CHAPTER IX

THE SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

To a large extent the unsatisfactory performance of many students in their academic activities can be attributed to poor school and classroom environments. During the investigation it was found that sometimes even the intelligent students failed to show results commensurate with their basic capacity owing to inadequate motivation. The conditions in most of the schools are not inspiring.

The famous psychologist, Jean Piaget, observes, "...if the aim of intellectual training is to form the intelligence rather than to stock the memory, and to produce intellectual explorers rather than mere erudition, then traditional education is manifestly guilty of a grave deficiency." In this context, in our school system, some deficiencies are apparent even on the surface and many more show up on deeper scrutiny. In course of the present study many such deficiencies were found to originate at many different points which compound later to manifest diverse forms. With a view to identifying the location and the nature of inadequacies and imperfections in our school systems the investigator explored into areas like curriculum, teachers' approach and

personality, teaching methods, students' response, parents' attitudes toward education and other relevant factors. In observing situations and interviewing people, attempts were made to be as objective and systematic as possible, but yet all the information could not be presented in terms of numbers and percentages for the obvious reason that some data did not easily lend themselves to quantification. However, the characteristic patterns have been brought out in reasonable clarity and, therefore, they are expected to be of help in understanding deficiencies in various school situations for the purpose of adopting ways and means to effect improvement.

Before going into detailed discussion on the shortcomings existing in different areas, an overview of a typical school in an urban area may be taken first. This will give an idea of the generally prevalent environment in the schools, and the extent to which it can be held responsible for success or failure of the students.

Case-study of an urban school: It is a uni-sex school with 277 girls, and 22 teachers - both male and female. The physical facilities consist of a building of the shape of the letter without the middle line and a small field which would hardly accommodate two badminton courts. The building has a good C.I. sheet roof but the floor is unpaved and uneven, as a result, the benches and desks are never in position of steadiness. In the corner of the field there is a small tank of drinking water of inadequate capacity supposed to be filled by municipality water-supply which
is never dependable. Also, there is provision of urinals and
lavatories on one side of the field which are inadequate in number
and insanitary. The field is not only small but low-lying with the
result that during the rainy season it remains always slushy and
hence useless for any activity by the students. The school is
conveniently situated in a comparatively quiet and respectable
locality of the town.

Not being supported by necessary facilities, the school cannot
compete successfully with other good schools of the town in
attracting academically bright students. It has to remain content
with students coming from poor socio-economic and socio-cultural
levels of the society. Of all the applicants to different schools
for admission at the lower-most class, this school hardly net any
belonging to the top quartile in intelligence and achievement.
Every year there is preponderance of girls whose parents are petty
traders, daily labourers, pedlers and hawkers, and in many cases
the girls are the first generations in their families to receive
formal schooling.

Of the 22 teachers, 19 are graduates (no one has Master's
degree) 7 of whom posses the B.T.degree. Of the other 3, one is
Matriculate and two have higher qualifications but undergraded.
On the whole, the teaching staff is fairly satisfactory although
unfortunately, the examination results of the students do not
often give commensurately satisfactory impression of the teachers.

However, such a group of teachers in a better school, better
mainly in terms of quality of students, would be doing a better
job. In this school, on the other hand, in spite of the extremely laudable efforts of two or three teachers in particular the students, because of their low intelligence and poor family support, fail to rise up to the teachers' expectation with the result that the enthusiastic teachers never have anything tangible to show to gain public appreciation. It is a pity that most people are incapable of assessing the worth of a person by intelligent observation of his/her performance and it is often quite natural that the enthusiasm of the young energetic teachers die down eventually when they find that they get no appreciation and that their sincere efforts bear no fruits.

The results of the High School Leaving Certificate Examination of the students of this school for seven consecutive years are shown in Table 9.1.

**Table 9.1**

**Results of H.S.L.C. Examinations for Seven Years**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of students appeared</th>
<th>Number of students Passed</th>
<th>Percentage of Pass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of 1st div.</td>
<td>2nd div.</td>
<td>3rd div.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-73</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-77</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The percentages of pass and numbers in the first division are far from satisfactory. Actual percentages of pass are in fact still less, because in class X the school holds a test, as is done in every other school, and some students are detained in it. If all of them been allowed to appear in the final examination, the percentages of pass would have been further lowered every year.

