CHAPTER VII

THE IMPACT OF PROBLEMS UPON THE PROGRESS OF EDUCATION

Problems are bound to occur whatever the field of education. The nature of the problems, however, may be serious or otherwise. If the problems are grave, the question is, how to judge their severity? Among many other methods two important ones can be clearly earmarked—

(i) the percentage of the persons reporting the problems and (ii) the extent to which these problems determine the progress of education. While the first measure refers to the magnitude of the problem, the second pinpoints the extent of its consequence. For the improvement of educational enterprise it is necessary that both the extent and the severity of a problem are fully understood. In the present study this has been the main objective of the investigator.

In the previous chapters, the extent of different types of problems in the field of elementary education and in the area of educational administration and financing have been dealt with and also the progress of elementary education since 1950 have been discussed. In the present chapter, an endeavour is made to highlight the impact of the problems on the progress of elementary education.

It is illogical to relate the progress of education to any one single factor. The progress is usually the sum total of a number of factors occurring in the social environment. For example, the progress of elementary education depends not only on the finances provided for the expansion of education, but also on the attitudes of the parents, teachers, administrators, members of the community and the students. It also depends on the social values and the cultural environment in which education is provided. Hence, to put forward one, as the retarding or accelerating factor alone for the
progress of education is not proper. The investigator was alive to the situation and hence made an attempt to investigate the problems existing at the various levels of elementary education. Still, as the study was limited to the administrative and financial problems of elementary education, many of the factors, like social and cultural ones, have been kept out of the purview of the present study. The discussion on the impact of the problems has thus been delimited and only those problems have been examined which occur on account of the barriers in the smooth functioning of the administrative process. It may be clearly pointed out here that no statistical technique has been followed to measure the impact simply because of the fact that the way in which the problems have been investigated and the indicators of progress outlined, to the best of the knowledge of the investigator, no valid and reliable statistical technique could be profitably employed. The investigator has avoided, as far as possible, the use of a technique which may not result in quite objective and usable conclusions.

The impact of the problems on the progress of education may be revealed by evaluating the quantitative progress of elementary education in terms of enrolment of the children in the schools. Qualitatively, the progress may be evaluated by studying the changes brought about in remodelling the curriculum and textbooks, in the improvement of the quality of teachers, in establishing better relations between the school and the community, in employing better supervisory and administrative techniques, and in having better buildings, furniture and equipment. It is in the light of these factors that the impact of the problems on the progress of elementary education is being discussed here.
In chapter VI it has been seen that the enrolment of students was only 83.7 percent of the boys and 65.7 percent of the girls in the age-group 6-11 and it was 57.4 percent of boys and 33.8 percent of girls in the age-group 11-14 in the year 1971-72 (Table 6.1, p. 197). Table 6.1 also shows that enrolment of girls in comparison to boys in both the age-groups had been far from satisfactory since 1950-51. As a matter of fact, girls, although an important section of the society, have not been given a fair deal in the matter of education throughout the country in the past. Of late, some attempts have been made to accelerate the progress of girls' education. However, so far the attempts have not borne the desired results. The reasons once again may be many for this dismal picture of girls' education in India and so in the Punjab. So far as this study is concerned, the problems existing in the administrative set-up of elementary education in the Punjab might have also resulted its slow rate of progress. For instance, separate elementary schools for girls in the Punjab were limited in number. Most of the schools were co-educational, where the parents, particularly of backward communities, backward areas, and rural areas, did not like to send their girls. This situation might not have contributed favourably.

As is evident from the above mentioned figures, even after 21 years of promulgation of the Constitution, the enrolment figures are nowhere near the target laid down in the Directive Principle of the Constitution.

After examining the enrolment figures districtwise in Tables 6.2 and 6.3, pp. 200-203, it may be observed that there is wide disparity between the percentage of enrolments in different districts.
of the Punjab. For example, in Sangrur district, 63.13 percent of the boys and 46.60 percent of the girls in the age-group 6-11 were enrolled in the year 1971-72, while in all the other districts, this percentage was higher than that. In the age-group 11-14, Bhatinda district shows the minimum percentage of enrolment of boys and girls as 27.13 and 22.82 respectively while the maximum percentage of enrolment is as high as 81.71 for boys in Hoshiarpur district and 46.11 for girls in Ludhiana district in the same year. These disparities may be explained in terms of administrative and financial problems of these districts.

