

CHAPTER VII

RETROSPECT

We are now in a position to glance backwards and make a few observations of a general character.

It can broadly be said that though education is open to all, it is availed of by some only. Though the content of education is the same everywhere, its effect is not always uniform, in several matters, on all the recipients of that content, because of different social backgrounds of the students.

Only some avail of the educational facilities and selective agencies which account for this are -

- (a) the city-urban-rural stay,
- (b) caste,
- (c) Education of the guardian, and
- (d) Sex.

The largest percentage of student population belong to the city though it has much smaller percentage of total district population. Educational facilities are availed of better by the urban students as compared to the rural students.

The percentage (59.64%) of upper-caste students

is greater though they have a small percentage (20%) in the total population. So also, amongst the students the percentage of male students is greater (78%) @@@@ than the female students in all the areas of investigation - namely, city, urban and rural - but it is considerably greater in the urban and rural areas.

Hence, secondary education has yet largely remained the privilege of the city-dwellers, of the upper castes and of the males. This reflects the social hierarchy that exists. This also indicates which youth is likely to occupy positions of importance and of power in the years to come. It not only explains the present social hierarchy but also suggests the possible future social hierarchy.

This position of privilege is found to be due to an extremely uneven distribution of the facility for education. It has been established that the need for education is commonly felt in all the areas but the supply of educational facilities is not adequate to the demand - particularly in case of the rural areas.

For we find that whereas Baroda city has a high-school for an area of half a square mile, the urban area (comprising the taluka towns) has a high-school for an area of four square miles, the rural area has a high-school for an area of 119 square miles. Not only

that, when viewed in relation to population it is found that whereas in case of urban area (including Baroda city) there exists one high school for a population of 9006 persons, in case of the rural area there exists a high-school for a population of 39,023 persons.

This disproportionate supply is observed to be due to the agencies which control educational facilities. The upper-caste and the higher class persons supply and control educational institutions. This is so because the creation of educational facilities depend on the economic condition and the aspirations of the people. No wonder therefore that it is the persons of the upper caste and ~~class~~ upper income groups that control the secondary education.

In the social background of the student it is found that the percentage (7.13%) of the illiterate guardian is smaller in the sample, as compared to the percentage of illiterates (71.40%) in total population. Thus, the illiterate guardians' wards do not come forward to receive secondary education. Illiteracy breeds illiteracy. But the city guardian is better educated than either the urban or the rural guardian, and amongst the last two mentioned the former is better educated than the later. Not only this, the upper-caste guardian is better educated than the lower-caste

guardian. Very naturally the educated guardians aspire to educate their wards and hence the greater percentage of upper-caste students in the composition of the student population.

The single largest occupation of the guardian is agriculture both in case of the urban (39%) and the rural (62.88%) areas though it is service (56%) in case of the city area. This has brought out some important findings in as much as there is observed among students an increasing tendency towards business and service in comparison to agriculture. Even the rural guardian, who is an agriculturist, has come to appreciate the importance, if not the value, of education, which he did not seem to have about a quarter century back.

An analysis of the economic condition of the guardian families in the urban, rural and city areas.

In matter of economic condition a very large percentage of families have average or ordinary economic condition, but the city families are better placed economically than the rural families and the economic prosperity of the city guardians is more as compared to the urban or the rural guardian.

Thus, the city guardian is well-placed both in matter of education and economic condition. And hence it is that the percentage of students is the largest in case of the city area.

But in spite of these differences in the social background of the students, and a distinctly predominated student population, when we come to the student and his academic attainments we find that the city-urban-rural stay or belonging to a certain caste or to a certain economic group has not much to do with the academic attainment of the student. The favourable social conditions may provide more educational opportunities to the student, but they do not determine the academic quality of the student. By his personal efforts or lack of efforts he can achieve a higher level of academic quality or can go down in it.

Thus, if the students, irrespective of their economic or social conditions, are, somehow, made to avail of the educational facilities it is more likely than not that they may all come to have academic attainments fairly comparable among all the social groups. However, the physical conditions (not the material) do determine the academic attainment of students in as much as the non-local students are found to be not qualitatively as high as the local students, possibly because they get less time for their studies.

