

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

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In this age of ours the ideas of democracy have begun to establish themselves and hence nations have been trying to achieve independence. Though most of the countries have achieved independence yet while we analyse the existing state of affairs in those countries, we feel diffident about the ultimate outcome of democracy. In spite of this sad plight, we feel that the countries that have recently become independent are trying their utmost to make progress in all fields of life and yet peace is a far cry and the waste of man and material has presented before us a perplexing dilemma, but still the waste of manpower not being clearly perceptible does not horrify us so much as the waste of material. Both the human and materialistic waste can only be avoided if the people living in the countries are filled with patriotism and the spirit of service.

Where does the remedy lie then ? It is only by cultivating the minds of unengraved children with muddy, sweaty, pudgy hands, always inquisitive and eager to gather knowledge of the world immediately around, by asking ' What ' 'Why' etc. a hundred times. It is here that the parents and the teachers get an opportunity to develop the young mind by giving a few suitable and satisfying answers ; but in most cases both of them fail to furnish the young mind with encouragement. With proper training and education these children will grow into geniuses on whom will depend the future progress and peace. Only such minds will develop into creative and imaginative individuals, able to design a dam, dewelop an auto-production line and conceive an atmoic power plant. And among them will world find stalwarts who would be able to settle a labour dispute or plan national and community programmes for humanity at large. Nor will the society lack individuals who would compose symphony, write a poem and produce dramatic and artistic works.

Have we really been successful to create such people from among the present generation of pupils ? On the surface of it, it does seem so with a vast army of scientists, engineers and doctors. One should be justified in arguing that it is the result of careful, appropriate education and one would rightly hope that not only political

leaders of the nation but also experts in the fields of scientific research, industry, agriculture, health, education, social sciences, philosophy, art, music and literature would be found from among such developed young minds. The responsibility of cultivating our sense of values to understand and to appreciate the national culture would largely rest upon them.

The following objectives adopted from a paper entitled " Educational Objectives and a Curriculum Plan for the Gifted Child in a Secondary School "<sup>1</sup> read at the Centre for Advanced Studies in Education, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Baroda, suggested by Shri N.L. Pandit will appropriately support the foregoing argument. The first objective referred to by him is that the gifted children have special capabilities and unusual characteristics. Possessed with these, they can think abstractly and generalize widely. Their creative abilities and qualities of leadership have to be challenged and exploited, with a view to achieving most for which proper and challenging learning situations are essential. To fulfil this purpose there is a need for special objective. According to Shri N.L.Pandit the second objective is that the gifted children of today are very likely to be leaders of tomorrow, who will have to discharge special responsibilities in the future; hence their education should be

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<sup>1</sup>Shri N.L.Pandit, Curriculum Monograph C<sub>4</sub> (Baroda:C.A.S.E. Faculty of Edu.& Psy.,1966),pp.196-197.

planned in such a way that it would prepare them for shouldering those responsibilities.

From the foregoing discussion, it follows that a nation that wants to give a good training to its citizens should organize a better system of instruction in schools. The moment we talk of a better system it becomes incumbent upon the present educationists to probe into the existing system of instruction in schools and find out whether it is feasible to improve upon the same for the betterment of the society.

Let us now try to examine the co-ordination of superior pupils and class teaching. The most vital thing in the prevalent teaching-learning process<sup>It</sup> is the method of class teaching adopted in teaching institutions. How does this class teaching help the pupils of three categories - superior, average and backward ? On the face of it, it appears to work well because the teacher keeps to the moderate standards of teaching and giving knowledge. That is, he works along certain definite lines, and that is generally the tendency among teachers in our country. It is conveniently forgotten that a class is a heterogeneous group of pupils differing in ability, capacity, interest and more often in age. Besides, this heterogeneous group consists of pupils who differ in

mental, physical, social, economic and moral attributes. Hence the problem of educating them as a group becomes obviously more and more difficult. It needs not be told that it would be relatively easier and simpler to educate pupils if the class is homogeneous.

