

INTRODUCTION

In generalized form education may be considered as the learning process. The transmission of knowledge from one individual to another or from one group to another. In such process the net product of experiences is handed down from one generation to the next. It is also true that in such a process there is always a continuous accumulation, new ideas added to old and thereby a steady development occurs. Despite the lack of evidence from very ancient times, it may be supposed that even then education was also prevalent thus resulting in the continuity and development of tradition. Without education, survival mechanisms would gradually disappear. Ethnologists are of the opinion that learning behavior is present among many species of animals but without development. Schools who have carried out work among the non-literate primitive tribal groups in different parts of the world have also observed the presence of education among them. Their educational methods are on the borderline of the formal education. On the whole there is a good deal of formality in their traditional mode of learning. In terms of informality, there is no structure base of institutions.

Regular education became positive with the invention of writing which dispenses with the necessity of personal and group contact. In the arena of civilization socio-cultural development gave rise to organized efforts and operations in society as a whole. In course of time, education became formal. This is not mere simple exposure to experiences but the interaction within the society at large through a system of communication. Since its inception, educational continuity gives rise to holistic development. Each community has its own education system, and such system may be considered on the basis of media of instruction.

It is not unlikely that within a broad region the education system shows some variation. In the genetic sense there is a high degree of uniformity in the global system and the phenotypic variation is not altogether absent, concerned as it is with individual growth. In Indian civilization, education is a deep-rooted tradition. A kind of formal education was present from its inception in the Indus Valley

Civilization with enormous manifestations in content, structure, institutions and process. Without going into the details of the history of education in India, a quick review may be made from pre-British times. More than three hundred years ago there was a full-fledged education system in India, specially in Bengal. Throughout India domination of the higher Caste group with their position in the societal hierarchy and relative economic affluence was evident. The greatest demerit of such a system was its restrictive character. As a matter of fact education did not penetrate into the society at large irrespective of caste and class differences.

The British Raja weeded enormous power as soon as they became stabilized on Indian soil, they started the dissemination of education. Their service to the society especially with regard to education was not simply a benevolent activity. It was intended to produce a class of civil servants to man the administrative system and proselytisation. In such a process, communication played a dominant role, especially in a language new to India. The British practically imposed their own education system upon India. It must be admitted that they rendered great service to Indian in propagating education. One of the outstanding contribution of the British in the field of education was education for all irrespective of class and caste, a significant increase in the number of educated people, a pragmatic approach in the broadening of the range of education. Women's education, which was completely neglected during the pre-British period, was given its due place by the British with the help of the enlightened Indian people. Educational institutions were opened and an efficient administration was set up, and also a standard system of education was achieved through course, content, curriculum, examination reform etc. For women's education separate institutions were established. Despite such useful efforts some major drawbacks could not be avoided. In the first place capital, cities and towns became the main centres of education and the villages tended to be neglected. In remote village areas, either there was no school or equal opportunities were not

given to women and the people of the weaker sections. This may be explained also in terms of the traditions or the orthodox mentality of the villagers. Moreover, the higher caste did not allow the lower caste group to be educated, thus the exploitation of the lower caste group by their higher counterparts continued. Education is not merely the acquisition of book knowledge, it includes interaction with other minds. Because of the lack of provision of separate schools for women, boys and girls were taught together in many places. Even in girls schools and Colleges at all levels there were male teachers found sometimes which was not really accepted by the older generation and the women folk specially in the rural and remote areas proved a stumbling-block. The result was that the education of males far outstripped than that of females as is seen from the records, especially the census reports, compiled every decade.

The growth of formal education was never uniform. Urban centres are generally more progressive than rural. In such places there is a greater degree of awareness than in other areas. In addition there are facilities and conveniences. In the case of West Bengal, Calcutta is not representative. Even the fringe areas of the city of Calcutta present a different picture. There is a striking contrast between the state of education in towns and district headquarters and that of rural areas, and this is especially so in women's education.

It is to be noted that level of education differs from district to district. The factors responsible to this are manifold : proximity to urban areas, communication facilities, industrial growth, socio-economic and cultural background, ethnic diversity etc.

