FAMILY STATUS AND SCHOOLING
INTRODUCTION

As the society modernises and industrialisation takes place, various changes occur in the different sectors and subsystem of the society. Industrialisation brings about changes in the structure of the society. It changes the traditional occupational structure needing skilled and educated labor force to work in the industries and in its byproduct ‘rational’ bureaucratic system. Modernisation brings forth the changes in behavior pattern, values and attitudes. The very attitude towards life also changes. All these changes pervade the educational subsystem which can prepare the labour force and provide the ‘right’ attitude and a value system. Hence, all the societies in the process of industrialisation and modernisation lay primary emphasis on education especially on mass education.

India has not remained an exception to this. The ancient India was having a highly different educational system allowing access to a privileged few on the basis of ascriptive and particularistic criteria. Though the colonial rule heralded a new modern phase in India, the rulers’ deliberately tried to keep India deprived of certain modern agencies and instruments. Though they introduced modern education, they left it to be monopolised by upper class people. There was no commitment altogether on the part of the colonial rulers to create equal opportunities for all social class. They did not favour mass education because it would consume a substantial part of the cake which they extracted from the Indian masses.

The Problem

However, after independence the national government talked loud about mass education and to put it in practice the government made it a constitutional directive for the state. Under the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution, it is universal primary education to all children within the age group of six to fourteen. In this regard many pronouncements have been made in various plan documents and many targets of time have been fixed, Different policies have been framed from time to time and members of committees have been constituted to translate the policies into practice. In spite of all these efforts the goal is still far from achievement. Universalisation of primary education still poses to be a myth. Sixty out of every 100 pupils enrolled in class I drop out in the process causing huge national wastage and making ultimate loss to the society. Only 40 per cent go up to class V or complete the process. The phenomenon of drop out not only peculiar to India alone, rather it is found with the same magnitude and dimension in almost all the Third World countries.

Drop out causes massive wastage. It is a matter of fact that wastage is one of the most crucial problems facing rural primary education in India. This concerns those children who participate in primary education without being permanently literate in the regular course of time. They either stagnate or drop out without completing their primary education. As a consequence, these children are most vulnerable to fall back to permanent illiteracy in due course.

This situation throws up very crucial questions: “for whom the schools are?” and “who becomes educated?” these are very complex queries which require thorough probing. It is doubtful whether there is any society in which educational opportunities for the young are made available on equal and impartial basis. Even though, official commitments are made to provide education to all or to democratize education especially at the primary level by a large number of countries including at the primary level by a large number of countries including India, yet disparities are glaring and
discrimination is apparent. A variety of forces such as race, sex, socio-economic status of the family, community identity, level of development of the community/society operate covertly and overtly leading to such disparities and discrimination defeating all pledges to 'equality of educational opportunity'.

A review of studies exploring the causes of drop out in Indian context identifies three broad causative factors, e.g. social, economic and educational. Social causes are rooted in the social structure and culture. 'Economic' denotes poverty, landlessness, poor occupational status of parents, etc. and educational causes subsume school facilities, overcrowded classes, ineffective teaching methods, poorly qualified have been suggested and implemented at micro and macro levels to mitigate the problem, yet wastage in the form of drop out still continues unabated.

Simply adequate infrastructural facilities will never ensure its utilisation by all communities. The common curriculum will also not entail same results and responses from every community. So the concept on 'equality of educational opportunity' has to be examined in school realities as well as in the social structure, because accessibility to school is determined by the interaction, because accessibility to school is determined by the interaction between school and social structure. While the school provides the internal factors, the social structure provides the external factors of facilitating or inhibiting educability of the children. The socio-economic differentiation within the society affects the equal participation in educational system. The families having higher caste status, higher income, occupation and educational status but more value on formal education and encourage their children for academic achievements. So consequently the drop-out rate among them is quite low as compared to the families with lower socio-economic status. The study should make an attempt to find the relationship between the socio-economic status of the family and the extent of participation in the school.

**TASK** – Identify three hypotheses which can be tested in the empirical situation to establish relationship between family status and participation and continuation of children in primary schooling.

**Original Hypothesis for the problem posed in CASE**

1. Lower the income of the family higher the drop out in the family
2. Lower the caste status of the family lower the endeavor on the part of the family to retain children in the school and consequently higher the drop out.
3. Lower the education of the parents higher the drop out tendency among the children in the family
4. Incidence of drop out is higher among the children with illiterate fathers. Educated fathers positively affect continuation.
5. Higher the size of landholding of the family lowers the incidence of drop out.
6. Higher the socio-economic status of the family, more participation by the children in schooling.