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Universities in the Twenty-First Century*

André Béteille**

Abstract

The paper reviews the ideals of the modern university as these came to be established in the course of the 19th century, and focuses in detail on the pressures being experienced by the universities from the growth and expansion of specialised knowledge and the pressures to become socially more inclusive, as also and how these pressures influence the mode of functioning of the institutions and how do they displace the initial objectives.

I

As an institution, the university has a longer span of life than the lifespan of any of its individual members. It was there before most of its present members entered it, and will continue to be there after they leave it. This appearance of continuity masks the many changes taking place both in the internal structure of the university and in its relationship with its environment.

My focus will be on the changes taking place in the university, both as a centre of learning and as a social institution. I believe that we can understand what these changes portend for the future only if we take a long-term view of them than is usually done in such discussions. I will not speak of any one university in particular but about universities in general, and I will not confine myself only to universities in India but also refer from time to time to universities in other parts of the world which have influenced our own universities in the past and will probably continue to influence them even more in the future.

When I entered the service of the University of Delhi in 1959, there were far fewer universities in the country than there are now. They were smaller in size and there was less variety among them. There was of course the distinction between the central and the state universities, but as such, it was not an important difference then. So far as I can recall, the category of 'deemed university' or 'deemed to be university' did not exist at that time. When I left the University of Calcutta, where I had been a student to become a lecturer in the University of Delhi, I was often reminded of what I had heard about Calcutta University as it was twenty or thirty years earlier. I had a certain idea or image of the university as a centre of science and scholarship. Not all the three hundred or so university institutions listed today by the Association of Indian Universities correspond

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** 69, Jorbagh, New Delhi-110003. Email: andrebeteille@yahoo.co.in.

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very closely to that conception of the university, and I believe that the reality will diverge more and more from it as we move further into the twenty-first century.

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, the universities were not only few in number, they were also small in size. These the university comprised only a few thousand persons, and it could and in some cases did function as a community of scientists and scholars among whom there was close and fruitful interaction across the disciplines from physics to philosophy, and between senior and junior members, such as professors, lecturers, research scholars, and graduate and undergraduate students. Such a close and fruitful interaction did not take place always or everywhere, but it could at least be visualized as a realisable objective.

The universities grew in size throughout the twentieth century but this growth was much more dramatic in some countries than in others. In larger universities in India, such as the Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi, their students numbered in hundreds of thousands. It is very difficult for the different parts of such a large organization to remain connected with each other effectively and meaningfully, and to act with a sense of common purpose. When an institution undergoes a large change of scale, its mode of functioning changes and its initial objective becomes displaced.

The change in scale of our universities has come about as a result of pressures of various kinds. The two that I will consider in some detail are the pressure from the growth and expansion of specialized knowledge, and the pressure on the universities to become socially more inclusive. The number of disciplines that a university has to accommodate today is far larger than it was a hundred years ago; and the number of students and, correspondingly of the academic and non-academic staff, has also increased enormously. These are the two issues with which I will deal sequentially, but before that I would like to set down the ideals of the modern university as they came to be established in the course of the nineteenth century.

The nineteenth century witnessed the emergence and growth of the modern university, beginning with the establishment of the University of Berlin in 1810. There were no doubt universities before that time – at Bologna, Paris, Oxford, Cairo and elsewhere – but they were very different from the modern universities that came to be established gradually in the nineteenth century and to flourish in the twentieth. We have only to look back from the beginning of the twentieth century to the beginning of the nineteenth to appreciate the significance of the changes that came about in the course of a hundred years. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Harvard, Yale and Princeton were universities only in name; they were basically colleges for undergraduate education, and very different from the great centres of science and scholarship that they became in the course of the twentieth century. Oxford and Cambridge had gone into a long period of hibernation from which they gradually shook themselves up in the course of the nineteenth century. The universities had sunk to such low levels in France that Napoleon turned his attention away from them to the newly established *grandes écoles* or great schools for producing a new breed of administrators, engineers and teachers to serve the nation.

As it happened, a new beginning in the life of the university was just then being made in Germany. Germany was by no means the most advanced country in Europe economically or culturally, but it had better universities at Jena, Heidelberg, Göttingen and elsewhere than its more advanced western neighbours. The architect of the new university was the philologist and philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt, then minister for education in Prussia. The university he helped to establish in Berlin in 1810 became a model for universities in many parts of the world. It was first named after the Prussian ruler, but later renamed as the Humboldt University of Berlin after its real founder. Its creation helped to revive the universities and provided a new institutional framework for the organization of science and scholarship in many countries.

Not many believed at that time that the universities were worth reviving. 'In France, neither Tocqueville nor Constant thought seriously about the universities, and they had no great expectations that they would contribute much to the effective operation of free institutions. In Scotland, Adam Smith had a rather low opinion of universities and university teachers, although he was a university teacher for a good part of his life. He certainly did not regard universities as the intellectual engines of liberal society. John Stuart Mill did not expect any great help for liberalism or democracy from universities' (Shils, 1997: 252).

Humboldt's ideas for the regeneration of the university met with opposition in his own country. 'He was also writing against a strong current of opinion in Germany which favoured the abolition of universities and their replacement for teaching and training purposes by specialized professional schools – as Napoleon had done in France – and by concentrating research in academies or learned societies' (Ibid.: 235). Those who value the modern university as a centre of advanced study and research should be thankful that Humboldt held his ground and had his way.

The new type of university, first set up in Berlin, is referred to by some as the Humboldtian university. New universities were set up and existing ones reorganized under its influence. The first university of the new type to be set up in the United States was the Johns Hopkins University, established in 1876. Thereafter Stanford University was set up in 1885 and the University of Chicago in 1891. Harvard, Yale, Princeton and other institutions were reorganized under its influence. Its influence reached India later, and that too in a vague and attenuated form.

II

The new type of university retained the aspiration of the old one to accommodate all the principal branches of study within its scope. When the first universities were set up in India in the nineteenth century, that was the implicit understanding although they themselves did not undertake much research or even teaching in their early phase of existence. New branches of science and scholarship began to emerge throughout the nineteenth century, and this tendency became accentuated in the twentieth. In the twenty-first century, it has become increasingly difficult for a university to cover every branch of knowledge and yet retain its coherence and unity as an institution unless the

conditions are exceptionally favourable. As a consequence, either the universities are bursting at the seams, as at Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi, or new universities with a more limited scope and a sharper focus are coming up, as for example, agricultural universities, universities of juridical sciences, and of course, the National University of Educational Planning and Administration.

The new-type university, which followed the model of Humboldt adopted three fundamental principles: (i) the unity of teaching and research, (ii) the freedom to teach and to learn, and (iii) the principle of self-governance. These three principles served to inspire modern universities in many parts of the world, including India. These were the ideals of the university in the 19th and 20th centuries, although the ideals were not fully realized in any university, including the University of Berlin.

Wilhelm von Humboldt set great store by the unity of teaching and research. He was himself an outstanding scholar of the humanities, and his younger brother, Alexander von Humboldt an outstanding naturalist. They both participated directly and actively in exploring new fields of science and scholarship.

Until Humboldt's time, research was done only occasionally and sporadically in universities and colleges. They were engaged principally in the transmission and, at best, the criticism of existing knowledge, rather than the creation of new knowledge. The advance of knowledge had in the past been slow and uneven. Things began to change from the end of the 18th century when knowledge began to advance on many fronts. Humboldt, unlike Napoleon, felt that the university should be in the forefront of this advance. There was nothing inevitable about his move, but it had momentous consequences for the development of science and scholarship.

In a world in which knowledge accumulates slowly and intellectual horizons are constrained by geographical boundaries, the college or university teacher may not be expected to do much more than to master the existing body of knowledge in his field and to transmit a part of it to his students. This is still what we expect from the conscientious teacher in a good secondary school, and probably not much more was expected from teachers in most colleges and universities before the nineteenth century.

In the course of the twentieth century, some of the leading universities, such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford and Chicago came to be known as 'research universities'. Their growth was accompanied by the growth of the 'mass universities'. This distinction is acknowledged in the United States and possibly also in China, but not in India. Edward Shils (1997: 14) has described the mass university 'as a university with more than twenty thousand students' and has observed 'The mass university has brought into the university many young persons whose foremost and perhaps exclusive aim is to obtain a degree and to enter a remunerative occupation' (Ibid. 45). Although Shils was speaking of universities in the United States, his remarks apply with particular force to the situation in India. Shils, it may be pointed out, was a member of the Indian Education Commission of 1964-66, known widely as the Kothari Commission.

Having become established by the end of the nineteenth century, the research universities acquired their own momentum in the United States, and moved in directions

that could hardly have been foreseen by Humboldt in 1810. As the results of research came to be widely disseminated, distinction in research began to attract public attention as against success in teaching. Particularly after World War II, the pressure to be productive in research began to be increasingly felt in the better universities.

The research universities began to compete with each other in terms of quality and quantity of the output of their professors. Rating agencies undertook to rank different universities according to their general standing and according to their standing in particular disciplines. Presidents and deans undertook to attract stars to their universities with offers of generous terms and conditions. The talent search was not confined to universities in the United States but was extended to countries throughout the world, including India. This kind of open and undisguised competition to attract scientists and scholars of national and even international renown, undermined the unity of teaching and research because today a star is a star by virtue of his research and not his teaching.

The freedom to teach and to learn is recognized as an essential feature in the operation of the modern university. Where the university is expected to explore and examine new fields of knowledge instead of merely transmitting the conventional wisdom, the freedom to teach and to learn becomes indispensable. The creation of new knowledge cannot be fruitfully undertaken without the continuous criticism of existing knowledge. The active encouragement of critical enquiry has come to be viewed as integral to the institutions of science and scholarship.

In many countries, the exercise of academic freedom is now taken for granted in the universities. This was not always the case in the past, and it is not the case in all countries even today. The exercise of academic freedom was a relatively new phenomenon in the early part of the nineteenth century. Most of the older universities, such as those at Paris, Oxford and Cambridge, were in some sense handmaidens of the church which often maintained close scrutiny over what was said or written in them. This was true of medieval centres of learning in most parts of the world. The universities took time to free themselves from religious control whereas such freedom could be more easily exercised in the learned societies and associations that began to emerge outside the universities in the wake of the European Enlightenment.

The principle of academic freedom or the freedom of enquiry in science and scholarship gathered strength in the universities throughout the nineteenth century. Once the dam of religious opposition to free enquiry was breached, the universities transformed themselves as both centres of learning and social institutions. By the middle of the twentieth century, the universities in the west had effectively become secular institutions. We have in that respect had the advantage that our first universities at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were secular institutions and free from regulation by religious authorities from their very inception. Religious education was excluded from the university's curriculum: at Calcutta, 'the Senate reiterated the principle that no question should be asked in the examination that required an expression of religious belief on the part of the candidate' (Chattopadhyay, 2007: 21).

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Academic freedom may be compromised even in a secular environment, for the threat to it can come not only from the church but also from the state. In the last century, the freedom to teach and the freedom to learn were severely restricted by the Soviet state. Under Stalin, the universities were not handmaidens of the church, they became handmaidens of the party. Whether in teaching or in research, the universities had to stay within the limits prescribed by the state and its watchdogs in a whole range of disciplines from plant genetics to the philosophy of language.

In democratic countries, such as Britain, France and India, the state does not interfere openly or directly with teaching and research in the universities. But to the extent that it controls the purse strings on which the flow of funds depends, it does influence priorities in teaching and research indirectly and in the long run.

Restraints on the freedom to teach in the classroom or to publish in accordance with one's considered judgement may be created by popular pressure or the anticipation of a public outcry. One cannot today express oneself freely and frankly about the lives and deeds of such iconic figures as Chhatrapati Shivaji, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose or Dr B R Ambedkar. A lecture or publication which seeks to do so may cause an outcry and even lead to a violent protest. Similar consequences may follow if offence is caused, albeit inadvertently, to the sentiments of a religious minority or a backward community. This kind of situation is most likely to prevail in the mass universities which have become ascendant since the middle of the 20th century.

By and large, the universities promoted a spirit of critical enquiry about man and the natural and social world that he inhabited in the course of the nineteenth century, and carried that spirit forward into the twentieth century and beyond. They also provided increasing room for political debate and discussion. With the great expansion of universities after World War II, and, in particular, with the emergence of the mass universities, they became leading centres of political dissent. Increasingly, they came to enjoy a kind of freedom that Opposition parties could not always enjoy. While critical enquiry in science and scholarship and political dissent may be related to each other, they are not one and the same thing. Pervasive political dissent, unrelated or remotely related to the ends of science and scholarship, has increasingly led to severe dislocation in the regularity and routine of academic work. Where the institutions of science and scholarship are weak, this kind of dislocation becomes endemic.

The freedom to express dissenting views has led students in the larger metropolitan universities, sometimes with the encouragement of their teachers, to espouse radical political causes. Strikes, rallies and demonstrations are regularly organized, and an antinomian and emancipationist atmosphere is created. It may well be the case that only a small and determined minority of persons, among both students and teachers, seriously espouse these causes, but they are allowed to prevail because of the indifference and apathy of the majority who simply stay away. This is a far cry from the nineteenth century ideal of the university as a community of scholars and scientists who would be free to study and teach and publish the fruits of their research without fear or favour.

The university was designed to be a community of scholars and scientists, responsible for the regulation of their own affairs. The principle of self-governance goes back to the tradition of the medieval corporation in Europe whose right to regulate its own affairs was generally confirmed by the grant of charters. In medieval Europe, the universities were among the early examples of corporations in the legal sense of the term, and it is commonly believed that Harvard University was the first corporation in that sense in the United States. Self-governance was accompanied in the case of the universities by a degree of seclusion from the outside world.

In India, the first modern universities were established not so much by communities of scholars and scientists as by the government of the day. It is no accident that the first three universities were set up in the three presidency capitals of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras by the colonial government just before the country formally came under the British crown. Just as Oxford and Cambridge still carry the vestiges of their monastic past, our universities bear many of the marks of their origin in colonial rule.

The colonial civil servants who took responsibility for the establishment of these universities, included many who had had experience of the best universities in England. Sir Henry Maine, who was one of the early vice-chancellors of the University of Calcutta, had been a professor at Cambridge. No doubt the colonial rulers of India meant well by the universities they were setting up, but it is not clear to what extent they believed that self-government was a realizable objective in India. Rightly or wrongly, they never tired of pointing out the absence of such a tradition in the country that they had brought under their rule.

Such self-governance as the universities were allowed, was exercised under the watchful eyes of the government. The early vice-chancellors of the Indian universities were British, although they were replaced by Indian vice-chancellors before very long. The heads of Indian universities acquired the habit of accommodating to the existing powers in the early decades of their existence, a felicitous aptitude that became strengthened rather than weakened after the transfer of power. It was only the exceptional vice-chancellors, in Sir Ashutosh Mukherji in the University of Calcutta before independence, and Dr M S Gore at the University of Bombay after that, who stood their ground against the government.

In recent decades, the great expansion in the size of the university and in its scale of operation has made academic self-governance increasingly difficult. The administrative component of many universities has become as important as their academic component, and in some respects more important. In the larger universities, the administrative staff number in their thousands. They tend to spend more time in the university and to know more about its daily operation than the professors. The academic and the administrative staff have both become unionized, and when the unions act in concert, they might count for more than the constituted authorities of the universities, such as the academic council, the board of research studies, and the faculty.

