CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Individuals differ significantly from one another in many aspects. Slight variations and deviations in various traits and abilities are commonly observed among the human beings. An exceptional individual, however, is a person in whom these variations reach the extreme. The exceptional children have been described as "those who deviate from what is supposed to be average in physical, mental, emotional or social characteristics to such an extent that they require educational services in order to develop their maximum capacity."\(^1\) According to Kirk (1970)\(^2\) "An exceptional child is he who deviates from the normal or average child in mental, physical and social characteristics to such an extent that he requires a modification of school practices or special educational services in order to develop to his maximum capacity, or supplementary instruction. The exceptional may vary in their abilities and those with superior mental abilities form a distinct group. Crow and Crow (1979)\(^3\) acknowledged two types of superior persons (1) those whose intelligence quotients are above 130 as measured by reliable standardized intelligence tests - "the intellectually gifted" and (2) those who have special talents in one or more limited fields, such as art, dramatics, music, or mathematics - "the talented"."
SIGNIFICANCE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

To place all types of exceptional children in schools meant for normal children is not a sound educational policy, because this may harm the educational progress of both the normal and the exceptional children. If the teacher attends to the exceptional child, the majority of normal children will suffer, and to ignore a superior or the bright child is a sin. It is clear that the teacher cannot pay equal attention to all of them for the obvious reason of their extreme mental differences. Therefore, special education has been emerged as a field to cater the educational needs of the exceptional child. It is specifically planned and designed for various categories of exceptional children. The needs and the requirements of exceptional children vary and useful researches and experiments are being conducted to work out adequate types of special education programmes suited to the special physical, psychological and intellectual requirements of various categories of exceptional children.

SPECIAL EDUCATION FOR THE GIFTED

The special education of the gifted envisages selection and organisation of educational experiences that will enable optimum level of development of various faculties among the gifted children. This involves total education planning,
including curriculum, administration, resources, teacher training, student guidance and community relationship. The educational programme for the bright must promote higher cognitive processes through a differential curriculum. The curriculum should plan and prepare instructional strategies that accommodate both the enriched content and learning style of the bright and make all possible arrangements for their education. The quality of education shall be further enhanced by the motivation, better teacher preparation and enriching the school environment. Vastness of these areas evidently requires quite differential and diverse programmes and services for the education of the bright. The type of education to be provided to them in any educational system shall, of course, depend upon the philosophy of education, political will, financial resources, location of the school, availability of facilities in the school and attitude of the parents, community and the society. Failure to provide suitable education may lead to frustration, under achievement or intellectual delinquency of the bright and loss of vital resource to the society.

The education of the bright should enable the bright for development of the self and self esteem. The special education system of the bright needs altogether different planning, but the system cannot avoid its responsibility of identifying the bright and developing their talent. Special
education programmes and strategies for the gifted can be classified and described as follows:

I. ACCELERATION

Acceleration as a special education strategy provides an instructional or administrative arrangement which enables the bright to progress comfortably at the speed suitable to their ability. The procedure that involves "speeding up" the educational programmes whereby the bright child moves more rapidly at any point in his educational career and accomplishes an academic programme in less time or at an early age than the normal may be termed as acceleration. Since the intellectually gifted tend to be more advanced in mental development and are generally ahead in mental age and have better cognitive ability and all round learning capacity, this strategy can place the rapidly maturing children at a pace that is entirely normal for them. Acceleration however has three aspects such as early entry, grade skipping and sequential but rapidly paced learning.

(a) Early Entry

The system of acceleration due to early entrance involves early admission of the bright child as compared to the entry of an average child. The system has been sometimes opposed on grounds of emotional maturity but studies have generally yielded favourable results and have not indicated any detrimental
effect on the child's academic progress or on his social and emotional development. Early entry of the bright is advantageous as they keep up with a higher age group with their higher cognitive skills. However, there should always be provision for later acceleration for those who could not be initially identified for early entrance.

(b) Grade Skipping

Grade skipping is the practice of omitting one or more grades or classes while ascending the educational ladder. This involves jumping from one class to another skipping the task of a grade or class in between. It is based on the assumption that the child who is sufficiently bright can forego the learning experiences of a given class and accept the challenge of the next higher one. The bright child by virtue of his advanced mental ability and cognitive skills is capable of filling in the gap with additional effort and through proper guidance.

The skipping child has the advantage of associating with classmates who are nearly his equal in mental age and can provide keener intellectual competition. On the other hand, it may not be academically sound as it may aggravate problems by placing the child in a group superior in physical, social and emotional maturity. The older students may exclude him from games and other activities and his impatience to improve may cause frustration. Inability to compete with them may make him return
to books and deprive him of all-round development. Grade skipping
should be attempted with utmost care and it is to be seen that
students who skip remain well adjusted in all spheres. Then the
danger of skipping can be far less than that of doing nothing.
Because of this, educationists consider skipping a dangerous
practice to be rarely followed and are generally recommended for
pre-primary or primary school levels, although this can be
attempted both in isolated and special cases at the secondary
stage.