Secondly, a large number of pupils in the class minimize all chances of paying individual attention to each child. Thirdly, there is hardly any scope for the teacher to use various modern methods and teaching aids, resulting in denying the pupils to learn through them.

Fourthly, in a backward country like India, even if Government wishes and attempts to impart the best education possible, the handicap of limited educational resources ties down its hands.

The above stated limitations are a constant source of dissatisfaction to the teacher inspite of his honest intention and sincerity to impart knowledge to the student. The general neglect which the teacher is compelled to show towards an individual child due to the above limitations is responsible for bringing inattention, lethargy and indiscipline. This results in general frustration, both among the teacher and the taught. Under such limitations most of the teachers plan their teaching

to suit average pupils. Consequently, the superior pupil is denied opportunities to show his special innate abilities and to develop dormant talents. Also, it is beyond the reach of a backward child to grasp hardly anything that is imparted, keeping in view the average child.

The Constitution of India guarantees equal opportunities to all, but in the field of education, this basic principle is violated. As we are here considering the case of superior pupils, it must be noted that though the assumption that they will 'get by' anyway is true, yet it is at the cost of a deplorable waste of their talents. It may be remarkable to conclude that the individuality of the child does not have a free display of ability in a heterogeneous large class. The main factor responsible for this is the economy of our country.

All the above factors make the teacher rise in revolt against the system of class teaching and also make superior youngsters lose interest in academic work or become bored and frustrated. Boredom and frustration caused thus turn bright and intelligent students into precarious ones who are likely to become the centre of all disciplinary problems, antisocial ideas and a menace to the society. Hence there is a greater need to adjust the school work to the diverse needs of superior as well

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as backward pupils. But lack of resources, uncongenial atmosphere and insufficient facilities have made the school administrators of today anxious about the future generation. Statistics show that a large number of young people stay much longer in schools than was possible earlier and this state of affairs can be attributed to social and economic conditions which have increased individual differences.

In spite of insufficient facilities administrators of today have devised various methods and adopted them so that instruction could be given on the basis of the level of intellectual ability and attainment. The method adopted is that of grouping pupils according to their mental and intellectual calibre. Such a grouping facilitates the bringing out of the best that is dormant in them. Further each of the potentialities and talents is given suitable opportunities to develop to its utmost. Again the generally accepted principle of democracy demands of the administrators that each child is entitled to a quality of education that would help him to develop his potentialities to a certain reasonable standard.

They also believe that in our new world of magnified power and shrunken space, there is an increasing level of literacy and technical skills required for effective work

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in industry, government and professions hence our knowledge about our own children and understanding their potentialities become imperative. It has rightly begun to work upon the personnel actively engaged in educating children at different stages of learning that the more a child is understood, the easier it becomes to remove its ignorance and more is achieved by understanding than by force. Hence in European and American countries are established numerous bureaux of tests and measurements, guidance centres and other services to gather information about the child. The modern methods of training teachers tend towards assessing objectively and accurately diverse abilities by means of standardised tools. The information obtained by the use of above sources, makes it possible to make content and methods adoptable to the natural abilities of the child resulting in better teaching, better learning and better attainment that fulfil the ever increasing need of leadership. Though the educationists strongly advocate grouping, yet various tests have proved that even this grouping is not a full-proof system. Hence need to study a child becomes paramount.

Let us make an attempt to ascertain why even grouping is not a full-proof practice. The most outstanding objection in regard to grouping is that this would make bright children conceited which would be to the detriment of intellectual standards.

Secondly, the strong advocacy of democracy becomes most undemocratic in the sense that class mentality like casteism takes deeper roots.

Thirdly, such groupings create 'intellectual aristocracy.'

Fourthly, this grouping system gives rise to competition which in turn gives rise to jealousy. What are the safe guards against the above results ?

It is an acknowledged fact that society is ever dependent on the insight and foresight of its group of ablest citizens, so one of the surest safe-guards is to recognise superior children in a group and place the responsibility upon them, out of whom the society will get the ablest citizens. Only then can a society be termed and recognised as an effective society. It is only such a society that encourages the maximum development of various abilities and provides for comparatively uninhibited interchange of both ideas and services.