There are six classes in the school, from class V to class X, and these are divided into 15 sections. The break-up of the classes into sections and the number of students in various sections are shown in table 9.2.

TABLE 9.2

SECTIONS AND NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN DIFFERENT SECTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Sections</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class V</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class VI</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class VII</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class VIII</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class IX</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class X</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15 Sections Total 677
In such large classes, as is seen from table 9.2, it is out of the question for the teacher to pay individual attention to his/her pupils. Mass handling is the only way out.

The school building has 15 classrooms for the 15 sections. Besides, it has a room for the headmistress half of which is utilised as the school office. There is also a very small teachers' common room with a wide desk in the middle and chairs and benches around it, not all sufficiently comfortable to allow the overworked teacher to rest and relax in his/her leisure period. In such congested room, receiving parents who might turn up for some important discussion about their daughter students is almost impossible. Also impossible is to establish personal teacher-pupil contact, because neither the students do not feel free to enter the teachers' common room to meet a particular teacher in the presence of all others, nor can a teacher afford to encourage students to meet him/her for clarification of subject matter or for any other guidance for the risk of evoking annoyance in his/her colleagues.

In the teachers' common room each teacher has a drawer or a small cupboard the capacity of which is so small that one cannot keep all the necessary books and papers in a systematic way. Among a few things like a few geographical maps, a globe, a metre rule, etc., the school does not have any teaching-aid worth the name. Even when some enthusiastic teachers bring some teaching-aids of their own there is no proper place to keep them.

The school begins at 10 A.M. everyday and ends at 3.30 P.M., with half-an-hour's break for tiffin at noon. This means there are
five instructional hours everyday. Each Saturday, however, is a half-day with only 3 instructional hours. For all these 23 hours in the week the students are glued to their bench as in all class-periods they are simply passive listeners. Little wonder that as the bell rings and the teacher goes out of the room, the whole class bursts into loud noise-talking, shouting and yelling as if the sluice gates of a dam have been suddenly thrown open letting the blocked water to gush out at full speed. Noise from all rooms mingle in a chorus and rends the air and it continues till the next teacher enters the room. Again there is pin-drop silence, again there is passive listening for another spell of forty-five minutes. Whether such mechanical control of noise or complete thwarting of the natural propensity of the young human beings to talk and respond for long forty-five minute periods is desirable is anybody's guess. In many classes one often finds many students yawning and dozing off indicating, unintentionally, their utter disgust and boredom. The proof of this is to be found in the hilarious shouts of delight that often accompany the occasional announcement of an early dismissal of the classes.

Most classrooms are overcrowded and inadequately furnished. In each bench five, and sometimes even six, girls sit where only three can sit comfortably. Only in a few class rooms the table and chair for the teacher are raised on a platform. Absence of a platform renders any demonstration difficult because the last benchers cannot see. In fact the smallness of the rooms and large number of students in each room make demonstration almost impossible.
The classrooms in the school are of size 20 feet x 20 feet, that is, of 400 square-feet area. From table 9.2 it appears that when a large section of above 50 students sit in such a room the average area per student is only eight square-feet. In such a congested room no teaching-aid, even if available, can be used to any advantage. The result is that the only teaching-aid happens to be the black-board, which is, in most cases, very small, very poor in quality, and ill-maintained. The paint has gone off from here and there and often the poor quality chalk pencils do not write clearly on them. This is extremely annoying for the teacher, and the screeching sound that the hard chalk pencils make while writing on the board is very irritating to the students. Coloured chalk pencils are hardly available.

The school sits for only about 170 days in the year. This excludes the Sundays, however. The actual number of working days or instructional days during the session 1976-77 were as shown below monthwise in table 9.3. These numbers are taken from the class register-books.

| TABLE 9.3 |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS IN THE ACADEMIC SESSION 1976-77. |
|---|---|
| Months | Number of days |
| April | 4 |
| May | 23 |
| June | 23 |
| July | 3 |
| August | 15 |
| September | 16 |
| October | 15 |
| November | 23 |
| December | 15 |
| January | 17 |
| February | 15 |
| March | - |
| 169 |
Of these 169 days roughly about one-sixth, i.e., 28 days, are Saturdays with only three instructional hours as against five on other days. Therefore, if all these 169 instructional days were full working days (without early class cancellation) the total number of instructional hours per year would be \((169-28) \times 5 + (28 \times 3) = 789\). The Education Commission (1964-66) observed "in an academic year the hours of instruction... at the higher primary and secondary stages should not be less than 1,000 and preferably raised to 1,100 or even 1,200 if conditions are favourable".