The bureaucratization of the universities is not an altogether new phenomenon. Writing nearly a hundred years ago, Max Weber (1948: 131) had noted its beginning in

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the German universities at that time the objects of administration among academics in many parts of the world. Closer to our times, Edward Shils (1997: 34) noted, 'As a result the administrative staff proliferate and academics find themselves surrounded on all sides by administrators, who want forms filled out, who wish to have their permission sought to do things for which older academics do not recall having had to seek permission. Rules, forms and "channels" become more prominent; informal understandings and conventions become less prominent in the administration of universities'. Shils was writing with the American university mainly in mind; but this problem is of course much more acute in India.

The authorities of the universities have now not only larger numbers of students and teachers to take care of, they have to secure and manage increasingly larger budgets. They have to supplement the traditional administrative skills with those of effective and successful fund management. It is said that the wealthier private universities in the United States are becoming organized like business firms. Enthusiasts for private universities in India are perhaps not all aware of the problems that are now being faced by some of the most renowned universities in the United States, such as Chicago, Princeton and Stanford (Shapiro, 1992).

III

The traditional concept of the university was that it would provide a home within the confines of a single institution for the cultivation of all significant branches of knowledge. It was this concept that Humboldt sought to carry forward at the most advanced levels of teaching and research when he established the University of Berlin in 1810. The institutions that Napoleon was promoting in France at about the same time were different in both principle and practice from the university in its medieval or its reconstituted form. The *grandes écoles* emerged as great institutions, but they did not seek to accommodate every significant branch of knowledge in any one single institution.

In an important work on the American university, Talcott Parsons and Gerald Platt gave expression to a view of the university that was still close to the model of Humboldt and had been carried over from Berlin to Harvard in the course of the nineteenth century. They wrote, 'Concern with knowledge and its advancement is analytically independent of its practical uses' (Parsons and Platt, 1973: 33), emphasizing that the main concern of the university was with the former and not the latter. Napoleon, on the other hand, had the practical uses of knowledge very much in mind when he decided to put his weight behind the *grandes écoles*.

Parsons and Platt believed that the university as an institution for the advancement of knowledge has a distinctive intellectual core. That core, according to them, consisted of the arts and sciences, meaning academic disciplines, such as physics, chemistry, mathematics, languages, history and sociology. They knew of course that subjects, such as law, medicine and engineering, had also been accommodated by the American university. These they believed to belonged its periphery rather than its core. The *école polytechnique*, perhaps the most renowned among the *grandes écoles*, was, on the other

hand, set up with the specific objective of training engineers for service in the civil and military branches of the government. With the advantage of hindsight, we may view it as a great precursor of our IITs.

If the university is to function as an intellectual community, or a community of scientists and scholars, is it possible for it in the twenty-first century to accommodate all branches of learning, theoretical and practical, and to deal with them even-handedly and meaningfully? The universities of the twenty-first century are very different places from what the University of Berlin was in the 1820s or even what Harvard University was in the 1920s when Parsons began his career there.

Even though Harvard maintains its pre-eminent position as a research university, it has changed a great deal. With close to 20,000 students, it is no longer either very small or very cohesive. Its various constituent units, such as the faculty of arts and sciences, the faculty of medicine, the law school, the business school and the school of public health, largely operate separately although they all bear the Harvard label. Some of them have huge budgets whose management and control are exercised to a large extent independently of each other. Whatever may have been the past significance of the faculty of arts and sciences, it no longer overshadows all the other components of the university.

At the symposium on 'Universities of the Twenty-first Century' held at Chicago in 1991, Dean Rosovsky of Harvard lamented the decline of academic citizenship in his time. 'When it concerns our more important obligations – academic citizenship – neither rule nor custom is any longer compelling' (Rosovsky, 1992: 187). In the mass universities that are growing rapidly today, not only are the obligations of academic citizenship treated lightly, but to many incoming members the very idea of it might appear strange and unfamiliar.

The idea of the university as a community of scientists and scholars of whom many, if not most, feel bound by the obligations of academic citizenship, has become remote from the reality, certainly in India but not in India alone. Yet the idea of the university as a community continues to have a hold on the minds of many academics, if only as a form of nostalgia. This nostalgia is sustained in part by an oral tradition regarding the exciting and unconstrained intellectual interchanges among scholars and scientists in the senior common rooms of Oxford and Cambridge which a few of our own more privileged academics had witnessed or experienced in the past. It is doubtful that that kind of intellectual life can be recreated in the twenty-first century even in Oxford and Cambridge, leave alone the universities in India.

The compulsion on the universities to accommodate new branches of study has increased enormously in the last few decades. The expansion of knowledge has been accompanied by demarcation between and within academic disciplines. The universities themselves played no small part in the expansion and the demarcation. The universities have today found space for many new subjects that have had hardly any existence in Humboldt's time or even a hundred years later. The proliferation of disciplines now

threatens the viability of the university as a single institution for advanced study and research in all subjects.

'The growth of knowledge', it has been said, 'is a disorderly movement' (Shils, 1975: 125; see also Parsons and Platt, 1973: vi-vii). New ideas come up and fade away; only a few of mature. The ones that fructify do not remain active for long. It is in the long-term interest of society to encourage new ideas, new methods of enquiry and new areas of investigation to grow even when they appear unpromising to begin with. But is it necessary or desirable to turn every new field of study into an academic discipline in order to find a place for it in the university? Today, in India, but not only in India, universities seem to be in competition with each other to attract and accommodate every new field of study. It is now becoming a common practice in our universities to admit and accommodate what are called 'self-financing courses' in order to augment their revenues. Promoters of these self-financing courses have often shown great ingenuity in devising new subjects for inclusion in the university curriculum.

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, universities were not very eager to accommodate new or emerging branches of study. Disciplines, such as anthropology, demography, psychology, sociology and statistics first grew outside the universities before they found places within them. However, universities took their own time to allow new disciplines in. In the nineteenth century, the learned societies and associations took a more active part in the growth of new fields of enquiry.

All through the nineteenth century the balance among disciplines underwent change in the universities. This change was in part the outcome of the growth of secular science and scholarship. The older European universities, at Paris, Oxford and Cambridge, gave pride of place to theology, philosophy, and classical languages and literature. Those subjects are still taught, but even in the older universities they have now lost their pride of place. Theology is not taught in many of the newer universities which might instead provide for teaching and research in comparative religion, or the history or sociology of religion.

In the English-speaking universities, the social sciences grew out of moral philosophy, and the natural sciences out of natural philosophy. There was some continuity but there was also a great deal of change. Issues relating to society, economy and polity were no doubt discussed and debated in the older universities, but they became subjects of systematic enquiry only in the nineteenth century. Systematic empirical investigations into social life were first undertaken outside the universities, by such persons as Frédéric Le Play in France and Charles Booth in England. It was only in the twentieth century that such studies became incorporated into programmes of teaching and research in the universities. Survey research has now become an integral part of the social sciences. Today it is undertaken both within and outside the universities, and it is not easy to argue that the universities enjoy any unique advantage in conducting such studies.

The transformation of 'natural philosophy' into the natural sciences began a little earlier, but here again many of the initial steps, particularly in England and France, were

taken outside the universities. In the eighteenth century, both Henry Cavendish in England and Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier in France conducted their pioneering studies outside the universities. This was largely true even of Charles Darwin in the nineteenth century.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the universities had reclaimed the major branches of science and scholarship. That century, and particularly its first half, witnessed the highest ascendancy of the universities as centres of science and scholarship. Between the two World Wars for someone with a vocation for science and scholarship almost anywhere in the world, a university would be the place of first choice. It provided a modest but secure livelihood, a relatively tranquil atmosphere for study and reflection, well-endowed libraries and laboratories, the companionship of colleagues and students, and the occasional excitement of working at or even beyond the frontiers of existing knowledge. There were not many such places outside the universities then.

As I have indicated, a new balance of disciplines began to take shape in the universities from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards. It became gradually established in Europe and America, and then extended its influence over the new universities that were coming into being all over the world. It appeared in many variations, but by the middle of the twentieth century, the new balance, with the arts and sciences at the core and the professional subjects at the periphery, had acquired certain stability. There is no reason to expect that this balance will remain unchanged for the rest of time. University institutions have grown and diversified to such an extent throughout the world since the middle of the twentieth century that it may be unrealistic to expect that any single model – whether the 'Oxbridge' or the 'Harvard' model – will be the predominant model everywhere.

New universities are coming up at a rapid rate in countries with very diverse intellectual traditions and socio-political orientations. The Chinese have built a very large number of new universities in the last two or three decades with objectives that are different from those with which universities were established in the nineteenth century or even in the first half of the twentieth centre. It is unlikely that their intellectual foundations will be the same as those of the earlier universities.

The emphasis in many countries is on engineering and management, and universities are conceived in a broad way rather than on the arts and sciences in the traditional sense. China, which had only a few universities until 1976, is now producing more PhDs in engineering than the United States (Li, Nalley, Zhang and Zhao, 2008). Perhaps the new-type university, that will acquire ascendancy, will have science, technology and management at its core and the humanities and social sciences at the periphery. Such a model will have a natural appeal for those who believe that the main purpose of tertiary education is to produce the trained manpower needed for rapid economic growth.

IV

Today the creation and expansion of universities is driven not only by pressures to accommodate new subjects, or new branches or variants of existing subjects. It is driven

also by the pressure on the universities to become socially more inclusive by accommodating students as well as teachers from all classes and communities, and women as well as men.

When the universities were given a new lease of life, starting with the creation of the University of Berlin, it was not the intention of the reformers and innovators to make university education available to all members of society. Even school education was far from being within everyone's reach. The nineteenth century university was an 'aristocratic' rather than a 'popular' institution, if not always in principle, at least generally in practice. Here Napoleon was clearly ahead of Humboldt. It was the *grandes écoles* that instituted the practice of recruiting students through open national competition or the *concours général*. However, those institutions were, and have remained elitist in their own way. They replaced an aristocracy of birth by a meritocracy of talent; and of course they remained closed to women throughout the nineteenth century.

All through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, restrictions on entry into universities on social grounds, i.e. on grounds of religion, race, caste or gender had come to be eased. By the middle of the twentieth century such restrictions had lost much of their force in most countries. This of course does not mean that all castes and communities, or that even both women and men are to be found in all universities in proportion to their strength in the population. Even though women have not achieved complete parity with men, they have in most countries fared better than disadvantaged castes and communities. The reasons for this difference are fascinating, but I am unable to enter into a discussion of those reasons on the present occasion.

In the nineteenth century, university education was for only a few and not the majority or even a numerically significant minority of the population. So long as the universities were few in number and small in size, only a few members of society could realistically nurture expectations of entering a university even where no formal restrictions on their entry existed. Education in a university was viewed as a privilege rather than a right. Today, it is increasingly regarded as a right, at least by many of those who meet the minimum requirements of eligibility for admission, and the requirements themselves tend to be relaxed under political pressure.

Social and economic changes in the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century led to changes in the expectations of people. More and more of them became aware of the entitlements of citizenship. As elementary education became universal and secondary education more extensive and widespread, increasing numbers of persons turned their thoughts to tertiary education. For members of the growing middle class, a college or university degree appeared indispensable both for its practical utility and its symbolic value. The demand for a university education, or at least a university degree, grew with the growth of the middle class.

The conclusion of World War II and the termination of colonial rule dramatically altered the prospects for tertiary education throughout the world. The proximate causes for the expansion of tertiary education differed from one country to another, but the outcome was similar everywhere. The universities opened their doors, if not to everyone,

then to increasing numbers of persons. Just as the middle of the nineteenth century ushered in the secularization of the universities, so the middle of the twentieth century saw their democratization.

In the United States, the end of World War II created unprecedented opportunities for returning soldiers to enter a university and receive a university degree. The Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, popularly known as the G I Bill of Rights was designed to serve more than one objective. It was designed as a token of gratitude to those who had risked death and endured hardship in the service of the nation. It was designed also to meet the need for qualified manpower, particularly graduates in the sciences in the post-war economy. Until its enactment, university funding in the United States had come mainly from private sources or from the states, but after that, the federal government became increasingly involved in university funding, and expansion of the tertiary sector in education became more consciously linked with manpower planning.

The colonial government, which set up the first universities in modern India, did so with limited aims and objectives. It did not expect the universities to bring about either a revolution in learning or a social revolution. The funding it provided was on a modest scale, that had to be supplemented by private philanthropy. The universities did contribute to the making of a new middle class with new attitudes and aspirations, but their influence did not spread very far or go very deep.

This began to change with the coming of independence. The makers of modern India had benefited from university education, whether in India or abroad, and wanted its benefits to be made widely available. Almost immediately after being set up, the first government of independent India constituted a University Education Commission under Dr S Radhakrishnan who had served as a professor at both Calcutta and Oxford. The attitude of government of independent India towards the universities was different from that of the colonial government. It expected more from the universities and was prepared to fund them more generously. Soon a strong bond became established between a well-disposed and munificent government and those in the universities who were hungry for their expansion. They acquired the habit of turning to the government for meeting their every need. The government could encourage the hunger for expansion that has grown in the universities, but it has satisfied that hunger only to some extent and on its own terms. Governments rarely view the pursuit of science and scholarship as an end in itself, but mainly as a means to other ends.

In independent India, the programme for building universities became consciously aligned with the needs of development and democracy. The objectives of the university had changed between Humboldt's time and the middle of the twentieth century; or rather, the university had acquired new objectives without fully renouncing the old ones. This was inevitable in view of the fact that different universities in different parts of the world had to adapt themselves to different kinds of social and political environment.

In the newly-independent countries, determined to catch up economically and educationally with the advanced countries, the idea of the university as an 'ivory tower', detached from the practical concerns of the outside world, did not invite much appeal.

Prominent scientists and scholars came forward to show what the universities could do to eliminate poverty, reduce inequality and establish a scientific temper. Far from wanting to insulate the universities from the outside world, they wanted them to reach out to it and make their contribution to economic development and social change.

Today in India, the universities are expected to contribute directly to the pursuit and promotion of equality. This is perhaps natural in a country which at the time of independence had inherited a remarkably hierarchical social system. The relationship between a country's system of higher education and its system of inequality is a complex one which is often misunderstood and misrepresented. The universities have contributed something to individual mobility and can contribute more. But they have also contributed to the reproduction of inequality, and this often appears to offset their contribution to individual mobility.

More than sixty years after independence, India is still not an inclusive society in any meaningful sense. Hundreds of millions of persons not only have no access to a university, they do not even know what it means to have a university education. The compulsions on the universities to become socially more inclusive and to contribute, directly and indirectly, to the making of an inclusive society, have grown stronger. There are no short cuts to that end, but the temptation to turn to universities for providing such short cuts have increased steadily. Where their adoption threatens the academic integrity of the university, vice-chancellors, deans and professors look the other way.

In a society where deep and pervasive inequalities continue to exist, the universities find it far more difficult to admit and appoint persons from all occupational strata – the offspring of agricultural labourers and stone breakers as well as of judges and businessmen – than to provide representation to all castes and communities in proportion to their strength in the population. Managing quotas based on caste and community has become a major preoccupation of the universities today. In 2006-7, the central universities were required to increase the numbers of their students and teachers suddenly and dramatically in order to make up for shortfalls in the quotas set for them.