Though Macro-studies on education in India as a whole have been made, Micro-studies are still meagre for example, education in different tribal communities or education of women. Even where such studies have been carried out, little attention has been given to them. In view of the above deficiencies

this project has been undertaken. To avoid an unmanageable situation the area studied has been deliberately circumscribed. In fact a compromise has been made between the two. The area under study is unique in itself even though relatively backward. Situated in the extreme northern portion of West Bengal, it has certain unique features. A full region bordering Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, it has considerable ethnic diversity with consequent cultural, social and linguistic differences.

All the above have an important bearing on education because after all education is for the people and administered by the people and affects their developments. A detailed study of the district of Darjeeling has been dealt with in the appropriate context.

In connection with the work undertaken, some specific features of the areas are necessary to be discussed for a proper evaluation of the work.

It is one of the few districts of West Bengal, Perhaps in India where the population is not homogenous. The major groups are Nepalese, Tibetans and Bengalis, and the first is the dominant group: In terms of biological anthropology the Nepalese belong to the Mongoloid stock and Bengalis are of the Mongol-Dravidian. The languages belong to two different linguistic classes. There are other population groups but because of their numerical recessive character no special emphasis has been given to them.

Although the system of education obtaining here is common to the state of West Bengal necessary adaptations have to be made to suit these cultural differences. For example Nepali is the first language of the people. The present generation is, in many cases, the only one to enjoy educational opportunities. This affects their attitude to education, especially where it makes demands upon their resources.

It is said that education helps in the growth of the economy. This is true at the final stage of education, provided job opportunities are ample but in the beginning education makes heavy demands on the resources. In fact there is a shift of energy input from other economic activities to education during the learning period. To a teacher education as occupation is a source of income while to students and their guardians education is an expenses. To the educated class education is practically a tradition. It is assumed that where formal education is concerned a uniform system is followed. Yet despite the uniformity of the system there are considerable variations reflecting the variations in society and culture. Some of the variations are derived from socio-economic status caste and religion, ethnic element. There are other distinctions, for example between the rural and urban population with such variables as communication and stages of development. There is another aspect which concerned with individuals personality and mentality, though this aspect is not included within the scope of this study. Such is a brief survey of the complexion of this study.

As previously stated, for an indepth study a limited area of the hill region of Darjeeling district has been taken out but this does not mean that the total population within the area has been covered. Instead representative samples have been taken into account. A sincere attempt has also been made to incorporate basic issues related to education. Primarily these are areas, institutions, school typology, management, total composition of teachers, guardians and also other factors have been taken into account such as ethnic elements, religion, caste grouping, occupation; economy, level of education, family unit etc.

Resolution of the Government of India dated the 24th July, 1968, specifically explained that a major concern of the Government of India has been to give increasing attention to education as a supreme factor to national progress and security.

In the post-independence period several noted committees and commissions reviewed the educational situations and made valuable recommendations to solve various problems also to improve condition in the educational field. Mention may be made on the University Education Commission (1948-49), the 'Secondary Education Commission(1952-53), and Kothari-Education Commission (1964-66).

It is a fact that many vital areas of human life comes under the scope of education such as physical, mental and intellectual development. And the development in all these field is - possible through acquisition of knowledge and through cultural heritage.

Development in the social and emotional sphere and development in the sphere of vocational professional education takes place through socialisation, training in citizenship and by acquiring perfect skills.

It is to be pointed out also that personal life also comes under the fold of education. Personal life can be brightened through education, through family planning and education on parenthood, through knowledge on proper utilisation of leisure time.

After independence India is facing tremendous challenges in various social and economical field such as poverty, unemployment, transportation communication social unrest and violent behaviour, drugabuse, problem of universal education and adult or social education etc.

However, it has been felt by many educators and national leaders that all these problems are related to population explosion.

Government enforced population control through family planning in our country from the Third Plan. It was decided that stress has to be laid in the third and subsequent Five Year Plans on the programme for family planning and the

programme of family planning has to be undertaken not merely as a major development programme, but as a nationwide movement, which develops a proper attitude towards a better life for the individual, the family and the community.