Conditions were often found not favourable. The total number of instructional days is far from satisfactory. Even the figure of 789, as calculated above, conceals the gravity of the problem for it includes all half days as full-days.

The total number of holidays declared by the education authority is about 80, but on top of that the schools remain closed on many other occasions. Besides these complete off-days, there are a large number of half days. The classes are sometimes cancelled for a variety of inexplicable reasons. Some of these are severity of weather (too hot, too cold or rainy) which occur too frequently to justify class-cancellation; death of persons, eminent and not-so- eminent; occasional arrangement of entertainments like circus, theatre, musical soiree etc. in the area; victory of school teams even in petty competitions, and many other flippant reasons.

When classes are cancelled, more often than not, they are...

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cancelled immediately after roll-call and this considerably lowers the total number of instructional hours. In this particular school there is no proper record of the half-holidays, but from teachers' and students' statements and from the investigator's own observation it could be said that the total number of such cancellations would not be less than 25 days. Some other schools are still worse in this respect. During the investigation the detrimental effects of inordinately large number of class cancellations could be clearly felt. The impropriety of this unseemly practice is appreciated by many teachers as well, although at the same time they would seem to be so used to the prevalent system that any rational reform in this regard is unlikely to be initiated or formally articulated by them. The norms laid down by the Education Commission (1964-66) should, therefore, be implemented by the educational authorities.

The school described above is a typical school. Most of our schools are like this. Dearth of adequate facilities for curricular and co-curricular activities make the schools a dull place. In such circumstances it is only natural that for many students attending school is a tedious and at the same time unavoidable routine, completely devoid of any interest and thrill.

Teachers and their subject-knowledge: Very little research has been done in our country to understand the qualities essential in a teacher. Due to lack of proper job-analysis and appropriate aptitude tests for the selection of teachers the authorities often have to recruit teachers by satisfying themselves only with superficial
interviews for a couple of minutes. As a result, any-body with a
graduate degree and some capacity to look impressive before the
interviewers can get a teaching job. This generally perfunctory
procedure of selection has disastrous potential for the teaching
profession. There are sizeable number of people in the profession
who have neither the requisite knowledge of the subject they teach
nor any art of imparting to others such limited knowledge as they
have.

Since the attainment of India's independance the total
enrolment in all stages of education, including secondary, has
been increasing at a fast rate. Along with this there has been a
corresponding rise in the number of schools with increasing demand
for teachers. Consequently, the gates of the teaching profession
have to be thrown open to a wider range of people. Table 9.4 shows
the enrolment of students in secondary education in India from
1950-51 to 1965-66 along with the anticipated numbers in the coming
years up to 1985-86.

**TABLE 9.4**

**ENROLMENT IN SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**STAGE VIII-X ENROLMENT (000'S)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Enrolment as Percentage of Population in the corresponding groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>1304</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>1508</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>2371</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>2941</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>3682</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-66</td>
<td>4707</td>
<td>1420</td>
<td>6127</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>6559</td>
<td>2259</td>
<td>8818</td>
<td>54.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>9104</td>
<td>3581</td>
<td>12685</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>12256</td>
<td>5285</td>
<td>17541</td>
<td>49.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-86</td>
<td>16526</td>
<td>7842</td>
<td>23368</td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table it is seen that the total enrolment increased from nearly 1.5 million in 1950-51 to 6.1 million in 1965-66. Thus, 5 million increased in just 15 years. This implies an annual increase of about 10 per cent or a doubling period of about seven years. Enrolment will continue to grow and teachers will be necessary in ever increasing numbers. If proper care is not taken in training and selecting teachers, lot of graduates utterly unfit for teaching are likely to be absorbed in the schools.

