

As far as the I.I.Ts are concerned, the trend appears to be that about 50% of the students have parents with an income of less than Rs. 500 per month. On account of the known pattern of occupation of the parents of these students, the figures are probably quite reliable.

4.6. In the conditions prevailing to-day, a monthly income of Rs. 500 cannot be regarded as a high income. The table on incomes at page 3 will show clearly the classes of employees whose income is above Rs. 500/-, Are we to understand that all categories of workers such as, high-school teachers, office assistants, steno-typists, skilled factory workers, technical-assistants, foremen, etc., come under the affluent section of society who send their children to English medium schools and have, therefore, advantage over others?

4.7. If the income-index is used as the criterion and Rs. 100 is taken as the subsistence level per member of the family, then the admission-figures at I.I.T., Madras for 1967 show that 65% of the students have an income index of Rs. 100 or less. In the light of this, it would be an exaggeration to say that most of the students admitted to the I.I.T. come from well-to-do families.

5.0. Rural versus Urban background: The I.I.Ts are accused of not keeping their doors sufficiently open for students from rural areas. In formulating a blue-print for the setting up of the Indian Institutes of Technology, the Sarkar Committee made the following observations on the admission requirements and the selection of students:

"Only those applicants whose evidence of academic fitness and professional promise indicate that they are likely to pursue the college course with profit should be admitted....

An Entrance Board should conduct a written examination to test the applicants' academic fitness and psychological tests and viva voce examination to gauge his professional promise.

In general, admission should be made in order of merit...."

3. It is my conviction that, in order to make an objective analysis of the prevailing situation and to arrive at just and reasonable conclusions, we have to take the trouble to clarify certain basic points and to provide ourselves with an unambiguous and concrete definition of terms and categories such as status in society, high income and low income, rural background and urban background, etc., so that all concerned will use the same yardstick. Otherwise, the comparisons made and conclusions arrived at therefrom will be invalid.

I, therefore, wish to make a few specific comments on the three points of comparison. In doing so, I am using data pertaining to I.I.T., Madras that are readily available to me; and with regard to the other Institutes and colleges, I have drawn the figures from the Report on the study conducted by the Education Commission.

4.0. Social and financial status: The Education Commission's Report states that 58.7% of the students admitted to the I.I.T.s come from families with a monthly income of more than Rs. 500/-; whereas in the engineering colleges only 12.6% of the students have parents earning over Rs. 500/- per month and as many as 38.7% of the students have parents earning less than Rs. 150/- per month.

4.1. In the first instance, it may be pointed out that the total monthly income of the parent is not a meaningful criterion as his financial viability is very much influenced by the number of dependents whom he has to support, inclusive of wife, children, aged parents, unmarried sisters, minor brothers, etc. It would be more realistic to think in terms of an 'income-index' which may be defined as income/number of genuine dependents, as a better guide.

4.2. We should also look at the present-day salary-structure of various kinds of employees to form an idea of what kind of people have an income of Rs.150/- p.m., Rs.500/- p.m., etc. Some categories and their pay-scales and monthly emoluments are enumerated below: