CHAPTER III

SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE

Home-school relationship as an area of special interest and research has proved to be very popular - and fertile as well - with many professional educationists in different parts of the world during the recent past.

True, the importance of forging close links between home and school has long been recognised by parents, teachers, educational administrators and educationists but rightly has it been observed: "In fact, this, one of the basic questions, in the sociology of education, is now for the first time being approached with an adequate apparatus of criticism and research" (1).

The interest in the problem is now no longer limited to the individual level; by all means it has become an area of departmental concern and a problem of national importance. The Education Commission Report, Government of India (1964-66) is replete with direct and indirect references on the subject. In no other report on Indian Education has the need for developing school-community relationships been highlighted and stressed as much as in this. In the U.S.A. alone, there are now more than 46,000 local parent-teacher associations (PTA’s) (2). Then there are National Parent Teacher Association local units in many other countries (3). Only recently the Department
of Education and Science, University of Liverpool, U.K. has developed in increasing interest in home-school relationships, particularly in circumstances of social handicap, whilst official attention in England has been called to the importance of specific preparation for the educational consequences of imperfect home-school relationship in the Newsom report and elsewhere (4). The theme of the National Conference held at Ormskirk, Lancashire (UK) in June, 1968 was "Linking Home and School" (5).

As a result of the growing concern for home-school relationship, we have now at our disposal some excellent material on the topic in the form of some National Reports on education, professional books, articles and other publications of a general nature and also enough of research data dealing with the theoretical and practical aspects of this multi-faceted problem. It is physically impossible to review or even mention here everything that we have with us in this connection. For reasons obvious, therefore, an attempt has been made to present a brief resume of only the major researches done in the area.

On surveying the existing literature, related to the topic in hand, we find that researchers have not stuck to any particular approach of investigation. Instead they have tried to make use of variety of methods, sometimes their combinations as well.

The methods employed so far could be broadly categorised into:
- (i) Survey Type;
- (ii) Clinical (or Analytical);
and
- (iii) Experimental.

We shall review the related work done under each.

Researches: Survey Type and Analytical.

Commenting upon the nature of investigations conducted on parent-teacher relationships, R.H. Ojemann and W.t.t. Bristow (6) observe, "Most of the studies of cooperation have been of a survey character. A few have been analytical in nature."

The assessment given by the authors pertains to the year 1941. The position stands much changed now. We have gone much ahead since then. True, the survey type researches still dominate the field, but the trend, now, is to supplement that type of work with clinical data. So we are now having more of analytical studies. And the experimental approach which was conspicuous by its absence in the past has now contributed most to our knowledge.

Studies under the head 'Survey and Analytical' could be sub-divided into

- (i) Direct studies on parent-teacher cooperation;
- (ii) Studies on attitudes and role of parents;
- (iii) Studies associated with factors influencing attitudes towards school;
- (iv) Studies on school-community interaction.
In 1928 Butterworth (7) proposed six objectives of Parent Teacher Associations as follows: (a) giving members understanding of the objectives and methods of the school; (b) learning to apply accepted educational objectives and methods to the out-of-school environment; (c) under certain conditions giving school officials opinions as to where the school succeeds or fails; (d) aiding to educate the community in desirable aspects of the school programme; (e) facilitating acquaintance of parents and teachers; (f) raising special funds for special conditions.

In addition to these objectives, Butterworth also listed five limitations: (a) the parent-teacher associations cannot have direct, legal control of the schools; (b) it is not the responsibility of the parent-teacher association to finance the school; (c) the association should not undertake duties of a technical character for which the members are not prepared; (d) the association has no authority over the various other agencies having educational influence; (e) the association should not, except in a case of emergency, undertake duties that are the primary responsibilities of other agencies.

Holbeck (8) studied 110 local parent-teacher associations throughout the United States and made a detailed case study of 10 selected associations. He concluded that
there was a need for re-statement of the principles of parent-teacher work in order that the aims of the organisation might be achieved and its activities directed toward definite accomplishments.

Rossbach (9) in a description of the parent-teacher activities of Lincoln School (New York City) indicated that schools venturing beyond traditional patterns must have full understanding and cooperation of parents if their programmes are to be successful.

Saylor (10) developed a check list to be used in appraising home-school relationships in the elementary schools. Burgard (11), using Holbeck Scale, found that the efficiency of the parent-teacher association is related to the characteristics of the principal officers such as the president, secretary and chairman of programme committee.

Nicely (12) working for his doctorate degree found a wide variety of activities in his study of parent-teacher association.

Ojemann and Fatland (13) after analysing the contribution of teachers and parents proposed a check-list by which any arrangement for effecting home-school cooperation can be tested. The items comprising the list are as follows:

1) Does the plan help the teacher to understand the background of each child so well as she can apply this knowledge in her daily relations with her pupils?
2) Does the plan help the teachers maintain their security, personal worth, and similar requirements for a cooperating personality?