Even at present such unfit teachers in our schools are not very small in number. There are many reasons for this. One is obviously the unemployment problem. Unlike other advanced countries with ample employment opportunities, inter-occupational mobility is extremely limited in India. 'Once in a job, always in the same job' is the pattern with most employed people. In the advanced countries, lack of family support drives the matriculates and graduates into any employment at almost any salary (only the talented ones get scholarships and other facilities for pursuing higher studies). Once a first job has been accepted they keep on searching for better employment elsewhere. Getting information for vacancies in various departments and organisations and 'applying through proper channel' etc. are far easier in the developed countries. In our country the institution of joint family, as has been already indicated in chapter VIII, supports the sons and daughters even after they have completed matriculation or graduation and they, therefore, being financially protected wait and continue the search for a 'satisfactory' job, instead of accepting any employment, including self employment, opportunities for which may
exist. Since it is difficult to move out once a first job has been accepted, they are, however, justified in spending longer time to getting degrees rather than accepting a job not commensurate with the qualifications they can acquire during the period of 'waiting'. After long waiting if a graduate gets a teaching job he is most likely to stay on irrespective of his suitability as a teacher.

Blaug, Layard and Woodhall recently made a study on India's unemployment problem among the educated people. They have calculated 1.04 years as the average waiting period for a graduate before he gets his first job. Some graduates, being sure of not getting a job, go in for post-graduate studies to increase their worth in the employment market. The study further observes that if it is assumed that a quarter of the students went for an average two years' post-graduate study, the average waiting period falls to 0.54 years.

In India the employers know very well the difficulties of getting jobs and difficulties of changing jobs. In the face of such acute unemployment problem the educational authorities also have to think very carefully before driving out a teacher, even if he has been proved to be utterly inefficient, because dismissal may mean 'no job' for him for the rest of his life. This seems to be one important reason why incapable teachers, despite of their proven inefficiency, are still continuing.

There are other factors too attributable to the existence of

3. Marx Blaug et. al., The causes of Graduate Unemployment In India. Allen Lane the Penguin Press. First Published in 1969 p. 79.

4. Ibid., pp. 79-80.
a vast number of incompetent teachers. In comparison with other occupations teaching is startlingly lacking in the auxiliary rewards that generally attract people. Industry, business and other professions offer promotion to more responsible positions with better salary and more privileges, while school-teaching only increases in pay and trivial seniority privileges. It is because of this that students of the highest ability seldom enter the teaching profession or training institutions for teachers. Only the mediocre and the dull enter training institutions, and even after successful completion of the training many of these would prefer other jobs to teaching. To enter teacher-training is in no sense a commitment to a career for them. Many students, discovering that there is no employment and other easy academic course to pursue, enter teacher-training courses merely by way of someone to bide time for some employment opportunities. In the language of Blanche Geer "for would-be athletes, musicians, and artists uncertain of success as performers and for women whose first choice of career is marriage, a degree in education is a form of occupational insurance".

Of all the occupations, to apply for a teacher's job is perhaps the easiest. Teaching requires the least formal education and, consequently, the least investment of time, money and energy. The applicant knows that once in he can continue for reasons explained above. There are also other reasons why he is not dismissed.

easily. In this context it would be appropriate to quote Blanche Geer again:

'They (The schools) support and legitimize his (teacher's) authority in a number of ways. The teacher has the advantage of his own ground the self-contained unit of the classroom and the enclosing walls of the school building, which cut the pupil off from the rest of his world. The teacher has dependable allies in other teachers, the school administration, and the state. His methods of control and evaluation (discipline and grading) receive institutional support in the record keeping of the administration. While there may be misunderstandings among these allies of the teacher and vulnerability to outside pressures, they have the advantage of being adults dealing with children. They maintain a continuing order in which the pupil is always subject to the authority of a teacher in a school the law requires him to attend.

The school also bolsters the teacher's authority by legitimating his claim to knowledge. It assures the community that its teachers have academic degrees and experience. Teacher and pupil do not simply agree, as in informal teaching, that the teacher has superior knowledge; it is a matter of public consensus that he does.'

With so many allies and so much support of his authority, the teacher's position seems unassailable.

Needless to say that in order to teach well a teacher must know what he teaches. This may sound very obvious; yet this requirement is not always fulfilled. Many teachers were observed in their actual class-room teaching and it has been found that on the basis of knowledge of the subject they teach, they can be arranged in a continuum from most unsatisfactory to quite satisfactory. However, roughly they can also be divided into three groups.

