

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In recent years, the major problem confronting Indian educators was the provision of education for all children. The schools were given the task of making the dream of universal education a reality. This effort might be characterized as an attempt to provide education in quantity. This quantitative aspect of education has affected the qualitative aspect. And we feel that no systematic attempt has been made in India to improve the quality of education. The quality of education largely depends upon the provision made in education for more able students.

But it was believed that gifted are born and they are not made. The possession of these gifts and talents, was considered to be a mere chance and hence no necessity was ever felt to study them. But after gaining independence a dearth of competent and trained manpower

is now felt in nearly every branch of national life and is probably one of the biggest bottlenecks to progress. It is also understood by the people that if we do not value trained intelligence, we shall be doomed. Hence we feel that we should discover and develop our most valuable asset. Unfortunately, very little of the available talent is now discovered and developed.

If we glance at the literature available on educational research in India, we find that nothing noteworthy has been done in this field. Hence we can call this field of educational research 'an unfinished business.'

As there exists no literature and no research work in this field in our country, we have to look for the same in foreign countries.

In reviewing the researches done in other countries, we find that researches here lack co-ordination and it is fanning out into different areas that it languishes for lack of direction. It is here suggested that perhaps the fault lies not completely with educational practice but also with those of us who are producing research. We must restate research for its various audiences, if we are to remain in rapport between theory and practice. In substance, there are four specific target groups. They are as follows :

1. Identification of the Gifted,
2. Characteristics of the Gifted,
3. Education of the Gifted, and
4. Achievement of the Gifted.

If we take the stock of the researches done in each field of work, we shall be able to trace the historical background. Hence an attempt is made here to gather the historical background for each specific field.

(1) To begin with the identification of the gifted, the following points were taken into consideration:

Since the term 'Gifted Child' is quantitative and does not imply any particular level, cut off points are established as matters of convenience. But different researchers have preferred a variety of cut off points. Thus I.Q. level 140 was used by Terman¹, 130 by Baker² and Hollingworth³, 125 by Danielson⁴ and by Norris⁵ and

¹Terman Lewis M. & Oden, Melita H. 'The Gifted Child Grows Up.' Genetic Studies of Genius Vol.IV.Stanford:U.S.A., 1947,p.448.

²Baker Harry J. Introduction to Exceptional Children. (New York:Macmillan And Company,Inc.,1944),p.496.

³Hollingworth L.etc., S.Gifted Children - Their Nature and Nurture.(New York:Macmillan & Company,Inc.,1926),p.374.

⁴Danielson,Cora. 'Special Classes for Superior Children in a far Western City.' Nat El. Prin.19:388-96,1940.

⁵Norris Dorothy E. 'Program for Gifted Children in Cleveland' In Proceedings of the Seventyeighth Annual Meeting, N.E.A.,1940,pp.639-40.

and 110 by Bentley⁶. Some investigators like Osburn and Rohan⁷ have suggested that children with special artistic and mechanical talents be included among the Gifted. Russel and Thorndike⁸ advocated that Intelligence Test should be supplemented by other evidences like teachers' judgments, achievement marks and school records. This kind of data, of course, are the kinds used by Terman, Hollingworth and their co-workers.

Some writers such as Ernst⁹ indicate their distrust of intelligence tests and in writings of educators who are not psychologists, there appears an undesirable tendency to identify giftedness with achievement while the experiences at Shimer College¹⁰ indicate that persons selected on the basis of traits other than high intelligence do not fulfil the expectations implied by the use of the term 'gifted.'

The identification and nurture of creative talent is being extensively studied by Torrance.¹¹ He has developed

⁶ Bentley John E. Superior Children. Norton, 1937, p. 331

⁷ Osburn, Worth J. and Rohan Benjamin J. Enriching the Curriculum for Gifted Children. Macmillan, 1931, p. 408.

⁸ Russell Donald W. 'A Functional Approach to the Study of the Gifted Child.' El. Sch. J. 57: 45-47; 1956.