In order to meet their quotas, the universities have not only had to increase the number of students and teachers, they have also had to relax their standards for admissions and appointments. The relaxation of academic standards in response to social and political pressures has become a standard practice in the universities since independence and increasingly so in the last couple of decades. It is an open secret which the authorities of the universities do not like to be aired in public. To even hint at the possibility that there might be some contradiction between the demands of social inclusion and the advancement of learning, would be to invite the charge of 'elitism' which in India no self-regarding academic would like to bring upon himself.

As the universities have grown in size, the larger ones among them have become more and more disorganized and difficult to manage; and the smaller ones follow the examples set by the larger. For those at the helm of affairs, the problems of administration and management take precedence over academic problems. The regularity and routine of academic life is frequently interrupted; admissions cannot be completed on

time; and vacant posts remain unfilled for months and even years. The authorities of the university are frequently locked in combat with unions of students, teachers and non-academic staff.

The idea of a research university never really acquired roots in the Indian soil. Today, very few persons in any Indian university are seriously engaged in the creation of new knowledge. Even the transmission of existing knowledge is seriously hampered by the poor quality of libraries and laboratories, and the indifference and apathy of all around. Absenteeism among teachers as well as students has become an acknowledged and established feature of many universities in the country. The unions are often so powerful that the authorities of the university have no choice but to condone absenteeism and other forms of dereliction.

At the same time, the number of universities as well as of university students and teachers is increasing. All the indications are that this increase will continue into the foreseeable future. Planners and policy makers are worried that we are not producing enough graduates or enough PhDs, and that other countries are ahead of us. The twenty-first century university in India will have to meet many different demands. The demands of science and scholarship or of advanced study and research are by no means the only ones with which they have to contend. They have to meet the demand to provide more young men and women with university degrees and diplomas. University graduates are still unevenly distributed among the various castes and communities in Indian society. This disparity is considered unfair and unjust, and the universities are, therefore, expected to not only produce more graduates but also to ensure that those graduates are more evenly distributed in society.

The declining minority of such university teachers who are seriously committed to teaching and research is affected by the preoccupation, not to say obsession, with examination and certification in our universities. But the preoccupation is not new. The first universities in modern India were set up in the presidency capitals of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras not so much to undertake research, or even teaching, as to conduct examinations and confer degrees. Writing on the occasion of the sesquicentennial of the University of Calcutta, Basudeb Chattopadhyay (2007:22) observed, 'Thus the University was set up in 1857 primarily with the task of holding examinations and conferring degrees on successful candidates', and the same observation may have been made about the two other universities set up in that year. The teaching was done mainly in the colleges, and some research was undertaken by the learned societies and associations, such as the Asiatic Society and the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science. The first, and so far only, Indian Nobel Laureate in science, Sir C V Raman, entered the services of the University of Calcutta after establishing his credentials as a scientist through his research in the Association for the Cultivation of Science (Venkataraman, 1994: 29-42).

One of the first things that had to be determined for the new universities in their early years was their jurisdiction. The territorial jurisdictions of the first three universities were wide to begin with, but they became progressively reduced with the opening of new

universities whose jurisdictions were carved out from those of the existing ones. These jurisdictions were essentially jurisdictions for conducting examinations and conferring degrees on students who were taught in various colleges in a widely dispersed geographical area.

Beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century and roughly up to the period of World War I, the Indian universities were too small and their jurisdictions too scattered for them to conduct advanced study and research in a purposeful way. The beginnings in the direction of serious study and research were made in a few universities, such as Calcutta, Allahabad and Bombay during the period in between the two world wars. But the promise that many saw in those universities began to fade away soon after independence when one after another they became converted into mass universities. Before they could establish a proper programme that would embody the unity of teaching and research, they had to contend with a new kind of institution dedicated to research rather than teaching, such as the laboratories under the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and the institutes and centres under the Indian Council of Social Science Research.

With the twenty-first century, we have entered the era of the mass university. But the nostalgia for a different kind of university in which teaching and research are combined at the most advanced level in all significant branches of knowledge, survives in the minds of many who have been exposed to the experience of universities in Europe and America or to legends associated with the University of Calcutta in the 1920s and '30s or the University of Delhi in the 1950s and '60s. We must see that this nostalgia does not become an impediment to the creation of more purposeful though perhaps less ambitious institutions of teaching and research in the twenty-first century.

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Enrolment and Dropouts of Muslims in West Bengal
Evidence from NSS 61st Round[#]

Zakir Husain[*]

Abstract

The issue of disparities in educational attainments between different socio-religious communities is a major problem in India. Based on unit level NSS data (61st Round, 2004) this paper undertakes a comparative analysis of the educational status of minorities, particularly Muslim, in the field of primary education in West Bengal. Although the result does not support the popular belief that Muslims do not value education, they are found to lag behind other communities in both rural and urban areas in terms of enrolment and dropouts. Econometric analysis shows that such differences remain even after controlling for household characteristics. We also find that while Muslim girls have marginally lower enrolment rates, the issue of gender discrimination is more complex than commonly believed.

Introduction

The positive effects of education on economic growth have been well documented by the Human Capital School (Schultz, 1961; Weisbrod, 1962). But it is also important to acknowledge the important microeconomic consequences of lower levels of education (what is referred to as "basic education") and its implications for the broader process of development.[1] By improving the functional ability and endowments of individuals, basic education leads to an increase in their entitlements and capabilities, expands their choice set and allows them greater freedom. This has important consequences for social welfare and development (Sen, 1985; Dreze and Sen, 2002).

While schemes like *Mid Day Meal Programme* and *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)* has led to substantial progress in enrolment and retention, the issue of unequal educational attainments across the population remains a major problem. Researchers and policy

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* Institute of Economic Growth, University of Delhi, Delhi-110007.
Email: dzhusain@gmail.com.

1 This paper focuses on primary education – constituting of the first five years of education of a child.

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makers have typically identified girls and children belonging to Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Castes (OBCs) as forming educationally deprived sections of the community, ignoring the poor educational status of Muslims.[2]

A major reason for this neglect is the perceived reason for the poor educational attainment of Muslims. It is commonly argued that Muslims are not interested in education (Hunter, 1869; Sharma, 1978), or if they are at all interested in educating their children, it is boys who are educated (Jehangir, 1991; Ruhela, 1991). Moreover, Muslims are supposed to prefer religious education provided through Madrasahs (Ansari, 1989, Bandopadhyay, 2002; Jehangir, 1991; Ruhela, 1991; Salamatullah, 1994). Since the barriers to educational progress are perceived to be religious and socio-cultural, thereby calling for internal reforms, the nature of vote banks politics in India ruled out the possibility of any targeted intervention by the state towards improving the educational status of Muslims.

This 'social value theory' of educational backwardness has been questioned in recent years (Husain, 2005; Alam & Raju, 2007). Researchers have argued that Muslims do recognize the importance of education, but their 'effective demand' is restricted by their low income levels, while discrimination in the labour market lowers perceived benefits from education. The publication of the "Sachar Committee" Report is an important landmark in this literature (PMHLC, 2006). The Report observed that though enrolment rate of Muslims had increased in recent times, it still remained below that of other communities. Further, dropout rates were high among Muslim students, resulting in low mean years of schooling relative to that of other communities. Rejecting the value theory of educational backwardness, the Report identified economic conditions of Muslims and pessimism about their prospects in the labour market as major demand side constraints. The Report also identified the failure of the state to provide adequate educational infrastructure in Muslim dominated areas as a supply side constraint to improving educational status of Muslims.

In this paper we seek to analyze the educational status of Muslims in the state of West Bengal, India, and identify the socio-economic determinants of their poor educational status. The analysis is based on the following hypotheses:

1. There is a significant disparity in educational attainments between Muslims and other communities.
2. Within the Muslim community, girls constitute a particularly vulnerable section.
3. Educational backwardness is explained not only by household and personal characteristics (like household size, per capita income, gender and education level of head of family, gender of the child, his/her age), but also by the socio-religious identity of the child.

[2] There are of course important exceptions: Khaledi (1995), Mondol (1997), Hasan & Menon (2004), Shariff and Razzack (2006).

Database and Methodology

This paper is based on unit level data from the National Sample Survey (NSS) 61st Round (2004-05). This database has information on the religion and caste of the respondents. These two variables are combined to create socio-religious communities for analytical purposes. The socio-religious communities are upper caste Hindus, Hindu Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Castes, Muslims and others (comprising of other minorities and a residual group who did not state their religion). These categories are reclassified into five socio-religious communities, given in Table 1.[3]

TABLE 1
Socio-Religious Communities in Population in West Bengal – 2004 (%)

Analytical Categories used	*Socio-Religious Communities*	*Rural*	*Urban*
Hindu-Upper Caste (H-UC)	Hindu – Upper Caste	27.35	12.64
Hindu-Backward Castes (H-BC)	Hindu – Scheduled Castes	27.17	19.32
	Hindu – Scheduled Tribes	6.37	1.21
	Hindu – Other Backward Castes	6.08	5.95
	Hindu – caste not stated	0.02	0.06
Muslims	Muslims	31.14	14.00
Others	Other Minorities	0.99	1.01
	Religion not stated	0.89	0.30
Total Population		100% (7.04 crores)	100% (2.20 crores)

The state-level is decomposed by gender and place of residence to get four analytical categories – Urban Males, Urban Females, Rural Males and Rural Females. Our analysis is undertaken for each of these categories as the dynamics of educational decisions may vary between them. For instance, a major reason for not enrolling boys, or withdrawing them from school, is the need to supplement family income. In the case of the girl child, on the other hand, the need to assist in household chores may be an important motivation underlying such decisions.

[3] The small proportion of Other Minorities (about 1% in both rural and urban areas in West Bengal) and Others (which is even lower, see Table 1) means that any meaningful analysis of these categories separately will not be worthwhile. We have, therefore, clubbed them together as 'Others'. Similarly, Hindu Scheduled Castes, Tribes, and Other Backward Castes have been clubbed together to form a category called 'Hindu Backward Castes' (H-BC). Hindu respondents, who have not stated their caste, are also included within H-BC. The logic is that upper caste members are not likely to be averse to stating their caste, while backward castes may be reluctant to do so.

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The focus of this study is on West Bengal since: [a] The size of the minority population in West Bengal is higher than in other states except Madhya Pradesh; [b] The percentage of minorities is higher than in any other major state. Only some small states like Assam, Jammu & Kashmir, North-Eastern states and some Union Territories have a higher proportion of minorities; [c] Ideologically, the Left Front government is committed to secular principles and its electoral manifesto emphasizes upliftment of marginalized sections of the population; [d] Its political stability has given the government the opportunity to implement its objectives of social justice and progress through long-term plans.

We use two sets of methodologies – descriptive analysis and econometric. Firstly, the NSSO data is used to estimate the following:

a) Children aged 6-15 years who have never attended school, as a proportion of children in the age category; and,
b) Children aged 6-15 years who had enrolled but have dropped out, as a proportion of all enrolled children in the age category.

We then attempt to identify the reasons for non-enrolment and dropout, based on reasons stated by their family members.

Secondly, we attempt to identify the factors influencing enrolment, completion of primary education and choice of schools based on econometric methods. Now, the dependent variables – whether a child is enrolled or not, whether a child has dropped out or not, and whether the child has completed primary level or not – are binary variables, with values 0 and 1. In this situation, logit or probit models are commonly used, estimated using the Maximum Likelihood Method. These models differ with respect to specification of the error term – if the error term follows a logistic distribution *logit* model is used, while *probit* model is used if the error term follows a normal distribution. Since the cumulative normal and logistic distributions are very close to each other except at the tails, we are not likely to get very different results for the logit and probit models. So we have used probit models to analyse determinants of non-enrolment and dropouts.

Main Findings

Status of Never Enrolled Children

NSSO provides data on children who have never attended (and presumably never enrolled) in any school. It can be seen that more than a tenth of Muslim children aged 6-15 years have never enrolled (Table 2). In urban areas, Muslim children have the highest proportion of never attended children; in rural areas, they do come second after Others, but the sample size of Others is so small (17) that it is not advisable to consider this class.[4] The difference in non-enrolment rates in urban and rural areas is not marked for

[4] The sample size of the socio-religious community 'Others', is so small that any meaningful analysis is ruled out. We have retained this column in all Tables to show that columns/rows add up, but the corresponding figures are not interpreted. A similar problem occurs for H-UC children in some cases, notably in urban areas. However, the sample size of Muslim children is large enough to undertake a meaningful analysis.

Muslims and H-UCs; non-enrolment rates among H-BCs is however much higher in rural areas than in urban areas.

Contrary to the common understanding about gender differences within the Muslim community with regard to educational decisions (Jehangir, 1991; Ruhela, 1998; Hasan & Menon, 2004), Table 2 reveals marginal variations in non-enrolment rates between Muslim boys and girls in both areas.

TABLE 2

Proportion of Children aged 6-15 Years who have Never Enrolled in Educational Institutions (%)

Socio Religious Communities	***Urban***			***Rural***		
	Total	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*
Muslim	11.17	10.52	11.82	12.49	11.87	13.07
H-UC	4.90	6.62	3.37	3.70	4.21	3.16
H-BC	4.76	3.16	6.48	9.90	7.02	13.00
Others	0.00	0.00	0.00	28.26	18.32	39.03
Total	**6.13**	**6.33**	**5.94**	**9.91**	**8.42**	**11.43**

NSSO also provided reasons for non-enrolment. Unfortunately, the categorization is somewhat limited. As a result the residual category of reasons for never-enrolment (Others in the NSSO questionnaire) dominates in many cases (Tables 3-5).

TABLE 3

Reasons for Non-Enrolment of Children Aged 6-15 Years

Sector	***Socio-Religious Communities***	***School Too Far***	***Supplement HH Income***	***Education not Considered Necessary***	***To Attend Domestic Chores***	***Others***
Urban	Muslim (58)	0	17.48	41.30	1.39	39.83
	H-UC (47)	0	11.16	24.59	2.11	62.13
	H-BC (55)	1.39	3.85	41.21	8.96	44.60
	Others (NA)	0	0	0	0	0
	Total (160)	0.34	12.02	34.72	3.33	49.63
Rural	Muslim (273)	1.19	9.25	20.05	6.93	62.58
	H-UC (53)	7.54	21.31	5.59	4.68	60.88
	H-BC (171)	1.31	9.00	19.20	8.64	61.85
	Others (17)	12.14	12.53	30.22	12.53	32.57
	Total (514)	2.27	10.26	19.08	7.69	60.71

Note: Figures in parantheses represent the sample size for respective category. These are estimated without using multipliers.

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Among the other reasons, particularly in urban areas, the perception that education is not important is high among Muslims and BCs. Before taking this as supporting the traditional value theory, we should note that education might not be considered important because of many reasons. For instance, pessimism about the prospect of the child in the labour market (Husain, 2005, PMHLC, 2006), the presence of relatively educated but unemployed youths in the neighbourhood (Ramachandra, 2003) and the poor quality of schools (Delap, 1998, PROBE, 1999) may also lead to the belief that the education that the child is getting will be of little use to him/her. Micro studies show that these reasons may significantly contribute to a feeling that education is not important.

Further, we should note that only about 11-12 percent of Muslim boys and girls in West Bengal are not enrolled. So, even if the traditional value theory is valid – as may be the case for urban girls – it is certainly not a widespread phenomenon within the Muslim community. This supports Hasan & Menon's finding that parental opposition is not an important season in explaining educational backwardness, except in Northern India (Hasan & Menon, 2004).

