CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER POSSIBILITIES

The investigation in hand aimed at studying the existing position with regard to parent-teacher cooperation in the secondary schools of Punjab.

To study the problem comprehensively the research-design was neither confined to the working of PTA's only, nor only to the activities which could come under parent-teacher cooperation; instead, it included in its scope an experimental and a correlational study on two very important aspects of the problem.

The objective of the experimental study was to scientifically assess the impact of parent-teacher cooperation on the scholastic achievement of students whereas the correlational study had parental interest in the education of children as its focus.

Before making a general survey of the prevailing conditions in the secondary schools of Punjab in respect of parent-teacher cooperation, we tried to make an objective assessment of the importance which different persons attached to it in comparison to forms of cooperation which the school should have with other agencies for making the school
programme effective. For this, we prepared a cooperation scale and administered it on parents, teachers, teacher educators and heads of institutions (N = 100 in each case). The findings, yielded by this scale have been discussed in Chapter IV.

For making a general survey of the work being done in our schools to bring about parent-teacher cooperation, we prepared a check-list-cum-questionnaire with the specific purpose of knowing what our schools were actually doing to promote close relationship between teachers and parents and what difficulties they were experiencing in this regard. The tool was administered on a sample of 400 high and higher secondary schools. The sample for study was so chosen as to give a fair representation to all the major categories of secondary schools available in the State. The data collected have been supplemented by studying the case histories of 20 randomly selected PTA's of the State and interviewing some parents, teachers, heads of institutions and officers of the Education Department.

The impact of parent-teacher cooperation on the scholastic achievement of students has been examined through an experiment by introducing the factor of parent-teacher cooperation as a variable. Both the control
and the experimental groups (X class students) were equated with each other in respect of intelligence-achievement composite scores, facilities for study at home, attitude of parents towards education, ecological conditions, medium of instruction, organisational control of the institutions and the area to which the students under study belonged.

The programme of parent-teacher cooperation which was introduced as a special variable to be studied in the experimental group, lasted for about three months. The achievement scores of both the groups—before and after the experiment—were statistically treated to ascertain the possible impact of parent-teacher cooperation on scholastic achievement of students.

For making a general survey of parental interest in the education of their children and to test a few hypotheses formulated in this connection, an interest schedule was prepared and administered on parents of students studying in 9th class. Data have been analysed, statistically treated and the findings thus obtained discussed in Chapter XIII.

On the basis of the findings of each phase of the study, we now are in a position to arrive at the following conclusions with regard to this problem.
1) Parent-teacher cooperation influences the scholastic achievement of students in a positive and significant way.

2) Interest of parents in the education of their children is substantial though it is mostly ambition-oriented, provisional or supervisory. The instructional type of interest on the part of parents is the least. There is also a positive correlation between parental interest and achievement scores of their children.

3) Inspite of the fact that PTA as an organised movement in the State is a recent phenomenon, much work in the form of different activities is already under way in schools. The work does serve the cause of parent-teacher relationships to an extent.

4) Most of the work being done at present aims at parent-teacher contact rather than parent-teacher cooperation.

5) Parents, teachers, teacher educators and heads institutions seem to realise the signal importance of bringing about parent-teacher cooperation in any programme of effective schooling, but the fact remains that the concept of parent-teacher cooperation remained undefined and somewhat vague to all of them. The major partners - parents and teachers - do not seem to be quite clear of
the exact purpose and scope of forcing close cooperation between parents and teachers.

School results being the chief consideration with schools, the approach to this vital and positive problem of parent-teacher cooperation is usually compulsive and negative, even limited. Schools approach parents when students misbehave or are poor in studies. Parents usually approach schools when their children apprehend failure in examinations.

6) The conditions with regard to parent-teacher cooperation in all the eleven districts of the State are almost similar.

7) The PTA movement seems to be gaining ground in the State, though the movement lacks organisation and leadership both at the State and District level. Though much against its wish, the efforts of the Department of Education Punjab to give necessary lead and incentives have not borne much fruit.

