

# Compulsory Primary Education In Baroda State

## RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

J. P. NAIK, B. A.,

*Member, Provincial Board of Primary Education, Bombay.*

---

( First published in the Progress of Education, Poona, February 1941, and now  
published in book form with the kind permission of the Editors. )

1941

*Price Annas Eight*

## Compulsory Primary Education in Baroda State

### Retrospect and Prospect

The history of Compulsory Primary Education in Baroda State is nearly fifty years old. The late Maharajasaheb who took keen interest in educational matters introduced compulsion, as an experimental measure, in the Amreli division of the State, as early as 1893. The experience gained was encouraging and compulsion was gradually extended till, in 1906, it became a general measure applicable to the whole State.

The following statistics will show what compulsion has achieved in the State :—

Item.	Statistics for the year 1904-1905, just before the introduction of compulsion.	Statistics for the year 1938-39, the latest year for which figures are available.
1. Number of schools ...	1,243	2,439
2. Number of Pupils ...	81,649	259,288
(a) Boys ...	68,536	150,993
(b) Girls ...	13,113	108,290
3. Percentage of pupils to population ...	4.3	10.6
Boys ...	6.7	12.0
Girls ...	1.4	9.1
4. Expenditure on Primary Education ...	400,000	2,202,000
5. Percentage of Literacy (Age 5 & over only is considered) ...	9.4	20.9
Males ...	18.0	33.1
Females ...	0.9	7.9

It has not been possible to obtain comparable statistics for the Province of Bombay, because the figures for 1904-06

given in the Director of Public Instruction's report include those of Sind and Indian States and it is not possible to pick out the exact figures for the Bombay Province only. But the following table quoted from the Bombay Census Report may be instructive :—

Year.	Number of literate persons per 1000 of population			
	Baroda		British Gujarat	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
1911	175	21	201	26
1921	210	40	223	42
1931	330	79	220	39

It will be seen that Baroda lagged behind Bombay in 1911. But today it is far ahead of British Gujarat which is the most literate part of Bombay Province.

The position of Baroda in the literacy map of India can be seen from the following figures :—

Province or State	Proportion of literates per 1,000 (aged 5 and over)		
	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4
<i>British India :—</i>			
Ajmer Merwara	103	203	35
Assam	91	152	23
Bengal	110	180	32
Bihar and Orissa	50	95	8
Bombay	108	174	32
Burma	367	560	164
Central Provinces	60	110	11
Madras	108	187	30
Punjab	59	95	15
Delhi	163	226	72
United Provinces	54	94	11

Province or State	Proportion of literates per 1,000 (aged 5 and over)		
	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4
<i>States :—</i>			
Central India Agency ...	52	92	9
Cochin ...	337	460	220
Gwalior ...	47	78	11
Hyderabad ...	47	83	10
Mysore ...	106	174	33
Rajputana ...	54	94	11
Travancore ...	288	408	166
Baroda ...	209	331	79

It will be seen that Baroda is surpassed only by Burma, Cochin and Travancore. The Census Commissioner of Bombay (1931) remarks that the literacy figures of British Gujarat are largely under-estimated on account of the civil disobedience movement—a factor which did not affect the figures for the Baroda State. There is probably some truth in this remark ; but even after making due allowance for it, we feel that there is a big gap between Baroda and Bombay, a gap which has, for all we know, widened during the last decade.

#### Periodical Reviews

A very interesting feature of the Baroda system is the holding of periodical enquiries to assess the progress made, to study the difficulties encountered and to suggest modifications in the organization of Compulsory Primary Education. After the introduction of compulsion throughout the State in 1906, a Commission was appointed in 1909 to study the whole question and report on it. Similarly a second Commission was appointed in 1916 and a third in 1926. Finally Mr. Littlehales, Educational Commissioner with the Government of India, was invited to Baroda in 1934 to study the whole educational system of the State and to make recommendations. Moreover, in 1927, the Diwansahab had ordered

that every Deputy Educational Inspector (he corresponds to our Assistant Deputy Educational Inspector) should make an *intensive study* of one village in his beat every year. The object of the study has been to find out how the system actually works in practice. The study among others, tries to ascertain—

- (1) whether the lists of school-going children are complete;
- (2) the reasons for non-attendance;
- (3) the grounds on which exemptions are applied for and granted (vide Bombay Primary Education Act, Sec. 19);
- (4) the strengths of various classes and a detailed analysis of the reasons for the withdrawal of pupils before they have gone through all the four classes;
- (5) how far literacy has increased among the communities in the village as the result of compulsory education;
- (6) the manner in which the system is ordinarily worked;
- (7) the extent of lapse into illiteracy of pupils who have been through the full compulsory course; and
- (8) the extent of appreciation of the system by the parents; a change for the better if any, noticed in recent years.