Is it, however, true to observe that the social background has nothing to do with the students even in other matters such as their personal habits, their

place in the family and their social outlook and aspirations, as in matter of their academic attainments?

And now, therefore, when we come to the student himself we find that the social conditions from which the students come have much to do with the determination of what the student is and what he aspires to be. In fact the city or urban and upper-caste predomination is found to explain several of the problems which concern the student in relation to himself, in relation to his family and in relation to what he aspires to be as an adult.

In matter of age of the students though the average age of the student under inquiry is 16.77 years, the average age of the city student is 16.43, of the urban student is 16.99 and it is 17.22 in case of the rural student. In relation to caste, the upper-caste students have a lower average age as compared to the average age of the lower castes who have a high average age.

A large bulk of students are unmarried, (86.26%) but amongst the married students the higher percentage is in the rural area and it is the lowest in the city area. However, the percentage of betrothed students is the highest in case of the city students and lowest in case of the urban students. This brings out that the

social tradition of early marriages has taken a polished form in case of city.

Thus, in these two respects the city and caste influence is clearly manifest.

The students are early-risers and commence their day's work with the rising sun. In matter of dress, the traditional items of dress like cap, coat and dhoti have almost disappeared. The attachment to dhoti as a dress is the highest amongst the lower castes than amongst the upper castes.

Though there are a few students who never visit a film most of them are cinema-goers. Cinema going habit is more in case of the urban and the city students than in the rural students. In matter of frequency of cinema-visits, the upper-caste students are more occasional cinema-goers and the lower caste students are more habitual cinema-goers whereas the other castes' students are more cinema addicts. Cinema has been a recognised activity for families in the city but not so in the villages.

The influence of city-urban-rural stay and caste is also observed here. It is further observed in matter of forming the friendship group.

The friendship formation amongst the students is confined to the group of school-going students, though

in case of the rural student it is also with the non-school boys suggestive of an adult influence on them. Secondly, it is confined to the group of the same caste or the same-level castes. Hence, in the hierarchy of castes, whereas the students from low-grade castes regard students of up-grade castes as their friends, the later do not reciprocate in this behalf.

In matter of religious attachment and practice amongst the students the trend is towards the decline as we go from the student's like for community prayer to his participation in religious activities, to his putting religious marks on his body.

Thus, the influence of the social factors on the student in several matters is obvious.

Now, when we look at the student in relation to his family it is found that the joint family system is still prevailing in all the three areas of investigation, but is to the largest extent in case of the rural area. In point of the size of the families the students live in, the families are evenly distributed amongst very large, large, medium and small size families in the urban area, but they tend towards the smaller size in the city area and towards the larger size in case of the rural area.

The pattern of the family is patriarchal and the

father is the architect of the family aspirations and it is he who controls the affairs of the family. This being so the students are able to talk least freely with him. The mother is found to be the most loved, and most confided member of the family. But though the students are not able to talk freely with the father it does not mean that they find their relation with the father in any way strained or fearful, on the contrary they find it as loving. This indicates that the family relationship is in the direction of peace and solidarity.

Even then, there are cases, though not many, where the students (19.47%) have a dislike for certain member of the family. Where there are joint-families, the tendency is towards the dislike of the members outside of the parents-children group; but where there are nuclear families, the tendency is towards disliking of the behaviour of the members within the nuclear family group itself. The students' measuring yard for the members of the family is obtained from what they dislike in those members for whom they have a dislike. He expects the family members to be fair and just and cordial and well-behaved to him. He expects peace and quiet in the family. He expects the family members to be of strong and sound character, and progressive in thought and deed. When these expectations are not fulfilled

he starts disliking the behaviour of the family members.

The cordial relationship in the family is evidenced both in the fact that the guardian takes interest in the well-being and progress of the wards, and in the fact, that the students in their turn participate in the work of home (89.26%) without finding the work irksome, or without any compulsion from or fear of the guardian. The students, therefore, are a unit of the family and are one with it.

But, though it is true that the student youth is a unit of a homogeneous family he finds himself different in several respects than the elder members of the family. In some respects he even finds himself advanced than his parents. However the family solidarity is maintained as the differences are not so great as to disturb it. To an extent they are tolerated and accommodated.

