

CHAPTER XIII

EDUCATION

PROGRESS OF EDUCATION

THE Nadia district has for centuries been famed for its learning, but in early days literacy was confined to a few privileged castes, and even now it cannot be said to have diffused among the masses to the extent which would have been expected. It is true that the census of 1901 showed that there had been a relatively large improvement in this respect during the preceding twenty years, but the percentage of males recorded as literate was only equal to that for the whole of Bengal, which is certainly not in keeping with the reputation of the district, especially considering its proximity to the metropolitan area, which is naturally the most favoured part of the Province from the point of view of education. There are no statistics to show what proportion of the people could read and write at the time when the first census was taken in 1872, but the Subdivisional Officer of Chuadanga made a detailed enquiry into this point over the greater part of his subdivision in the year 1871-72, and from the figures obtained by him it appears that at that time only 2·4 per cent. of the people were sufficiently literate to be able to read and write. The percentage of literate males was 5·5 in 1881, as is evidenced by the figures of the census of that year. The censuses of 1891 and 1901 showed 7·1 and 10·4 of the male population respectively as literate, 10·4 being the exact percentage of male literacy of the Province as a whole in 1901. The percentage of male literacy thus increased nearly twofold in the 20 years ending with 1901.

In the year 1856-57 there were only 19 Government and aided schools in the district; these were attended by

1,865 pupils. By 1871 the number of such schools had increased to 252, attended by 9,120 pupils. In addition to these there were 255 private schools attended by 6,406 pupils. There were thus in all 507 schools attended by 15,516 pupils. In comparing these figures with those of subsequent years, it must be remembered that in 1871 the Bangaon subdivision of the Jessore district was still included in Nadia, it not having been transferred to Jessore until 1883. By 1895 the number of schools had increased to 973, and the attendance to 31,304. In 1908-09 the corresponding figures were 1,175 and 41,505 respectively. Of these latter schools 46 were maintained or aided by Municipalities and 738 by the District Board. Included in the above were one High English school with 216 pupils, 4 Middle English schools with 517 pupils, and 41 Primary schools with 2,052 pupils, which were chiefly maintained by the Church Missionary Society.

COLLEGIATE EDUCATION

There is one Arts College in the district, namely, that at Krishnagar. It was founded by the Government in 1845 and is under the control of the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal. Any person who has passed the University Entrance Examination may be admitted. Students pay a monthly fee of Rs. 5.

The College stands upon an enclosed compound of upwards of 100 bighas. It occupies two buildings. The larger one, which is the main College building, is a handsome structure covering about three bighas, or one acre. It was erected in 1856 at a cost of Rs. 66,876, of which about Rs. 17,000 was contributed by private persons. There are thirteen free studentships which are within the gift of the subscribers to the cost of the building, each donation of Rs. 1,000 having entitled the donor to nominate to one free studentship in perpetuity, and each additional Rs. 500 to one further similar nomination. The smaller building is a later addition, in which parts of the Physical and Chemical Laboratories are located. Part of the ground occupied was

purchased by Government; for the remainder the College is indebted to the munificence of the Maharaja of Nadia and Maharani Swarnamayi of Cossimbazar.

In 1871 the B.A. classes were abolished by Sir George Campbell, then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and for some years the College only afforded instruction up to the First Examination in Arts. In 1875, however, Sir Richard Temple, on the petition of the chief inhabitants of the district, consented to restore the College to its former status, provided that a considerable share of the increased cost was subscribed by the community. A sum amounting to more than Rs.40,000 was subscribed during the year, and with this endowment B.A. classes in the B course were opened. Classes for the A course for the B.A. were opened in June 1888.

The College, which was affiliated in 1857, has been affiliated in Arts up to the B.A., and in Science up to the B.Sc. Standard, under the new regulations.

A prize of Rs. 80, founded by Babu Mohini Mohan Ray in 1883, and called the Mohini Mohan Ray prize, is awarded annually to the Student who most successfully passes the B.A. Examination with honours, or to a graduate of the College who passes the M.A. Examination in any subject.

Another prize of Rs. 8, founded by Babu Syama Charan Maitra, and called the "Smith and Macdonell Prize", is annually awarded to the student who most successfully passes the F.A. Examination and prosecutes his studies for the B.A. Examination in the Krishnagar College.

The College endowment funds now amount to Rs. 46,500.

There is a Hindu Hostel attached to the College, which is under the direct control of the Principal, and is managed by a Superintendent who is also the Gymnastic Master of the College.

The College has been very sparsely attended by Muhammadans (during the five years ending on 31st March

1907 there was never at one time more than one Muhammadan on the rolls), and in 1905 the Principal reported that the Muhammadans of the town and district could not afford to give their children a proper education. It was thought that the absence of a Muhammadan boarding house in Krishnagar was partly responsible, and, in July 1906, the funds necessary for opening a hostel for them were sanctioned, and it was arranged that one of the College Maulvis should reside in it as Superintendent. However, up to the end of 1907, no application for accommodation in this boarding-house had been received, and the funds sanctioned had not been utilized.