The worst group has extremely poor knowledge of the subject matter. This group of teachers are characterised by complete lack of enthusiasm, vitality and concern for their students. Not only these teachers do not grow educationally and professionally, what is more, whatever intellectual capital they had initially constantly decay and shrink due to complete lack of any exercise. When confronted with situations which are likely to expose their incompetence and shallowness of knowledge, as often happens during short-term training courses, they were found to play a defensive role and adopt evasive tactics. These teachers' incompetence is often openly exposed before their students and this unfortunate situation tends to lower the prestige and image of the whole teaching community. Some teachers however, initially belonging to this category put in sincere efforts to equip themselves with the requisite knowledge and eventually pass on to the next higher category which is discussed below.

The second group of teachers know their subject well and do fair justice to the subject they teach. They seem to know quite thoroughly all that is there in the syllabus, but often it has been found that they know not a single thing more than what is exactly necessary for classroom teaching. Quite honestly, some of them feel that any endeavour to know more is useless. When students ask them questions that are relevant but not quite from within the syllabus or not directly connected with the topic, they tell the students, without any prick of conscience, to mind their business and not to bother about anything else. It is natural that such teachers, with their limited stock of knowledge, can never succeed
in stirring imagination in the minds of the students. Their students may, and often do, learn enough by heart to do well in stereotyped examinations, but never develop adequate grasp and love for the subject. Few teachers belonging to this group could appreciate the investigator's suggestion that in order to inspire the potentially good students the teacher must be capable of throwing open window after window onto wider horizons of knowledge thereby showing his students what they can learn in the college and university. Such teachers are like postmen who need know only the street they serve and to whom knowing any other street is not necessary for their professional duty. In fact, usually teachers discussed in this context face very considerable difficulty when syllabi and textbooks are changed. With this background analysis one can easily understand why one section of teachers always resists the introduction of any novelty in teaching-learning situations.

The third group of teachers really know their subject well and can see it in a wide perspective. Not only these teachers have a good grasp of their subject, but also they can see the interrelationships that exist between different parts of the subject and between his subject and other subjects. Interviews with such teachers revealed that they could appreciate the truth that even the rudiments of an important subject cannot be understood properly without knowing it at higher levels. One very enthusiastic teacher belonging to this group told the investigator that he believed that human mind is infinitely capacious and that one could never correctly guess as to how much knowledge a pupil in his class might want to know.
if it is presented to him in the right way, how much he might not digest. It is such generous considerations that inspire this teacher, and others like him, to keep themselves abreast of the modern developments of their subject and to constantly add to their existing stock of knowledge. It was found that teachers of this description, relatively few in number, are always prepared to answer all classroom questions relating directly or indirectly to the outer ranges and inner depths of the subject. Even when they fail to answer a specific question satisfactorily they are never afraid to admit it, they even encourage their pupils to try to get the correct answer on their own. In the process, the esteem of the students for their teachers does not suffer in any way. On the contrary their sincerity earns them respect.

If it is supposed that subject-knowledge is normally distributed among the teachers, we would expect 16%, 68%, and 16% in the three groups described above. But observations suggest that the distribution would not be normal but positively skewed, that is, the peak would be shifted towards the inferior end of the scale, thereby including relatively more in the worst group than in the best. In terms of percentages it would perhaps be something like this: Worst 30%, mediocres 60%, and best 10%.

A reference to teachers' love for the subject and love for the students is also necessary. Knowing the subject well does not necessarily imply a love for the subject. Without a love for the subject one cannot master it and without a love for the pupils one cannot teach a subject effectively. Whether a teacher likes or dislikes his subject cannot be understood by asking him straight-
forward questions. The investigator tried the method of asking pointed questions but the response was found unsatisfactory. Barring a few, most teachers said they liked their subjects though in many cases it was apparent that the opposite was true. They were hesitant to reveal their dislike as they knew it was a disqualification for them, hence the investigator looked into non-verbal signs indicative of the degree of a teacher's liking for the subject and his pupils. It was found that about a quarter of those teachers having a good grasp over the subject showed a positive love for their subject. It is only they who honestly enjoy teaching. Students who have to learn a subject from a teacher who does not like it are really unfortunate. In this connection Gilbert Highet's analogy is interesting:

'Think how astonished you would be if your doctor told you that personally he really cared nothing about the art of healing, that he never read the medical journals and paid no attention to new treatments for common complaints, that apart from making a living he thought it completely unimportant whether all patients were sick or sound, and that his real interest was mountain climbing. You would change your doctor. But the young cannot change their teachers—at least, not until they reach university age, sometimes not even then. They have sometimes to submit to being treated by doctors of the mind who seem to believe the treatment useless and the patient worthless, no concern they often distrust education'.

