies were sent to the same students who had not replied to the English form of the questionnaire previously sent. The response was now more encouraging both in numbers and quality. After introducing a few accidental changes the questionnaire was printed and mailed to the four thousand odd students who had not graduated in four years from the faculty of first registration. An English translation of the said Gujarati questionnaire is given on the following three pages i.e. 83, 84 and 85.

The Interviews. In order to delve deeper into the problems of the students under survey it was considered desirable to interview one hundred of the respondents. The prospective interviewees would be chosen at random to prevent bias, but care would be taken that they represented both the faculties in equal numbers. In order to encourage students to attend the interview letters were sent together with the questionnaires inviting them to attend the interview and if prevented from doing so to mail the questionnaire duly filled in. Students were given every facility of time and place, and business reply cards were sent along for them to notify their choice. Students availed themselves of the freedom of choice given and in large numbers preferred to give the interview at
QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions: 1. Read the whole questionnaire carefully before attempting any question. Fill in the blanks of the section or sections that are applicable.

2. You are requested to give a clear and sincere answer to the questions. You need not write your name.

Sex: Male/Female

Date of birth ... Native place ... urban/rural (1)

Are you married? Yes/No (1). Year of marriage ...

Is your family monthly income below Rs 200/ between Rs 200 and 500 or above Rs 500? (1)

Year of passing the S.S.C. ... No. of attempts ... Percentage

School from which graduated ... urban/rural (1)

Were you a working student while in college? Yes/No (1)

When did you start working? ... For how many years of your college career were you a working student? ...

(1) Cancel what is not applicable.

COLLEGE CAREER

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(1) Write Ext. if appeared for the examination as an external student.

(2) Write P for fully passed: F for failed: A for absent.
I. REASONS FOR FAILURE IN THE EXAMINATIONS

1. General reasons for failure.

Did you ever fail in college? Yes/No

If you failed, please indicate the reasons for failure by writing "Yes" in the blanks below and explain the nature of the reason for failure. As for example, Negligence in studies? Yes. Fond of reading novels.

1. Financial problems?...
2. Illness throughout the year? ...
3. Illness at the time of the examinations? ...
4. Interest in other activities leading to neglect of studies? ...
5. Undesirable friendships leading to neglect of studies? ...
6. Nervousness at the time of the examination? ...
7. Family problems? ...
8. Neglect of studies? ...
9. Wrong choice of subjects? ...
10. Personal problems? ...
11. Marriage? ...
12 Other reasons? ...

2. Reasons for failure in the individual subjects.

Note:- Write in the blanks below the following information:

1. The subject or subjects failed.  2. The year in which failed.  3. The number of times you failed in each subject.  4. The special reasons for failure in that subject, such as (a) A difficult subject (b) Dislike of the subject (c) Defective teaching (d) Weak foundations in the subject (e) Other reasons.

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II. REASONS FOR INTERRUPTION OF STUDIES

Did you interrupt your studies during your college career? Yes/No

If so, when did you interrupt them? ... When did you resume them? ...

Indicate the reason or reasons for interruption by writing "Yes" in the blanks below.

1. Financial problems? ...
2. Failure? ...
3. Found a job? ...
4. Illness? ...
5. Marriage? ...
6. No leave granted by employers? ...
7. Other reasons? ...

III. REASONS FOR DISCONTINUANCE OF STUDIES

Did you discontinue your studies? Yes/No

When did you discontinue them? ...

Indicate below the reason or reasons for discontinuance by writing "Yes" in the blanks below.

1. Financial problems? ...
2. Illness? ...
3. Change of interest in the course of studies? ...
4. Marriage? ...
5. Failure in the examination? ...
6. Found a job? ...
7. Change of residence? ...
8. Other reasons? ...

Do not hesitate to enter here any important point that has been omitted in this questionnaire.
their own residence. This afforded the opportunity of obtaining first-hand information regarding their social and economic status and, at the same time, it was a means of ensuring response, for many of those who had chosen for the interview places other than their own houses rarely attended it.

Visiting students in their own residence proved a very slow process. Every interview took a minimum of three hours as the addresses had to be found out - sometimes in the remotest quarters of the city - occasional delay and disappointments occurred, and rapport had to be established in all cases before pertinent questions could be asked. At times interruptions from relatives and neighbours slowed down the progress of the interview.