TABLE 4

Reasons for Non-Enrolment of Urban Children Aged 6-15 Years

Sectors	*Socio Religious Communities*	*School Too Far*	*Supplement HH Income*	*Education not Considered Necessary*	*To Attend Domestic Chores*	*Others*
Male	Muslim (31)	0	37.41	19.97	0	42.62
	H-UC (24)	0	6.49	32.73	0	60.79
	H-BC (25)	0	11.17	35.15	4.05	49.64
	Others (NA)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Total (80)	0	18.27	28.51	0.6	52.62
Female	Muslim (27)	0	0	60.00	2.62	37.38
	H-UC (23)	0	19.34	10.35	5.82	64.49
	H-BC (30)	2.13	0	44.39	11.54	41.95
	Others (NA)	0	0	0	0	0
	Total (80)	0.62	5.6	41.1	6.13	46.55

Note: Figures in parantheses represent the sample size for respective categories. These are estimated without using multipliers.

Disaggregating the rural and urban sample by gender allows us to study variations in motivation for non-enrolment across gender (Table 4). In comparison to 29 percent for urban boys, only 20 percent of Muslim boys are not enrolled as parents perceive that education is not important. In contrast, the need to supplement household family income is a more important reason – about a third of non enrolled Muslim boys cite this as the cause for non-enrolment. This would indicate that poverty is a major reason for non-

enrolment.[5] Among Muslim girls, however, the perception that education is not important is the major reason for non-enrolment.

Surprisingly, the perception that education is not important does not play a major role in non-enrolment in rural areas (Table 5). This is true for both sexes. On the other hand, opportunity cost of child labour seems to be more important in rural areas, although the dynamics varies across gender. In the case of boys, the need to supplement family income is important, while in the case of girls, the need to attend domestic chores is a major reason for non-enrolment.

TABLE 5

Reasons for Non-Enrolment of Rural Children Aged 6-15 Years

Sectors	*Socio-Religious Communities*	*School Too Far*	*Supplement HH Income*	*Education not Considered Necessary*	*To Attend Domestic Chores*	*Others*
	Muslim (130)	0.29	38.9	17.03	9.3	34.48
	H-UC (27)	0.00	43.76	10.59	3.00	42.65
Male	H-BC (64)	0.00	47.56	14.16	1.51	36.77
	Others (6)	0.00	52.90	0.00	0.00	47.10
	Total (227)	0.14	43.07	14.81	5.34	36.64
	Muslim (143)	0.00	15.31	21.57	24.54	38.58
	H-UC (26)	0.00	10.07	12.81	29.07	48.05
Female	H-BC (107)	0.00	8.54	16.68	38.48	36.29
	Others (11)	0.00	34.07	31.85	34.07	0.00
	Total (287)	0.00	11.85	17.87	31.74	38.54

Note: Figures in parantheses represent the sample size for respective categories. These are estimated without using multipliers.

Tables 4-5 provide support to the proposition that opportunity costs of education play an important role in reducing enrolment. This is in line with earlier studies (NSSO, 1997). However, it is necessary to delve deeper into this issue. An important question in this context is what type of work (household chores or productive activities) can be performed by children aged 6-8 years? For instance, in rural areas, children in this age group are more likely to *assist* their parents by carrying food, or foraging for common pool resources, etc. Similarly, children in urban areas either assist in household based productive activities or in household tasks on a part time basis, after school years or on holidays. In neither case the assistance is likely to be of a nature that will *prevent* the child from being enrolled; rather, they may subsequently lead to withdrawal of the child from school.

[5] The monthly per capita income of never enrolled Muslim children is Rs.355, compared to Rs. 492 for Muslim children who have been enrolled. It was also observed that per capita income of never enrolled children for all SRCs was substantially less than per capita income of children who had been enrolled.

TABLE 6
Reasons for Non-Enrolment of Children Aged 6-9 Years

Sectors	***School Too Far***	***Supplement HH Income***	***Education not Considered Necessary***	***To Attend Domestic Chores***	***Others***
Rural Male (84)	-	2.4	-	7.1	90.5
Rural Female (117)	0.9	-	19.7	1.7	77.8
Urban Male (84)	-	3.1	-	-	71.9
Urban Female (27)	-	-	29.6	7.4	62.3

Note: Figures in parantheses represent the sample size for respective categories. These are estimated without using multipliers.

Accordingly, we have re-estimated the reasons for non-enrolment, restricting our sample to children aged below 10 years. In rural areas (Table 6) the main reason for non-enrolment appears to be a lack of belief in the value of education, though the residual category is extremely high. Predictably, the explanation of non-enrolment in terms of opportunity cost loses its explanatory power.

To test this proposition, the age-wise distribution of children who had never been enrolled due to either of these causes was estimated. It was found that only 7.48 percent (in urban areas) and 3.64 percent (in rural areas) of such children were aged below 10 years. Since it is unlikely that parents will enroll their children after 10 years, it is likely that such children are merely reporting their current status, rather than stating the actual reason for their non-enrolment.

In urban areas, too, the incidence of children not enrolled in order to assist in household tasks or supplement family income is marginal. Failure to acknowledge the importance of education is important only among H-BCs (both sexes) and among Muslim girls. The sharp variation across gender for the Muslim community may possibly be due to the presence of the fairly substantial proportion of non-Bengali speaking population, with a different attitude towards education shaped by their cultural and religious beliefs.

Before moving on, we should note the high residual proportion in Tables 6 and 7. Coupled with the inability to identify the true reason for non-enrolment of children aged 10 years or more, this makes it difficult to rule out supply side explanations for non-enrolment.

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TABLE 7
Educational Infrastructure in Minority Concentrated and Other Districts of West Bengal - 2001

District	*% Minority Population*	*Schools*		*Population ('000 Covered by Schools*	
		Govt. Schools	*Total Schools*	*Govt. Schools*	*Total Schools*
Puruliya	7.5	2985	3313	0.8	0.85
Bankura	7.7	3914	3914	0.8	0.82
Purba Medinipur	11.6	3490	3878	2.5	2.75
Hugli	15.3	3393	3565	1.4	1.49
Jalpaiguri	16.6	2233	2302	1.5	1.52
Barddhaman	20.4	4138	4800	1.4	1.67
Kolkata	22.1	1532	2007	2.3	2.98
Darjiling	22.7	1371	1388	1.2	1.17
Paschim Medinipur	23.7	4831	5392	0.0	0.03
NON-MINORITY DOMINATED DISTRICTS		27887	30559	1.3	1.5
Koch Bihar	24.4	1872	2070	1.2	1.32
North 24 Parganas	24.7	4049	4644	1.9	2.21
Haora	24.9	2148	2627	1.6	1.99
Dakshin Dinajpur	25.5	1351	1351	1.1	1.11
Nadia	26.1	2787	3063	1.5	1.65
South 24 Parganas	34.1	3604	4396	1.6	1.92
Birbhum	35.4	2371	2774	1.1	1.27
Uttar Dinajpur	48.0	1438	1632	1.5	1.70
Maldah	50.0	1909	2221	1.5	1.72
Murshidabad	64.0	3170	3682	1.6	1.85
MINORITY DOMINATED DISTRICTS		24699	28460	1.5	1.7

Source: Estimated from Census 2001 data: Table C1 (Population by Religious Community - Blockwise) and Table on Educational Amenities in West Bengal (http://www.wbcensus.gov.in/ DataTables/08/FrameTables-e_1.htm).

As can be seen from Table 7, the population covered by a school is higher in minority-concentrated districts of West Bengal. This holds true for both government schools and all types of schools (that is, government and private). This would imply a deficiency in schooling infrastructure in minority-concentrated areas, which contradicts demand-side explanations of educational backwardness of minorities put forward by government officials. The claim that programmes like SSA have been successful is also important in this context. The SSA is not geared to counteract the negative influence of opportunity costs but is primarily a demand-based programme, involving community participation. Since community participation requires the existence of demand for education, the argument in favour of supply-driven explanations of non-enrolment becomes strong.

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Status of Dropouts

While there is still scope to improve the enrolment rates, particularly among minorities and Muslims, schemes like the SSA has led to a sharp increase in enrolment rates in recent years. The next step, therefore, is to ensure that children are retained in schools for a sufficiently long period to ensure that their education has some value in their future life. This calls for an analysis of the incidence of dropouts.[6]

TABLE 8

Proportion of Enrolled Children Aged 6-15 Years Dropped Out from School

SRC Socio Religious Communities	Urban			Rural		
	Total	Boy	Girls	Total	Boy	Girls
Muslim	18.58	21.98	11.12	11.06	14.41	7.80
H-UC	7.28	7.33	6.56	7.84	6.55	9.19
H-BC	11.52	10.24	11.75	10.49	10.36	10.64
Others	12.39	21.94	0.00	16.72	11.06	24.94
Total	10.85	11.59	8.83	10.19	10.97	9.37

About a tenth of enrolled children aged 6-15 years dropout in both rural and urban areas (Table 8). This is not very high; further variations across gender and place of residence are marginal. However, there are substantial differences in dropout rates across SRCs. In urban West Bengal, dropout rate is highest among Muslims. One out of every five Muslim children drops out at some stage of their primary education. Surprisingly, dropout rates are higher among Muslim boys, than Muslim girls. In rural area, too, incidence of dropouts is highest among Muslims (11 percent). Again, dropout rate is higher among Muslim boys than among Muslim girls.

A substantial gender difference is observed among Muslim in both rural and urban areas (Table 8). However – again contrary to expectations - it is among Muslim boys rather than among Muslim girls in both urban and rural areas, that dropout rates are higher. One reason for this may be that the perceived benefits to education (in terms of increased probability of getting employment) is lower among Muslim boys, discouraging Muslim boys from continuing studies (Ramachandra, 2003; Bhandari & Bordoloi, 2006; PMHLC, 2006). On the other hand, it has been argued that perceived benefits from educating Muslim girls may be high because:

a) An educated girl has greater prospect of marriage as she is able to teach her children, keep accounts, manage daily expenses, and otherwise run the household more efficiently (Pratichi, 2002; Husain, 2003);

[6] Here also, as we shall see in Tables 10-11, the number of others is too small for any meaningful analysis. Following the pattern in earlier sections, we have retained the column but not attempted any comparison or interpretation.

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b) She is better able to fend for herself in the case of desertion by her husband (Hossain & Kabeer, 2004); and

c) Unlike other communities, the cost of marriage of an educated girl need not increase sharply as it is acceptable for the bride to have a higher educational status than the groom. For instance, it has been found that 26 percent of educated Muslim women have illiterate husbands (Hasan & Menon, 2004).

As a result, in many cases parents may prefer to continue to educate the girl child till her marriage (Pratichi, 2002).

TABLE 9

Reasons for Dropping Out of Children Aged 6-15 Years

Sector	*Socio-Religious Communities*	*School Too Far*	*Supplement HH Income*	*Education not Considered Necessary*	*To Attend Domestic Chores*	*Others*
Urban	Muslim (51)	0	70.86	14.87	12.94	1.39
	H-UC (73)	0	18.09	19.93	13.25	48.73
	H-BC (78)	0	26.58	15.47	13.80	44.15
	Others (1)	0	0	0	0	100
	Total (203)	0	38.61	16.47	13.09	31.84
Rural	Muslim (195)	0.19	30.47	18.65	14.75	35.96
	H-UC (89)	0	24.47	11.86	17.92	45.74
	H-BC (171)	0	29.15	15.35	18.96	36.55
	Others (5)	0	41.45	19.37	20.73	18.45
	Total (460)	0.08	29.15	16.17	17.11	37.49

Note: Figures in parantheses represent the sample size for respective categories. These are estimated without using multipliers.

Analysis of NSSO data reveals that in urban areas the need to supplement family income is the major reason for dropout among Muslims. The proportion of children dropping out from school to supplement family income is about four times higher for urban Muslims as compared to Hindu - Upper Caste. Seven out of every ten Muslim children dropout to supplement household income in urban West Bengal (Table 9). This is possibly because of lower per capita income levels,[7] coupled with possibility of getting work in the informal sector (Ramachandra, 2006).

Interestingly, a large portion of H-UC dropouts (20 percent) in urban area consider education not that important. This observation is quite surprising as it is commonly

[7] Monthly per capita income of Muslim dropouts is Rs. 465, compared to Rs. 496 for Muslim children currently attending schools. It should also be noted that the average per capita income of Muslims is lower than that of other SRCs in both rural and urban areas. A recent study estimated that poverty levels too are higher among Muslims in both rural and urban areas. This would support the proposition that poverty is a major reason for dropout among Muslims.

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believed that it is the Muslim who value education less due to their conservative attitude (Sengupta & Guha, 2002). However, before emphasizing too much on this, we should note that dropout rate among H-UCs is only 7 percent.

Disaggregating our analysis for male and female children of both rural and urban areas, we observed causes of dropout to vary sharply between male and female children (Tables 10 and 11).

TABLE 10
Reasons for Dropping Out of Urban Children Aged 6-15 years

Sector	*Socio-Religious Communities*	*School Too Far*	*Supplement HH Income*	*Education not Considered Necessary*	*To Attend Domestic Chores*	*Others*
Male	Muslim (33)	-	81.58	15.65	0.86	1.91
	H-UC (38)	-	34.48	20.08	-	45.45
	H-BC (42)	-	34.13	25.1	-	40.77
	Others (1)	-	-	-	-	100
	Total (114)	-	52.6	18.98	0.35	28.07
Female	Muslim (18)	-	49.98	13.16	36.49	0.38
	H-UC (35)	-	1.78	19.77	26.44	52.01
	H-BC (36)	-	19.48	6.41	26.77	47.34
	Others (NA)	-	-	-	-	-
	Total (89)	-	20.88	13.28	29.23	36.61

Note: Figures in parantheses represent the sample size for respective categories. These are estimated without using multipliers.

In urban areas, the need to supplement household income is the main cause of dropout of boys in all SRCs. However, this motivation is particularly strong among Muslim boys – 82 percent of dropout among Muslim boys is caused by the need to supplement family income. This is not surprising given the fact that per capita income of Muslims is lower than for other communities.

Another interesting observation is that, while the perception that education is not necessary is a major reason for dropouts (about a fifth of dropouts is caused by this belief), this factor is least important within the Muslim community.

Among urban girls, supplementing family income is an important reason for dropout among Muslims (50 percent) and H-BCs (19 percent). Not surprisingly, performing domestic chores is another important cause of dropout observed for all SRCs. The perception that education is not important plays an important role only among H-UCs. These results are again linked to relative poverty – forcing the girl child to either undertake productive work generally within the household, or to free older female family members of domestic responsibilities and allow them to work outside the home.

TABLE 11

Reasons for Dropping Out of Rural Children Aged 6-15 Years

Sector	Socio Religious Communities	School Too Far	Supplement HH Income	Education not Considered Necessary	To Attend Domestic Chores	Others
Male	Muslim (117)	0.29	38.9	17.03	9.3	34.48
	H-UC (37)	-	43.76	10.59	3	42.65
	H-BC (89)	-	47.56	14.16	1.51	36.77
	Others (2)	-	52.9	-	-	47.1
	Total (78)	0.14	43.07	14.81	5.34	36.64
Female	Muslim (78)	-	15.31	21.57	24.54	38.58
	H-UC (52)	-	10.07	12.81	29.07	48.05
	H-BC (82)	-	8.54	16.68	38.48	36.29
	Others (3)	-	34.07	31.85	34.07	-
	Total (215)	-	11.85	17.87	31.74	38.54

Note: Figures in parantheses represent the sample size for respective categories. These are estimated without using multipliers.