The instructions laid down for the guidance of the Inspecting Officers for conducting these studies are very instructive. Here is a quotation from them.

“The object of the studies is to find out from a special investigation of the individual case of each pupil, conducted by the Inspector himself, the reasons for absenteeism and retardation. The following points should, therefore, be borne in mind while conducting these inquiries:

(i) The figures of seasonal fluctuations should be investigated both in regard to the numbers on roll and the

percentage of absenteeism, comparing figures month by month for a series of years.

(ii) Irregularity in attendance and absenteeism and the reasons thereof should be investigated for each pupil separately by the officer himself.

(iii) Similarly, stagnation and the causes thereof should be studied for each pupil and the results tabulated."

In this way, intensive studies are carried out of about 40 villages every year and the results published annually as "Compulsory Education studies, No.....". The first of the series was published in 1929 and eleven studies have been published so far. They form very instructive material for a careful study of the problem.

From this year, another interesting experiment is undertaken by the State. The *same* villages that were selected ten years ago for intensive study are again selected and the results now obtained are compared with those of ten years ago. It would, therefore, be very instructive to study the next bulletin to be published by the State.

It would be no exaggeration to say that the rapid progress in the State is due in a large measure to this periodic self-examination and to the prompt introduction of reforms suggested by experience.

#### Distribution of Schools

Before we take up a detailed examination of the progress of education in the State and assess the results of compulsory primary education, it would be desirable to know something about the distribution of schools in the State. Excluding cantonments and areas under foreign railway administrations, there are 49 towns and 2,920 villages in the Baroda State. Of these 1,580 villages have a population of less than 500 each. The population of these villages is 400,578 which is about 17 per cent of the total State population.

In 1937-38, the State conducted 2,327 primary schools besides which there were 58 aided and 57 unaided insti-

tutions. The extent of the population that is served by these schools can be seen from the following figures :—

	Number	Population	Percentage to the total population of the State.
Villages where schools exist	1433	1,868,559	76%
Villages within one mile radius of these schools	211	72536	3%
Total :— served by schools	1644	1,941,095	79%
Villages without schools	1325	4,95,347	21%
Total	2969	2,436,442	100%

For several years past, there has been no increase in the number of schools; rather their number is being reduced by the state policy of amalgamation and consolidation. For example, the number of schools was 3,199 in 1916-17, 2,996 in 1926-27, 2,552 in 1936-37, and 2,542 in 1937-38. The State has a prejudice against single-teacher schools and under the present policy of the state, a new school is opened only if 75 children are available. All villages which could gather together 75 pupils have already been provided with schools. What now remain are smaller villages which can not have 75 children. They do not get State schools. There is hardly any private effort in the field as the areas of these smaller villages are very uninviting and the rates of grant offered by the State are low. In the whole of the State there are only 33 single-teacher schools and attempts are being made to eliminate these also either by closing them down or by the addition of one more teacher.

So long as this policy continues, the smaller villages of the State can hardly hope to get schools. In this connection, the following remarks of Mr. Littlehales will be of great interest :—

“ Single-teacher schools under trained teachers may be quite satisfactory; they are not objectionable. I should go further and allow temporary single-teacher schools under un-

trained teachers, and knowing that a school once closed down is difficult to resuscitate, I would rather not close a school because its single teacher was untrained. Many schools which were formerly provided with only a single teacher have been closed and others have been provided with an additional teacher. This policy, I submit, is not to the good of the country, especially in its present state of educational advancement. In places where the school has been closed, facilities for education no longer exist and children remain illiterate. In places where the additional teacher has been added, though the individual instruction given to pupils may have been slightly improved, the strength of the school is not appreciably increased; it has certainly not doubled; furthermore the cost of the school has increased twofold though the instruction given has not improved to anything like the same extent.

“ There will always be small villages, where the employment of a single teacher is all that can be economically justified and wastage in school effort will always be with us especially when illiteracy is large, so that single teacher schools will have to remain in parts of Baroda just as they remain in small and out of way villages in other parts of the world. What is desirable is that where a single teacher school exists, the teacher should be conscientious in character and trained. It has not been found impossible in other countries for a single teacher to conduct several small classes in a small village; it should not be impossible in Baroda. I advise the opening of single teacher schools in places where they have been closed and transfer to them of trained teachers. ”

These remarks have produced no effect and the State policy of eliminating single-teacher schools continues. The pity of the matter is that it is these small villages that are inhabited by backward communities like Rani Paraj. They need education most and are denied it. The population of these communities is 312,051 but the number of their pupils is only 11,339. The figures need no comment.