The immense majority of the interviewees were men. It was very difficult to secure the cooperation of women and nearly all the eleven women who eventually attended the interview were either known beforehand or were won for the enquiry by some relative or acquaintance of theirs. The reasons for the difficulty in securing the cooperation of women are well known; the main one being the position of women in Hindu society. Case No. 50 could be considered as a typical one and an illustration of this point.

The method followed in conducting the interviews was the non-authoritarian adopted in the pilot study and
already mentioned above. The questionnaire was first filled in with the cooperation of the interviewee, and then the interview was taken following the guide prepared beforehand, and already used in the pilot study. During the interview notes were taken of the main points. The summaries of the 136 interviews are given in the form of case studies in chapter XII.

Autobiographies. A good number of respondents, forty in number, unable to attend the interview in spite of their eagerness, sent in descriptions of their difficulties in studies and of their own personal problems. For lack of a better word these descriptions were termed "autobiographies". The length of these autobiographies ranges from one to twelve pages and so does their intrinsic value. Autobiographies lack the scientific value of the interview and so they are not included in the present study. However, the valuable suggestions made by some of these respondents have been tabulated and included in the concluding chapter. An idea of the tone of the autobiographies can be gathered from the following one sent in by a lady student.

I am very glad to know that you take such a great interest in educational matters. I too, am interested in education and would like to see the educational system improved. I personally think that it is only education that can give a meaning to our lives,
and for this purpose, I endeavour to acquire as much education as I can.

And now I would like to give you an account of my family background. Although there was no economic problem in the family at the time I attended school and college, I used to give tuitions to school children in order to earn something and so be able to stand on my own feet. I have always been interested in social and religious activities, as well as in various types of artistic occupations. Since by nature I am not given to idleness I turned my mind to preaching in my spare moments. In the middle of my junior year I went to Africa on a missionary tour. This tour proved very useful and rich in experiences, for I had plenty of opportunities to hold numerous discussions with several Englishmen on religious matters and thus increase my knowledge and gain more self-confidence. In the summer I used to go to the villages and do social work and some religious preaching. After my return to the country, one year later, I continued my studies and passed in due course the B. A. Examination.

Once a graduate, I felt very unhappy to see that as a woman I had no possibility of earning my living. Seeing no other way out I registered for the M. A course in the University of X, taking History as my principal subject. As we had to attend classes only twice a week I had plenty of free time at my disposal and decided to put it to some use by studying Ayurvedic Medicine. This is a four-year course and I thought I could combine both, but it so happened that the M. A. final examination coincided with the yearly examination in Medicine and since I could not prepare both at the same time, I decided to take the Ayurvedic examination and postpone my M. A. by one year.

Among the Ayurvedic students I was the only graduate. The rest of the class had either passed the S. S. C. or at the most the Inter Arts Examination. I think that in order to serve society and the country one had to possess some technical training. My only aim in taking this course was to be able to sympathize with the poor and understand their sufferings.

Thanks to my studies I have been able to start a new secondary school. I have done this not to make money but solely to spread education among the people. At present our school has a staff of 25
teachers to attend to the education of 250 students. Our aim is to make these students take interest in their own education and I think we have succeeded in our purpose to a great extent; so much so that our school looks different from all the others in the vicinity. I am glad to see that as a result of our school's influence all those children who before did nothing but roam about the streets are now attending classes and are being educated. Of late we have opened a sewing class for women. These classes are free of charge for we want our sisters little by little to learn to earn their living and so be able to stand on their own.

Education is now going through a crisis. There is a large number of graduates, and even holders of higher degrees, that have to be satisfied with a very low wage, there are too many graduates and few jobs for them. Besides, students waste their time in sports and entertainments. I think the whole educational system should be revised and the young should be taught things that may enable them to make a living after leaving college. This way they will understand the value of education. As it is they cheat their parents and others, too. The only aim of today's students is to obtain a job and nothing else. But they are not entirely at fault for the education they receive has been conceived as a passport to employment. Is not this a pitiful state of things?

There are many more things I wish to express and would like to do so if given an opportunity.