It is less easy to identify the reasons for dropout among Muslims in rural areas as the residual category is quite high. Among Muslim boys, economic activity is an important cause of dropout, though its importance is less than among other SRCs. Among Muslim girls, attending domestic chores, followed by a belief that education is unimportant, are the major reasons for dropout. While this is also true for H-UCs and H-BCs, a large proportion of girls from the Other category also dropout to supplement family income.

Econometric Analysis

Variables

Finally, we undertake an econometric analysis to identify the factors determining enrolment and dropout rates. Literature shows that attainments depend upon household characteristics and socio-religious identity of the respondent (Desai & Kulkarni, 2005; Sengupta & Guha, 2002; Husain, 2005; Alam & Raju, 2007). Accordingly we regress our dependent variables on the following independent variables:

1. *Monthly Family Expenditure (MFE):* Higher levels of MFE mean that the household has the resources to invest in education of children. This is important, given the surprisingly high costs of the 'free' primary education (Probe, 1999; NSSO, 1998). Thus, we expect that MFE will have a positive effect on enrolment rate and completion rate of primary education. Correspondingly, dropout should be lower with high levels of MFE. Given the high values of MFE with respect to the values of dependent variables, we have taken the logarithmic transformation of MFE (LMFE).

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2. *Household Size (HHSIZE):* The household size is likely to affect educational status adversely, unless the dependency ratio is low.[8]
3. *Gender (FML):* There is a vast body of literature arguing that families tend to invest less in education of the girl child (Probe, 1999). To verify this hypothesis, we have constructed a gender dummy, FML equal to unity if the child is female and otherwise 0.
4. *Age (AGE)*: As a child gets older it becomes more difficult for him/her to join school. This is partly because of incompatibility with other children of the same class, or because of loss of interest in schooling, or because parents tend to engage him in productive or household tasks rather than keep him/her idle (increasing opportunity costs of schooling). After getting enrolled, the probability of dropout increases as the child grows older. This may be because parents have a target level of education that is typically low, or because they want to divert the financial resources for schooling to younger siblings (Husain, 2005). However, the probability of his/her completing primary level will be higher than younger children.
5. *Educational Level of Head of Household (EDU_DM):* Literature shows that if the decision maker is him/herself educated, then he(she) is more likely to educate his(her) children. While studies generally focus on literacy, we have taken different levels of education as defined in NSSO.[9]
6. *Gender of the Head of the Household (SEX_DM):* Gender of the head of the household also affects education related decisions. If a female is the decision maker, it may be expected that she is more responsive to the needs of educating a child, particularly the girl child.[10] On the other hand, if she is also the main income earner then she may have to remove girls from school to undertake household chores, and even boys if gender discrimination in the labour market results in her getting relatively lower wages; then the family income may have to be supplemented.
7. *Socio Religious Community (SRC):* Recent literature shows the presence of inequality in educational attainments at the all-India level between socio-religious communities (GOI, 2006). The analysis in Section 3 also indicates that

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[8] It may be better to take the dependency ratio, rather than household size. However, dependency ratio will have to be derived manually – making it an extremely cumbersome, though not impossible, task. Hence we have taken household size, rather than dependency ratio.

[9] The variable is therefore a continuous variable, representing illiterate (1), literate without formal schooling: EGS/ NFEC/ AEC (2), TLC (3), literate: below primary (4), primary (5), middle (6), secondary (7), higher secondary (8), diploma/ certificate course (9), graduate (10), post-graduate and above (11).

[10] For instance, researchers have argued, based on all-India NSSO data, that empowerment of women will increase enrolment (Das & Mukherjee, 2007).

Muslims, Other Minorities (in rural areas), and Backward Castes lag behind Upper Caste-Hindus in West Bengal in this respect. We have, therefore, constructed dummies to capture differences in educational attainments between SRCs, taking Muslims as the reference category:

H-UC = 1 if respondent belongs to Hindu Upper Caste, otherwise= 0

H-BC = 1 if respondent belongs to Hindu Backward Caste, otherwise= 0

Others = 1 if respondent belongs to Non-Muslim Minorities, and Others otherwise = 0

The discussion is summed up in Table 12.

Results

NSSO classifies respondents into three categories – those who have never attended educational institutions, those who had enrolled at some time, but are currently not attending (i.e. dropout), and those who are currently attending. We first consider the probability that a child (in the age group 6-15 years) has ever been enrolled in any educational institution (Model 1). Given the sample of enrolled children, we next identify the probability of the child dropping out (Model 2). The detailed results of the model are presented in Appendix, while Table 12 sums up the main results.

TABLE 12

Hypothesized and Actual Signs of Regression Coefficients

Variable	*Model 1: Enrolment*			*Model 2: Dropout*		
	Expected	*Actual*		*Expected*	*Actual*	
		Urban	*Rural*		*Urban*	*Rural*
LMFE	+ve	+ve	+ve	-ve	-ve	-ve
EDUDM	+ve	+ve	+ve	-ve	-ve	-ve
SEX_DM	+ve	+ve	+ve	-ve	**+ve**	-ve
HHSIZE	-ve	-ve	-ve	+ve	+ve	+ve
FML	-ve	**+ve**	-ve	+ve	**-ve**	**-ve**
AGE	-ve	-ve	-ve	+ve	+ve	+ve
H-UC	+ve	+ve	+ve	-ve	-ve	-ve
H-BC	+ve	+ve	+ve	-ve	-ve	-ve
Others	+ve	NA	**-ve**	-ve	**+ve**	**+ve**

Notes: 1. Except for H-BC in Model 2 (Rural), all coefficients are statistically significant at 99% level.

2. Coefficients with unanticipated signs are shaded for ready identification.

The regression results show that household and personal characteristics determine educational attainments, with factors like family expenditure, educational level of

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decision maker, household size and age having expected impacts on probability of enrolment, dropout and primary completion.

Literature has identified girls as a particularly vulnerable section within our society. However, the picture may be more complex than commonly presumed. Probability of enrolment is actually *higher* for girls in urban areas. In rural areas, girls predictably have lower enrolment rates; but, once they are enrolled, girls have greater probability to 'survive' and continue their education. Thus, controlling for other variables, a girl has actually lower probability of dropping out in both rural and urban areas, possibly because of their lower mobility and opportunities outside the household. In the case of probability of completing primary education, however, girls fare worse than boys for the study age group. This is because girls are enrolled at an older age than boys, so that they fail to complete primary level within the age of 15 years. However, the achievements at lower levels of education do not translate into commensurate levels of achievements at higher levels of education, or into greater decision-making power. It is necessary to explore how the linkages between primary education, subsequent levels of education and empowerment can be strengthened for women.

The sign of the coefficient for SEX_DM generally conforms to our expectations. Probability of enrolment and primary completion rates are higher in female-headed households. Rural households headed by female also have lower rates of dropouts. This conforms to intra-household bargaining theory, which argues that a mother may incorporate her child's well-being in her personal utility function (Sen, 1993). In urban areas, however, a child from a female-headed household is more likely to dropout from school.[11]

In urban areas, if women of low income households are the decision makes, then it is likely that she will also be the bread earner. Given the structure of job market in urban areas, her employment may take part of her day. Given the nuclear structure of urban families, this entails shifting part of the responsibility of looking after the younger children and undertaking household tasks to older children, increasing the probability of dropout.

In rural areas, on the other hand, the mother may either have to spend several days outside the home or at least most of the day. In such cases, shifting the responsibility of the entire household tasks to older children may not be practicable. Further, given the presence of older female relatives in the household, household tasks, including supervision of education of children may be undertaken by these relatives. Further, female decision makers may be more interested in educating their children as it will enable them to return to the household sphere and assume traditional functions. The operation of all these forces in the rural areas may lead to empowerment of women

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[11] To rule the possibility that a female head will behave differentially depending upon the gender of the child, we had regressed separate equations for boys and girls. The sign in all cases was negative. Subsequently, when regressing dropout, we had again run individual regressions for boys and girls, but found that results were invariant.

having a favorable effect on education.

An important result from the econometric exercise is that, after controlling for household and personal characteristics, the socio-religious identity of the child is important in determining its probability of getting enrolled, continuing education and completing the primary stage. It is expected that Muslims will fare poorly relative to H-UCs. But, contrary to expectations fueled by the myth of minority appeasement, Muslims tend to perform worse than even the backward castes (H-BCs) so far as enrolment and dropouts are concerned. The probability of completing the primary level is higher for H-BC children vis-à-vis Muslims in urban areas. While children from other minority communities, constitutes too small a sample for estimation in urban areas, their status is worse than Muslims with respect to enrolment (rural areas). However, they have lower dropout rates and higher primary completion rates (rural areas), i.e. Muslim children are less 'robust'.

Conclusion

The analysis undertaken in this paper provides useful insights into the relative status of Muslims and non-Muslim minorities in West Bengal with regard to basic educational attainments. In Section 3 we had seen that levels of non-enrolment and dropout of Muslims are higher than that of H-UC, as also of H-BCs in both rural and urban West Bengal. This may, of course be due to household and personal characteristics, like lower income levels, larger household size, lower educational level of household head, etc. The econometric analysis in Section 4 not only supports our finding that Muslims are relatively deprived, but indicates that even after controlling for such factors, Muslims have higher levels of non-enrolment and dropouts.

This raises the question as to whether Muslims lag behind other SRCs due to cultural and attitudinal traits of the community (Jehangir, 1991), or due to real or perceived discrimination. Policy makers would of course like us to believe the former to be the main reason.[12] While the nature of NSS data prevents us from specifically examining the data to determine valid explanation, the analysis in Section 3 does not provide support for the belief that Muslims are non-appreciative of the value of education. Parents of only 4.6 percent of Muslim children aged 6-12 years believe that education is not important.[13] It is, therefore, necessary to examine the relative importance of cultural and economic factors in determining the demand for primary education within the minority community, and the nature of this demand.

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[12] For instance, during deliberations on the Annual Plan for 2007-08 for West Bengal officials of the School Education Board argued before the State Planning Board that there was no point in setting up schools in Muslim-dominated areas as Muslim parents were not interested in sending their children to government schools. This contrasts interestingly to our finding that more than 80% of rural Muslims are enrolled in government schools.

[13] Moreover, in 70% of these cases the decision maker is illiterate.

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At the same time, it should be kept in mind that even after controlling for household and personal characteristics, minorities lag behind other SRCs. This calls for affirmative action targeting minorities (like focusing on minority-dominated areas under the SSA, providing scholarships,[14] opening local study centers in minority-dominated areas, slums, distributing free textbooks, and so on) to change their cost-benefit calculations in educational decision making. Despite the fact that only 4 percent of Muslim children in West Bengal are enrolled in Madrasahs (PMHLC, 2006), the West Bengal government has tended to focus on Madrasahs as the panacea for educational deprivation (GoWB, 2008). Such an attitude and strategy will merely accentuate the gap between minorities and other communities.

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[14] While there are currently scholarship schemes for Muslim children, the corpus is too small for the schemes to have any marked effect. For instance, the financial assistance extended by Maulana Azad Education Foundation covers only 0.02 percent of Muslim girls from BPL families (PMHLC, 2006). Similarly, in 2008 about 7.5 lakh minorities people (nearly all of whom were Muslims) applied for the pre-matric merits-cum-means scholarship in West Bengal. Only about 44,460 (representing less than 6 percent of applicants) would be awarded scholarships, amounting to Rs.1,100 per annum. It should also be noted that the amounts will be released only after about a year from the date of application (personal communication from Dept. of Minority Affairs & Madrasah Education, Govt. of West Bengal).

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Appendix

ECONOMETRIC RESULTS

I. Determinants of Enrolment

Urban

Probit regression, reporting marginal effects
Number of obs =3232758 LR chi2(8) = 1.4e+ve05 Prob > chi2 = 0.0000
Log likelihood = -681403.41 Pseudo R2 = 0.0950

Never enrolled	dF/dx	Std. Err.	z	P>|z|	x-bar	[95% C.I.]	
LMFE	.027577	.0002351	116.39	0.000	8.2253	.027116	.028038
EDUDM	.0056773	.0000408	135.39	0.000	5.8705	.005597	.005757
SEX_DM	-.0610919	.0005896	-134.67	0.000	.086878	-.062247	-.059936
H-UC	.0262025	.0002856	92.73	0.000	.498092	.025643	.026762
H-BC	.0356138	.0002323	135.69	0.000	.285505	.035159	.036069
HHSIZE	-.0051056	.0000558	-90.87	0.000	5.61809	-.005215	-.004996
FML	.0026501	.0002283	11.61	0.000	.509748	.002203	.003098
AGE	-.0026464	.00004	-66.06	0.000	10.8029	-.002725	-.002568
obs. P	.9378265						
pred. P	.9533351	(at x-bar)					

(*) dF/dx is for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1
z and P>|z| correspond to the test of the underlying coefficient being 0

Rural

Probit regression, reporting marginal effects
Number of obs =14348046 LR chi2(9) = 1.3e+ve06 Prob > chi2 = 0.0000
Log likelihood = -3995024.8 Pseudo R2 = 0.1373

Never enrolled	dF/dx	Std. Err.	z	P>|z|	x-bar	[95% C.I.]	
LMFE	.1264464	.0001975	618.10	0.000	7.82165	.126059	.126834
EDUDM	.0135178	.0000259	493.80	0.000	3.80867	.013467	.013569
SEX_DM	-.0021673	.0002715	-8.07	0.000	.05711	-.002699	-.001635
H-UC	.0405894	.0001501	223.88	0.000	.210068	.040295	.040884
H-BC	.0030548	.0001358	22.42	0.000	.389012	.002789	.003321
OTHERS	-.1214299	.000779	-213.89	0.000	.017046	-.122957	-.119903
HHSIZE	-.0189289	.000032	-586.83	0.000	5.97241	-.018992	-.018866
FML	-.0209523	.0001257	-167.46	0.000	.493199	-.021199	-.020706
AGE	-.0024756	.0000215	-115.11	0.000	10.4888	-.002518	-.002433
obs. P	.9010596						
pred. P	.9354884	(at x-bar)					

(*) dF/dx is for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1
z and P>|z| correspond to the test of the underlying coefficient being 0

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II. Determinants of Dropout

Urban

Probit regression, reporting marginal effects

Number of obs =3077299 LR chi2(9) = 5.7e+ve05 Prob > chi2 = 0.0000

Log likelihood = -770077.31 Pseudo R2 = 0.2712

	Dropout	dF/dx	Std. Err.	z	P>|z|	x-bar	[95% C.I.]
LMFE	-.0665758	.0002851	-253.81	0.000	8.25118	-.067135	-.066017
EDUDM	-.0040668	.0000412	-98.64	0.000	6.04898	-.004148	-.003986
SEX_DM	.0067101	.0004335	16.20	0.000	.077283	.00586	.00756
H-UC	-.0479891	.0003074	-162.53	0.000	.49761	-.048591	-.047387
H-BC	-.0326051	.0002371	-125.47	0.000	.285661	-.03307	-.03214
OTHERS	.0052411	.0009552	5.71	0.000	.014796	.003369	.007113
HHSIZE	.0076155	.0000582	131.96	0.000	5.6167	.007501	.00773
FML	-.0073666	.0002263	-32.71	0.000	.509763	-.00781	-.006923
AGE	.0253852	.0000531	500.51	0.000	10.7836	.025281	.025489
obs. P	.1084945						
pred. P	.0475428 (at x-bar)						