⁹ Ernst Karl D. 'Meeting the Needs of Exceptional Endowed Students in Public Schools.' In Bridging the Gap Between School and College Evaluation Report No. 1. Fund for the Advancement of Education, 1953, pp. 45-55.

¹⁰ Fund for the Advancement of Education, They Went to College Early, Evaluation Report No. 2. The Fund, 1957, p. 117.

¹¹ Torrance, E. Paul, 'Testing and Creative Talent.' Educational Leadership, 20, 1, October, 1962, p. 7-11.

verbal and non-verbal tests which discriminate among levels of divergent ability.

Maw¹² and Maw studied the dimensions of talent, believing that high curiosity is an indicator of superiority.

There exists number of researches in this field of identification over and above the some that we have seen above. To list them all is beyond the scope of this research. Hence an attempt is made in the following table to show different procedures adopted.

Table
Summary of Identification
procedures for the Gifted. *

Community and Date Initiated	Grade	Identification Procedure
1. LaMesa, Calif. (1957)	1-8	1. I.Q. of 140 + on S-B or WISC. 2. Recommended for testing by teacher; high group test scores.
2. Los Angeles, Calif. (no date given)	Elementary Junior College	1. 'Gifted'. I.Q. of 130+ ; 'highly gifted', I.Q. of 160+ 2. Group Intelligence tests in Grades 1,3,5,7,9,11. 3. Group achievement tests in Grades 3,5,7,9,11.
3. San Diego, Calif. (1951, city-wide)	3-	1. S.B. I.Q. of 148+
4. Denver, Colo. (no date given, city-wide)	K-12	1. I.Q. of 115+ in first and third grades; registered. 2. Recently substantiated I.Q. of 125; Physical and emotional capacity, consent of Parents.

¹² Maw, Wallace H. and Maw Ethel W., 'Selection of Unbalanced and Unusual Designs by Children High in Curiosity,' Child Development, 33, December 1962, p.917-922.

Community and Date Initiated	Grade	Identification Procedure
5. Miami, Fla. (No date given, city-wide).	1-12	1. Grades, I.Q. standardized test scores; teacher judgment. 2. Results of first I.Q. test (given in Grade 3).
6. Winneka, Illinois (1955, suburb)	New Trier Township High.	1. Upper 10% of class. 2. For some work, upper 1-2%. 3. Standardized test results. 4. Grades in Junior High School; comments from Junior High School teachers.
7. Indianapolis, Indiana (1952, city-wide)	5-8	1. Group I.Q. tests in Grades 1A, 4B, 7A; I.Q. of 125+. 2. S-B for referred children and those having I.Q. of 125 + .
8. University City, Mo. (1951, suburb)	Elementary	1. Teacher Observation. 2. Results of Intelligence and achievement tests. 3. S-B I.Q. of 140 + .
9. Lyons Falls, N.Y. (1955, rural school).	11-12	None mentioned.
10. New York (1914, city-wide)	4-6	1. Identified at end of third grade. 2. I.Q. of 130 + on individual and group tests.
11. New York, N.Y. Elementary School (1938, city-wide) mostly middle class)	High School of Music and Art.	1. Music; Seashore test; judgment of singing & playing. 2. Art: submission of portfolio; situation test.

Community and Date Initiated	Grade	Identification Procedure
12. Hunter College Elementary School (New York, 1941; complete range but mostly middle income).	Pre-School 6	1. I.Q. of 136 + 2. Interview with parents.
13. New York Bronx High School of Science, 1938. (city-wide, mostly middle class).	9-12	1. Entrance examination 2. Past academic record 3. Ability and interest in Science and Maths.
14. Cleveland, Ohio Major Work Classes (1922, city-wide but mostly upper middle class communities)	1-12	1. Teachers' judgment. 2. Standardized tests. 3. Emotional, social stability; good health. 4. S-B I.Q. of 125 +
15. Portland, Oregon (1952, city-wide)	K-12	1. Upper 10% in intellectual and nonintellectual talent. 2. Teachers' observation; group tests; talent tests.
16. Pittsburgh, Pa. Colfax Elementary School, 1938. (Complete range but mostly upper middle class).	K-6	1. Referrals by teacher, parent, child, using all available criteria. 2. S-B I.Q. of 130 +.
17. University of Chicago, Laboratory School (No date given, mostly upper middle class).	K-12	1. Average I.Q. of 130; applicants must give promise of being able to achieve at levels of other students. 2. I.Q. and achievement test results; reports from previous; evaluation of social and emotional adjustment; interview with parents.