(c) Rapid Progress

Rapid progress is the practice of pupils proceeding
through the school programme faster than the normal without
skipping any part of curriculum. The process involves quicker
promotions by shortening the time for the completion of
curriculum in a class. Rapid progress has the advantage of giving
the pupil an opportunity to become acquainted with the entire
content of the curriculum and simultaneously allowing him to
proceed at an accelerated pace which avoids the disadvantages of
grade skipping. The adjustment problems resulting due to
chronological displacement cannot be avoided in this method also.
Rapid progress imposes additional academic task for teachers as
it requires to devote extra time on the bright for the completion
of curriculum at his own pace. These administrative difficulties,
however, tend to decrease as the child ascends the educational
ladder since self-education becomes easier at later stages.
II. ENRICHMENT

Enrichment involves a special curriculum for the bright children which is superior and richer than that for the average students in content and practice. Basically, it involves the selection and organisation of learning experiences and activities appropriate to the child's adequate development. The aim is not to replace the curriculum but to provide, develop and enhance learning experiences in order to add both breadth and depth of meaning beyond what is acquired by the average in the normal classroom. Enrichment can also include learning experiences in kind and degree and need not be only limited to greater depth and breadth of study.

Repetitions and extra drills that simply keep the bright busy and are boring can be omitted for the bright. The bright are able to complete the normal work usually in half the time and may then be given supplementary work involving reading, knowledge, skills, creative projects, experimentation, independent study in areas of interest and other fields. Enrichment may be attempted for the bright as follows:

(i) Individual or Group Basis

Individual enrichment programmes do not need any readjustment of the class, but do require adequate academic and administrative planning. On group basis, it provides opportu-
nities for more intimate association and greater competition among the students which is denied in an individual enrichment programme. Enrichment, on individual or group basis, is certainly more meaningful and effective when coordinated with regular curriculum and provided in addition to the normal classroom teaching.

(ii) **Enrichment in Classroom or Outside Classroom**

Enrichment programme for the bright may be organised inside the same class or outside. The bright child remains with others of less ability but is given special attention, either individually or in small groups. The disadvantages is that diversities in mental abilities make the task of the teacher extremely difficult in providing enrichment to the bright according to their abilities in a normal class or even outside it. In a large class, it is really difficult for a teacher to prepare genuine enrichment material for a few bright and not doing justice to the other students in the class. Even though administratively less expensive, whether it is academically viable or not is the greatest consideration. Also enrichment need to be attempted carefully as the students find it difficult if introduced prematurely to a subject which may require some background mastery of fundamentals.
(iii) In or Outside the School

Enrichment for the bright can be organised both within or outside the same school. In the same school, it may be within or outside the normal school time. It is easier to organise it within the school and within the normal working hours of the school as it becomes very difficult both administratively and financially to organise it outside the normal working hours.

(iv) Special Teachers

The teacher must be skilled in creative teaching, in individualising instruction and in the effective planning of their educational programmes. Enrichment programme in a school may be organised through the same classroom teacher or through a specially qualified teacher. Classroom teacher may make modifications in his instructional programme by providing necessary learning experiences or opportunities to explore the subject more deeply. A special teacher can develop plans for individual enrichment in co-operation with the regular classroom teacher. The special teacher can act as a consultant and will be able to provide opportunity for the exchange of ideas and effectively correlate the enrichment experiences of the bright with regular curriculum to make it more meaningful not only to the bright but to all students. A combination of the system of regular and special teacher will certainly offer a more effective enrichment programme.
(v) Part-Time or Full-Time Basis

Special classes for enrichment may be provided on full time or part time basis. Enrichment classes can also be organised as workshops, groups and seminars. Such a system, even though less effective at times, retains the social values of a heterogeneous class and also provides enrichment to the bright through special teachers who may be more conveniently available for shorter duration. It can also serve as a good beginning for initiating enrichment programme in a school.