(*) dF/dx is for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1

z and P>|z| correspond to the test of the underlying coefficient being 0

Rural

Probit regression, reporting marginal effects:

Number of obs =12928445 LR chi2(9) = 2.1e+ve06 Prob > chi2 = 0.0000

Log likelihood = -3195452.5 Pseudo R2 = 0.2496

	dropout	dF/dx	Std. Err.	z	P>|z|	x-bar	[95% C.I.]
LMFE	-.0587599	.0001576	-383.37	0.000	7.84097	-.059069	-.058451
EDUDM	-.0067025	.0000209	-325.72	0.000	3.99073	-.006744	-.006661
SEX_DM *	-.0129492	.0001847	-61.71	0.000	.056374	-.013311	-.012587
H-UC	-.0038833	.0001413	-26.92	0.000	.224501	-.00416	-.003606
H-BC	-.0000981	.0001163	-0.84	0.399	.388961	-.000326	.00013
OTHERS	.0849626	.0008403	143.41	0.000	.013572	.083316	.08661
HHSIZE	.0072451	.0000279	262.28	0.000	5.90964	.00719	.0073
FML	-.0046599	.0001023	-45.57	0.000	.484937	-.00486	-.004459
AGE	.0276411	.0000273	1129.20	0.000	10.4801	.027588	.027695
obs. P	.101974						
pred. P	.0432286 (at x-bar)						

(*) dF/dx is for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1

z and P>|z| correspond to the test of the underlying coefficient being 0

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Primary Schooling in a Tribal District of Rural Maharashtra
Some Policy Relevance

Aparajita Chattopadhyay*
Vijaya Durdhawale**

Abstract

The poor functioning of Indian schooling system is one reason for persistence of endemic illiteracy. Even if the local schooling standard is good, school enrolment and attendance for girls are always lower than boys for low parental motivation. The situation of primary schooling is indeed appalling in backward districts because education planning in India does not give adequate attention on the educational needs and aspirations of the poor people. The study focuses on the situation of primary education in some tribal villages of a backward district of rural Maharashtra with the help of qualitative and quantitative data. Despite infrastructural constraints, the study strongly favors introduction of local languages for basic education, provision of personnel for clerical works and proper maintenance of records that reflect the reality of primary schooling. Economic uncertainty and financial hardship are the contributing factors for the age-old disinterest in education among the tribes. Thus increasing the sources of income could help encourage their willing participation in basic education.

Education has been assigned a high priority among the national objectives in India. Education is widely accepted as a necessary tool for the attainment of developmental goals. For developing nations it is recognized that the achievement of national goals and purposes in the modern world are tied to the quality of education provided to their children. Article 45 of the directive principles of the Constitution of India provides for free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of fourteen years (GOI). To cover all the children in the age group 6-14 under the umbrella of elementary education, government decided to provide incentives, such as mid-day meal, free textbooks, stationary and uniforms, to disadvantaged pupils. In spite of substantial expansion of the elementary education system in the last two decades, a very large number of children, particularly girls and from the deprived section of the society in India, continue to be out of school. According to UNESCO (2006) report, though the net enrolment rate rose to 88

* International Institute for Population Sciences, Department of Development Studies, Govandi Station Road, Deoner, Mumbai-88, email: apachat@rediffmail.com
** Tata Institute of Social Science, Deonar Mumbai-88

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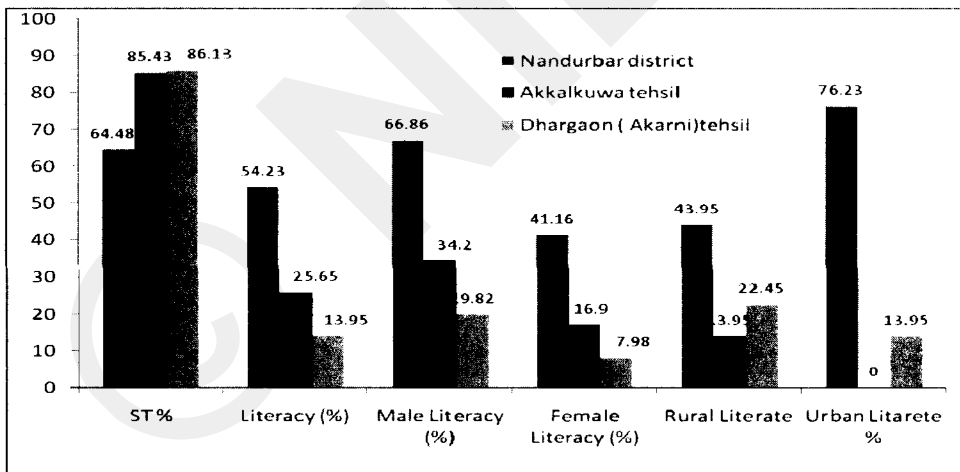
percent in 2002, only 61 percent were still in school by the time they reached the age of 10, and dropout rate was 25 percent (GOI, 2006-07). There were also vast differences within states and between social groups, with very low rates of enrolment reported for socially disadvantaged groups, such as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. About 40 percent of scheduled tribe children drop out of school in I-V grades (GOI 2005-06). The Annual Status of Education (ASER, 2008) indicates that 44 percent of children between the ages of 7 and 10 could not read even a simple paragraph. Teaching is still done by traditional methods, and children are often taught in a language they do not understand. In 2008, still 4.5 million children aged 6-14 years were out of school (Loak Sabha, 2008) in spite of the fact that in the year 1986 a new education policy was adopted and efforts had been made through successive Five-Years Plans to achieve the target of 100 percent literacy through compulsory and free education for children. The main causes of the non-implementation of this basic objective of our national policy are well known, viz., financial inadequacy, non-availability of sufficient number of suitable teachers, lack of parental motivation, poverty, language constraints and household burden (see Aggarwal-Vol-3, 2002; D'Souza; 2003; Gautam, 2003).

FIGURE 1

Level of ST Population and Literacy in Nandurbar District and two Selected Tehsils



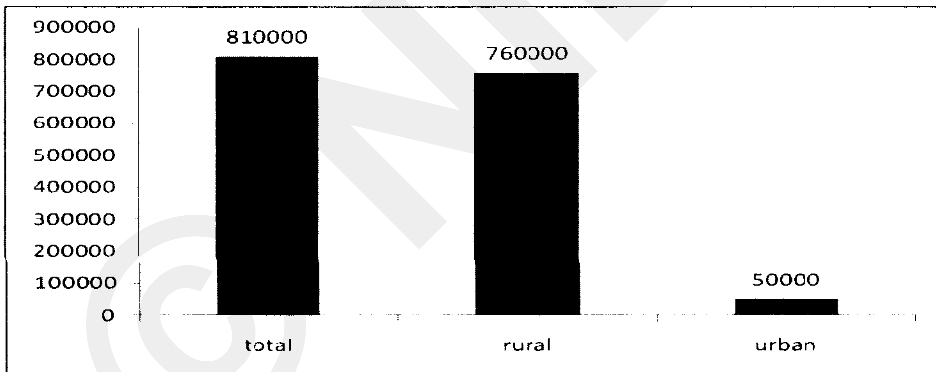
Despite a series of efforts by the government, there exist numerous problems in achieving the goal of cent percent elementary education. Moreover, disparity in the levels of attendance of primary schooling across the various social and economic groups is also a point of concern. This variation is more pronounced in the less developed districts of India. Hence, the study reports on the exploratory analysis of primary education in the selected less-developed, tribal villages of Nandurbar district of Maharashtra. An investigation into the determinants of non-attendance of primary schooling among boys and girls can potentially benefit the quest for knowledge in research, especially since a

significant amount of money on primary education is spent every year. According to official estimates, as early as in 1978, 93 percent of the population in India was being served by a tuition-free primary school within one kilometre radius (NCERT, 1989). To understand why are so many children out of school, in spite of apparent access, is the basic aim of the study.

Nandurbar district has the maximum tribal population in Maharashtra, located near the hilly region of Satpura and at the southern part of the Narmada river basin (Fig. 1). The main tribal communities in this district are Bhil, Pawara and Kokani. Reasons for the selection of this district are many. Maharashtra as a whole and all other districts, except Nandurbar, have added more literates than the net addition in population (as per district census handbook, census 2001, pp-47). Disparity in urban-rural literacy is one of the highest in Nundurbar district (28.87 percentage points) (Table 1). It ranked 27th out of 35 districts of Maharashtra in 1981 and over time its rank deteriorated as it stood the lowest among all the districts in 2001. During the last decade, the absolute number of illiterates of all the districts in Maharashtra, except Nandurbar and Thane, has come down. As seen in Fig: 2, Nandurbar has added 8.1 lakh illiterates from 1991 to 2001 and majority of the illiterates are from the rural areas.

FIGURE 2

Net Addition of Illiterates in Nandurbar from 1991-2001



Only 23.59 percent tribes were literate in Nandurbar district as per census 2001. Gender disparity in Nandurbar district in literacy rate was also the highest in Maharashtra (rural: male literate 62.13 percent and female literate 40.50 percent; as per 2001, census). As the problem of tribal illiteracy in this district is still acute, this study focuses on the situation of primary school attendance of six selected villages of Nandurbar district. The main objectives of the study are: to assess the situation of non-attendance of schools among children aged 6-12 as reported by their parents, to understand the reasons behind non-attendance and to know the quality of schools of the selected villages. Statistical tests were applied to understand whether positive attitude towards girls help them in attending schools.

TABLE 1

Literacy Rates in 1981-1991-2001 in Maharashtra, Mumbai and Nandurbar (%)

	1981			*1991*			*2001*		
	T	*R*	*U*	*T*	*R*	*U*	*T*	*R*	*U*
Maharashtra	57.24	46.70	76.31	64.87	55.52	79.20	77.27	70.84	85.76
Mumbai	79.03	--	79.03	81.96	-	81.96	86.82	--	86.82
Nandurbar	44.82	39.96	71.34	51.12	46.04	78.48	56.06	51.40	80.27

Note: Nandurbar ranked 27, 29 and 35 out of 35 Districts in 1981, 1991, 2001 respectively. Mumbai ranks highest in Literacy. T= Total, R= Rural, U= Urban

Methodology and Background Characteristics

Village Selection

Nandurbar district of Maharashtra is predominantly a tribal district, encompassing six tehsils. Out of these six tehsils, we selected two namely, Dhargaon and Akkalkuwa based on the literacy rate (two lower most) and tribal population (two highest). As seen in Fig 1, only 14 percent population of Dhargaon and 26 percent in Akkalkuwa are literate. Female literacy is abysmally low, only 8 percent in Dhargaon and 17 percent in Akkalkuwa. Then, we listed all the villages of these two *tehsils* and randomly chose six villages namely, Dhadgaon, Bijary, Molgi, Toranmal, Khuntamodi and Khadki.

Household Selection

House listing of the six villages was done by gathering specific information, on whether 6-12 years aged child stays in that household. Then we selected 40 households from the eligibles from each of the six villages and interviewed the parents (mother or father). The interview was done in June-August, 2002. Total households interviewed were 183 as we got less than 40 households in two small villages namely Kadki and Toranmal. Total children (6-12 years age) out of 183 households were 245. We gathered information of all eligible children as reported by either of the parents.

Research Tools and Techniques

Both qualitative and quantitative tools were applied to capture the situation of the primary schooling. The major tools and techniques used were as follows:

- Semi-structured interview of parents (total interviewed 183),
- Structured interview of the head/any teacher of the public primary schools (total interviewed 16),
- Four observations in schools,
- Seven in-depth interviews of educational personnel, namely District Education Officer, (DEO) Block Education Officer (BEO), *Sarva Shikshak Adhikari* (SSA), *and Tehsildar.*

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Besides collecting primary data, we also used secondary data of education statistics collected from the Block Development Office (BDO) and the data from school registers of 11 schools in the selected villages.

For the purpose of the study, two separate interview schedules were prepared, i.e. for parents and school teachers. For parents, the questionnaire comprised four parts: (1) for those where the child never attained school, (2) for those whose child dropped out, (3) for those whose child is currently going to school, and (4) gender roles, covering all the respondents. In the section on gender roles, twelve statements were put forth to the parents to capture the attitude and behavior towards girls. Each statement contained five answer categories, ranging from fully disagree to fully agree. The statements were related with the gender difference in the right to education, burden of household work, general intelligence, future responsibility of children in taking care of parents, highest level of education, sequence of having food, control of parents on children, permission of travelling alone to school, opinion about marriage. A summative scale was made and the total score of parent's attitude towards girl was categorized as 'favorable attitude', 'moderately favorable attitude' and 'non-favorable attitude'. Reliability of the scale is 0.82 (alpha value).

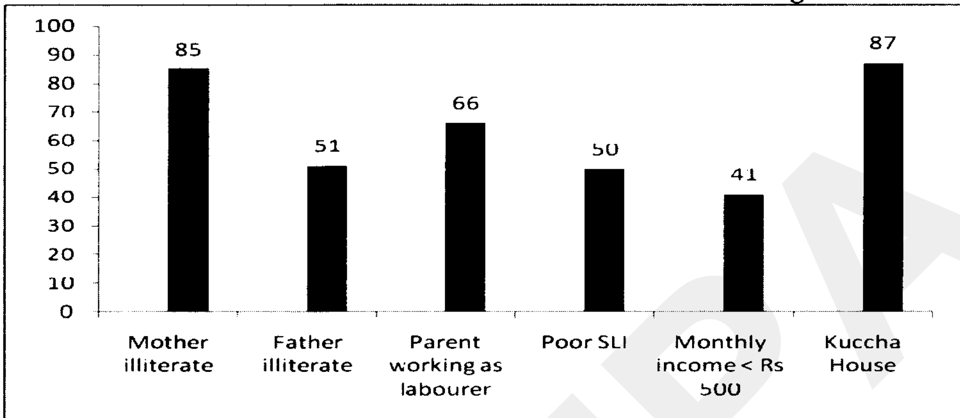
A structured schedule of school teachers tried to seek the following sets of information: the amenities available in schools; details of school statistics in the last five years, i.e. status of enrolment, pass out, number of teachers and students and their attendance in the last three days; the plans for improvement of the schools; staff positions sanctioned and currently working; educational qualification of teachers; salary of the teachers; and number of classrooms available. However, much of the information of this section is out of the scope of this paper.

Standard of living of the households was measured based on questions asked on house type, toilet facility, source of lighting, source of drinking water, separate room for cooking, ownership of agricultural land and livestock, and certain durable goods. We followed the standard method of National Family Health Survey (NFHS, IIPS and Macro International) to assess the living standard. Index score ranges from 0-14 for low standard, 15-24 for medium standard, and 25 and above for high standard.

Results and Discussion

Majority of the interviewed parents were Hindus (96 percent), belonging to scheduled tribe category (78 percent). Fifty-one percent fathers and 85 percent mothers were illiterate. Majority of them were labourer. Thirty-three percent households experienced seasonal migration. Half of them had a poor standard of living. Eighty-seven percent lived in Kuccha household. About four-fifths stayed in a nuclear family though the mean household size was seven.