In 1909 the staff consisted of the Principal, five Professors, four Lecturers, and an Assistant for each of the Laboratories. The number of students on the rolls was 124.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

In the year 1856-57 there were only three aided Higher and Middle schools in the district. The number of Higher Schools, had increased to 11 by the year 1871-72. In the year ending on 31st March 1899 there were 16 High English schools. Ten years later, *i.e.*, on 31st March 1909, there were 25 High schools in the district. Of these, one, Krishnagar Collegiate School, was maintained by Government; one, Santipur Municipal school, was maintained by a municipality; 17 were aided by the District Board and municipalities; and 6 were unaided. These 25 schools were attended by 4,813 pupils, giving an average of 192 pupils per school. The average cost of these schools for the year was Rs. 4,047. The names of the two schools which are supported entirely from the public funds have already been given. The following schools are aided by Government:—Amla Sadarpur, Belpukur, Bhajanghat, Chuadanga, Gosain Durgapur, Harinarayanpur, Kumarkhali, Kushtia, Majdia Railbazar, Muragachha, Meherpur, Ranaghat, Sudhakarapur, Shikarpur, Krishnagar Church Missionary Society, Jamsarpur. The Nabadwip Hindu school

is aided by the Nabadwip Municipality. The following are private and unaided schools, which, however, have been recognized by the Calcutta University:—Krishnagar Anglo-Vernacular school, Khoksa Janipur, Sutragarh (Maharaja of Nadia's) High English school, Santipur Oriental Academy, Juniadaha, Natudaha. None of these unaided schools were in existence even ten years ago.

In 1898-99 there were 48 Middle English schools, and the same number were in existence on the 31st March 1909. The average cost of these schools was Rs. 949, and the average attendance at them was 78 pupils. The number of Middle Vernacular schools was, in 1871-72, 31, including 4 unaided; in 1898-99 28 (none unaided); and on 31st March 1909, 13 only. The average expenditure on these schools in the year 1908-09 was Rs. 588, and they were attended on the average by 64 pupils. The falling off in the lowest of these three classes of schools, and the increase in the highest, are a clear indication of the desire of the people for an English education rather than a purely vernacular one.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

The number of Primary schools, including *pathshalas*, was 229 in 1871-72. In 1898-99 there were 85 Upper Primary and 615 Lower Primary schools. On the 31st March 1909 there were 123 Upper Primary and 706 Lower Primary schools. The total number of pupils at the three periods mentioned were 4,836, 20,824 and 26,117 respectively; the latter figures do not, however, include the pupils who are attending the Primary classes of secondary schools; taking these in, the total number of pupils receiving primary education on 31st March 1909 was 31,235. The spread of primary education has more than kept pace with the increase in the population during the last 30 or 40 years, and this notwithstanding the fact that there has recently been some falling off in the number of schools owing to the insistence upon greater efficiency in the teachers.

FEMALE EDUCATION

The progress of female education has been more marked than that of male primary education. In the year 1871-72 there were only 21 girls' schools; by the year 1898-99 their number had increased to 103; and on 31st March 1909 there were 152 primary schools for girls only, in addition to which 589 girls were attending at primary schools for boys. During the year 1908-09 the number of girls and women attending classes at public institutions increased from 4,275 to 4,753, the increase being made up of 10, or 6.2 per cent, in the number of pupils in special schools, and 468, or 11.3 per cent., in secondary and primary schools. The number of girls in the middle stage of education was 10, and in the primary stage 4,572. There are two Model Primary Schools in the district, one at Santipur and the other at Nabadwip; each of these is attended by more than 50 pupils and has three qualified teachers; they are shortly to be recognized as Government institutions. One female teacher was employed during the year at a cost of Rs. 389 to impart instruction in zanas; she had 25 pupils.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION

There is no public technical institution in the district, but an Industrial School is maintained at Chapra by the Church Missionary Society. This was attended by 33 pupils in 1908-09, and the cost was Rs. 1,050. The school received no direct assistance from either Government or the District Board, but the latter paid the sum of Rs. 588 for special scholarships for boys leaving the school for further training in the Kanchrapara workshops and elsewhere. The Divisional Commissioner has recently (1909) given this school special grants for the purchase of a steam engine and of a screw-turning lathe.

TRAINING SCHOOLS

The Church Missionary Society maintains a first grade Training School at Krishnagar. It had 27 pupils on the

rolls on 31st March 1909. The total expenditure was Rs. 9,069, of which Rs. 2,800 was met from provincial revenues, and the balance by the Society. There are ten Guru Training Schools, which are attended by 134 pupils; they are maintained at a cost of Rs. 14,709 which is met from provincial revenues and fees. A Training School for females is maintained at Krishnagar by the Church of England Zenana Mission Society; it is attended by 36 pupils, and six-sevenths of the cost is borne by the Society, the balance being covered by a contribution from provincial revenues.

MUHAMMADAN EDUCATION

Although ratio of Muhammadans to Hindus in the district is about 6 to 4, the ratio of Muhammadan pupils at the schools to Hindus is about 1 to 2. The Muhammadans of the district cannot therefore be described otherwise than as backward in education; but they are steadily improving their position in this respect. In 1871-72 the ratio of Muhammadan pupils to Hindu was 1 to 8, and in 1898-99 it was 1 to 4; the fact that during the last ten years the disparity has been further reduced to 1 to 2, gives hopes that the advantages of education and receiving wider recognition among the Muhammadan community.

SANSKRIT EDUCATION

This has been dealt with in the article upon the town of Nabadwip in the Gazetteer Chapter of this volume.

LIBRARIES AND NEWSPAPERS

There are small libraries at Ranaghat, Kanchrapara, Santipur, Meherpur, and Haradham. There is a useful library attached to the Krishnagar College, but this is not available to the public. One weekly newspaper, *Banga Ratna*, is printed in Calcutta and published in Krishnagar, but it has a very small and purely local circulation. A weekly paper, *Banga Lakshmi*, and a monthly magazine, *Jubak*, are printed in Calcutta and published in Santipur; they also have a very restricted circulation.