How and what they teach: The teacher presents the subject in a certain style and the students perceive it accordingly. The more vivid the ways of presentation, the clearer is the perception. But so far as learning is concerned, a good deal depends on the

perceptual-field that the teacher creates in the classroom.

Apart from showing maps and charts and occasional experimental demonstrations on science subjects, most teachers confine themselves to mere talking, that is, lecture method. Even this is not always done in a proper way.

Observations of classroom teaching enabled the present investigator to locate one basic deficiency even in some really good teachers — teachers who know their subject well, love their subject and their pupils. This deficiency relates to their inability to present the subject in its entirety, or in other words, to their inability to bring out clearly the separate elements and then combine and organise them into one meaningful whole. There is a proverb about the difficulty of seeing the wood because of the trees. Nevertheless, seeing or knowing each individual tree is not the same thing as seeing or knowing the wood. In terms of the proverb, the aim of education is to make the pupils see the wood by means of the trees. Every school subject has certain basic facts, principles, and theories which form the skeleton or the essential structure of the subject and on which details can be hung at any time. Teachers' main duty is to acquaint the pupils with the basic structure, the pupils can add details even on their own effort. The reverse, however, is not that simple; even the acquisition of a rich stock of details may not enable a pupil to discover the essential form which the details might completely conceal. During the present study, teachers in most classes were found to emphasize only the details and very often it was noted that the pupils'
to see and appreciate the basic structure of the subject. In this connection mention may be made of the work of the famous psychologist Jerome S. Bruner. On Curriculum he wrote a small book, The Process of Education. Perhaps, no other single reference has stimulated more thought about curriculum than Bruner's little volume. In this book he puts forward four major hypotheses:

1. All disciplines are reducible to fundamental ideas of development ideas — that is, structure.
2. These basic ideas can be taught to almost all individuals at any age and any level of ability in some intellectually honest manner.
3. All children can develop a type of 'intuitive sense' of the nature of the disciplines that is now generally typically only by scholars.
4. Intellectual curiosity is ample motivation for students if they are given the opportunity to see for themselves or to 'discover' the structure of the disciplines.

Teacher-training institutes should emphasize the importance of need first to discover the basic structure of the subject and then to present it to the students in as simple a manner as is possible. In the syllabus on methods of teaching this aspect should be adequately reflected.

While reviewing syllabus, it was noted that in subject

like General Science and Social Studies for the upper classes of the secondary stage a lot of unconnected materials are included, with the result the students get a good deal of facts and information that are difficult to assimilate. In so important a matter like framing of syllabus, guidance can profitably be sought in the invaluable writings of authorities like Bruner, Whitehead etc. The latter enunciates two educational commandments, 'Do not teach too many subjects', and again, 'what you teach, teach thoroughly'. He also remarks:

'The result of teaching small parts of a large number of subjects is the passive reception of disconnected ideas, not illumined with any spark of vitality. Let the main ideas which are introduced into a child's education be few and important, and let them be thrown into every combination possible. The child should make them his own, and should understand their application here and now in the circumstances of his actual life' 9.

Apart from defective presentation of subjects to the students there seems to be another drawback in the curriculum itself. As the same uniform curriculum is imposed on all types of students belonging to widely varying socio-cultural spectrum, it appears to lose its relevance for certain sections of students. The education designed and imparted during the British period was such that intended to alienate the educated elite from the common mass. This


element is still very much present in our educational system, education tends to create a contempt for manual labour. In this connection Unesco's observation is of relevance:

The man who has had a Western education, whether in his native country or in Europe or America, is inevitably separated from the uneducated man in outlook and mode of life. Western education influences him to new styles of dress, speech, behaviour and opinion; it teaches him the value of western culture and, by implication, the worthlessness of tribal life and primitive custom. His reference group tends to become not his kin and people of his native region, but the community of the educated by whose standards he has been taught to live. He tends to be cut off also from indigenous religions and intellectual traditions, to be critical of traditional sources of authority, and to become oriented to the secular, industrial, urban and international culture of the West.