FIGURE 3
Basic Characteristics of the Parents of Selected Villages



Reasons for Non-Attendance in Schools

Out of a total of 245 children, 60 percent was going to primary schools. The proportion of boys was much higher than that of girls in terms of school attendance, i.e. 70 percent boys were attending schools, against only half of the girls. Among the students who ever attended schools, about 44 percent faced or were facing some problems in studying (Table 2). Majority of the students who either dropped out or were going to schools did not know how to read and write, as reported by the parents and also examined by the researchers. A large part of the dropout students never understood what the teacher teaches. Almost 40 percent parents complained that the teacher was not teaching properly. It is clear from the table that the maximum number of parents complained about the teaching methods and the teachers, instead of the infrastructural deficiency.

TABLE 2
Problems Faced by Children of 6-12 Years in Studying, as Reported by Parents

Problem in Studying and in School	Percent	
	Drop-out	Attending
Do not know how to read and write	49.0	42.3
No cloth	19.6	12.7
No book	7.8	7.0
No transport facility	13.7	10.5
No one to help in studying at home	45.1	26.8
Do not understand what teachers teaches	52.9	25.4
Teacher is not coming	15.7	21.8
School often remains closed	13.7	4.2
Teacher is not teaching	----	36.0
Faced at least one problem	45.0	43.4
N	51	148

Reasons for non-attendance of schools (Table 3), as opined by parents (whose children had either dropped out or never attended schools) were burden of household work, poor economic condition and irregularity of teachers. A majority opined that until and unless their economic status improved, they wouldn't be able to send their children to school as they could not afford both the school related cost and the opportunity cost. To elucidate the reasons for non-attendance, two-thirds of those who never attended primary schools, said that they were very poor and unable to afford a single penny for sending their children to school. For them, child's schooling was a luxury. Little more than one-fourth of the parents complained about constraints in transportation as a reason for non-attendance in schools, irrespective of the sex of the child. To mention here, while doing the fieldwork researchers faced a number of constraints in transportation as the areas was hilly with narrow roads and many a times they had to cross small streams to reach the schools. Out of the dropped-out children, a large proportion of the parents of dropouts cited the burden of household work (i.e. mainly taking care of the younger siblings and domestic animals as well as cooking), poverty and inability of children to read and write as reasons for non-attendance.

TABLE 3

Reasons for Non-Attendance and Dropouts in Schools among Children 6-12 Years, as Reported by Parents

Sr. No.	*Reasons*	*Percent*	
		Never Attended	*Dropouts*
1	**Problem related to teaching and school**		
	Teacher irregular	31.91	31.37
	School not open	31.91	13.72
	Teacher not teaching/ coming	65.95	52.94
	No ashram school	17.02	1.96
2	**HH related factors**		
	Doing household work	53.19	78.43
	Parent migration	14.89	19.60
	Working	57.44	58.82
	Caretaker for younger sibling	34.04	39.21
	No money, very poor	65.95	56.86
3	**Personal, related to children**		
	Do not know how to read and write	-	43.13
	Children not interested in school	14.89	31.37
	Ilness of the child	31.91	23.52
4	**Village related**		
	No transport facility	27.65	5.88
		N=47	N=51

Parents whose children were either not attending school or had dropped out were further probed to find out that under what conditions they would like to send their children to school. A large proportion of the parents of the non-attendees said that only

when their economic condition improved (74 percent) or the transportation facility was available (47 percent), they would allow their child to go to school.

Factors Affecting Non-Attendance in Schools

Two binary logistic regressions models were used (for total sample and for girls) considering a series of demographic and socio-economic factors. We also included 'attitude towards girls' by constructing a scale containing twelve statements (as mentioned in methodology). Increasing age, being a girl child, more than six members at household, being a scheduled tribe, location of schools beyond 1 km, and 'non-favorable attitude' towards girls were the main factors of non-attendance of the children aged 6-12 years as a whole, and specifically girls (Table 4).

TABLE 4

Determinants of School Non-Attendance of Children and Among Girls

Characteristics	*Exp(b): Total*	*Exp(b) : for Girls*
Age of the children	1.387***	1.408***
Sex of the children		
Boy #		
Girl	2.490***	
No of household members		
Less than seven #		
Seven and above	3.032***	3.105***
Cast		
ST #		
Others	.351**	.303**
Father's education		
Illiterate #		
Literate	.796	.803
Mother's education		
Illiterate #		
Literate	1.150	.1410
Mother's occupation		
Working #		
Housewife	1.599	1.748
Distance to school		
Up to one km #		
Above one km	2.711**	2.645*
SLI		
Low #		
Medium	.597	.582
High	.319***	.369**
Attitude towards girl		
Unfavorable #		
Moderately favorable	.915	.920
Favorable	.345**	.363**

Dependent variable: 0= going to school, 1= not going to school

*** Significant at 1 percent level; ** significant at 5 percent level; * Significant at 10 percent

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To elaborate, if the family size was seven and above, then the chance of not attending school increased three times. However, after controlling all variables, parent's education and mother's occupation did not affect the school attendance significantly. Being an SC, OBC or a general caste, the probability of not going to school declined by 70 percent against the scheduled tribes. If the school is more than 1 km, then the chance of non-attendance increased two times. Compared to parents who had 'unfavorable attitude' towards girls, the chance of non-attendance declined about 70 percent for those who had 'favorable attitude' towards girls.

Qualitative data revealed the medium of instruction in these areas was Marathi, which was different from the tribal languages, like *Adivasi, Pauri* etc, and hence, it mostly resulted in one-way communication with no reciprocity, as reported by Block Development Officer. Our observation revealed that location of schools in hilly, inaccessible areas along with lack of transportation facility further reduced the school attendance. Forty percent population of these villages migrate to Gujarat during the months of October to March, as indicated by *Sarva Shikshak Adhikari*. Children were absent in schools for 5-6 months for such migratory movement, as per the Block Education Officer

'Schools remain closed for 5-10 days in a month (besides Sundays) as teacher visits Tehsil Office for collecting salary, attending teacher's meet, supplying School Statistics to Block Research Offices and attending educational training'. 'So, when will they teach? a Tehsildar observed.

Quality of Schools

Some of the indicators used by researchers to capture school quality were student-teacher ratio, facilities available in schools etc, as indicated in Tables 5-7. In the selected villages, student-teacher ratio ranges from 24 to 30, based on recorded statistics (collected from the schools by the researchers), though in actual terms (based on observation) it was up to 65. Out of 11 surveyed public schools, fifth class was available only in two schools though on paper, three schools were having classes up to 7th grade. There were, seven schools having only one classroom where students from 1st to 4th standards sat together. Out of these 11 schools, 4 schools were having single teacher, and two teachers ran another four schools. To add to inadequacy of space, even the rooms that existed were often used as offices and storerooms since most schools did not have any space allotted for these purposes. It was common to see classes being held in verandahs and other open spaces. Classes held in open space are bound to be disrupted by monsoon and other extremes of weather, as reported by the teachers. In a situation where there is no school building at all, the scope for disruption is enormous and the implications for school participation are obvious. Some statistics, collected and observed from the 11 schools are given below.

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TABLE 5
Quality of Schools in Nandurbar and Selected Villages

a) Situation of Primary Schooling

Block	Distribution of Schools	Girls per 100 Boy Enrolled	Deficit of Teachers	Student – Teacher Ratio
Nandurbar	14.39	88	1	32
Sahade	17.41	92	23	34
Navapur	21.9	103	32	24
Talode	9.91	92	32	33
Akkalkuwa	19.65	88	52	27
Dhadgaon	17.32	88	19	24
	N=1160			

Based on data collected from Block Office, Nandurbar

b) Student- Teacher Ratio in Selected Primary Schools of the Surveyed Villages

Village	Student-Teacher Ratio
Dhadgaon	54
Bijary	31
Moigi	47
Toranmal	24
Khuntamodi	63
Khadki	65

Based on Observation

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c) Characteristics of Nine Schools in Selected Villages

Class	Percent Attended School Out of Total Enrolled	Distribution of Enrolled Students by Class (%)	Student/Working Teacher Ratio	Student/Working Teacher Ratio (Observation)
1	21 (386)	32		
2	15(282)	22		
3	18(286)	23		
4	17(274)	22		
Total Primary	--	---	16.12	30.00

Note: 5th class is available only in 2 schools, (--) total enrolled, Based on observation

Excerpts from Observation in a School at Kakawadi

Kakawadi is a rehabilitated village, 1km from Dhadgaon. There is a Zila Parished primary school. The locality where the school is situated is dirty. Teachers as well as

students use a public urinal near the school. Students in this school do not get cooked mid-day meal but they receive 3 kg rice per month. Researchers visited the school at 2 o'clock. The school contains one classroom where students from 1st class to 4th class sit together. The same room is also being used as a storeroom for rice grains, stationery and wood. A table and two chairs for teachers are found in a half-broken condition.

TABLE 6

Amenities in School as Reported by Parents

Sr. No.	*Facilities*	*Percent*	
		Dropout	*Attending*
1	Mid-day meal	58.8	44.3
2	Drinking water	37.3	43.6
3	Playground	41.2	43.6
4	Toilet facility (boys /girls)	19.6	26.4
5	Free books	72.5	87.2
6	Free dress	72.5	74.7
7	Hostel	33.3	11.5
8	Scholarship	13.7	18.2
9	Library	5.9	6.8
10	Blackboard	96.1	86.5
11	Sitting facilities (desk/ mat)	29.4	37.2
12	Classroom	88.2	85.8
13	Electricity	41.2	27.7
14	Chair for teacher	78.4	78.4
15	Toilet for teacher (male/female)	9.8	13.5
		N=51	N=147

The teacher entered the class at 3 o'clock. There were 32 students and the number of enrolled students was 45; the teacher recorded hundred percent attendance. The small classroom was over crowded. Teacher gave same instructions to all the students. Students were sitting in groups. Some were playing games with a small stone (khade-khade), some were playing head and tail (chhapa-kata), while some were scratching on the books and some were going outside without taking permission from the teacher. Out of 32 students, only four students had a chappal and three students had a school bag. Some students were sitting along with their younger siblings who had not yet enrolled in schools. Many of the students did not know how to read and write. After the class, the teacher said, 'I am helpless; I am alone here and managing four classes along with maintaining office documentations. The officials at the head office want lot of information from us. How can I manage both teaching and clerical job?'

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TABLE 7
Amenities in Surveyed Schools

Amenities	*Number of Schools*
Electricity	1
At least one classroom	8
Free dress	1
Free books	9
Toilet facility	2
Drinking water	5
Mid-day meal	8
Pucca building	2
Blackboard	11
Table- chair for students	5
Chair for teacher	10
Playground	3
Library	1
Hostel	1

Note: Total number of schools observed were 11. None of the teachers in the surveyed schools was female.

Table 6 reveals the amenities available the primary schools in the selected villages as reported by the parents whose children are either dropped out or attending schools. More than 70 percent parents reported that free books and free dresses are provided, though toilet facilities are lacking in most of the schools. More than half of the parents said that their children do not have the provision of mid-day meal or drinking water which is a basic need. While more than four-fifths of the parents said that classroom was available, our observation did not support their saying. Observation in the field revealed that most of the schools did not have toilet facilities (both for students and teachers), electricity, provision of free dress, enough classrooms and *pucca* building (see Table 7). Though about half of the schools did have the provision for mid-day meals, in most cases uncooked rice was distributed to students for lack of space for cooking, fuel and also for low attendance of students. Provision for toilet facilities, drinking water, sitting arrangements for students and provision of basic books at schools are the bare minimal requirements for improvement of the quality of schools. The observation of schools in Dhargaon can give us a vivid picture about the standard of schools we have in tribal areas.

Excerpts of Observation of Schools in Dhargaon

Number of teachers in active service hardly ever crossed two and that they attended school less than twice in a week. Generally, majority of the schools had one room which

was also being used as a store for wood, rice grains, straw, etc. School timing was less than official hours. Although the average attendance ranged between 30-40 percent, the teacher records showed 100 percent attendance, for official statistics. Classes 1-4 were being imparted identical instructions without any difference with regard to syllabus or content. Even the medium of instruction (Marathi) was foreign to almost all the students. Instances of elder siblings accompanying their younger brothers and sisters to schools in the absence of proper caretaker at home were also seen. Schools were not distributing mid-day meals but were providing some uncooked rice to each student every month on a curtained day in the month.

As reported by one of the teachers, they felt victimized for getting this assignment and they were biding their time for the next transfer. Thus majority of the teachers were dissatisfied with low motivation level.

Majority of the parents, when asked about what more they wanted in schools, demanded 'good quality schools', which means regularity of teachers, concrete school buildings and provision of basic amenities. They asked for the provision of drinking water and toilet facility in every school. Teachers requested for storage facility of drinking water, electricity connection, and construction of more classrooms and renovation of school buildings. They also suggested the need for increasing the awareness of parents regarding the need for education through folk media.

However, government is trying its best to universalize elementary education, as it is evident from BDO's comments:

The SSA scheme has a target of 100% enrolment. We have reached very near to our target to enroll all children. But after enrolment, number of parents migrate to Gujarat or nearby cities during the month of October to March. The parents are apathetic in children's education. For these migrated children, we arrange "Sakhar Shala". The basic idea of "Sakhar Shala" is making of temporary arrangement for teaching the migrated children. Now 202 primary schools in Akrani(Dhadgaon) and 236 primary schools in Akkalkuwa are managed by Zila Parishad. We try to set up primary school in each and every village'

'We provide "Wasti shala" for each Pada if it is demanded by parents. "Wasti Shala" is a scheme to bring each and every child to school. In this scheme we appoint a local educated person as a "Swayamsevi Shikshak" (volunteer teacher) and give an honorarium of Rs. 2000/- per month. He teaches in local language.'

Policy Relevance and Suggestive Measures

The universalisation of education has been the central concern of the educational plans and policies ever since independence. A glance at the provisions made for educational expansion under the various five-year plans, the recommendations of bodies like Education Commission (1964-66), the National Policy on Education, Operation Blackboard, District Primary Education Programme, Sarve Shiksha Abhiyan, etc., are evidence enough that all such initiatives and steps are aimed at equalization of educational opportunities for all.

Education has still to play a significant role in the overall development of the poor people, especially the poor tribal population of India where there is high dropout and low participation rates which is again gender sensitive (Subhramanian, 2003). The impact of education policy, as mentioned above, on tribal population is disappointing because education planning in India does not take into account the educational needs and aspirations of the poor people. Studies by Balagopalan and Subrahmanian (2003) highlight that tribal children are pushed out of schools because teachers feel that tribals are too slow in understanding, the parents are idle and disinterested in their children's studies. The above mentioned authors also state that despite making elementary education a fundamental right, the sanctioning of one-room schools with less qualified teachers under Alternate Education schemes points to their creating a parallel and second-rate system of schooling for marginalized children. The major strategy of tribal education in India is an assimilationist one of providing residential schools and scholarships for all scheduled tribe children to study away from their homes, without the distractions and contradictions of their home-world (Hanemann Lopez, 2003). They study in a mainstream regional language and a curriculum divorced from their realities, transforming them, in most cases, into misfits in their own community by the end of their formal education. The Tenth Plan (2002-2007) in India had, for the first time, formally acknowledged the need to allow greater flexibility and initiated innovative programmes to meet the specific requirements of tribal pockets of the country (Hanemann Lopez, 2003).

