

CHAPTER XIII

EDUCATION

PROGRESS OF EDUCATION

THE backward state of education in the district half a century ago may be gathered from the account given in 1863 by Colonel Gastrell in the first Statistical Report of Bānkurā. In 1847 a Deputy Collector, who had an intimate acquaintance with the habits of the people and had travelled over every part of the district, reported: "Education is very little attended to. Few, indeed, can do more than write their names even in the towns. In the villages education may be said to be entirely neglected. In the towns the children of tradespeople attend the Guru Mahāsaya or Pandit's school until they understand common accounts". Up to 1861 there were only 12 schools, with 967 pupils, established by Government; and the state of these schools was not satisfactory owing to the want of interest in them taken by the people. "But," said Colonel Gastrell, "where such utter darkness had prevailed, any light, breaking in and dispelling no matter how little of it, is to be hailed with delight as the dawn of a brighter day". As regards the state of education in his own day, Colonel Gastrell wrote: "Education is neither much sought after nor thought of by the lower classes. Few can read, still fewer write".

The progress which has been made since the above remarks were written has been undoubtedly great, though, Bānkurā being a poor and backward district, the advance has not been so rapid as in richer parts of the country. Figures showing the extension of education for any lengthy period cannot be given, as the district did not acquire its present dimensions until 1879; but an idea of the progress made recently can be gathered from the returns for the last 25 years. According to statistics furnished by the Education Department, the number of schools in the year 1881 was 1,410 and there were 32,243 scholars on the

rolls. In 1891 the number of educational institutions had increased to 1,534 and the number of pupils to 39,057. During the next 10 years there was a falling off in the number of schools, while the attendance remained almost stationary, the number of the former in 1901 being 1,300, while the aggregate of pupils was 39,092. The census of that year showed that the total number of persons able to read and write was 103,679, representing 9.3 per cent (18.3 males and 0.5 females) of the population. According to the returns for 1906-07, there are, in addition to a college at Bānkurā, 1,406 schools attended by 43,315 pupils, the number of boys receiving instruction being 46.8 per cent of the number of boys of school-going age.

GENERAL STATISTICS

Of the total number of schools, 1,330 with 42,608 pupils are public institutions, and 76 with 707 pupils are private institutions. Of the former, 12 schools attended by 660 pupils, are under public management, five being managed by Government and seven by the District Board; while 1,318 schools, attended by 41,948 pupils, are under private management, 1,184 being aided, while 134 are unaided. The inspecting staff consists of 2 Deputy Inspectors of Schools, 8 Sub-Inspectors of Schools, one Assistant Sub-Inspector and 11 Inspecting Pandits.

COLLEGIATE EDUCATION

The only college in the district is the college at Bānkurā maintained by the Wesleyan Mission, which is affiliated up to the B.A. Examination in Arts. The college was established in 1903, and new buildings are being constructed, including a hostel for Hindu boys, another for Christian students, and a house for the Principal. A fuller account of the college will be found in Chapter III.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

The number of secondary schools is 63, and the attendance at them is 5,090. Of these schools no less than thirteen are High schools, at which 2,133 boys receive instruction. The largest

is the Kuchkuchiā High school, with 336 boys on the rolls; this school is maintained by the Wesleyan Mission, and is aided by Government. One school is maintained by Government, viz., the Zilā school at Bānkurā, and nine receive grants-in-aid, viz., the High schools at Kuchkuchiā, Bishnupur, Kotalpur, Kuchiākol, Sonāmukhī, Palāsdānga, Rol, Māliārā and Beliātorē. Besides these, there are three unaided schools, viz., the Bānkurā Hindu High school and the High schools at Rājgrām and Indās. There are altogether 28 Middle English schools, including 25 aided and 2 unaided schools, besides one main ained by the District Board. Secondary vernacular education is losing popularity, and the number of Middle Vernacular schools has decreased to 22, of which 6 are maintained by the District Board and 16 are unaided.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