III. GROUPING

Grouping is the process of classification and bringing together students of similar ability for all or a portion of their educational experience. It is also sometimes called ability grouping, homogenous grouping, streaming, tracking, segregation or organisation of multi-level on multi-trade curriculum. The aim is to narrow the range of ability and provide adequate learning experiences to a group of students of similar intellectual capacities for the development of their abilities which cannot be normally provided in the regular classroom. Grouping does not automatically take care of ability. The learning experiences must be adopted to the individual needs of the bright in order to provide in-depth intellectual stimulation in every field of education and thus challenge them to continued progress. In these groups, the bright can have a better perspective of their own
ability and achievement and can work at their own pace. They can explore their own ideas which may spur them and their peers to further learning. Organisation of special ability groups creates an academic environment in which the bright can be provided more challenging activities and can be guided in their achievement more effectively than in a regular classroom. These special ability groups may be formed in the following four different ways-

(i) In the Same Heterogeneous Class

In this method, the bright are grouped together and retained in the same class along with other students of lower ability and achievement. Philosophically, it is democratic to keep the high and low achievers together but this democratic value itself is questionable. Grouping in the same class is a step towards individual instruction for the whole class, but the danger lies in the bright receiving minimum help and not achieving to full capacity and the slow learners receiving disproportionate time and attention and getting frustrated. The system requires ingenuity for curriculum adjustments for the teachers and makes his task extremely difficult.

(ii) Within the Same School

Grouping of the bright children in the form of a special ability section within the same school has been consciously or unconsciously followed in the past and also
practised at present in the institutions. These groups may be formed on the basis of ability or achievement and may be further divided into sub-groups to narrow the range of abilities and achievements and thus facilitate more intensive, extensive or accelerated learning.

(iii) **Outside the School**

The bright may pursue their normal studies in their own class and may then meet for enrichment programmes outside the normal working hours of the school. Seminars and tutorials are forms of such programmes which may be organised after school hours or on holidays. They provide an opportunity to the bright for independent study, the plan of the study and monitoring being done by the regular teacher. The programme can be followed in a school of any size or by combining students from nearby schools. The system certainly places extra burden on the teacher and also requires seriousness of purpose on the part of the bright student.

It is also apprehensive that such a programme may leave very little time for the bright for participation in other activities and may have a deleterious effect on their development.
(iv) Special Schools for the Bright

Another method of grouping the bright is to place them in a separate school. In such a school, all the students of all the classes are bright and the teachers are also trained to provide them education according to their ability. Such a system represents the ultimate in group enrichment. The bright read widely, learn all basic skills, use research methods, conduct investigations individually and in groups, pursue their interests and evaluate their own work. They of course, require talented teachers, well equipped library and adequate learning resources to carry out their programmes. Actual curriculum in such a school is very much like the one in a special class for the bright and is more meaningful, richer and challenging than the normal one.

Schools such as these, it is argued, are likely to develop elitist tendencies and a false sense of superiority among the bright. Their isolation from the normal students for a considerable period of their school life can also lead to the possibility of creating an intellectual aristocracy and a tendency of looking down upon their brothers in normal schools, thus causing a serious social and mental division in the minds of the children at a very impressionable age. Separate special schools may be attempted in separate geographical area and can group academically talented students from several schools. Part time special education in special centres of learning can be provided to the intellectually gifted children.
DEVELOPING CREATIVITY AMONG STUDENTS

Creativity, as a natural endowment and cognitive ability needs stimulation and nourishment. Creative talent cannot flourish unless it is given proper training, education and opportunities for expression. Creative thinking ability though not equal is universal. It is not the monopoly of a few geniuses. Everyone of us possess the creative ability to a certain extent and it is not only the geniuses who are needed to create, manifest and produce.

The need of creating an environment conducive to full growth and development of the creative potential among children is a must. Certain strategies for promoting creativity are cited below -

(i) Do Not Over Value the Customary

The first step toward encouraging creativity is to respect and value the creative talents. This is not easy to do as creative children are not always the easiest to work with. The teacher must somehow get across that conventional, predictable, routine, structured behavior is good in a general sense but that the gems of unusual, unique, imaginative and unpredictable behaviour are highly valued.
(ii) Be Willing to Lose Time

Slavish attention to the clock works directly against creativity, even though there are many times in a teacher's day when attention to the clock is important. By deliberately setting aside time schedules and by being willing to drop time constrictions and toying with them, the teachers and parents can foster creative ideas in students.

The very nature of the teachers job seems to be that it encourages obsessive compulsive behaviour. Perhaps a teacher could never meet all the requirements of the job without being somewhat compulsive. But rigidity, compulsiveness and fear of such sins as 'wasting time' work directly against the development of creativity in students. Conscious efforts on the part of the teachers and parents to overrule the time schedule and save time to the individual needs of children shall pay rich dividends.

(iii) Encourage Unusual Question

Generally the unique questions which are off on tangents, draw laughter, are puzzling or require a shift of gears seem to irritate teachers.

Unusual questions are considered as a waste of time and are often difficult even to fit into the discussion. But such questions may stem creative imagination. such questions are to be
valued and the opportunity should be used to generate creative idea. The class even might discover something creative in a question that was meant to annoy the teacher and will end up respecting the teacher more because of his or her response.

