The Study seeks to interpret the development of education in British India during the period 1921-1947 as a result of the interaction of socio-economic and political determinants. The five main objectives of the study were:

(i) to build a coherent picture of the development of education in British India during 1921-1947.

(ii) to examine critically the various trends and blends in the socio-economic and political background on the development of education and to bring out their implications in respect of history of education.

(iii) to produce a faithful and richer record of the educational development which took place during 1921-1947.

(iv) to have an increased understanding of the relationships which existed between education, economy, politics and society in which education develops.

(v) to have an increased understanding of educational policies of the Government with reference to socio-economic and political forces in operation during 1921-1947.

It is a piece of library research of the survey type. The sources have been culled out from the educational records of that period from National Archives of India, New Delhi. The sources have been sorted out from official files, quinquennial reviews, contemporary newspapers and also from secondary sources. To add further to the insight, as informal interview was used with some of the
distinguished educationists/sociologists/historians etc. About 24 scholars representing different areas of specialization and from different parts of the country were contacted and interviewed. This was found extremely useful during different stages of the research study.

The study deviates in approach as well as in treatment from the histories of Indian education written in the post-independence period. It largely employs the inter-disciplinary approach wherein the focus is on marshalling the socio-economic and political data to throw light on educational trends and development. Though the starting point in the study is description and discussion of educational events in the period 1921-1947, the same is done in perspective of political and socio-economic factors.

Amongst the important findings are the following:

The impact of political forces was so much that education got considerable attention in the Legislative Councils of the provinces. Even the people belonging to backward and minority classes started looking up for education. This also accelerated pace for "political socialization," i.e. the process of induction into political culture. Thus, with the increased tempo of political events more and more interest began to be taken in the sphere of education. Even new experiments in education were also politically motivated.

A very significant finding is that a considerable expansion took place in terms of a large number of increase in students, schools, colleges and universities. Allied areas of professional, technical, women education etc. etc. got momentum on account of continued political awakening in the country. New trends like communalism in education, national system of education and even evolution of new educational policy by the British Government, were first and foremost, an outcome of the political necessity.
Educational thinking in British period during 1921-1947 was also affected by the major international events like the Second World War. For instance, the main effects of the Second World War were to expose and pin-point the weak spots in the educational system of India and to introduce a sense of urgency for restructuring the same.

Another important finding is this that whenever there were political conflicts between the nationalist element and the Government, and in which education was also involved directly, two things happened. One, there arose tendencies for new experiments in education, some of which got translated into practice. This is very well reflected in attempts to evolve some kind of national systems of education. Second, educational values of the people received a fillip after such conflicts, thus causing spurts in the expansion of education immediately after. The Nationalist Movement also contributed a great deal in breaking the apathy of the people towards education, and thus helped the growth of education.

Education does not grow in vacuum. It is influenced by the society in which it operates. It also modifies society as an effective instrument of social change. Thus, society and education are interdependent. It has been observed that in British India during the period 1921-1947 such social determinants as caste hierarchy, poverty of the people, socio-religious movements, status of women, values, beliefs, attitudes of the people, means of transport and communication, mass media, social legislation, size of population, impact of technological and industrial advancement, emergence of new classes, elite groups, role of national leaders, depressed classes etc. etc. influenced the growth of education. Indian society was fast changing in the first half of the twentieth century and its impact on the development of education was quite distinct. Correspondingly, education was also playing its significant role in improving society and changing the attitudes of the people, even in the most orthodox families of the Hindus and Muslims. The natural outcome of all this
was that even the Muslims who were largely averse to English Education before this period, and the depressed classes and women who displayed almost negligible interest in education, were showing distinct progress in education.

Another significant finding which comes incidently is that owing to the impact of new politics, economic and administrative changes, the caste structure was also losing its importance. On account of more demand and value of education in the middle class people, some trends of upward social mobility were also visible.

Still another finding is that economic determinants are at the root of the development of education. On account of the economic value, education was considered as an instrument of economic development. It is because of the economic motives that Britishers introduced modern system of education in India.

The economic conditions of the people influence the growth of education in general. Both per capita income as well as poor conditions of majority of the people in British India were responsible for the poor attendance of the children at schools. Thus, poverty was the sole factor which affected the education adversely. Owing to poverty, parents had to withdraw their wards from schools and thereby giving birth to educational wastage.

Low priority accorded to education shows that the British Government, motivated by imperialistic tendencies used the large part of its revenue for imperial needs like army, law and order. Thus, it seems obvious that the small grants allocated to education were not due to the paucity of total government resources but were the direct and inevitable consequences of the imperialistic policies.

Other economic determinants like economic depression of the thirties, World War II, poor educational planning, lack of vocational and technical education, increase in population, poor financing of Indian education, geographical factors such as rains, distance of the schools from place of residence,
diseases, etc. etc. were responsible for the lop-sided development of education in India and this development was far from satisfactory.

Another very interesting finding is that formal education during that period had little connection with the industry or agriculture of the country. Probably this feature was due to the fact that educational administrators were not able to visualize the role of education in relation to the demands of industry and agriculture.

In brief, the study highlights the role of socio-economic and political determinants in the development of education in British India during 1921-1947.