No society can long afford the prodigal expenditure of ability or refuse to accept unusual insights. A complex society, a threatened society, a progressive society can least afford to lose these special contributions nor can it disregard training which will provide the gifted with a strong sense of stewardship!"<sup>2</sup>

2. Maurice F. Freeman, Gifted Children Their Psychology and Education, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961), pp.1-9.

"But it should be noted that the cultural, scientific and social needs are not the only criterion for determining the role of the gifted. A group needs must be cautiously balanced against individual rights. The recent Rockefeller report on education insists that the group must aid the individual in finding ways to identify and to maintain his individually, because errors in the selection of either ideas or leaders are calculated risks in democracy."<sup>3</sup>

Hence education is challenged to produce a more mature society, effective in the co-ordinate use of both group judgment and individual intelligence.

From the above controversy, it seems that the cause of the gifted has become a popular one. The American Association for gifted children and its best spokesman Paul Witty have created a professional awareness of this issue involved in the discovery and education of this group.

A voluminous literature, concerning the problem has grown up but there is still exists such disagreement regarding the value of even the more common methods. Even with this attention it has been estimated that at least half of all gifted children have failed to realise their educational potentialities - a loss to themselves and to the society.

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<sup>3</sup> John W. Gardner, Panel Report V of the Special Studies Project. - The Pursuit of Excellence Education and Future America, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Inc. Garden City, New York; Published by Doubleday & Co., Inc. 1958.

Shri N.L. Pandit puts it thus: " Unfortunately educators in our country have not yet fully realised the importance of imparting proper education to such children. The gifted children of today are likely to be leaders, administrators or scientists of to-morrow and if their potentialities are wasted it is going to be a severe national loss."

#### POSITION OF INDIA<sup>4\*</sup>

Prior to August, 1947 most of the leadership needed in the struggle for independence came from the section of talented people. People got a lead from them and thus the whole of India was as if surcharged with a new spirit. A similar transformation is needed these days.

If at all a new spirit of awakening a new enthusiasm for rebuilding and a new idealism of making India a first rate power are to dawn, then the class of intelligent young men must accept the burden of this task themselves.

Unfortunately the new generations that are coming up are miles away from any thought about social responsibility. It is admitted on all hands that there is a general deterioration in values of life. In such circumstances, the intelligent pupils are getting more and more self-centred as they pass from the secondary school to the college and then to the University. In the end, the purpose of life of most of them is to earn ample money, enjoy different

<sup>4</sup>. Naik, J.P. Synopsis of the Report of the National Education Commission, 1966.

amenities of life without much regard for social responsibility.

The important objective of education is to prepare the gifted youngsters to be the creators of ideas and products, the translators of these into benefits of mankind and the communicators for the spread of culture, seem to have been achieved.

Though the progress in the field of education is quantitatively satisfactory the quality has not much improved. The pupils admitted to the different branches of learning are not creatively engaged in their work. Hence the progress is not quick. How can we, progressing so slowly, keep pace with other countries that have been our signposts in the fields of art, learning and science and have opened up new horizons for us to traverse in the present age of science. If at all any change is to be desired in the prevalent state of affairs, new educational institutions will have to be created. Such institutions should be powerful enough to nullify the enormous derogatory forces at work. If education is the instrument of social changes educationists ought to be able to conceive of such institutions and bring them into existence.

The only solution to this problem lies in educating the masses and finding out from among them the gifted

for training in the various branches of higher learning and teaching sciences, agriculture, politics and other fields.

The problem of identifying the gifted is not so simple as it appears. Knowledge about the characteristics of the gifted children is the need of the day. To satisfy this need effective planning of the educational facilities for them is the vital problem. But for the developing country like India the problem is vital as well as crucial. Hence we cannot afford to sit staring at the problem vacantly; instead we as a nation should face the problem squarely. In the following pages an attempt is made to study the set ideas and beliefs regarding the characteristics of superior children.

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