In addition to valuing and pursuing unusual questions by students, encouraging follow up questions and explanations, and rewarding such questions, the teacher should try to come up with unusual questions to ask the class as a model of this type of behavior. Unusual questions can result in a most creative discussion. Encouraging, formulating and responding to such questions enhance creativity.

(iv) Demonstrate Testing of Ideas

One of the most damaging ideas that students have is the image of school being the pursuit of correct answers to specific questions. Such views have been reinforced in students over a period of many years. But somehow the teacher must get across the tentativeness of ideas, the possibility that some questions have many answers and that other questions have no known answers. An idea that comes up in class discussion, that is planted deliberately by the teacher, that does not have one 'correct' answer is valuable material to explore if creativity is desired. Often, the pursuit of an idea leads nowhere, but this is not important.
(v) Treat All Ideas with Respect

The dangers of hurting a student by failing to respect a well-intended idea more than offset anything that may be best when a teacher respects a poorly intended idea. It is unlikely that a teacher can automatically distinguish between a strange but creative question and a joke. There is probably little to be gained by such a skill anyhow. However, disrespect for a student idea has a stifling effect on creative thinking not only for the student involved, but for any other students listening or observing.

It is best, then to treat all ideas with respect, no matter how offbeat, bizarre, or obtuse they might appear at first. If a suggestion turns out to be unworkable, the student will figure that out in time, and nothing is lost. Some ideas that sound ridiculous at first, became valuable ideas. The crucial lesson for students is that any ideas they might have, regardless of how strange, will be treated with respect by the teacher.

(vi) Avoid Perfect Examples

Being in awe of masterpieces, worshipping great creators from the past, admiring heroic examples are not prescriptions for encouraging creative behaviour. The problem is that, in looking at a perfect example, students consciously or
unconsciously compare it with their own work, find their own wanting, and became discouraged.

Instead of perfectness in outcomes (the perfect poem, play, novel, picture, sculpture) the teacher should stress the creator's efforts, the problems encountered along the way and the shortcomings and flows that are almost always a part of any creative outcome. The disappointments and dissatisfactions that some artist, writer, or musician has faced served as encouragement to creative students, as they see that they are normal and that their work is not supposed to be perfect. Being in owe, overwhelmed, incredulous at the work of others is of very limited use in developing one's own creative abilities.

(vii) Informality and Flexibility

Somehow, having a healthy flexibility and informality in the classroom does not come easily for many teachers. Perhaps this goes against the natural desire for structure, control and order. Or perhaps it is only a function of teachers unconsciously wanting to teach in the same way that they were taught themselves.

One way to approach this is to escape from the all or none dilemma by starting with just a portion of each day that is especially informal and flexible.
The classroom that is more informal and flexible in general tends to bring out creative and imaginative behaviour. Teachers should be able to find ways of providing enough informality and flexibility in the classroom. Teachers can even experiment to find what works in relation to their own particular classroom personality.

(viii) Tolerance of Ambiguity

This is the ability to accept uncertainty, to live with tentativeness, to overcome the need for absolutes, and to live with possibilities and a certain degree of vagueness. This is one personality characteristic of creative persons. It may be due partly to genetic endowment, but it is certainly affected by learning. It is essential that it be part of a classroom environment that intends to promote creativity.

If the students are to develop a tolerance of ambiguity, the teacher must model this characteristic. It is not a whole-scale change so that the classroom becomes vague, confused, ambiguous, and tentative to the point of constant uncertainty. The teacher must be careful not to over structure, not to eliminate all food for thought and decisions, and leave some room for the type of tentativeness and uncertainty that encourages creative problem solving.
Contrary to popular opinion, creativity does not abound automatically in situations devoid of criticism. If all criticism squelched creativity and all encouragement caused it to blossom, the answer would be simple - don't criticize, give only positive feedback, reward, encouragement, and watch creativity grow.

A closer look at the research yields the commonsense fact that there are different types of criticism and that it is only certain types that squelch creativity.

Although not yet understood fully, it seems fairly clear that children achieve confidence in the value of their ideas beginning in early childhood. Parents obviously play a large role, but teachers are also important in this process. Two keys to helping students learn to value their ideas are (i) to encourage all efforts at creative achievement regardless of the outcome and (ii) to encourage internalized self-criticism rather than dependence on an external judge.

Objective criticism, focusing on outcomes while strongly encouraging efforts, always leading to internal standards and self-criticism, seem to be the basic guidelines in criticism as it relates to creativity. Criticism that is negative, too personal, discourages effort, devalues one's own
ideas, and implies "goodness" and "badness" seems to be the formula for squelching creative efforts.