### Present Position

In order, therefore, to have a correct idea of the effect of compulsion, we shall have to remember that nearly 21 per cent of the population of the State is without schools and is, therefore, very largely illiterate. Every year, the State calls for a report from its Educational Department regarding the number of children who have passed standard V and become literate. This number is added to the number of literates as given in the 1931 census and thus an up-to-date list of the number of literates in the State is maintained. No allowance, however, is made for deaths and these figures are not quite correct; but they will suffice to give us a fair idea of the progress of literacy in the State as it stands on 31st July, 1939. The following table gives the necessary statistics:—

Total population of the State	...	Men	.....
		Women	.....
		Total	2,652,112
Total number of literates	...	Men	548,056
		Women	186,293
		Total	734,349
Percentage of literates to total population of the State. (All ages)	...	Men	40·2
		Women	14·4
		Total	27·5
Percentage of literates to total population of the State. (Age seven and over).	...	Men	48·5
		Women	17·8
		Total	34·1
Percentage of literates to population served with schools. (All ages).	...	Men	50·9
		Women	18·2
		Total	34·8
Percentage of literates to population served with schools. (Age seven and over).	...	Men	61·4
		Women	22·5
		Total	44·1
Number of children of school-going age for the whole State.	...	Boys	177,040
		Girls	154,832
		Total	331,872

Number of children of school-going age already at school.	Boys	1,24,252
	Girls	94,571
	Total	2,18,823
Percentage of children of school-going age attending schools to the total number of children of school-going age in the whole of the State.	Boys	70
	Girls	61
	Total	66
Percentage of children of school-going age attending schools to the total number of children of school-going age in areas provided with schools.	Boys	.....
	Girls	.....
	Total	86.2

These are no mean achievements and the system that could produce them is worth a careful study.

#### Education of Women

But the achievements of Baroda in the enrolment and education of girls are even more striking than these general results. The following table compares the figures of boys and girls reading in primary schools of major British Indian Provinces and the Baroda State:—

Province	Number of Pupils in Primary Schools 1937-38		Number of girls in schools to every 100 boys in schools
	Boys	Girls	
Baroda	147,991	106,527	61.2
Madras	1,993,410	881,549	44.3
Bengal	19,05,126	685,426	35.9
Sind	119,611	42,306	35.0
Bombay	887,359	304,150	34.3
Assam	396,177	80,590	26.4
Orissa	232,368	57,801	25.0
Punjab	737,494	170,052	23.0
Central Provinces	356,055	79,731	22.5
United Provinces	1,193,760	204,709	17.2
Bihar	7,06,983	107,215	15.1
N. W. F.	59,864	7,001	11.6

It will be seen that there is a great disparity between the enrolment of boys and girls in all Provinces and it is only Baroda that has succeeded remarkably in enrolling a very large number of girls. This is mainly due to (i) compulsion and (ii) strict enforcement of the Act preventing child marriages.

In the rural areas of Bombay Province, girls are still married or betrothed early and as soon as either ceremony takes place, the girl is withdrawn from the school. The Sharda Act is too mild a weapon to deal effectively with this social evil. In the Baroda State, a more powerful weapon is put on the Statute book and is known as the "Child-Marriage Prevention Act". Under the provisions of this Act, the marriage of a girl or a boy under 8 years of age is declared void and persons responsible for the marriage of a boy under 18 years of age or that of a girl under 16 years of age, including the priests who officiate at such marriages are liable to be punished by simple imprisonment up to one month, or fine up to Rs. 1000 or both. There are, of course, some exemption allowed in very special circumstances; but the extent to which the Act is enforced can be seen from the following figures for 1938-39:—

Total number of marriages celebrated in the State ...		20,093
Number of child marriages		
Allowed by courts ...	51	
Penalised ...	1386	
	—	1,437
Percentage of child marriages to the total number ...		6.8
Number of prosecutions started during the year ( with arrears from the preceding year) ...		2,054
Number of cases disposed of ...		1,772
Percentage of cases ending in conviction ...		60.6
Number of Persons convicted		
Imprisonment only	12	
Imprisonment and fine	69	
Fine only	2818	
	—	2899
Amount of fine collected ...		Rs. 43,982

The factors impeding further progress in female education are thus described :

“Parents require the services of girls to help them in household duties, and hence their attendance is generally irregular. This affects the quality of education. Again there is the difficulty of persuading girls to continue their studies after the completion of the compulsory age or the compulsory class. Then there is the ignorance of the people and prevalence of certain social customs like early marriage and purdah. The belief that “the girls need not take to service and therefore it is not necessary to educate them” is not yet rooted out from the minds of the people. The poverty of the average parent makes him keep the girl at home to take care of the little children. On the other side, there is a want of enthusiastic female teachers willing to work in villages and good male teachers are unwilling to serve in girls’ schools because they cannot get very good results on account of irregular attendance.”