8) The major activity of the PTA's is limited to raising funds, and improving the physical conditions of the school.

Higher stages of the working of PTA's such as the interpretation stage, the resource stage, the service
stage, the planning stage, and the evaluation stage are still conspicuous by their absence in our State.

9) After going through the achievements of different PTA's and on the basis of personal interviews, it can be said with some conviction that the success of a PTA depends primarily upon the initiative, willingness and competence of heads of institutions and that the incentives given by the Education Department in this regard can go a long way towards letting PTA's make substantial achievements.

10) Whereas illiteracy and backwardness of parents are proving to be definite handicaps and obstacles in achieving the desired level of parent teacher relationship in rural schools, the urban parent is indifferent to and disinterested in school affairs, because he is too busy to spare any time for the child and his school. The city resident seems to believe in sending the child to school and footing the bill ... and that usually is the limit of his participation.

As things are, school policies are never planned cooperatively by parents and teachers, much less by students. Look-to-your task and pass-the-time-attitude seems to prevail all over. Answers to problems come always from the top,
from the selected few. Concept of shared thinking and cooperative planning or involving parents and teacher in the programmes of schools, is still alien to our system of education.

Beyond some nominal cooperation for school improvement, there is by and large no involvement of the community in planning for better schools.

11) By and large resources of the community in general and those of parents in particular remain untapped.

12) For reasons multifarious, and perhaps unknown, there is a lot of misunderstanding and distrust among teachers and parents. Both blame each other and distrust each other.

13) Calling parents to school functions, sending progress reports to parents and the like are usually taken to be the only tasks of school, in the matter of associating parents with schools. Efforts is seldom made to explain school programmes to parents or to involve parents in the academic working of schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

The author on the basis of the findings of his study ventures to make the following recommendations and suggestions for further possibility in the matter of parent-
teacher cooperation. The ultimate objective is that of making education more effective and fruitful for the child.

FOR LOCAL BODIES.

The close involvement of schools with their communities is a principle of great educational significance and this is the direction in which we should move.

The recommendations made by the Kothari Commission Report are so sound in this regard that we would do no better than to reproduce a few which get sufficient support from the findings of our study:

1) As an ultimate objective, it is essential that schools and their local communities should be intimately associated in the educational process.

2) It would, however, not be proper to press for the universal adoption of this principle without reference to local conditions.

3) The immediate goal in this respect is to associate the local communities, namely, village panchayats in rural areas and the municipalities in urban areas, with their local schools and to make them responsible for the
provision of all non-teacher costs with the help, where necessary, of a suitable grant-in-aid from the States.

4) The ultimate goal to be reached is the establishment, at the district level, of a competent local education authority which may be designated as the District School Board and which would be in charge of all education in the district below the university level.

5) In all association of the local authorities with education, adequate safeguards should be provided to ensure that the teachers are not harassed and that they do not get involved in local factions and politics.

6) It is necessary to remember that it is not enough to decentralise the administration of education and to vest it in the local authority. The programme will not succeed unless intensive steps are taken, to educate local leadership on the right lines, to provide the local authority with trained and competent officers who would have certain independence in the performance of their duties and to make the necessary resources available to the local authority to fulfil the responsibilities placed upon it.

FOR PTA'S

1) The school PTA's may be democratized and made autonomous. They may be authorised to handle school
building funds and other grants, to receive donations for specific purposes in cash or kind for the benefit of the school or its students.

2) The Education Department should set-up separate and exclusive cells to take care of and to promote as well as popularize PTA movement.

3) PTA's should provide substitute or additional coaching assistance, help in improving physical school plant and school equipment, institute pre-primary classes, run health services, guidance programmes and social work projects, organise co-curricular activities, conduct supervised home work, and publicize the work done by them through school magazine.

4) Scientific data on problems of school going children may be supplied to the PTA's to enable the latter to help in the task of dealing with such problems.