The progress of elementary education in the state of Punjab is also related to the progress of education of the backward classes. These classes include scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, notified tribes, nomadic tribes and other backward classes. Education of these classes was a neglected feature in the pre-independence period of the country. About the scheduled castes Srikant observes:

"Having been regarded as 'untouchables' for centuries, they were socially segregated and denied all opportunities of education. Consequently, they became the poorest and the most backward group in society. In the system of indigenous education, which prevailed in the country at the beginning of the nineteenth century, no pupils from these castes were found to be attending schools. Their social amelioration and educational advance are thus an essentially modern phenomenon due to the renaissance in Hindu Society which came in the wake of its contact with the West".

It may be seen that scheduled caste scholars constitute a very small number of the total enrolment in the primary and middle schools as shown in the previous chapter, Tables 6.4 and 6.5, pp. 205-207. In 1967-68, only 36.1 percent and 14.8 percent of scheduled caste

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scholars to total population of scheduled caste children in the age-group 6-11 and 11-14 respectively were enrolled (Table 6.5).

The Indian Constitution, guarantees equality of educational opportunities for all. These opportunities must be provided to the backward castes and classes also. Since their enrolment figures are low it may be concluded that either the opportunities were denied or enough incentives were not given to them for encouraging them to join schools.

Looking towards the problems reported by the various administrators it can be seen that much of the slow progress, and in the later years retardation in elementary education among the weaker sections might be due to those very problems. The scheduled castes students, on account of economic backwardness were unable to pay the building fund. No ancillary services were specially available to them. This poor section of society could not afford books, stationery etc. The B.E.O.'s reported the problems of poverty of the parents and also the lack of reading and writing materials for their children (Table 5.12, p114). Besides these problems, the prescription of defective curriculum might also be responsible for discouraging the scheduled castes children to attend schools. After schooling, they have usually to engage themselves in some employment. The defective curriculum was not catering to this need of their's.

A survey conducted by Economic and Statistical Organization Punjab, indicates that "a large section of the scheduled castes/tribes population was not given any weightage while providing educational facilities in villages". Being the poorest and the most

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backward section of the community, they did not realise the importance of education. Moreover, the efforts made by the government to enhance the enrolment of the children of this section of society might not be so effective. It is, therefore, clear that these problems affected the enrolments of the backward classes in schools adversely.

Unsatisfactory quantitative progress may be mainly due to the various types of problems existing in the administrative and financial set-up of elementary education in the Punjab, which have already been discussed in chapter V. Here it seems worthwhile to examine how these problems may be influencing the enrolment of children in elementary schools, particularly that of the weaker sections of the society. It may be noted that the problems reported in chapter V may also be hindrances in the qualitative progress of elementary education.

**IMPACT OF PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND ANCILLARY SERVICES**

7-2. It is but natural that the students are mostly attracted to the schools which have good building and adequate equipment. Unfortunately, the elementary schools in the Punjab suffer from inadequacy of school building, furniture, equipment and ancillary services. Almost all the administrators concerned with elementary education have pointed out these problems and the unsatisfactory nature of their efforts as shown in chapter V. It is, therefore, not surprising that the enrolment of students in elementary education is much below the level at which it may be expected in the light of the Constitutional Directive. The disparity in enrolment in various districts may also be explained on the basis of severity of the existence of these problems. In the present study these problems have been reported in fuller details in the intensive study of the two districts of Bhatinda and Ludhiana.
Since other districts have not been taken for intensive study, it is difficult to say with any finality that the severity and extent of these problems are more, or less in these two districts. So conclusively, it cannot be said that severity and extent of the problems are the only reasons for the variations in enrolment. But, in extensive study, these problems have also been reported by all the B.E.O.'s and other administrators, which indicate that the similar problems existed in other districts and might have been responsible for low enrolments.

No good education is possible without adequate facilities for the students. This fact is well supported by Dudani when he says:

"In order to provide satisfactory conditions under which the teachers can impart effective instruction, and in order to be able to attract and retain children, the elementary schools need certain physical facilities such as a good site, an adequate campus (including a playground and some land for farming or kitchen-gardening), buildings for tuitional and other purposes (including, wherever possible, residential accommodation for teachers), and a good deal of equipment (including a fair collection of teaching aids and books)."