(S.B. = Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale.

WISC = Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children.)

(* This table is taken from: Jack Kough, Practical Programs for the Gifted. Chicago: Science Research Association, 1960, and from Robert J. Havighurst, Eugene Stivers and Robert F. DeHann., A Survey of the Education of Gifted Children. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955).

From the above data we can conclude that no identical criteria were used by any two researchers. However, we find certain common criteria of identification, which are as follows:

1. Intelligence Quotient,
2. Achievement Marks in School Subjects,
3. Teachers' Judgments.

After reviewing the different procedures of identification and finding out the common elements of identification, let us now proceed to the next important field of research which is named as Characteristics of the Gifted.

When we try to concentrate on this aspect of research we find that the characteristics are classified under certain broad headings like the following:

1. Special abilities of the Gifted,
2. Physical Traits of the Gifted,
3. Social Traits of the Gifted, and
4. Emotional Traits of the Gifted.

Terman has classified the same in the following manner:

1. Characteristics pertaining to physique and health and educational achievement of the Gifted.
2. Characteristics pertaining to Interests and Pre-Occupations of the Gifted.

3. Seven character traits :

- (a) Over-statement A,
- (b) Over-statement B,
- (c) Book Preferences,
- (d) Character Preferences,
- (e) Social attitudes,
- (f) Cheating,
- (g) Emotional stability.

On reviewing the classification, let us now glance at the specific field of special abilities.

We find that special talents in art and music have often been cited as characteristics of the Gifted. Antrim¹⁴, Boynton,¹⁵ Courvoisier,¹⁶ Lewis¹⁷ and others have indicated the mental superiority of students on music and art. Wilson¹⁸ has shown that a group of bright children were superior in Art, Music and Mechanical Abilities. Hoblingworth insisted, however, that special abilities are independent of intelligence; according to her studies, the gifted are not superior in music sensitivity. Carroll¹⁹ and Eurich found a similar result in their research on critical ability in Art.

¹⁴Antrim Doron K. 'Do Musical Talents Have High Intelligence?' Etude. 63: 127-28, 1945.

¹⁵Boynton Paul L. 'The Relationship Between Children's Tested Intelligence and their Hobby Participations.' Ped.Sem.58; 353-62, 1941.

¹⁶Courvoisier, Leila B. 'Studying Musically Gifted Children.' California: J. Sec. Edu., 15:1940, pp.177-82.

¹⁷Lewis W. Drayton. 'The Relative Intellectual Achievement of Mentally Gifted and Retarded Children.' J. Exptl. Edu. 13:98-109. 1944.

¹⁸Wilson Frank T. 'Social Special Ability Test Scores of Gifted Children.' Ped.Sem. 82:82:59-68 ; 1953.

¹⁹Carroll, Herberta, and Eurich, Alvin C. 'Abstract Intelligence and Art Appreciation.' J. Ed. Psychology, 23: 214-20, 1932.

Some new insights into the characteristics of high achievers were provided by the Human Talent Project at the University of Texas. McGuire studying the characteristics of effective achievers, reported three abilities such as convergent thinking, divergent thinking and symbol aptitude.

Perhaps the differences of opinion may be reconciled by accepting Hollingworth's generalisation that the Gifted are not superior in musical talent as measured by tests of sensory discrimination but noting that persons who are successful in musical education are superior in I.Q. as indicated by Courvoisier and others.