This is, of course, the same old story that is repeated year after year in all provincial reports on Public Instruction. Propaganda, abolition of pernicious social customs, and creation of public opinion in favour of women’s education are absolutely necessary to overcome these difficulties. But the Baroda results show how compulsion can help in breaking down opposition to the education of girls.

It is interesting to note that there seems to be hardly any prejudice against co-education in Baroda State. Out of a total of 2,226 primary schools, only 278 are special schools for girls. Out of a total of 106,302 girls attending primary schools, 40,332 are in girls’ schools and 65,970 in boys’ schools. The number of girls in boys’ schools is increasing rapidly year after year. It will, therefore, be seen that though a large section of parents oppose the education of girls as such, they do not oppose co-education, once they make up their mind to send the girls to school.

#### **Compulsory Education Act**

We shall now give a brief analysis of the Compulsory Education Act, Baroda, and the rules made thereunder.

The act was passed in 1926 and has been amended a number of times after that. The summary given here takes note of all amendments till 31st August, 1940.

The Act applies to the whole of the State; but the Maharaja may exempt, by a notification in the official gazette, any area or any community from its operation (Section 2). The age-period of compulsion is fixed from 7+ to 12+ both for boys and girls (Section 4 (अ)). The parent of every child of compulsory age is under a statutory obligation to send his child to school (Section 5). But in certain exceptional cases, children are exempted from attending schools. For example, exemptions are granted to children (i) who are undergoing satisfactory instruction at home, (ii) who have passed standard V or an equivalent examination, (iii) who cannot attend school owing to some permanent physical or mental disability, (iv) who have to maintain themselves, or attend upon parents who are disabled by old age or disease, or who must be kept at home to take care of younger children as both the father and mother have to go out for work, and (v) to children within one mile of whose residence no school is found to exist. (Section 6). One month before the annual examinations, the revenue authorities prepare a census of all children of school-going age, with the assistance of the teachers if necessary, and publish it in the prescribed manner (Section 8). Within thirty days of the publication of the list, any parent who wishes to challenge the correctness of the census or claim exemption for his children may apply to officers authorized in this behalf and their decision is final (Sections 9 and 10). The parent of every child whose name is mentioned in the list and who is not exempted under Section 6, must send it to a school within thirty days of the publication of the list or of the decision on his application for exemption (Section 11). The headmaster must submit monthly reports of children who are mentioned in the census but who fail to register their names in the school (Section 12). On the receipt of the headmaster's report, the Village Panchayat (in villages), Municipality (in towns), and the Mamlatdar (in Baroda City) summon the defaulting parents, give them a hearing, and if found guilty, fine them eight annas for the first offence, one rupee for the second

and two annas more than the previous fine for every subsequent offence, subject to a maximum of ten rupees. The fines continue to be imposed every month till the child is sent to school (Section 13). Every child whose name is enrolled is entitled to leave of absence on account of illness or attendance upon a sick member of the family, or on account of assisting its parents in their professional work ; provided that the leave on account of the last reason does not exceed 15 days at a time or 30 days in a year (Section 14). Excluding this period of leave every child must be present on  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the working days of the school every month. Headmasters must send monthly reports of all children who fail to put in this minimum attendance (Section 15). On receipt of the headmaster's report, the bodies mentioned in Section 13 above will follow the same procedure and fine the parents in the same manner, but in this case the upper limit of the fine is Rs. 5 only (Section 16). Fines must be paid within 15 days or they will be recovered as arrears of land revenue (Section 18). No appeals are allowed on orders of fine under sections 13 and 16, but a revision application to a higher authority is allowed (Section 19). Employers of children are also liable to fine prescribed under sections 13 and 16 (Section 20). The Inspecting Officers are bound to study and report whether the census of children is correct, whether exemptions are properly granted and whether fines are properly imposed and realised in time (Section 23). The Mamlatdars are empowered to write off irrecoverable fines (Section 24). The amount of fines realised is to be spent on education in the manner fixed by rules *i. e.* 65 per cent for buildings and 35 per cent for supply of books to poor children (Section 26).

#### **Difficulties experienced in working the Act**

(A) *The first and most important part of the work is the preparation of the census of the children of school-going age.* At first, this used to be prepared by the teachers and the revenue officers were asked to assist them. But various difficulties arose and the poor teachers were too weak either to demand assistance from the Patels or to protest against them when help was not given. So the Act was amended and the onus of drawing up a census of children of school-going

age now rests upon the village Patel ; the village teachers are required to assist him.