It was reported that no progress was made in regard to school buildings and other physical facilities. This was what might be easily expected in the light of the problems repeatedly reported by the administrators.

The impact of these problems was that the students were made to sit in the shade of trees, in verandahs or in congested rooms. They had to face the vagaries of nature round the year in extreme climates with the result, teaching-learning programmes suffered to a great extent. Thus it can be said that the unsolved

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Problems of physical facilities have impeded presumably the qualitative progress of elementary education in the Punjab state.

**IMPACT OF TEACHERS**

7-3. Teachers play a vital role in the progressive development of education more particularly so in its quality. The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) have said, "we are, however, convinced that the most important factor in the contemplated educational reconstruction is the teacher—his personal qualities, his educational qualifications, his professional training and the place that he occupies in the school as well as in the community". In the same manner the Indian Education Commission (1964-66) have observed, "of all the different factors which influence the quality of education and its contribution to national development, the quality, competence and character of teachers are undoubtedly the most significant". The situation with regard to the quality of teachers in the elementary schools in the Punjab was none-too-happy. It was rather dismal. As discussed in chapter V, the poor general and professional education of the teachers was the main reason that they were inefficient to teach all the subjects in all the elementary classes, resulting in the falling of standards. Allied to their poor background of general education and professional training, their negative attitude towards teaching, agitational approach in dealing with other higher authorities, their interpersonal relationships in the school and with the community, lady teachers', disinclination to work for enlistment drive

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under Compulsory Primary Education in the state and absence of any effective control over 'problem teachers' might be detrimental to the speedy progress of education. All these problems which have persistently continued might be due to the lack of effective supervision. It may be further noted that no improvement in the quality of teachers was reported by any category of respondents when the questions were put to them regarding their quality. The educationists felt further that there was rather deterioration.

Thus it may be seen that the problems, arising out of variations in background, attainments and temperament of teachers, had a lot to do with the progress of education. On the one hand, teachers' poor quality might be responsible for lower enrolment as students might not be finding gainful experiences in the schools for studies and serious work, and on the other the qualitative progress might be impeded as is revealed by the responses of the different categories of respondents (Table 6.15, p.22).

**IMPACT OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS**

7-4. Better relationships between the school and the community accelerate the progress of education particularly at the elementary level. Participation and cooperation of the community in various programmes of planning and improvement of education in the state is of immense value to the educational administrators. Many of the projects and the Plans of the democratic government may fail for want of public help and their contribution through men, money and material. One of the "Principles underlying Public Participation" as pointed out by the Metropolitan School Study Council is, "Public participation in educational planning finds positive justification because a democracy demands full participation of everyone concerned."
Democracy opposes separation of government from the people.¹ In the Punjab state, elementary education is directly under the control of State Department of Education, but the government needs community's help and cooperation particularly in the improvement of physical facilities of the schools and the universalisation of enrolment at the elementary stage. But the state of affairs regarding the school and the community relationship, was not encouraging. As reported by headmasters, conflicts between the schools and community were found to exist. The B.E.O.'s faced non-cooperation from the local Sarpanchas and even by the community at large particularly in matters of compulsory Primary Education drive. This was one aspect of the problem, while on the other poor parents, particularly, parents belonging to Backward and Scheduled castes were not in a position to afford Building Fund and reading and writing materials for their children. Moreover, the government could not provide adequate ancillary services especially to the weaker sections of society. With the result that the masses might not be in a position to afford even the modicum of education to their children. In rural and backward areas, lady teachers would feel diffident on account of the non-cooperative attitude of the community. These lady teachers showed unwillingness to serve in such areas and when forced to work, they could not give a good account of themselves. They remained indifferent in doing their job, showed negative attitude towards teaching, and raised all sorts of problems regarding their relationships with the community. Under these circumstances, it was but natural that the progress was affected adversely. Generally, uncordial relations made the matters worse.

Another worth mentioning feature of the problem was pulls and pressures on the educational administration particularly with regard to the transfers and posting of teachers, and opening and upgrading of primary and middle schools in the State. This feature might also be raising conflicts and blockades in the administrative process and adversely influencing the progress of education. The problem of transfers is a unique problem in the Punjab. Due to the pressures, proper appointment of teachers does not take place—in some schools there remains a dearth of teachers and in others there is over-staffing. A press report regarding the problems of primary schools in the Punjab stated that there was considerable over-staffing in almost all the schools situated in urban areas and problem of understaffing in rural area schools. Thus good teaching is adversely affected on account of uneven distribution of teachers.