Thus it is felt that the available studies of abilities of special groups seem inadequate to settle the question conclusively because of lack of control of selective factors. Some survey studies might be desirable, using objective tests, careful statistical method and suitable controls.

Let us now switch on to the next specific field of physical traits.

The pioneer studies of Terman have given us the basic picture of the gifted child. The picture is so well supported by further research that there is no reason to question its validity. The information summarised by him includes anthropometric measurements, health histories, medical examinations, education histories and tests of school achievement.

In 1923 thirty-seven anthropometric measurements were made of 594 subjects. The information on physical history was supplied by parents, teachers and physicians who gave medical examination to 591 subjects.

This study indicated that the gifted tends to be larger and stronger than other persons in the same age group in school.

These studies suggest the desirability of research on the physical and motor characteristics of the gifted in adult life and in maturity.

After looking into the field of physical traits, let us now proceed to review the researches in the field of Social Traits.

The early comprehensive report by Terman and others showed that these characteristics include the following traits:

1. Leadership
2. Sensitivity of Approval
3. Popularity
4. Freedom from Vanity
5. Fondness for Large Group.

Carroll also studied the social traits and reported that the gifted are sometimes very advanced over the average in character development. Thom and Newell²⁰ suggest

²⁰Thom, Douglas A and Newell Nancy L. 'Hazards of the High I.Q.' Mental Hygiene. 29: 61-77, 1945.

that the gifted tend often to be socially immature. Torrance²¹ compared various personality and sociometric indices for the highest scoring boy and girl in each of 23 classrooms with a group matched on sex, race, I.Q. and class. This group appeared to be more relaxed, less rigid and more playful and humorous.

Richards - Nash suggests that the gifted should be made aware of their social responsibilities, but should not be forced to mingle with others if they are not so inclined. This suggestion has received support from recent research by Mann²² in which it is shown that placing the bright in groups with average children does not necessarily bring about the intended results. Gowan²³ has reported that the gifted show less social introversion than do their class-mates.

In short, as a group, the gifted have better than average social adjustment. If they have problems, the gifted seem to be able to cope with them.

The last section of the traits which we have now to deal with is about Emotional Traits.

Terman in his study about Emotional Traits included the following factors :

- (i) Sense of Humour (ii) Cheerfulness and optimism,

²¹Torrance, E. Paul. 'Personality Studies of Highly Creative Children,' Research Monograph 59-12, University of Minnesota.

²²Mann, Horace. 'How Real Are Friendships of Gifted and Typical Children in a Program of Partial Segregation?' Exceptional Children 23: 199-201, 206; 1957.

²³Gowan John C. A Comparison of the Achievement and Personality Test Scores of Gifted College Students with their Classmates.' California. J. Ed., Res. 7, 105-9; 1956.

(iii) Permanence of mood. The figures for emotional traits are : Sense of humour (74 per cent), Cheerfulness and optimism (64 per cent), Permanence of mood (63 per cent). The average of these is 67% which is exactly the same as the proportion of the gifted who equalled or exceeded the controlled group in the Woodworth - Cady Test of Emotional Stability.

Certain other studies were also carried out during the past decades. They are as follows:

1. Boardman and Hildreth²⁴ who go on to discuss the needs of the gifted and to suggest appropriate counselling techniques.
2. Burn²⁵ used a case-study method to indicate how personality problems may be interfered with the best development and expression on the part of maladjusted bright children. Carroll reported that placement in suitable ability groups helped prevent development of attitudes of snobbishness and conceit on the part of very bright pupils.
3. Hollingworth reported that the gifted are more stable emotionally than unselected children and there are fewer neurotics among the very bright.
4. In comparison of superior and inferior school children Laycock²⁶ found many more maladjustments and more serious maladjustments among the inferior.

²⁴Boardman, Rhea K. and Hildreth, Gertrude, H. 'Adjustment Problems of the Gifted.' Understanding Child 17:41-44, 51, 1948.