5) Conferences of teachers should be utilized for discussing the programmes of PTA's from time to time.

6) Areas of action research for promoting PTA's programmes should be listed. Well meaning and interested teachers may take up such research with the object of promoting PTA's programmes.
7) The Teacher Training Colleges should deal with parent-teacher relations in their courses. They should point out to the teacher trainees that the children they teach are the products of a particular environment which is of special relevance in the classroom. They should also offer courses in the techniques of parent-teacher contact.

The development of more cooperative relations between home and school, which the above steps seek to bring about, can stop or diminish the alarming wastage or ability, especially among the working-class children. It is the responsibility of teachers to help parents voice their feelings and wishes, to articulate more effectively, to know their way around the educational system as most middle class people do, and to use it actively instead of just accepting it. Parents need to be drawn into the process of education and shown how teachers teach and what they can do at home to re-inforce this. Teachers must regard parents as their allies. Teachers need to make imaginative efforts to understand parents' difficulties in bringing children up. No decisive improvement is possible unless teachers re-think their attitude towards parents. Education authorities can encourage, even exhort, but teachers who can make day-to-day contacts with parents can act.
Parents need an opportunity to freely talk about their children to an informed and sympathetic listener. This opportunity is best provided by an effective PTA.

If this study stimulates only some teachers and parents to act, to look again at the opportunities of meeting and working constructively together, it would have been worth taking up. Parents and teachers are not rivals, but partners in the task of education. The following may be some of the methods by which they can re-inforce each other's work.

**FOR PARENTS.**

1) Being an active member of the PTA and attending School functions as far as possible.

2) Helping the school by sending discarded toys and books, money for school funds, magazines, giving talks at the school, organising sales or fetes and the like.

3) Replying to school reports, giving views of the child, thanking for what the school does for the child or seeking clarifications, if necessary.

4) Meeting the head or class teacher at school or inviting him to home to look into the question of helping the school or the child.
5) Giving weight to the teachers' point of view about the child.

6) Refraining from making any complaints about the school in the presence of the child.

7) Appreciating the teachers' difficulties like large classes, inadequate facilities, paucity of time etc., while talking about what teachers can do to help the child.

8) Advising other parents to do likewise.

FOR TEACHERS.

1) Enhancing contacts with parents and strengthening the organisation of the PTA.

2) Improving school reports and using modern methods of communicating to parents about the results on detailed forms giving specific information and constructive suggestions. Monthly progress reports showing the child's achievements in studies, cleanliness, sociability etc., may be sent asking parents' suggestions.

3) Living in and with the Community.

4) Talking with parents. Making home-visits more rewarding and enjoyable.
5) Giving weight to parents' point of view about the child. Appreciating their difficulties and helping them to overcome these difficulties.

6) Inviting parents to witness tournaments and other important functions of the school. Bringing to the parents' notice any proficiency gained by their child or a special aptitude shown by him in a particular activity.

7) Asking parents to come over and discuss specific issues regarding their children. The author is tempted to refer to Louis Cohen's (2) investigation which concluded that neighbourhood factors, school factors and home factors affect educational attainment. It is these factors which the PTA's can always take care of and hence their relevance to the present study. These factors are (i) Intelligence, health, temperament and attitudes towards school-of pupils, (ii) Intelligence, temperament and educational and occupational experience - of parents, (iii) Intelligence, temperament, educational experience, training, attitudes towards children, and attitudes towards education and authority-of teachers (iv) Atmosphere, status in the neighbourhood, contacts with local industry and relations with youth club-of school, (v) Atmosphere, cleanliness and order, type-of and severity of discipline, possession of books and papers - at home and (vi) Level
of housing, age of building, economic and occupational level, crime level, cultural provisions and moral climate of neighbourhood. Cohen's study serves to indicate the extent of the field in which PTA's might act to do as much as possible.