(x) Resist Peer Pressures

Peer influence can also enhance creativity but peer pressures negates it. From about seventh class on through high school, the peer group is number one for determining thoughts, tastes and standards of its members. But a teacher can encourage students to resist peer pressures when it comes to creativity, to value their own ideas. One way is for the teacher to model internal standards and resistance to outside pressures, thus demonstrating the self-confidence and self-evaluation required. The teacher must also take care not to unwillingly reward peer conformity. Independent behaviour should not be neglected in the quest to maintain order and sanity in the classroom. It is to be encouraged that resistance to peer standards and conformity lead to respect and peer approval in the long run. The student who shows individuality and pursue creative ability can receive not only the approval of teachers, but the support and approval of peers. Open-ended assignments, individual projects, thought provoking questions, just suppose games are all ways of developing resistance to immediate peer conformity enhancing creativity in the long run.
(xi) Encourage Self-Initiated Learning

Studies of highly creative persons indicate that freedom to engage in self-directed activities and learning are essential to creative achievement. Sometimes it appears that our society's emphasis on the well-rounded person works against such self-initiated and self-motivated learning. When a curriculum forces students to take exactly the same program as everyone else, when standards are set so rigidly that sameness is implied, when the bulk of time is spent on developing deficient areas rather than advancing in an outstanding area, creative individualism is hardly the likely result.

Instead, teachers must constantly look for ways to individualize assignments, to encourage students to develop areas in which they are already above average, to focus on unique skills and ideas that are not the norm, to reward non-conformity as well as conformity. A searching, enquiring attitude on the part of the teacher, accompanied by freedom, courage, independent thinking, and discipline on the part of the students, implies a high valuing and rewarding of self-initiated learning.

(xii) Using the Creative Resources of the Community

Children should be made to visit the centres of art, scientific, and industrial creative work. This may stimulate and inspire them for creative work. Creative artists, scientists and creative persons from different fields may also be occasionally
invited to the educational institution to interact with the student in an effort to enhance the scope of knowledge of our children and kindle the spark of creativity in them.

(xiii) Avoidance of Blocks to Creative thinking

Factors like conservation, faulty methods of teaching, unsympathetic treatment, fixed and rigid habits of work, anxiety and frustration, excessively high standards of achievement for low levels of work, over emphasis on school marks, authoritarian attitude of teachers and parents etc. are known to be detrimental to the growth of creativity among children. As far as possible, parents and teachers should, therefore, try to avoid such factors in upbringing and educating the children.

(xiv) Proper Organisation of the Curriculum

Learning experiences in the form of curricula should be so designed as to foster creativity among children. For this purpose, the school curriculum should be organised primarily on the basis of concepts rather than facts. Individual needs of each student should be catered to rather than to the generalized needs of all students. The general philosophy should be that truth is something to be sought after rather than something to be revealed. Curriculum should be quite flexible and make provision for studying and working without the threat of evaluation. In a nutshell, the curriculum should reflect the creative dimensions
of fluency, flexibility, originality, divergent thinking, inventiveness and elaboration etc.

(xv) Reform in the Evaluation System

The education system is totally examination oriented and appropriate reform must, therefore, be made in the evaluation system if creativity is to be nurtured. The emphasis on memorization by rote, fixed and rigid single responses, and convergent thinking etc. which kills creativity of the children should be abandoned and a proper evaluation system adopted for encouraging complete and balanced experiences in developing their creative behaviour.

(xvi) Use of Special Techniques for Fostering Creativity

Researches in the field of creativity have suggested special techniques and methods for fostering creativity among children.

(a) Brainstorming - Brainstorming is a technique to explore ideas without judgment or censure. In practice, the children may be asked to sit in a group for solving a problem and attacking it without any inhibition from many angles. In fact, literally storming it with a number of possible ideas and solutions. To start with, the students may be provided with a focus, e.g., a particular problem like 'student unrest', or the
growing unemployment problem in India. The students are then asked to suggest ideas as rapidly as possible.

(b) Use of Teaching Models - Some of the teaching models developed by educationists may prove quite beneficial in developing creativity among children. For example, Bruner's concept attainment model helps in developing creativity in children for the attainment of various concepts. Similarly, Suchman's inquiry training model is very helpful in developing creativity among children in addition to imparting training in the acquisition of scientific inquiry skills.

(c) Use of Gaming Technique - Gaming techniques, in a playful spirit, help the children in the development of creative traits. These techniques provide valuable learning experiences in a relaxed, spontaneous and evaluative situation. Both verbal and non-verbal stimulus material is used in such techniques. For instance, in verbal transaction of ideas, children may be asked to name all the round things they can think of, tell all the different ways a knife may be used, or all the ways in which a cat and a dog are alike. In non-verbal transactions the children may be asked to build a cube, construct or complete a picture, draw and
build patterns, interprete the patterns of drawings and sketches and build or construct something or anything out of the raw material given to them.