²⁵Burns, C.L.C. 'Maladjusted Children of High Intelligence.' Br. J. of Edu. Psychol. 19:137-41, 1949.

²⁶Laycock Samuel R. 'Adjustments of Superior and Inferior School Children.' J. Social Psychology 4:353-66, 1933.

The evidences then, in general, indicate a wide range of emotional characteristics among the bright, with a tendency of the intellectually gifted to be happier and better adjusted than the average child.

In the foregoing pages we reviewed the literature about the two phases of the research. Here now we shall consider the third and the most important phase of the research. A voluminous literature has sprung up for this area. It is worthwhile to glance the literature according to countries provided for a special type of education for the gifted.

Let us at the beginning review the special features of Soviet Russian Education, provided for the gifted. They are as follows :

1. The intellectual challenge of the stiff academic curriculum.
2. The social climate of respect for intellectual achievement.
3. The social climate of hard work.
4. Co-operative work within the school class.
5. Enrichment assignments for abler pupils.
6. Projects in Pioneer and Komsomol circles.
7. Correlation of academic subjects with complicated practical activities.
8. Highly competitive selection for advanced study.
9. Economic subsidies for most students in higher education.

10. Special schools for certain kinds of talent.

The American system of education includes the following types of programmes for the gifted :

1. Enrichment of school curricula.
2. Special grouping.
3. Acceleration.

Current Trends in Education of the Superior Children

In the 1940's and early 1950's, surveys indicated that few schools were making special provisions for this group. Surveys and school reports within the last half a dozen years indicate a growing awareness on the part of educators on the importance of making special educational provisions for the gifted child. Among the most recent surveys is one by Tannenbaum noting the continuing expansion of provisions for gifted students at all levels of 460 local schools and school systems in New York State surveyed in 1959-60, 59 reported that they were inaugurating programmes while three were dropping them. Witty also cited the expansion of research on the gifted since 1950.

Many schools have published guides for administrators and teachers for working with gifted which discuss identification procedures, administrative arrangements and curricular suggestions.

The Talented Youth Project - Horace Mann - Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York, was initiated in 1953 to

improve the education^{al} provisions for students with unusual potential for understanding achievement in socially valuable areas.

These are some of the many researches that are dealt with. The following table will show the educational procedures adopted by different researchers.

Table
Summary of Programs for the Gifted *

Community and Date Initiated	Grade	Educational Provisions
1. La Mesa, Calif. (1957)	1-8	Cluster plan; Gifted children of each grade level are grouped in one room.
2. Los Angeles, Calif. (no date given).	Elementary Junior College	Enrichment, acceleration grouping summer school; emphasis on flexible program.
3. San Diego, Calif. (1951, city-wide).	3 -	1. Acceleration when desirable. 2. Teacher consultants at elementary and secondary level. 3. Individual counseling and guidance. 4. Study group meetings for parents. 5. Students released from some required courses; allowed to substitute electives.
4. Denver, Colo (no date given, city-wide).	K-12	1. Guidance and counseling with parents and students. 2. Elementary; individual instruction. 3. Junior high; ability grouping, acceleration, enrichment. 4. Senior high; advanced placement program; guidance.

Community and Date Initiated	Grade	Educational Provisions
5. Miami, Fla. (no date given) city-wide).	1-12	Grouping; honors classes; acceleration; enrichment; special programs in math, science, guidance.
6. Winneka, Illinois	New Trier Township High.	Advanced placement program; special programs in math, English, social studies.
7. Indianapolis, Indiana (1952, city-wide)	5-8	Twenty-five 'gifted child' classes; basic common curriculum plus enrichment, such as French, typing, teacher conferences.
8. University City, Mo. (1951, suburb).	Elementary	1. Enrichment teachers; met with groups 6-10, pupils, Grades 3-6, separately by grade level, 1-2 forty-five minute periods each week. 2. Part-time enrichment. 3. Primary Unit Program; each child, Grades 1-3, to move through Achievement levels at his own pace.
9. Lyons Falls, N.Y. (1955, rural school).	11-12	1. Youth Seminar, pupils brought from all over country on weekly basis. 2. Discussion groups on broad topics e.g., communication.
10. New York (1914, city-wide)	4-6	1. Intellectually gifted children, classes, enrichment of curriculum; special projects; special classes. 2. Foreign languages, typing.
11. New York, N.Y. Elementary School. (1938, city-wide; mostly middle classes).	High School of Music & Art	1. Music; first three years in theory, instrumental, vocal, choral, orchestra music, senior-year elective.