3) Does the plan help parents learn the principles of child development so as they become skillful in applying them in day-to-day family living?

4) Does the plan help parents to become so well adjusted personally as they do not project their mission and irritation into the lives of their children or into their relations with their children's teachers?

5) Does the plan help teachers and parents become so well acquainted that they can work together with understanding and confidence and can look at problems from each other's point of view?

In our own country also we have had such studies though much less in number and much narrower in scope.

The State of Madras seems to have been the first to give a lead in this direction (As back as 1945, Tiruvenkatachari (14) studied the methods of promoting parental cooperation in South Indian Schools. Seven years later, Dixit (15) worked on a similar problem in Uttar Pradesh. The need of providing more opportunities for parent-teacher contact was stressed.

Thereafter we find a series of investigations direct on parent-teacher cooperation or on the working of parent-teacher associations in a particular town or city.
Shrivastava (16), Aggarwal (17) in their critical studies of parent-teacher cooperation in the secondary institutions of Allahabad and Agra respectively found that among other things the scope of cooperation in majority of the cases was limited to calling parents to attend school functions or sending the progress reports of children to their homes.

Similar studies have been conducted by Phillips (18) in Lucknow, Saxena (19) in Jaipur, Goel (20) in Delhi, Panigrahi (21) in Jaipur, Rajan (22) in Shopal, Bhatt (23) in Beroda and Nathai (24) in the State of Kerala. Daljit Kaur (25) in her critical study of the Parent-Teacher Associations of Patiala City came to the conclusion that most of the PTA's were on paper only and that the job they were doing was highly unsatisfactory.

Studies on Attitudes and Role of Parents:

Gandhi (26) conducted quite a comprehensive study on 'Attitudes of Parents towards school children'. The various aspects included in his questionnaire were:

(i) Economic status (of teachers), (ii) Honesty of purpose (on the part of teachers), (iii) Social status (of teachers), (iv) Discipline (in school), (v) Teacher-pupil relationship, (vi) Teachers' qualifications and activities, (vii) Extra curricular activities, and lastly (viii) parent-teacher relations. The main conclusions drawn by him are reproduced below:
1. Teachers should be given due representation on school managing committees.

2. Teachers generally lack honesty of purpose.

3. Teachers do not enjoy proper social status.

4. Students lack discipline.

5. Teacher-pupil relations are far from cordial.

6. Parents must be invited to school functions. Only competent parents should be invited to schools as resource persons and parents should be represented on the school managing committees also.

Dixit (27), Iqbal Kaur (28), Deb (29), Sam (30), Rajadyaksha (31), Kashyap (32) have also done some similar work in this area, though on different aspects of the problem. The general consensus seems to be that parents' attitudes towards schools and their working somehow are far from favourable. They, however, have shown their awareness of and keenness of making things better.

'The Review of Educational Research' (33) reports that considerable attention has been given to the matter of attitudes towards education in all its aspects.

Lyle (34) conducted a comparative study of the opinions of various professional groups in Oklahoma and found liberal arts professors to be more critical of public education than lawyers and physicians. Somewhat similarly
Coakley (35) studied the attitudes of children, parents, and educators towards the curriculum, methods, plans, and personnel of the elementary school; he concluded that parents and pupils were more forward looking than educators on many items. Citizens in Paul's Valley, Oklahoma, were found by Payne (36) to perceive the school as the predominant youth service agency in the community. Parents in a small district were found by Jones (37) to have utilitarian philosophy and to place the fundamental, occupational roles of their schools above the roles of college preparation and aesthetic development. Hutton (38) found high level of satisfaction with schools that the people of Charlottesville, Virginia enjoyed. Horsman (39) surveyed attitudes and beliefs about schools in Mt. Lebanon Township, Pennsylvania, and found general support for all areas of the school programmes.

Gillanders (40) found agreement between Arizona citizens and professional educators with respect to the desirable goals of physical education. Cook (41) sampled students, parents, and English teachers and found parents and recent high school graduates to favour a more traditional, formal, language study type of English programme in the high school. Heidler (42) investigated the reported reasons for leaving high school on the part of adults and pupils; he concluded that lack of good teacher-pupil, teacher-parent relationships and failure to develop with
parent co-operation the kind of school programme which would more adequately meet the needs of all youth were the primary causes of current drop-outs. As reported by Lovelace (43), a nationwide study by Phi Delta Kappa showed that about one-half of those polled had read negative articles in nationally circulating magazines, while 73 per cent of the sample had confidence in the public schools. A supporting study reported by Boss (44) verified the findings and showed that 85 per cent of those sampled believed the schools today to be better than those 30 to 40 years ago.

Ackreley (45), Gardner (46), and Elliot (47) studied particularly parents’ knowledge regarding child health and behaviour. Their studies show that parents by and large possessed a poor knowledge of child psychology. The studies stressed the need for parent education and closer contacts of teachers with parents.

Dr. Douglas's 18 year classical study on the children of Great Britain already reported in Chapter I has added much to our knowledge on the subject.