(xvii) Teaching by Example

There is truth in the saying that example is better than precept. The teachers and parents, who themselves follow the beaten track and do not show any originality for fear of being wrong or never experiences the excitement of creating or doing something new, fail to stimulate creativity among the children in their charge. The teachers and parents must, therefore, themselves develop the habit of creative thinking. They should learn to believe in change, novelty and originality, and themselves experience the creative process. The behaviour and style of teaching must reflect their love of creativity which can give students inspiration for change and innovation.

MIZORAM : THE LAND AND PEOPLE

Mizoram comprises the erstwhile districts of North and South Lushai Hills which were under Assam since 1898, and were known as the Lushai Hills District. It became a union territory in 1972 consequent to the North-Eastern Reorganisation Act of 1971. Mizoram attained statehood in February, 1987, the twenty-fourth state of India. This strategically located state has an area of 21,081 sq. km. and its boundaries touch the neighbouring
countries of Bangladesh in the West and Myanmar on the east and South and has international boundary of approximately 1,014 km.

The state of Mizoram has three districts, namely Aizawl with 4 sub-divisions, Lunglei with 3 sub-divisions and the Chhimtuipui district with 2 sub-divisions.

According to 1991 census, the population of Mizoram is 6,86,217 (3,56,672 males and 3,29,545 Females) the density of population is 33 per sq.km and 54 per cent of the Mizo population is rural, living in small villages situated on hill slopes. The state capital Aizawl has a population of 4,75,360 and about 94 percent of the population comprises scheduled tribes like the Mizo, Chakma, Lakher, Pawi and Hmar. "Mizo" is the mother tongue of majority of the population. Mizos came under the influence of christian Missionaries in the 19th Century and the majority, now practise Christianity. Mizo society is a close knit one affiliating to kinship, social relations and co-existence. Mizo women enjoy a position of honour and freedom in society now a days although Mizo society is patriarchal and patrilineal.

EDUCATION IN MIZORAM

The present set-up of Educational system in Mizoram was exclusively the result of the works of Christian Missionaries who
had a deep faith in spreading literacy among the Mizos besides proselytizing them into the Christian religion.

Prior to the arrival of Christian Missionaries, there was no organised educational institution in the area. There was no written language and all the instructions were verbal in nature. Family served as an effective agent of education.

Formal education was introduced in Mizoram by the Christian Missionaries for the first time in 1894. There was no script and no literature whatsoever in the Mizo language. The first alphabet was composed by the Missionaries by adopting the simple Roman script with a phonetic forms of spelling in 1895. The first school in Mizoram was opened on 9.4.1894 and was reopened in 1898 since the first one has been closed down. In the year 1909, the first Middle school was opened in the Lushai Hills District in Aizawl.

The opening of schools in both the towns and village had completely changed the attitude of both man and woman who became more respective to new ideas. The first High school was started in 1944 through public donations and collaboration. It was provincialised in January 1950.

Remarkable educational development has been achieved in the post-independence period partly because of the part played
by the Government in the field of education. The number of schools as well as the enrolment of student have increased and this has an abiding impact on the rate of literacy. The literacy percentage of Mizoram in 1991 census was 81.32 per cent. In 1996 the state has achieved a literacy percentage of 89.94 (Adult Education Wing, Mizoram Government).

The first college was started in Mizo Hills District to cater to the need of the public in 1958. It was provincialized in 1965. Within a very short span of time of its existence, the college was able to produce a number of graduates. After the formation of Union territory in the year (1972) new colleges came up. At present, there are 29 colleges out of which 8 are Government colleges, 10 are Deficit colleges and 11 private colleges. There is one University campus under NEHU with Pro-Vice Chancellor and supporting staff.

The growth of population and the growth of literacy rate from 1901 to 1991 census are clearly shown in Table 1.01.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Literacy percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>82,436</td>
<td>0.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>91,204</td>
<td>3.98</td>
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<td>1921</td>
<td>98,406</td>
<td>6.28</td>
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<td>1931</td>
<td>124,404</td>
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<td>1971</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>686,217</td>
<td>81.32</td>
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</table>
The state follows the national pattern of education 10+2+3. The first ten years of education comprise three stages; the primary stage - classes I to IV; upper primary stage - classes V - VII and the secondary stage with classes VIII - X. The higher secondary stage classes XI and XII are attached to degree colleges with the nomenclature of pre-university course affiliating to North-Eastern Hill University. However, steps have been taken to attach the higher secondary stage to the high schools from 1996 onwards as classes XI and XII, and examination will be conducted by the Mizoram Board of Secondary Education (MBSE).