Community and Date Initiated	Grade	Educational Provisions
		2. Art: first two years, fundamental; last two years, specialised.
		3. Complete high school curriculum.
12. Hunter College Elementary School (New York, 1941; complete range but mostly middle income).	Pre-School 6	1. Basic curriculum of New York City Schools. 2. Enrichment provided—Hunter College campus and New York City.
13. New York Bronx High School of Science, 1938. (city-wide, mostly middle class).	9-12	1. Usual academic high school curriculum; 20% heavier than most schools. 2. Four years English; 4 years social studies; 3 years of one foreign language; 3-4 years math; 4 years science, including laboratory work.
14. Cleveland, Ohio Major work classes (1922, city-wide but mostly upper middle class communities).	1-12	1. 26 major work enrichment classes. 2. Enrichment.
15. Portland, Oregon (1952, city-wide)	K-12	1. Elementary; classroom enrichment; special interest classes. 2. Secondary: accelerated courses, selective seminars.
16. Pittsburgh, Pa. Colfax Elementary School, 1938. (complete range but mostly upper middle class).	K-6	1. Workshop; homogenous grouping for academic subjects. One-half of day devoted to workshop.

Community and Date Initiated	Grade	Educational Provisions
		2. Homeroom heterogeneous grouping for music, art, physical education, and so on. One-half day in homeroom.
		3. Type-writing, German.
17. University of Chicago, Laboratory School (no date given, mostly upper middle class).	K-12	1. No special program for gifted students. 2. Program varied for individual students. 3. Eight years of work covered in 7 years; after eleventh grade, student is ready for college.

(* This table is taken from: Jack Kough, Practical Programs for the Gifted. Chicago: Science Research Association, 1960, and from Robert J. Havighurst, Eugene Stivers and Robert F. Dehlann, A Survey of the Education of Gifted Children. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955).

These procedures show that they attempt to meet the needs of the gifted. The procedures or provisions differ with different researchers and different institutions. All these procedures do not give us a hundred per cent efficiency but it is definitely a pace towards the right direction.

Lastly now let us look at the field of Achievement of the Gifted.

The achievement of the gifted students tend to be far superior to that of average persons in their age group. This finding is so general that it is taken for granted as common

knowledge and research on the achievement of the gifted tends to emphasize study of the differences with the group. However, so many persons have been concerned with the 'underachievement of the gifted' that there is fast developing a false stereotype. One might note that people in general fail habitually to work up to the highest level of which they are capable.

Among the causes of failure in school on the part of bright students Conklin noted the inadequate adaptation of the school to the bright. She found also as have others that the failures were often associated with emotional problems and frustration noting that the school is unable to deal with effectively with family problems which are often the basis for maladjustment.

Terman and Oden found that emotional stability drive to achieve, a cheerful and happy temperament and freedom from excessive frustration are characteristics of the gifted persons who are more than ordinarily successful in adult life.

The review of the four specific fields of research on gifted children leads us to conclude that much can be done if one starts to work along the line, suggested by others or by paving one's own path.