Things have considerably improved since the amendment was passed. But still a number of difficulties are experienced and the census of children is not as perfect as it ought to be. The following are some of the main difficulties :—

( i ) Information regarding girls is much more difficult to obtain than information regarding boys. There is still a strong objection on the part of parents, especially the Rajputs and Muslims who observe the Parda system, to give information regarding their girls. There is in fact a hereditary custom to give no information regarding the women of the household.

( ii ) The Patels do not take the work of the census as seriously as they ought to. In fact, many officers of the Education Department complain that the revenue authorities look upon compulsion as only a side business of theirs and hence their cooperation in the task of enforcing compulsion is not as whole-hearted as it could or ought to be.

( iii ) Very often, the villagers do not assist in the work. They want the children to work at home or on the farm and hence try to keep the names of their children out of the census list as far as possible. This is particularly true in the case of backward communities.

( iv ) Not infrequently, the Patel is too ignorant to compile a faithful list ; oftener still, he does not do it on purpose as he does not want to incur the odium of his fellow villagers. Reporting names of all children means fines for many and consequent unpopularity in the village. Very often a list is incomplete merely for fear of this unpopularity.

( B ) *The next step is the granting of exemptions.* From the intensive study of villages where compulsion is introduced we find that there are very few applications for exemptions. They are not even one per cent of the enrolment. Even in the applications that are received, the applications on account of girls are twice as many as those for boys. Exemptions are not granted on trivial grounds and the

tendency is to grant them as sparingly as possible. This policy does contribute to keeping down the number of applications. Appreciation of education by the advanced and intermediate communities and ignorance of law on the part of the backward communities also tend in the same direction.

(C) *The third step, in the enforcement of compulsion is to prosecute the parents* of those children who are not enrolled or fail to attend regularly after enrolment. In Baroda, the prosecutions are vigorously carried out. Headmasters send monthly lists of children who are not enrolled or who do not attend regularly ; and the Panchayats, Municipalities, and Vahiwatdars go on fining as cases come up. But the weak part of the whole business is that a large majority of the fines imposed are never actually realised. What is the use of fining defaulting parents when we do not or cannot take any steps to recover the amount of fine? The prosecution is then a farce and has little effect upon the people. The following statistics will be of great interest :



**Fines Imposed and Recovered Under the Act,**

Year.	Total amount of fines imposed with arrears.	Amount recovered.	Amount written of.	Total.	Arrears.	Surplus in recovery.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1933-34	367,466-4-4	52,826-6-5	93,794-4-7	146,620-11-0	220,850-11-4	5-2-0
1934-35	386,085-4-6	43,338-8-11	73,548-14-3	116,887-7-2	269,197-13-4	2-4-0
1935-36	452,696-3-1	44,948-6-9	186,790-8-1	231,738-14-10	220,958-7-3	1-3-0
1936-37	352,620-8-1	36,422-12-0	142,113-8-8	178,536-4-8	174,084-3-5	...
1937-38	311,427-15-8	40,599-13-9	123,048-4-11	163,648-2-9	147,784-9-0	...
Total ...	1,870,296-3-6	218,135-15-10	619,295-8-6	837,431-8-4	1,032,875-12-4	8-9-0

In 1935-36 the fines that had accumulated up to the end of 1932 were all written off on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the late Maharaja. That is why the amount of fines written off in that year is so big. Similarly, the fines that had accumulated till April 1939, were remitted by the present Maharaja.

Two reasons are given for this state of affairs. First, prompt measures are not taken to realise the fines in time. Secondly, poverty of the people plays a large part in such cases. A poor Harijan, for example, fails to send his son or daughter to school. He is fined again and again till the total amount of fine accumulates to Rs. 10. But all his assets are not worth even Rs. 2. How is the fine to be realised ?

Whatever the reasons, this is a clear weak point in the system and shows how compulsion fails against economic factors.