A large bulk of students find change in them on account of education. The rural student finds intellectual, individual and social changes in him, and the city and the urban students find intellectual and social changes in them rather than individual change. Thus, most of the students feel that they are intellectually well up on account of education and it is education which has taught them to be useful members of the

society. But the rural students in addition to this also feel that education has helped them in building up character which has effected a personal or individual change.

That education has brought about a change is admitted by almost all the students. But not as large a percentage of students feel culturally advanced than their parents (52.04%) as that finding change in life on account of education. A larger percentage of rural students feel that they are culturally advanced than their parents as compared to percentage for the same of the city or urban students. The cultural advancement to the parents that the rural student finds is in matters of knowledge, beliefs and manners.

The change in the student is also observed in that he comes to dislike (20.70%) ~~of~~ the guardians' occupation. The dislike for guardians' occupation is shown to the maximum by the urban students (25.17%) and to the minimum by the city student (16.87%). The dislike for guardians' occupation is shown, by a large percentage (54.23%) of students, on grounds of uncertainty of income attached to the occupation. 30.84% students show dislike for guardians' occupation for it involves more physical labour.

The guardian also finds change in the student. And

this is observed in the fact that he shows dislike for students' education and criticises it.

The dislike for the students' education is shown to the maximum (34.28%) in the rural area and it is the lowest (22.00%) in case of the city area. They find the student as irregular and weak in his studies and that make them dislike his education.

The students' education is criticised to the maximum percentage (26.80%) in case of the city area - probably because the city guardians are more awake to the education of their wards. The criticism is mostly of the want of practical skill on the part of the student and it is levelled against the student when he shows weak progress.

Thus, the educated youth finds himself changing in matter of cultural advancement, in intellectual understanding and in the attainment of knowledge.

Apart from the general criticism against the education of the students it is often held that the educated youths do not have aspirations, are not thoughtful about their future responsibilities and have no plans for the future. This criticism against the student cannot be justifiably maintained. For it is more than evidenced from our inquiry that the students do think and have plans about their future and they do

have their own aspirations.

As regards their future plans a greater percentage of city (85.60%) students intend to study further as compared to the percentage for the same of the urban (77.34%) or the rural (62.15%) students. The educational aspiration for further studies on the part of upper and intermediate Hindu castes is almost equal but it is not so in case of Harijans and the lower-castes. Quality seems to be correlated with the future plans of the students in as much as higher the academic quality, the higher the percentage intending to go in for service and the lower the academic quality, the higher is the percentage of students desiring to go in for service.

Not only do students think about their future plans, but those who desire to prosecute their studies further have even thought about the course of study they would pursue after having passed their S.S.C. examination. The trend in matter of selection of a course for further study is towards the technical and professional courses rather than for liberal courses.

So, also it can be said that students think not only about their immediate future but even regarding what they aspire to be, which place they want to take in the occupational set-up, and where they would like to settle.

In matter of choice of occupation, the trend is towards going in for occupations which are independent rather than those where they may have to depend for their employment on someone else. This trend is manifested more in case of upper-caste Hindu students than in others. The occupational trend amongst the backward castes is to enter into business - the occupation of the upper castes and these upper castes in turn aspire to hold to their present occupational set up more firmly and in greater numbers. This may bring about not only caste-competition but even caste-conflicts.

In matter of place of settlement, a fairly large percentage (43.38%) of them aspire to settle in city. A smaller percentage (30.56%) of students do aspire to settle in the village only.

Thus in matter of the aspirations of the educated youth we find that they aspire to be higher, better and greater than what they are. This is more emphatically felt in case of city and upper Hindu castes as also intermediate caste students. To what extent this may be possible and in what this aspiration may result - either a peaceful healthy competition for progress and prosperity or in caste conflict - is in the womb of future and may be investigated into at a later stage. But, what stands out more strikingly is the fact that

the educated youths aspire to be different from what they are and this change they desire to bring about because their education has made them see it as a desirable and a better change.

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everywhere

Thus, though the students receive the same content of education, in matters of their personal habits and behaviour, and in their relation with their guardians, their attachment to and their place in the family, as also in their estimations and aspirations, there are differences among them with reference to the area of stay, or caste or guardians' education or economic condition.

On the whole, it appears that the better educated and the better placed groups in the city area will be most open to the effect of education.

The role of the educated in the changing society could be the subject for future inquiry.