The historical background of each aspect leads us to test the conclusions drawn by others. Hence an attempt is made in the following pages to review in brief the historical background, to jot down the line of work.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH *

A systematic attempt to provide for gifted children took place in 1868 in St. Louis. The plan developed there served as a model until the turn of the century. The plan, called the "flexible promotions system," was basically that of chronological acceleration. Gifted children could complete their first eight years of school in less than the scheduled amount of time without skipping any major parts of the educational sequence. A number of systems - including those in Elizabeth, New Jersey; Santa Barbara, California; New York City; and Chicago - adopted modifications of the St. Louis programme. Possibly the most publicized plan for flexible promotion was the Cambridge Goble Tract Plan, developed in 1891. The plan permitted bright students to complete the six years between Grades 3 and 9 in four years under the coaching of special teachers. Twenty years later the plan was revised so that students could complete the first eight grades in six years.

The flexible promotion plan continued to be popular through the first two decades of the twentieth century. Significant experiments of various kinds were underway which - although they were incidental to accelerated educational programme - laid the foundation for variations in the flexible promotion plan and for the development of new programmes in

* Abraham J. Tannenbaum, 'History of Interest in the Gifted.' Education for the Gifted. (Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education, 1958).

the 1920's and 1930's. One of the new developments was the standardized group intelligence test.

With growing concern for individuality, the concept of acceleration through flexible promotion began gradually to be replaced by the idea of special grouping. In the 1920's, the Cleveland Major Work Classes, The Detroit XYZ, and the New York City Special Progress Junior High School Classes, as well as some of the special high schools for the gifted in New York, were originated.

A good deal of skepticism, however, was expressed - particularly by child studies specialists - about the feasibility of composing homogeneous groupings of children using mental ability as a criterion for selection. Even when children were comparable in terms of their rate of learning, they were different in so many other ways that homogeneous grouping began to seem a somewhat meaningless term. It was considered advisable to keep bright children within the regular classroom and to provide for their needs there through enrichment.

During the 1930's, there was a gradual decline in the interest in the education of gifted children although some efforts continued to be made to provide classroom enrichment. Interest in the gifted reached its nadir during World War II. The nation appeared to be too

preoccupied with many other problems to consider the needs of the gifted.

At the close of World War II, however, interest in the gifted increased once more. Each year there appeared an increasing number of studies and publications dealing with the problem of educating such children. Significant publications began to stir the educational world in the late 1940's and early 1950's. In 1950 the Educational Policy Commission issued a publication strongly supporting the idea of providing more adequately for gifted children. A year later, the volume entitled The Gifted Child, edited by Paul Witty, was published by the American Association for Gifted Children. A rash of studies and publications have been forthcoming. Interest shown by the Office of Education and several large foundations in the problems of educating gifted children also stimulated work in this field during the 1950's.

Several factors account for the increased interest in the education of gifted children. Science became one of the fields of competition with the Soviet Union. The need for scientists skyrocketed. The need for scientists was indelibly etched into the mind of the American public with the launching of the Russian Sputnik. It was not difficult thereafter to get a sympathetic hearing for improving the

education - not only for future scientists, but for all bright children.

The economy of America began expanding immediately after the war. Many key positions for engineers, scientists and managerial leaders were created. The needs of the expanding economy came at a time when there was a shortage of young people in their early twenties. This shortage was brought about in part by the low birth-rate in the 1930's. A delay in the advanced education of a number of young men in this age bracket who had participated in World War II kept more potential manpower off the market. Still another force toward improving the climate for accelerated learning programs was provided by thoughtful Americans who became concerned with what appeared to be a growing cult of mediocrity. These forces converged on American educators and public in the 1950's and accounted for much of the current interest in gifted children.

Efforts to educate the gifted during the first half of the twentieth century have therefore been spotty and sporadic. There are outstanding examples of programme to which we may point with pride. On the whole, however, the efforts have hardly reached the proportions of a concerted movement.

During the 1950's, a new high point was reached in efforts to educate superior children. By the close of the

decade, the work had taken hold most effectively in suburban communities where a large number of professional people live. In contrast, however, the impact upon schools in the large cities and in small communities was still negligible.