(D) Some other difficulties mentioned by the Educational Officers are worth noting. The following excerpts speak for themselves :—

“Children of the backward classes do not reach the fifth class but remain absent for a very long time paying fines, evading the law under one pretext or another, leaving the school after the completion of the compulsory age.”—*Educational Inspector, Baroda Division.*

“The low percentage of backward class children can be explained by the fact that these poor people being hard-pressed by economic depression prefer to avail themselves of the services of their children even at the risk of being fined. In the case of Antyaj children, there is opposition of forward classes to allow Antyaj students in schools which are housed in private buildings and temples.”—*Educational Inspector, Patan Division.*

It has to be noted that the opposition of the forward classes is of two types — direct and indirect. Sometimes they make open protest at the admission of Harijans to temples etc. On other occasions, they bring economic pressure upon the Harijans who are very poor and dependant upon the caste Hindus for their maintenance, and the Harijans prefer withdrawing their children and paying the fines to incurring the displeasure of the caste Hindus. The following incident told by a Deputy Educational Inspector is very interesting: “In a certain village, there is a custom that for certain services (sweeping the streets etc.) the caste Hindu families give one Javar bread to Harijans and this forms the

main source of their livelihood. When, as a result of compulsion, the Harijans began to send their children to schools the caste Hindus protested to the authorities; and when the authorities remained firm, the caste Hindus stopped the daily bread given to Harijans. The result was that the Harijans withdrew their children from school and preferred to pay the occasional fines rather than lose the daily bread."

"The fact that it is very difficult to make a correct census list of the children (of compulsory age) of the backward classes, affects the enrolment prejudicially."—*Educational Inspector, Kadi Division.*

"There is a peculiarity in this division that the population is divided into a large number of forward class and pretty large number of backward class people. The backwards never acquire literacy in spite of compulsion. Lapse into illiteracy has no meaning in their case. The forward class people are very careful to see that these backwards should not learn anything and thereby keep them constantly under subjugation as of yore. Poor backwards are the only people to be fined and often their forward overlords do not hesitate to pay up their fines too."—*Educational Inspector, Navsari Division.*

(E) Besides these socio-economic factors, the following purely economic difficulties come in the way of full enrolment:

(1) Both parents are away from home during the day-time, earning in the field; there is a small child left at home. The older child of school-age has also to stay at home to take care of the infant.

(2) Owing to the poverty of parents, the child also has to go out and earn something in order to help the family to maintain itself.

(3) The cattle have to be sent out; the poor agriculturist does not have sufficient fodder close to his house. Grazing is available only in selected plots or by the road-side. Some one, usually a child of school age, must look after the cattle while they are grazing.

Such cases will arise at all places. They show how fallacious is the supposition that mere compulsion will help

as to enrol all pupils and maintain them at school. Compulsion will help in cases where the parent *can* send the child to school but *will not*. But where he *cannot* send the child for economic reasons, compulsion will have no application at all and social ameliorative measures are the only way out.

(F) There are difficulties in the way of attendance also. After an intensive study of a number of villages and average school attendance, each month for a number of years, the Educational Inspectors came to the following conclusion :

“We notice that the attendance of children gets low in the months of July and August due to harvest season. At times it goes low in the months of May and June owing to marriage season. Attendance in villages depends on the agricultural conditions of different places.”—*Educational Inspector, Petlad Division.*

“Desertions are greatest when children assist their parents in agricultural operations.”—*Educational Inspector, Patan Division.*

The following recommendations of Mr. Littlehailes (since accepted by the State) are very interesting :

“It is not desirable to fix for every part of Baroda the same dates for the chief holidays. The people are mainly employed in agriculture and children are needed to help their parents during certain seasons. In one place where cotton is grown the time when children are needed in the fields is from March to May ; in another place where jowar is grown the children are needed in the fields in the months of January and February ; again in other places where rice is the chief agricultural product the period when children are needed in the fields is from October to December. If then the chief holidays are to be fixed at times when the children are needed in fields by their parents—and this is desirable—then holidays should be local and may vary from place to place, even adjoining villages requiring holidays at different periods.

“Further more in some places children are required longer in the fields than in others, the time required for their assistance depending upon the time needed for reaping or sowing of crops. The exact duration of the main holidays need not, therefore, be fixed for the whole State.....It is only by doing so that we shall get rid of the more or less justifiable complaint that children have to attend school when they are most needed by the parents to help them in the fields. The educational advisory bodies of the district and talukas might from year to year recommend the dates of vacation for each taluka or part of a taluka, the district inspectors being empowered to sanction them subject to the maximum number of days to be granted each year, which will be fixed by rule, not being exceeded. By altering the dates of holidays to suit local conditions, the average attendance of children at school should improve.”—*Report of Mr. R. Littlehailes.* pp. 39-40.

In the areas provided with schools the enrolment of pupils in Baroda is 86·2 per cent of the census of the children of school-going age. Making allowance for the defects of the census, we might roughly say that the enrolment is at least 80 per cent of the total number of children of school-going age. The average attendance in schools is 77 per cent ( of enrolment ) in the case of girls and 82 per cent in the case of boys. It has to be remembered that in compulsory areas, the enrolment of children is greater but the attendance is smaller than in voluntary areas. It may be pointed out in passing that in Scotland, the enrolment is 84 per cent and attendance 90 per cent. Baroda figures are certainly satisfactory if we allow for social and economic differences.