**IMPACT OF SUPERVISION**

7-5. It is needless to emphasize the impact of good supervision on the qualitative progress of elementary education. Naik has rightly concluded in his article on 'Supervision of Elementary Schools' that the success of the programme of raising standards in elementary education would ultimately depend on good supervisors and their pre-service and in-service training. This statement is further corroborated by the Report of the Study Group on Supervision and Inspection, which in its conclusion maintains:

>"The Group is deeply convinced that this is one of the issues in education, on the dynamic nature of which depends the very quality of education at the school level. Commenting on

this subject, the National Education Commission (1964-66) remarked that supervision is in a sense the backbone of educational improvement and that the only break-through in the present educational impasse is, therefore, a new system of supervision and inspection. If qualitative improvement has got to be in terms of better instruction of which one of the most important ingredients is good supervision and inspection, the Group feels that ever-increasing attention has to be given by the state governments to this important aspect of education.

Elementary education in the Punjab was suffering for want of effective supervision, as reported by the officers at different levels (refer chapter V Table 5.15-5.21, pp. 129-148).

The staff provided for supervision was too meagre. The B.E.O.'s were over-burdened with para-academic and non-academic work, thus finding little time for supervision of teachers. Shortage of supervisory staff might be keeping the administrators busy in routine affairs and so there might be the neglect of the most essential areas of supervision such as adjusting the curriculum to the changing requirements and revising the textbooks, providing sufficient staff in the schools, filling up vacancies of teachers in time, improving examination system, framing suitable criteria for upgrading primary schools, reducing wastage and stagnation, stream-lining official work, providing sufficient time in planning and removing other maladies as discussed in Chapter V.

The lack of proper supervision might also be affecting the enrolment drive. It might be on account of disinterestedness or inability due to overwork that the administrators at various levels failed to give as much incentive for enrolment as could be expected from them.

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2 Refer chapter V, Problems at the Block level, p. 73.
Finance, in the modern age, is the 'sine quo non' of any enterprise. No improvement worth the name at any level of education is possible. In this fast changing world, inadequacy of funds may lead to deterioration both in terms of quality and quantity. Financing of elementary education, is a pre-requisite in the progress of all types of education. In the words of Parulekar:

"Little money and a large number of children to be educated have always been the stories of the finance of primary education. Compulsory primary education is very costly—therein money should not 'trickle' but 'pour'—as provision has to be made for the free schooling of every child within easy walking distance from his school, and in case of poor children and of children of backward tribes and aborigines educational requisites like books and slates, clothings and mid-day meals are to be supplied free of charge... It is, therefore, imperative that the financial aspect of primary education is so handled by the government that the programme of universal primary education will not flounder on financial grounds."

Financial problems of elementary education in the state of Punjab discussed in chapter V, for instance, delay in the payment of arrears of teaching personnel, delay in deciding cases pertaining to accounts by the higher authorities, red-tapism especially in the Finance Department in issuing the sanctions to the Education Department, diversion of funds from Education to other subjects by the government, bottlenecks in the supply of requisite material to the schools, etc. (Table 5.29, p.173) were causing concern to the educational administrators. And these problems might be leading to frustration among the teachers and the B.E.O.'s, starvation of certain programmes in the schools, lapses of grants, flopping of plans and other schemes, etc.

The data on financing of elementary education in the Punjab presented and discussed in the previous chapter show that the funds available for elementary education were not adequate, particularly funds allocated to non-teacher costs were insufficient from year to year. Similarly, funds for the education of girls were meagre. The cumulative effect of all the problems might be adversely influencing the qualitative vis-à-vis quantitative progress of elementary education in the state of Punjab.

In the present chapter an attempt has been made to relate the administrative and financial problems with the progress of elementary education. Though it is rather difficult to categorically conclude that only the problems highlighted in this study are responsible for the unsatisfactory progress of elementary education in the state of Punjab, yet it cannot be denied that these problems to a significant extent have influenced the progress of elementary education. It has got to be accepted that for speedy quantitative and qualitative progress of education, it is imperative to solve the problems of administration and finance.