There was a time when birth control was considered immoral or illegal but the thinking has been changed. All the nations are concerned after observing global population explosion.

Population explosion in the 'third world' which consists of a large number of developing countries such as Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America is very significant. Three countries are free from this problem such as South Africa, Israel and Japan. Asia's contribution in their annual field of population is alarming which accounts 60% of the total increase. China produces half and India produces, a quarter of this increase, according to the experts. So educationists now feel that not only family planning should be given priority but population education should be included in the curriculum from the primary school level so that growing students realise the need of population control. The students from the very beginning should know about the problem of population explosion which is bringing of adding problem to our nation also the various causes of population explosion such as religious influences, social norms, early marriage. Psychological urge to have more children, desire for more children to support the family, desire for more children for providing against any expected loss, sex preference and desire for male child for the purpose of inheritance and family name, polygamy in some societies still exists. Another health factor is also contributing to population growth such as better natural medical care, benefit of maternity leave etc.

However, all this is leading to very bad consequences such as this is bringing ecological problem due to greater demand for housing cultivated land is decreasing and land is losing its natural fertility due to deforestation and construction of buildings. Living space is also decreasing and bringing pollution everywhere.

In the economic situations it is observed that because of population gain people's per capita income is declining due to less savings, unemployment and underemployment problem.

Population gain is also bringing pressure on social development such as shortage of medical, educational, recreational civic, transportations and communication facilities. Quality of education is lowered. Universal literacy will never be achieved if population increases in this rate.

So now not only family planning should be given importance but population education or other environmental studies should be included in the curriculum. And this study is a must for all male and female students. All the male and female students should learn the need of population control. However, U.G.C. was thinking seriously in this matter and it proposed to include environmental studies in the curriculum so the students learn about different environmental hazards and the method to improve conditions and very recently environmental studies has been included in the syllabus.

However, with some set objectives of the present study, some hypotheses have thus been formulated in a logical manner. One of the prime objectives of the present work is to test the hypothesis with the correlation of data in the form of material and information. In general term the work is directed towards the overall understanding of educational progress in the hill areas of Darjeeling.

A background on education in the district has been presented along with the historical perspective because the first objective is to study the problem of education in its historical perspective. Education is a mirror of society. It reflects the needs and aspirations of the people. Hill areas of Darjeeling District once had no contact with the world outside. Whenever British and later European national came to this region, educational activities gradually started. Foreign Christian Missionaries of

different orders and later the British Government effort brought new life to the hill people. From the later part of the 19th century enlightened Indians from different parts of India also came in this region, settled down and contributed to the field of education. The hill region of Darjeeling received modern education much later. However, the educational condition of the hill areas have changed considerably after independence. Government of India has given first preference to educational development in all the states.

So the author feels that history of the developmental process is to be studied thoroughly because history narrates the past and in order to solve the present educational problems knowledge on history of society and land is essential.

Second objective of the study is to know the demographic transition and its impact on the quality of education.

According to some experts demographic transitions are every country's periods or stages of change before its population is stabilised and its own pattern of growth is established. This problem has been discussed in the previous paragraph and later chapters. It has been observed that here also slowly quality of education is declining due to population explosion. There may be other reason, but this is also one of the important reason. So in the region educators are concerned about this problem and a few College teachers and social organisations organised - some valuable exhibitions and seminars on this recently.

Third objective is to study the position of education in different levels such as primary, secondary and higher and the attitude of the guardians, as well as students regarding this. There are so many problems in the field of education so the third objective also give emphasis on identifying the specific problems of education in the urban and rural areas of the hill, plan allocation of funds for education also to analyse the reason for wastage and stagnation.

To study the reason for wastage or stagnation some hypotheses have been formulated for the present study. These are given in the followings :

1. Is inadequate transport and communication in the interior of the hill area causing problem in the field of education ?
2. Do inadequate infrastructural facilities such as water supply, lack of energy and power resources causing problem in the field of education ?
3. What are the major function of a family or school to motivate the students for education ?
4. What is the nature of wastage and stagnation in education? Whether it is posing as major problem in the field of education specially in the field of primary education in the hill areas.