#### **Some general considerations**

One of the important questions to be decided in connection with schemes of compulsion is that of the period necessary to attain permanent literacy. The complete primary education course in Baroda is of seven years. The course of compulsory elementary education is of five years because the view still prevails that five years' schooling is necessary in order to attain permanent literacy. The following table is

compiled from the intensive studies of compulsory education in the years 1936-37 and 1937-38 :—

Communities.	No. of pupils who studied up to classes IV & V during the last 10 years.	No. of those who can read and write.	No. lapsed into illiteracy.	Percentage of lapse into illiteracy.
1	2	3	4	5
<i>1936-37</i>				
Advanced ...	2215	1956	259	11.7
Backward ...	1092	921	171	15.7
Antyaj ...	361	318	43	12.6
Muslims ...	345	336	9	2.7
<i>1937-38.</i>				
Advanced ...	2605	1725	63	2.4
Backward ...	1858	1213	185	9.9
Antyaj ...	610	473	65	10.6
Muslims ...	359	264	11	3.0
Total ...	9445	8206	806	

Some explanatory notes regarding these figures are necessary. Let us first consider the year 1936-37. The figures in column 2 are of *persons who, at the time of the study, were actually staying in the village* and had studied up to class IV or V only, sometime during the last ten years. The figures in column 3 are of those who were found to be able to read and write, the test being personally held by the deputy educational inspectors. It has to be remembered that in the Baroda State a person who can only read is also considered to have lapsed into illiteracy. We find that percentage of lapses is very small; and if we allow for the

persons who can only read, the percentage of real lapses is almost negligible.

The figures for 1937-38 are slightly different. Those in column 2 are the *pupils who left school in classes IV or V during the last ten years*. But all of them were not living in the village at the time of the enquiry as some had migrated and some had died. But every person staying in the village was examined and was classed under column 3 if he could read and write and under column 4 in other cases. The results again show a very small percentage of lapse, except in the case of Harijans.

Figures for the other years for which studies are available are also on the same lines and lead to the same conclusions.

We must, of course, take into consideration the provision of a reading room and library made by the State in every village where there is a school. But we are certainly justified in concluding that a person attains literacy after four years schooling and that he does not lapse into illiteracy later on, particularly if the provision of a reading room and library is made in every village where there is a school.

The following remarks of Mr. R. Littlehailes deserve careful consideration :—

“It is generally assumed that education for a period of five years in a primary school is necessary to enable a child to attain literacy. In some other parts of India it is assumed that a period of 4 years is sufficient. At one of the conferences which I held with inspecting officers, opinion was nearly evenly divided as to whether the period required for attaining literacy in schools was four years or five years. The actual period, however, is dependent—leaving aside the inherent intelligence of the child—upon two main factors : the home surroundings of the child and the methods of instruction adopted in the school.

“A child of the better educated classes of the community is brought up in home surroundings which are literary and cultural. Such a child becomes literate at a very early stage, quite frequently after only two or three years of formal

education. Children of the educationally backward classes of the community however, and the village community is in the main of this category, require a longer period than two or three years to become literate.

“But no matter what the inherited intelligence and cultural surroundings of the child may be, good methods of instruction will reduce the period required for attaining literacy while inferior methods of instruction are bound to lengthen the period. An enquiry as to the methods of instruction adopted by our teachers in primary schools, especially as to the methods adopted for teaching language, reading and writing, is necessary if we are to ascertain whether the period required to acquire literacy might not be reduced by improving methods of instruction.

“The method to be adopted in teaching is mainly a professional or technical matter which is dealt with in the training colleges for teachers, where teachers may receive instruction in the best method to adopt in teaching. Some teachers have a natural bent towards teaching, others do not have this natural talent, but instruction in the best method to adopt in teaching children is valuable to all teachers and necessary for all. The talented teacher may not need training so much as the untalented teacher, but even he by training will gain new ideas, have the weaknesses in his methods pointed out to him and receive help in eradicating his faults. By giving all teachers a professional training, their methods of instruction will improve and the period required for the attainment of literacy amongst children will be reduced.

“The reduction of the period for attaining literacy is thus traced back to the training colleges and it is upon their efficiency that such reduction depends. The staffs of the training colleges must themselves be able to put their students under training into the best ways of teaching children how to read and write, and they must themselves, from time to time, experiment on new and different methods of teaching. Our training schools must be staffed by teachers imbued with the true spirit of education, who, realising that the last word in methods of instructions has never been said, will keep themselves up-to-date, experimenting on all new methods which



come to light and themselves try to invent improved methods." *Report pp. 12-14.*

We may add that the period also depends upon the syllabus—upon the time that is allowed for three R's as against other subjects like history, geography etc. The less burdened the syllabus, the shorter the time required for attaining literacy.