The total number of boys' Primary schools in the district is 1,059, of which 190 are Upper Primary and 869 are Lower Primary schools. With the exception of two Upper Primary schools attached to the two Guru Training schools, all the schools are under private management, 956 being aided and 101 unaided. The attendance at these schools is 34,119, viz., 32,468 boys and 1,651 girls. There are also 88 night schools attended by 1,591 pupils, mostly sons of artisans and day labourers. It is reported that most of the Upper Primary schools have separate buildings, but that they are not very suitable for the purpose, and that there are scarcely any Lower Primary schools with separate buildings. For want of such accommodation, the classes are generally held in the common *pūjā* houses of the village or in the verandah of some well-to-do villager's house: a *pūjā* house, it may be explained, is the house set aside for the performance of the *bārwaris* (religious and musical entertainments) of the village.

FEMALE EDUCATION

The advance of female education, at least of a primary character, has been very noticeable in recent years; for the number of Primary girls' schools rose from 90 in 1901-02 to 183 in 1906-07 and the attendance from 1,466 to 2,987, besides 1,654

girls reading in boys' schools. In all, 4,641 girls received instruction in 1906-07 as compared with 3,209 in 1901-02, i.e., the increase during the decade was no less than 41 per cent. At present, the majority of these schools are taught by male teachers belonging to neighbouring boys' schools; and there are only a few girls' schools with a separate staff. The number of female teachers, is very few, for there are only five schools with female teachers, and they are all Christian.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS

There are four Training schools for the training of Primary school teachers, of which three are intended for male and one for female teachers. Of the former, two are under the direct management of the Education Department, and one, at Sārengā, is maintained by the Wesleyan Mission. That Mission also maintains the Training school for female teachers mentioned above.

INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION

Industrial or technical education is practically non-existent, the only technical school being that known as the Bānkurā Mission Technical School, which is maintained by the Wesleyan Mission. At this school carpentry, shoe-making, weaving and the manufacture of cane baskets are taught.

OTHER SCHOOLS

Under this head may be classed the Sanskrit *tols* and musical schools established in the district. Sanskrit *tols* number 15 and have 211 boys on the rolls, the pupils being taught Sanskrit grammar, literature, rhetoric, logic, Hindu philosophy and Hindu law. There are 5 musical schools, at which vocal and instrumental music is taught to 70 boys.

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

The number of private institutions is 76 and that of the pupils studying at them 707. These 76 schools include Sanskrit *tols* not adopting departmental standards, and 11 *maktabs* teaching Arabic and Persian of an elementary character.

EDUCATION OF MUHAMMADANS

The number of Muhammadan pupils studying in public institutions in 1906-07 was 1,528, representing 3.5 per cent of the number of pupils of all creeds. The proportion of Muhammadans to the total population, according to the census of 1901, is 4.5 per cent, so that it would appear that the Muhammadans of Bānkurā are more backward from an educational point of view than the Hindus. It is noticeable, moreover, that nearly all of the boys under instruction attend Primary schools, and only 123 attend Secondary schools.

EDUCATION OF ABORIGINALS

The number of aboriginal pupils in the various public institutions in the same year was 2,148, of whom 73 were Christians and 2,075 were non-Christian Sāntāls. Special efforts are being made by the Wesleyan Mission to diffuse education among the Sāntāls, and a Training school has been established for the training of teachers in the Sāntāl schools maintained by the Mission.

HOSTELS AND BOARDING HOUSES

Altogether 14 boarding houses have been established, of which twelve are intended for male and two for female students. The latter are under the management of the Wesleyan Mission, and are located at Bānkurā and Sārengā.

LIBRARIES AND NEWSPAPERS

There are two public libraries, viz., one at Bishnupur, for which a small building was constructed in 1904 within the Municipal office compound, and a small library opened in 1903 at Kākatīā in the Bishnupur subdivision. The only newspaper published in the district is a Bengali paper known as the *Bānkurā Darpan*, a weekly paper, printed at Bānkurā, which deals chiefly with matters of local interest.