CHAPTER V

RESPONSE TO THE ENQUIRY

Rate of Response. The response of the students to the enquiry was not very enthusiastic from the beginning, as was to be expected. Enquiries are not a common feature in India and they often meet with apathy and even open suspicion. The present enquiry in particular, trying to investigate into the causes of the failure of students to graduate in four years, was bound also to arouse some suspicion precisely among the students whose cooperation was most desired.

It had been planned to base the conclusions of the present study on the data of one thousand responses. This meant that a minimum rate of 20 per cent of responses was necessary, as the number of students who had not graduated in four years was nearly five thousand. But the experience of the pilot study had shown that, even under the best circumstances, the highest rate of response ever obtained was less than 13 per cent. Thus the need for sending reminders was visualised from the start.

Reasons for Low Rate. Several factors influenced the initial low rate of response. The main ones, already mentioned in the pilot study, were incomplete data and changes in the address of the students. As a matter of
fact 428 questionnaires were returned, most of them for the reasons just mentioned, although there were also some cases of open refusal on the part of the addressees themselves. And there is no telling how many questionnaires were lost in transit and so never reached their destination.

In order to make up for the loss of responses 1,367 reminders and questionnaires were mailed to those who had not yet replied. This increased the rate of response till finally a total of 1,210 questionnaires were received, representing both the faculties in almost equal proportion. If mere numbers are considered the actual number of respondents was higher than the tables indicate. But some of the material received was so incomplete and vague that it could not be put to any use. This does not imply that all the questionnaires finally accepted were complete to the last detail. Sometimes one or other item would be missing, but still the rest of the information could be utilised. The response to the enquiry is analysed by faculty and sex in table 5.

### TABLE 5

**RATE OF RESPONSE TO THE ENQUIRY BY FACULTY AND SEX**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>Commerce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total No. of questionnaires</td>
<td>4,975</td>
<td>3,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents</td>
<td>1,210</td>
<td>695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A cursory study of this table shows that there is little difference between the response of the students of the two faculties. However, the difference between the sexes is more marked. The reasons for this difference will appear more clearly from the study of the following tables.

**Analysis of the Response by factors: Age.** In general the age groups do not differ significantly in their response except for the two extreme groups (See table 6). In the 14-15 age group the number of students are too small to draw any definite conclusion. From a further analysis of the data of the 21 and above group it can be learnt that it is the senior-most students who responded less. Thus from among the students who were 30 or older when entering college very few sent in their replies. The older women were at the time of entry, the lower their rate of response was. One reason for this phenomenon may be that many of these women were already married at the time of the enquiry and it is rather probable that the questionnaires never reached them.

**Community.** The communities represented by the students under survey have their own peculiar pattern of response at table 7 shows. Of the three largest communities, Hindus, Jains and Muslims, the last has the highest rate of response while Jains have the lowest. The highest
absolute percentage of response, however, is found among the combined group of Christians, Parsees, Jews and Sikhs. The number of students in each of these communities is too small to guarantee any conclusion but it is interesting to note that the highest percentage of response in these groups is given by the Parsee women (4 respondents out of 9 questionnaires sent) and the second highest by the Christian men (9 respondents out of 24 questionnaires).

S. S. C. Marks. Grouping the students according to the marks obtained in the S. S. C. the following points are observed. Table 8 . Excepting the two extreme groups, response tends to increase in proportion as the S. S. C. marks increase. And if the S. S. C. results are taken as an indication of the intelligence of the students, it could be concluded that the more gifted students responded better than the less gifted ones. The progressive increase in rate of response is more marked among men than among women.

Income. In general, income does not seem to influence the response of the students, as table 9 shows. This is a very difficult point to assess for the data regarding income are very unreliable. The data in hand show that the richer students of the Faculty of Arts have a considerably higher rate of response, while the richer students of the
Faculty of Commerce have a lower rate. The highest relative percentage of response is obtained among the richer women of the Arts Faculty. They responded almost at a double rate than the other groups.

**Marriage.** Married students, according to the data given in table 10, responded better than unmarried students. This difference in favour of the married students is constant in both the faculties under consideration and also among both men and women. It could be suggested as an explanation that married students, as more responsible and serious-minded, took more interest in the enquiry.

**Native Place.** Students coming from urban areas responded significantly better than those coming from rural areas. This is shown in table 11. However, if the data are broken down by faculty and sex more differences are noticed. Among the Arts students it is those coming from rural areas that responded better, but among the Commerce students the opposite takes place, response is higher among the urban students. Men of rural origin responded better than those of urban origin. No difference is noticed among the women of urban and rural origin.

**School.** Table 12 shows that response by school of graduation follows the opposite pattern seen in table 11.
Students who graduated from rural schools responded in general better than those who graduated from urban schools. The difference persists when the two faculties are analysed separately. By sex the data show that men of rural schools responded better than the others. The data regarding the response of women cannot be taken into consideration on account of the small numbers.