FOR SCHOOLS AND THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

1) All schools should have a regular programme for contact with children's homes. This programme should include:

Meeting between parents and teachers at the time the child enters school, arrangements for formal talks at least twice a year, open days to be held at times to enable parents to attend, informing parents through booklets regarding the ways children are being educated, written reports on children once a year regarding child's work, special efforts to contact parents who do not visit the school.

2) The Department of Education should publish literature containing examples of good practices in parent-teacher relations, the steps taken by authorities to encourage schools to foster good relations, and the contribution which the combined efforts of teachers, supervisors, parents and students can make to the qualitative improvement of education.
3) Steps should be taken by the Education Department to improve schools which are known to be popular with parents.

4) Parents and other adults should be invited to help the school with its out-of-school activities, and community schools should be developed in all areas.

5) Local people, who are better educated, more well-to-do and vocal, should be requested to take positive interest in the educational programme for their children.

6) Well-trained and enthusiastic teachers, who maintain good relations with the local community, should be encouraged to find appropriate situations such as those connected with public situations, simple village project, care of small children and help to the old and the sick, in which the school children can help the community.

7) Every educational institution should try to develop a rich community life of its own and provide adequate and satisfying opportunities for students to participate in it and help in organising it.

8) All efforts should be made to enable the parents to have a proper understanding of the school programme and practices. The programme made in the schools in the last
quarter of a century, towards more freedom, less rigid discipline, more child-centred study, does not seem to have been matched in the understanding of parents, at any rate of working-class parents. There is a time lag: the schools have moved faster than the parents, and as a result parents are critical of the schools, for not drilling enough sheer information into their children's heads and for being too lax in discipline. The parents' distrust is communicated to the children, the children's loyalty to the school reduced, and the accomplishment of the school consequently curtailed. The faster the pace of change in the school the more likely is the support of parents to be lost. The only way to prevent this outcome is to educate the parents at the same time as the children.

FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

The parent-teacher work should become increasingly the subject of college courses and activities as has been the practices in countries like America, Canada, France and many others.

The colleges could institute the following steps.

1) Courses in parent-teacher cooperation in regular sessions and in summer schools.

2) Extension courses for teachers in service and for parent-teacher workers.
3) Occasional lectures on parent-teacher work and related subjects.

4) Classes and courses in parent education.

5) Courses to acquaint the would-be teachers with the functions of organised home-school cooperation, and the problems that arise in effective parent-teacher relationships.

FOR RESEARCH

This study indicates that there is a strong interest among parents in effective home-school cooperation, but there is little guidance as to the effective ways in which this may be brought about. The universities can do a lot in providing such guidance.

Research on related literature shows that an understanding of child behaviour on the part of both parents and teachers is one pre-requisite to effective cooperation. Another pre-requisite is a type of personal adjustment on the part of parents and teachers that does not lead them to project their own anxieties and concerns into the lives of children or adults. These findings are, however, not enough. We need to know more about how to effect the actual cooperating between parents and teachers without undermining the security and respect of each of them.
The problem of parent-teacher cooperation is analogous to the problem faced by us in any cooperative enterprise. Man has not made much progress in working out methods which recognise and enhance the personality growth of all participants in a cooperative programme. Again education has not done much in training students in schools or colleges in the matter of community cooperation.

Future researchers therefore need to identify and describe problems needing cooperative attention of teachers and parents, to isolate factors affecting the attitudes of parents towards teachers and teachers towards parents, and to examine the effect of different methods of cooperation.

That parent-teacher cooperation is a knotty problem both in its nature and scope, that several agencies have to be tapped to foster this cooperation, that pioneering efforts have yet to be made to do so in Punjab, and that proper methods of cooperation should be devised, are some of the major findings that this study suggests.

Further researches with stricter controls, larger samples and more sophisticated techniques may replicate these findings, modify them and may throw up
more suggestions which in turn may, in due course of time, reform the situation regarding parent-teacher cooperation. The present study is a small attempt which may at best be regarded as a humble beginning.

REFERENCES