During visits to villages in connection with the present study, one octogenerian told the investigator that he and his sons were not educated, but were not unhappy because they had the land from which to earn their living. But two of his grandsons had been to school, got up to class VII or VIII, and then became virtually useless for any job, traditional or otherwise. Their educational achievement was not high to earn them white collar jobs in the town, but yet they thought that the level of their education was high enough to justify their contempt for manual work in the field. They were lost to both sides; education had crippled them, the old man lamented.

The fact that a person with some education may fail to find

the kind of employment corresponding to his qualifications ever, however, be regarded as scandalous. But the fact that such a person cannot or does not want to take up a socially useful function is, however, a pointer to serious lacunae of the educational system. Failure to get desired employment and unwillingness to accept anything considered lower than the desired jobs make the students go up the educational ladder aimlessly and instinctively. This phenomenon is characteristic of most developing countries.

To quote Unesco again:

'As time goes on and specific manpower shortages are overcome a still larger problem looms, taking the form of an over-all 'surplus' of educated manpower relative to the total number of job openings of every kind. One finds this phenomenon, for example, in such growing countries as India, the UAE, and the United States, where educational expansion began early and has been extensive. Yet it would be absurd to regard these countries as being 'over-educated' in any real sense. They, like the other developing nations, have an urgent need to utilise their human resources as a basis for more rapid economic growth and social development. But unfortunately, because of the structural rigidities and imperfections which characterise such economies, their theoretical manpower needs for growth far exceed what the employment market actually demands and can pay for. The difficulties arising from imbalances between educational output and available jobs are on the whole less severe in more developed economies whose labour mobility and absorbability are greater'12.

Structuring of more meaningful curricula and their appropriate implementation alone can enable the students to appreciate the value of education as effective means for better living, not merely as an ornament.

Classroom-Climate: Apart from the quality of teaching, the teacher also creates in the classroom a social climate the type of which depends upon his personality and his relation with the pupils. In every teaching situation the teacher is the superintended and his pupils are his subordinates. There are constant interactions between the teacher and the pupils and among the pupils themselves. As a result of these interactions a social climate is created. The teacher controls his pupils and it is the nature of his control that determines the climate created. The success and effectiveness of teaching and learning depends to a great extent upon this social setting. Because of its importance, investigation of classroom conditions became an important subject of study with educators.

Some people like Birchmore analysed the answers given by pupils to direct questions of the type: 'What sort of teacher do you like best'? 'What in your opinion are the qualities of a good teacher'? etc. He found that replies differed from school to school. More subtle methods have also been used by others. Some research workers, for example, interviewing boys and girls, have extracted by incidental means, evidence as to the accepted stereotypes of good and bad teachers held by groups of pupils in differing circumstances. Similar material has been collected by others through an analysis of pupils' essays on superficially neutral topics.

While observing classroom teaching the investigator was mainly guided by the work of Kurt Lewin and Harold Anderson. Their analyses formed the basis of observation. The type of control the teacher adopts in the classroom can be understood in terms of Lewin's analysis of leadership into types which are autocratic, laissez-faire or democratic. The same can also be viewed through Anderson's analysis of leadership into two types which are integrative and dominative.

The investigator wanted to see the relation between the teacher's nature of control and the quality of learning which that type of control promotes. For this purpose the investigator placed each teacher, after observing a number of lessons given by him, on a straight line one extreme of which represented most autocratic (Lewin) or most dominative (Anderson) and the other the most democratic (Lewin) or most integrative (Anderson). For such placement consideration was taken of behavioural signs such as giving of orders, constructive and non-constructive criticism, praise and approval, infliction of punishment, harsh and friendly remarks etc.

The teachers who were found dominant or autocratic seemed to belong to two categories: (1) those who know the subject well, can present it in a logical way but at the same time keep the class completely passive, and (2) those who are very weak in the subject and become dominant only to cover their inadequacies. Dominance is a sort of defense-mechanism with the latter category. Teacher's dominance, whether natural or artificially cultivated.
as a defensive device, and students' spontaneity appeared to be inversely proportional to each other. In the class of a dominant teacher there are feelings of fear, hostility, aggression and suppression and consequently a less favourable atmosphere for learning. On the other hand, teachers with a democratic outlook encourage co-operation, spontaneity and creativity and as a result a healthy atmosphere more conducive to learning often prevails in their classrooms.