EDUCATION OF THE GIFTED AND CREATIVE IN MIZORAM

Inspite of the high literacy rate, the state has failed to offer special education for the gifted and the creative. Students considered academically gifted are given double promotions in some schools, otherwise there is no special provisions or special curriculum for the exceptionally gifted students. The state offers Merit scholarship to students who perform well in primary, middle and High school leaving certificate examinations. The state council of educational research and training (SCERT) awards prize money and certificates to those outstanding students who do well in science and mathematics subjects in Primary, middle and high school leaving certificate examinations.
A small amount of Prize money is also granted to students of classes VIII and IX who has scored high marks in science and mathematics in promotion examinations in the high schools in Mizoram.

The Mizoram scholarship Board, under the Higher and Technical education department also awards post matric merit scholarship to meritorious students in Arts, Commerce, science and technical streams for the pre-university, degree and post graduate levels. Post matric merit science scholarship and book grants are awarded by the Mizoram planning Department to selected B.Sc. and M.Sc. students.

The creative and talented children are also not paid much attention. However, a few efforts are made by the government and other bodies for the promotion of the talent. The art and culture department provides facilities for training in traditional dances and modern music to talented individuals for a period of three months. Open competitions are conducted in story writing, spot painting, art exhibition, solo and beat contest, cultural dances, wood curving and sculptor, craft exhibition, book exhibition and drama competition etc. by the Art and Culture Department with a view to spot and award the creative and talented ones. There is no effort to identify the creative or talented and there is no special training to promote their
creativeness. This can be considered as the main drawback of the present system of education.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Harold Lyon (1976)\(^4\) erstwhile U.S. Federal Director of the gifted and talented observed that the planets survival depends on how successfully the potential of the gifted and talented children is realised.

The report of the Education Commission (1964-66)\(^5\) accorded that there was dearth of competent manpower in every branch of national life. It quoted Whitehead's warning. In the modern world the rule is absolute any race which does not value trained intelligence is doomed.

A nation's wealth of superior talent is the most precious of its resources according to renowned philosophers like Plato, Aristotle down to the present day scientists. The development of a nation depends upon the vision and insight of a relatively few exceptionally able people. The vision necessary for the promotion of human welfare must come from the gifted and they should be educated for worth while leadership and productivity in a democracy. Democracy will be realised in its richest sense by recognizing the full range of ability in our total population and also by giving full recognition and adequate
opportunities for the maximum development of the gifted and talented". This indicates the necessity for identifying the intellectually superior and the creative individuals and foster their talent to the fullest possible extent.

Not much work seems to have been done in identifying the gifted and the creative in India. The studies conducted are mostly among the urban and more advanced regions. Mizoram, one of the youngest states in India is situated in the remote part of the North East Region. Although Mizoram is having a high rate of literacy and education, special education for the gifted and the creative has not been given much attention.

Consequently, there is a tremendous amount of wastage of talent especially among the Mizo youth. This is due to the neglect and failure to identify and promote the potential to develop in conducive conditions. The pioneering work in this field has been done by Varparhi Khiangte. Khiangte (1987) has constructed a creativity test and has identified the high and low creative secondary school students. The personality characteristics of the high and low creative students were compared on 14 personality factors.

Concerning the limited studies done in this area, and considering the benefit the state of Mizoram is going to harvest from the research in this area, the investigator was inclined to
undertake the present research. The study is intended to compare the intellectually gifted and the creative college students with regard to their personality and problem solving ability.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study is entitled "A Study of the Gifted and Creative College Students in Mizoram in Relation to their Personality and Problem Solving Ability".

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the intellectually gifted college students.

2. To identify highly creative college students.

3. To study the personality characteristics of the intellectually gifted and highly creative college students.

4. To study the problem solving ability of the gifted and creative college students.

5. To find out the existing provisions for the education of the gifted and make suggestions for special education schemes in the state of Mizoram.
HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference between the gifted and creative students with regard to personality characteristic: reserved - outgoing.

2. There is no significant difference between the gifted and creative students with regard to personality characteristic: less intelligent more intelligent.

3. There is no significant difference between the gifted and creative student with regard to personality characteristic: affected by feelings - emotionally stable.

4. There is no significant difference between the gifted and creative student with regard to personality characteristic: humble - assertive.

5. There is no significant difference between the gifted and creative student with regard to personality characteristic: sober-happy go lucky.

6. There is no significant difference between the gifted and creative student with regard to personality characteristic: expedient-conscientious.
7. There is no significant difference between the gifted and creative student with regard to personality characteristic: shy - venturesome.

8. There is no significant difference between the gifted and creative student with regard to personality characteristic: tough minded - tender-minded.