The question is not purely academical. For the shorter the period, the less is the cost to the state, and what is more important, the less is the burden to the parent not only that caused by depriving him of the wages that the child would earn or the assistance that he would offer, but also that of feeding and clothing the child and equipping him with learning aids, such as books and slates. It is for the Baroda authorities to decide whether the wastage in their system cannot be eliminated in part by reducing the compulsory course to four years; I feel that it could certainly be done.

(B) In the intensive studies, we find the reasons for leaving school classified carefully after an individual study of each pupil. As the matter is interesting, I quote below the figures for the years 1936-37 and 1937-38:—

Statement showing desertions with causes

Year	Completion of compulsory course		Completion of compulsory age		Physical defect		Death		Migration		Help to family by employment		Help to Parents		Total	
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	Boys	Girls
1936-37	269	48	293	283	3	2	10	7	123	62	11	11	22	18	731	431
1937-38	319	123	296	321	5	10	5	7	134	105	28	31	...	8	787	605
	588	171	589	604	8	12	15	14	257	167	39	42	22	26	1518	1036

It will be seen that a large majority of girls leave school after completing the compulsory age rather than the compulsory course; that a majority of boys attain literacy and

generally leave school after completing the compulsory course; and that desertions due to unavoidable causes like physical defect, death, economic necessities, are only 7.2 per cent.

(C) Lastly it will be useful to compare the extent of stagnation and wastage in Baroda State with that in the Province of Bombay, without going into the question whether the departmental method gives us a correct idea of wastage. We shall only compare the figures for the last quinquennium :—

Year	Pupils in Infant class five years ago.	Pupils in Class V.	Percentage of pupils in class V to those in class I.
<i>Bombay</i>			
1932-33	330,455	102,062	30.9
1933-34	346,604	105,992	30.6
1934-35	349,274	111,311	31.9
1935-36	355,830	116,154	32.6
1936-37	337,384	120,320	35.7
<i>Baroda</i>			
1932-33	69,381	23,644	34.0
1933-34	69,834	28,659	42.4
1934-35	72,840	28,726	39.4
1935-36	72,351	29,523	40.5
1936-37	70,201	29,692	42.3

Judged by the same standards as we apply in Bombay we find that things in Baroda are not so much better as one would expect. Without entering here into the causes of stagnation and wastage, it may be pointed out that we ought not to accept, without a closer examination into the question, the common remark that compulsion is the sovereign remedy

for all stagnation and wastage. In fact, the Educational Reforms Committee of Travancore have observed :—

“ We have in fact known a considerable number of instances outside Travancore in which, for example, the wastage between class and class in schools of compulsory areas has been larger than the wastage in schools of non-compulsory areas.” *Report p. 134.*

#### Conclusion

Baroda has done pioneer work in introducing compulsion in rural areas on a very large scale. It has developed a very useful system of administration in the light of its vast experience. It has published considerable literature on the subject and laid bare all the difficulties involved in such an experiment. Its successes, nay even its failures, have a great lesson to us all. We would urge upon the Bombay Government to avail itself of the Baroda experiences and improve its antiquated machinery for the enforcement of compulsion.

#### Bibliography

1. Baroda Compulsory Education Act of 26th August, 1926, (with the latest amendments )
2. Rules made under the above Act.
3. Report of the Baroda Education Commission, 1909.
4. Report of the Baroda Education Commission, 1916.
5. Report of the Baroda Education Commission, 1926.
6. Report of Mr. R. Littlehales, M. A., C. I. E., Ex-Commissioner of Education with the Government of India, on the Educational System of the Baroda State, 1934.
7. Annual Reports on the Public Instruction in the Baroda State, 1927-38.
8. Report on the Administration of the Baroda State, 1938-39.
9. Compulsory Education Studies. Volumes, II to XI.
10. Primary Education Rules.
11. Syllabus for Training Schools for Primary Teachers.
12. Syllabus for Primary Schools.
13. Census of India ( Baroda ). Vol., XIX, Parts I and II.

Printed by Mr. V. H. Barve at the Aryabhushan Press,  
House No. 915/1 Bhamburda Peth, Poona 4, and  
Published by Mr. M. M. Shirkol, B.A., LL.B., for the Karnatak  
Co-operative Educational Publications Society, Ltd.,  
Dharwar, at its Office in Dharwar.