Studies on Factors Associated with Attitudes Towards Schools.

There has also been considerable research on factors associated with or affecting attitudes towards the schools.
DeRemer (48) reported a significant difference between public-school patrons and non-patrons in attitudes towards public schools. The distance between residence and school was found not to be related to attitude in the Negro schools of Orange County, Florida, as reported by King (49), but Hines and Grobman (50) found that a very real deterioration of school-community relation occurred as distance increased. Informed persons were found by Day (51) to have stronger opinions with respect to schools than uninformed persons. Morgan (52) found that attitudes towards discipline in the high schools of Washington County, Pennsylvania, were associated with amount of education, occupation, and family income. Hines and Grobman (53) found the more highly educated and wealthy parents to favour democratic operating procedures and those with only a grade-school education to somewhat favour non-democratic behaviour in the school's relations with teachers, parents and children. Schussman (54) reported a tendency for higher socio-economic neighbourhoods with low urban and ethnic status to have more favourable attitudes towards the schools. Capra (55) found PTA members and college graduates to have more favourable attitude towards current educational practices than non-PTA members and high-school graduates. Anderson (56) found parents of tenth-graders generally favourable towards a teaching career for their children.
Thomsen (57) reported a positive relationship between the principal's personality and behaviour and favourable community reaction. Of the various groups studied by Bray (58) in Arkansas, business and professional groups knew the most about the school end farmers and housewives knew the least.

Swift (59) has shown that it is the socially aspirant middle-class and lower middle-class parents, whose own careers have been unsatisfactory and whose personal ambitions have been frustrated, who make such a fuss about schooling and who over-actively cooperate with the more limited aims of schools, in the way, that is to say, of passing examination rather than in terms of widening children's cultural interest.

Studies on School-Community Interaction.

Parents are very much a part of the community. It would be quite in order, therefore, to make a mention of some studies related to the problem of school-community interaction.

Grant (60) developed a list of 99 hypothetical ways, acceptable both to educators and to parents, which parents could use to supplement the education of their children. DeVauc (61) analyzed lay-professional participation in curriculum development in the secondary schools of Ohio and concluded that educators generally dominated such groupings, with parents assuming a very minor role.
Using tape-recorded interviews, Bowe (62) examined actual and potential roles of lay community members in several phases of educational planning and operation. His findings indicated that such participation could have great value and public support; community members were more willing to participate than were administrators to have them participate. These and other studies seem to indicate a need to explore more fully the areas, where lay participation can be utilized, and the methods for realizing the greatest good from the procedure.

Experimental Studies.

As already observed, experimental studies are far less in number than the other two types discussed hitherto. But as observed further, the interest in this type of research is now on the increase and we have with us sufficient literature on the topic.

Experimental evidence is now available to show that a teacher can work more effectively if she knows the out-of-school experiences of the pupils (63). There is also experimental evidence indicating that changes in the home environment can affect the child's behaviour in schools (64).

Wilson (65) found that educational achievement was comparatively devalued in working class neighbourhood to such an extent that even the products of middle-class families
in the same area felt the draught of this influence. A process of what might be called anticipatory socialisation in reverse seemed to occur (66).

There has been another classic study in this connection of junior high school and its parents by Michael Young and Patrick McGreeney (67). All the children at John Lilburne school were tested in the autumn of 1965, just before the experimental variables of open meetings of parents, private talks, discussions of teaching methods with parents and home visits by teachers, were tested for a second time six months later i.e. just after the trial period. The following table gives results obtained by the authors (66).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average differences in scores in children's scores</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>Non-verbal</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Arithmetic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average differences in children's scores</td>
<td>+0.76</td>
<td>+5.23</td>
<td>+1.56</td>
<td>+3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children taking tests before and after trial</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of statistical significance</td>
<td>Non</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is clear from the table that the changes were all in the right direction, upward and those in the non verbal, reading and arithmetic were all statistically highly significant.

The tests were repeated at the end of further six months. No experimental variable was introduced this time. If there had been a return to the original levels once the trial period of first six months was finished, this would have suggested that nothing of more than passing value had been gained. The results reproduced below showed however that at the end of a year the improvement of the first six months had on the whole been maintained.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVERAGE DIFFERENCES IN SCORES DURING FIRST AND SECOND SIX MONTHS FOR CHILDREN AT JOHN LILBURNR</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbal</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average differences in children's scores, 1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over first six months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of statistical significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average differences in children's scores between first and second 6 months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of statistical significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children taking tests on all three occasions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is on the basis of such-like findings that there is now a growing recognition of the need for effective cooperation between parents and teachers in problems of mutual concern (70). Besides, a demand has developed for more education of parents in child care and development on the one hand and for more opportunities for teachers in training and teachers in service to learn about child behaviour and the home and community background on the other (71).

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68  Ibid., p. 88.

69  Ibid., p. 89.


71  Ibid.