9. There is no significant difference between the gifted and creative student with regard to personality characteristic: trusting-suspicious.

10. There is no significant difference between the gifted and creative student with regard to personality characteristic: practical - imaginative.

11. There is no significant difference between the gifted and creative student with regard to personality characteristic: forthright - shrewd.

12. There is no significant difference between the gifted and creative student with regard to personality characteristic: placid - apprehensive.
13. There is no significant difference between the gifted and creative student with regard to personality characteristic: conservative - experimenting.

14. There is no significant difference between the gifted and creative student with regard to personality characteristic: group dependent - self sufficient.

15. There is no significant difference between the gifted and creative student with regard to personality characteristic: undiscipline self-conflict - controlled.

16. There is no significant difference between the gifted and creative student with regard to personality characteristic: relaxed - tense.

17. There is no significant difference in the problem solving ability of the gifted and creative college student.

18. There is no significant difference in personality and problem solving ability of students grouped on the basis of gender, course of studies and socio-economic status (SES).

19. There is a constellation of personality characteristics and problem solving ability of the students belonging to groups such as gifted and creative.
DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Giftedness

Paul Witty (1958)\(^7\) defines giftedness as remarkable performance in any potentially valuable human endeavour.

For the present research, the term gifted is taken to mean the students identified as possessing, demonstrated or potentially high intellectual powers or ability and is measured by the Standard Progressive Matrices - Raven (1992).

Creativity

Creativity is taken as a divergent thinking process enabling the pupils for creative outputs (novel and useful) and measured through verbal and non-verbal tests on four primary traits - fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration.

Personality

Personality is more or less stable and enduring organization of a person's character, temperament, intellect and physique which determine his unique adjustment to the environment (Eysenck, 1970). It is that which permits a prediction of what a person will do in a given situation (Cattell, 1972). For the present research, the personality characteristics are defined in terms of the sixteen personality traits and measured by the 16 PF questionnaire (Cattell and Cattell, 1979).
Problem Solving Ability

The skill of the students in understanding and analyzing a problem and applying the scientific knowledge and method to solve them is designated as problem solving ability in the present study, and is measured by a Problem Solving Ability Test (PSAT).

DELIMITATION

The study is delimited to 600 pre-University students chosen from seven colleges in Mizoram. Standardised tests have been used for collecting data on different variables under study.

ORGANIZATION OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

The research report has been presented in six chapters. The introductory chapter presents the significance and strategies for special education for the gifted and the creatives, a brief survey of the educational development in Mizoram, the need and significance of the study, and enunciates the problem, major objectives, hypotheses and delimitations of the study. The second Chapter is devoted to a review of the related research. Studies conducted in India and abroad are reviewed in this Chapter.

The third Chapter deals with the conceptual framework of the study. The method and procedure of the study has been
described in Chapter four. The sample, the tools used, the procedure for data collection, and the statistical techniques used for the analysis of data are presented in detail in this chapter.

Chapter five deals with the analysis of the data which is presented in fifteen sections. Section I deals with the identification of the gifted and the creative college students and explains their characteristics in general. Section II deals with the comparison of the gifted (G) and creative (C) with regard to their personality and problem solving ability. Section III deals with the comparison of Gifted (G) and Gifted-Creative (GC) with regard to their personality and problem solving ability. Section IV deals with the comparison of the Creative (C) and Gifted-Creative (GC) with regard to their personality and problem solving ability. Section V deals with the comparison of male and females with regard to their personality, problem solving ability, intelligence and creativity. Section VI deals with the comparison of science and commerce students with regard to their personality, problem solving ability, intelligence and creativity. Section VII deals with the comparison of science and arts students with regard to their personality, problem solving ability, intelligence and creativity. Section VIII deals with the comparison of commerce and arts students with regard to their personality, problem solving ability, intelligence and creativity. Section IX deals with the comparison of the Low and High socio-economic group of the gifted students with regard to
their personality and problem solving ability. Section X deals with the comparison of the Low and High socio-economic group of the creative students with regard to their personality and problem solving ability. Section XI deals with the comparison of the Low and High socio-economic group of the gifted-creative (GC) students with regard to their personality and problem solving ability. The intercorrelation of the scores of gifted students with different variables under study are given in Section XII. Intercorrelations of the scores of creative students with different variables under study are stated in Section XIII. Section XIV presents the intercorrelation of the scores of gifted-creative (GC) students with different variables. In Section XV the intercorrelations of the scores of total sample with different variables under study are present which is followed by conclusion of the study, discussion and tenability of hypotheses.

Chapter VI deals with the summary and conclusion. The existing provision for the education of the gifted are presented and suggestions for special education programme for the gifted college students for the state of Mizoram are also stated.
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