However, it is to be mentioned that some data on wastage was collected and case studies were undertaken only in the field of primary education as the problem is more prominent in this field.

Fourth objective of my study is to know the problem of education in the perspective of community development. The world is changing rapidly and in this changing world the purpose of education is to have closer relations with the life of community as a whole. It has been observed that inspite of many governmental programme notably N.S.S. work education etc. present social and education system is isolating pupil from community. It is the problem which is being faced by all the states. The teachers and students do this work because of compulsion they are not truly motivated to do this work, whereas it is urgently needed that students should understand the relationship between themselves and community life, should try to solve social problems through team work. Students should be trained to give leadership in different areas of life; they should be inspired by higher values and should develop interest to lift up the weaker sections such as scheduled castes and

tribes and the downtrodden people with the help of the teachers, social workers and Government officials.

It is to be mentioned that after attaining freedom Government of India have taken many measures to improve the social, economic and educational condition of the weaker sections by giving adequate financial help and employment. Government provisions in terms of justice and social equality is there but disparities are still observed. Regional disparities are observed in the urban and rural areas regarding accessibility of education. Weaker section of the community is still lagging behind due to poverty.

The main purpose of the present study is to examine the development and expansion of education in Darjeeling hills and to analyse the problem of education and also to pointing out some measures which could be undertaken to solve the problem.

For the present study the following methodologies have been adopted:

1. *Sample study of the area* - Facts, in terms of data have been collected through field work, with the help of questionnaires students direct interviews and observation of specific problems.

2. *Sample study of the tea garden and agricultural sectors* : The life pattern of the people, their economic and financial position, cultural and educational conditions were observed and recorded. Primary schools in the urban and rural areas were also visited. From the sample of the different schools certain conclusions were drawn regarding wastage in the field of education.

3. *Personal observation method* : In the first phase questionnaire for the students were carried to the field for primary data collection.

In the second phase, selective methodology was adopted in relation to specific problems of schools, guardians and students.

The third phase comprised of interviews of different cross-section of populations, like students, teachers and parents or guardians of students.

4. The published data from the Government and different other sources were consulted. A good deal of available published works have been read and necessary notes were also taken for supplementing the data base of the study. Archival source materials were also collected to analyse the development of education in Darjeeling hills in a historical perspective. However, whatever data collected in the process is furnished in the form of Tables and the Tables were also interpreted. Methodology and Questionnaire were prepared for taking interviews for the guardians and the students. As the primary objective is to see whether education strengthening the mental ability and cultural aspect of the people which serves as an instrument in the process of social and economic changes various questions related to the above aspects were also asked to the respective groups.

It is to be observed through systematic study and analysis subsequently this region in the field of educational development has reached a satisfactory level in terms of infrastructural base and proportion of literates and educated people etc. So emphasis is primarily laid in the present study on analysis of the socio-economic condition of the people and the possible impact of education on the expansion of modern education during pre-independence and post-independence era.

The Scheme of Chapterisation

INTRODUCTION

- I Role of Education in the Development process.*
- II Growth, Development and Demographic Trend of Darjeeling Hills : A Historical Perspective.*
- III Growth of Education in Darjeeling Hills : A Historical Perspective [Role of Missionary and Government Effort in the Spread of General and Collegiate Education in Darjeeling Hills].*

- IV** *A General Survey of Pre-Primary, Primary, Junior Secondary, Secondary and Higher Secondary Education in Darjeeling Hill Area During Post-Independence Period. Some General Problem.*
- V** *Education in Plantation Sector in the Hill Area (Few Case Studies on Primary Education)*
- VI** *Education in Agricultural Sector in the Hill Area (Few Case Studies on Primary Education).*
- VII** *Growth of Technical and Vocational Education in the Hill Region of Darjeeling.*
- VIII** *Growth of Women's Education in Darjeeling Hills : Problems and Prospects.*
- IX** *Development of Adult and Social Education along with some Special Education Centres in Darjeeling Hill Areas.*
- X** *Attitude towards Education in Darjeeling Hills : A Study of Students and Guardians.*
- XI** *Growth of Education and its Impact on Community Development.*

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

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