The tribal education in our country is an enigma. The main reasons, as revealed in our study, are the lack of information facilities especially in the interior areas along with very poor transport facilities as well as poor quality of schools (see Ambasht, 2001; Kangas, 1999). Teachers and students have to walk 5-6 kilometres daily to reach their school. These problems get more aggravated during rainy season. Majority of the schools doesn't provide residential facility for the teachers and students. Boys and girls from interior villages prefer to go for work instead of attending schools that are far away from their village. Moreover, the family size in many cases is very large (12-14 persons in each family) and for feeding these members, it becomes necessary for them to engage in work. Further, many of the parents are not interested to send their children to school because of their poor economic condition. The tribals have their own folk songs, myths, traditions and stories. The tribal children would only feel a sense of oneness in their study and get interested in the school if their cultural aspects are embedded in the school curriculum. It is, therefore, necessary to keep these aspects in view while framing the syllabus.

It is also evident from our study that the medium of instruction is the greatest disconnect in the education system. It makes sense to have teachers from the same community or at least people communicating in the same language as instructors. In this connection it is worthwhile to highlight the efficacy of the innovation of "*Samaj Sevi Shikshak*" which could be further developed. A fact that needs to be highlighted is the discordance of observed and recorded data regarding the quality of schools. On paper, all

the schools undergo regular inspections, a very favorable student-teacher ratio, and first-class school attendance, though in reality the scenario is utterly different.

So, we can point out a number of loopholes; like poor school infrastructure, transportation bottleneck, unnecessary burden on teachers for clerical works poor quality of teaching, insincerity of students, poor attendance, problem in language of instruction and economic constraints at households for non-attendance.

The policy suggestions that can be based on this study are as follows:

We need to popularize the fundamental utility of education through campaigns, roadshows, door-to-door motivations by influential people of the locality, otherwise children of the *adivashi* communities would be failing to attend the basic education (Jadhav, 2008).

Enhancing the power of women is necessary to make them understand the need for girl's education. A positive attitude for girls definitely helps girls' attendance in school (Subhramanian, 2003).

While to retain children in schools some lucrative elements like adding extra classes that they like, providing good quality mid-day meals are required, compulsory vocational training along with regular study has to be included in the course curriculum. This training can augment future earning potential for these children who will benefit from dual utility of basic education along with an initiation into some basic vocational practices (Chattopadhyay, Guha, Durdhawale; 2005).

Economic uncertainty and financial hardship are the contributing factors for the age-old disinterest in education among the tribes of the less developed districts of Maharashtra. Thus increasing the sources of income is the only way to encourage their willing participation in basic education. In this connection, it is better to involve private sector's participation. Private-public partnership could be encouraged to actively promote income generating schemes, like contract farming on condition that government will extend tax holidays to the sponsoring companies if they provide financial and infrastructural support to take care of the educational requirements of the kith and kin of the poor. As hunger is more dangerous than illiteracy, the policy makers need to sort out and prioritize area specific problems. First and foremost, there is a need to implement programmes for a stable earning through land reforms, extension of irrigation, small scale industrialization, and provision of basic amenities for mere survival of the poor. Public-private partnership in innovative entrepreneurship is necessary to improve the demand as well as the supply side.

Teaching initiatives in local languages is a must for the tribal people, as experience suggests (Gautam, 2003; Sinha, 2005). People must be taught and learn in everyday contexts and much learning must be centred on the activities of the cultural calendar and ceremonial events. Learning should be made integral to and relevant to life as it has been observed in many parts of South and Central America which are predominantly inhabited by indigenous people. Western style education, which is followed by the Indian system of education, makes little effort to link numeracy to learners' prior knowledge and culture and hence fails to build on their understanding (Wallace and Eriksson, 2003). Research

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proves that beginning schooling in the children's first language, and using his language for continued learning and development, are the best ways for children to develop to their full potential (Lopez and Hanemaan, 2003).

Provision of transportation and basic amenities in schools need to be guaranteed to attract and retain pupils. If Himachal can achieve success in the midst of the mountain terrain, Maharashtra can also do the same. As transportation is one of the major bottle necks for teachers to come to the schools regularly, teachers and trainers at elementary level must be selected by the community, for the community and be monitored by the local governance.

Maintaining of registers and clerical jobs must be done by the para-teachers while teachers must be trained for elementary level teaching. Integrated culturally relevant thematic curriculum, based upon cultural calendar, should be developed by teachers and communities.

Indian education system has also declared in its policy plan that Universal Elementary Education (UEE) is contextual. The contextuality varies widely across the country. Therefore, the attempt would be to prepare district-specific and population-specific plans for UEE within the broad strategy frame of micro planning through people's participation.

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The School and the Community
Some Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

N. Jayaram*

It is a sociological axiom that the school does not exist and function in a socio-cultural vacuum and that it is inextricably intertwined with the community in which it exists. However, the fact that the school in India, as we understand it today, is an implanted institution both in its structure and functions, challenges the conventional understanding of school-community relations. The subject is further complicated considering that (a) there are various types and levels of schools and in different locales, and (b) the connotation of the concept of community has changed from its original association with geographical space to its current association with socio-cultural identity/identification. Keeping these considerations in mind, this paper explores the theoretical and methodological issues in the study of school-community relations in India.

Introduction

The school, as the formal social institution we know today, is of recent origin (Jayaram 1990: 23-27). It originated in response to the need for the transmission of a vast variety of accumulated knowledge and for socialisation in a complex culture associated with modern urban-industrial society. It is not that tribal and pre-industrial societies did not have arrangements for transmission of knowledge and socialisation, but the scope and scale of the institutions performing these functions were limited. In terms of their numbers, geographical spread and the number of years that children spend in them, the modern school system is unprecedented.

The growth and spread of the modern school system does not, however, mean that traditional institutions, like family, which once performed the socialisation and knowledge-transmission functions, have lost their significance. The family still provides not only physical care but also teaches the ways of society to its progeny. Parents continue to be the 'first educators of the child', and it is within the family that a child's personality is developed in its early and formative years. It is in the neighbourhood and wider community and culture that a child still continues to interact intimately and gets socialised further. Positioned as it is in such a socio-cultural milieu, the school can hardly be an autonomous institution. It is inextricably intertwined with the community in which it exists. The reciprocal relationship between the school as a formal social institution and

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* School of Social Sciences, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Deonar, Mumbai-400088.
Email: njayaram2@rediffmail.com

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the wider community in which it exists is captured under the rubric 'school-community relations'.

Not surprisingly, from early on, in the classical tradition of 'educational sociology' (as different from the later tradition of the 'sociology of education' or 'the sociology of school'), the school was viewed as the focal point of the community. In fact, the village school best represented the social integration of school and community. The teachers not only knew the pupils but also their families. The immediate neighbourhood provided much of the subject matter for the school. However, with community life undergoing change, it became increasingly difficult to hold the school as the focal point of community interest. This also necessitated attempts to establish and maintain school-community relationships. In the West, these attempts took many forms such as:

a) the encouragement of parent-teacher associations;
b) the development of school-community councils;
c) cooperation of the school with various organisations and interests in the community, including religious and political groups; and
d) increasing recognition of the importance of public relations in school administration at all levels.

Based on an appreciation of the focal significance of school vis-à-vis the community, educational sociologist Francis J. Brown (1961) enunciated the following principles as appropriate of school-community relations:

1) *Flexibility to meet the changing services of other organisations* – that is, 'the school should be sufficiently flexible to continually re-adapt its programme in the light of the changing services of other community agencies'.
2) *Adaptability to community background of the child* – that is, 'the role and function of the school should be determined in the light of the needs of the specific community background of the child'.
3) *Capability of extension to service the entire community* – that is, 'the school should develop a programme of activities and services to extend, refine, and integrate human experience for all age groups and at all levels'.
4) *Responsiveness to national and world needs* – that is, 'the school must relate itself to the larger community of the nation and the world'.
5) *Organisation for community-wide participation* – that is, 'effective service within the community for all its citizens can be achieved only through organisation in which the school should play a vital, but not necessarily the leading role'. In other words, the effective implementation of the first four principles requires definite organisation and community cooperation.

What such formulations ignored was the fact that the school-community relation is neither a one-way process nor is it static. In relation to the community, the school performs two functions: (i) transmits a formally authorised body of knowledge, and (ii) effects secondary socialisation. The school serves and impacts the community by

providing services which would not otherwise be available to the community. The functional outcome of the school vis-à-vis the community could often be conflictual: reproducing society and reinforcing its norms and values, on the one hand, and changing the societal patterns and norms and values, on the other.

The structure and functioning of the school is influenced significantly by the key human inputs that the community provides, namely, teachers and students; material inputs, including money; and cultural inputs in the form of values, including the value of education. Both teachers and students generally vary in their background characteristics, and communities differ in terms of the material/monetary support they can extend to the school and in their value systems. These diversities in the community's inputs into school impact it both directly and indirectly, and determine the functioning of the school and the outcome of its educational efforts.

It is important to note that, in specific instances, the nature of school-community relations and the outcome of the reciprocal relation between the two are a matter of empirical investigation rather than theoretical postulation. Since both school and community are variables, the matrix of relations between the two is complex.[1] Thus, generalisations about school-community relations can hardly be universal without provisos; they can only be context specific. This point has methodological significance for sociologists and educationists studying school-community relations, in terms of both the logic of procedure that it entails and the tools/techniques of data collection and analysis that it demands. This has also policy significance in that the policy prescriptions on school-community relations have to be flexible and the policy formulation must keep in view the context specificity of school-community nexus.

It was noted earlier that the school as an independent formal social institution originated in the West in response to specific historical and the obtaining socio-economic conditions. During the colonial era, this institution was transplanted into India and other colonies. This fact must be kept in mind in the discussion on the nature of school-community relations in India today. The nature of school-community relations with reference to the pre-colonial indigenous institutions of school-level learning, such as Buddhist *viharas*, Hindu *pathashalas* and *tols*, and Muslim *madrasahas,* will obviously be dissimilar.

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1 In an essay, published first in 1949, Wilbur B. Brookover and David Gottlieb included four points as being essential for 'an understanding of the community educational system and its integration in the total life of the community' (1970: 9). These are: '(1) the delineation of the community as it affects school organisation, (2) analysis of the educational process as it occurs in the non-school social systems of the community, (3) the relationship between the school and community in the educational function, and (4) demographic and ecological factors of the community in relation to the school organisation' (*ibid*: 8).

The School: One Concept, Many Referents

At the most general level, the term 'school' refers to 'an institution for educating children' (Pearsall; 1999: 1281). Sociologically speaking, it is 'a social unit devoted specifically to the process of education. It ordinarily includes some physical setting, particularly a building or buildings, and two categories of personal participants, i.e. teachers and pupils' (Fairchild; 1976: 267). However, such general, dictionary definitions do not tell us much about the nature of school as a formal social institution that we encounter as students of social sciences. Even a cursory analysis would reveal that there is a great variety of schools and, at the empirical level, this variety makes for substantial differences in the way schools relate to the community (presuming for the time being that the community is homogeneous and invariant, which it is not) or vice versa.

To start with, schools vary in terms of the level at which schooling takes place and the age-group to which they cater. There are primary or elementary schools, secondary schools and higher/senior secondary schools. The connotations that these labels carry in different countries differ, though at the entry and exit levels, there may be more agreements. For comparative purposes, in India, the accepted distinctness is in terms of 'standards' – from I to XII. The age composition of each successive 'standard' is more or less comparable: with entry into Standard I at around the age of 6 and the progress through each standard per year and exiting out of Standard XII at around the age of 18. To this, if we also add the pre-school 'schools' – called variously as kindergarten (KG, to be short), pre-primary, nursery, play-home, etc. – with their own internal gradation in terms of successive years (as in Upper KG and Lower KG), the range of institutions called 'school' would widen.

It is easy to understand that the nature and significance of school-community relations is vastly different at successive levels of schooling. Perhaps the community is in closest association with the school in the first couple of years that the child is in it. Accordingly, one has to give the greatest attention to school-community relations at the primary level. Irrespective of the previous pre-school experience, 'for most children the move into statutory schooling requires the most formidable readjustment' (Grugeon; 1993: 11). The child entering a new cultural field in the school has to learn new patterns of behaviour and relationships, which are predominantly adult-directed. The cultural resources that the child brings from the community may, no doubt, help it negotiate the new social situation. However, the cultural orientations of the school and the community need not necessarily gel. Often, right in the first few years 'school' becomes an alien institution to the child, and schooling an alienating experience. This aspect is often missed out in our understanding of the problem of drop-out of children from schools. This dimension is also crucial for understanding the phenomenon of 'counter culture' and 'subversive culture' – that is predominantly initiated and mediated by the children – in later years of schooling.

The second important dimension of the variations in school is its location. Schools located in villages (some of which are remote or interior) or tribal hamlets (which are generally inaccessible) are undoubtedly different from schools in small towns or big

cities. Some of the village schools are two-teacher schools, which are structurally different from the multi-teacher schools. Even in towns and cities, it matters where the school is located. In a spatially circumscribed village, the school best represents the focal point of the community and an ideal typical case for the study of *organic* school-community relations. As mentioned earlier, in such a school, the teachers not only know the students but also their families. Members of the village community, whether they have school-going children or not, invariably know the school teacher(s). In fact, for a long time now, the village school master has been a key actor/agent in rural life.

The dynamics of school-community relations in city schools is markedly different. Here, the school functions more as an association in which the involvement of both students and teachers is segmentary and the role interplay is more formal. The community's interest in school is mediated more by governmental channels rather than by community members *per se*. Compared to the organic nature of school-community relations in rural areas, the school-community relations in urban areas (especially, the big cities) appear to be *synthetic*, if not forced. In fact, let alone the members of the community at large, even the parents may not know the teachers of their wards. This is particularly so, once the status passage of the child from family to school is completed. Of course, the community baggage of the child is never shed; the reference to school as an alienating experience and the development of counter/subversive culture made earlier is apposite here, too.

Schools vary also in terms of their gender composition. There are single-sex schools meant exclusively for boys or girls, and co-educational schools catering to both boys and girls. Some schools are co-educational in the first few years, but are single-sex at a later stage. Given the strong imprint of patriarchy on our society and the prevalence of gender-based dual value system, the orientation of education of boys and girls remains significantly different. The social construction of gender and gendered socialisation in our schools is reinforced by the socio-cultural orientations of the community at large. Obviously, the gender dimension in the variety of schools offers yet another direction to our understanding of school-community relations.

Who owns/manages the school for what/whose interests is yet another significant dimension in the typology of schools. To the extent that school education is a public good and a responsibility of the state, the government schools (or those run by its allied agencies like the board, corporation or municipality) constitute an important segment of schools. These schools, by and large, cater to the educational needs of the socio-economically weaker sections in the rural areas. There is a large number of schools in the private (not-for-profit) sector, which receive grant-in-aid from the government. And finally, there are private (for-profit) schools catering to the well-to-do sections of the society and those who are aspirants for upward social mobility.

It is well known that schools vary widely in terms of the quality of education they impart and the quality of products they turn out. In the popular conception, good quality education is associated with private schools (ironically, some of them are called 'public schools') and poor quality education is coterminous with government schools. Exceptions

to this, no doubt, are easy to find. What is particularly noteworthy about the government schools is their strain towards uniformity and rigidity, and pronounced indifference to the overall cause of education because of the bureaucratic way in which the school system is administered. However, considering the socio-economic background of the vast majority of the population, especially those living in the rural areas and inaccessible regions, government schools appear to be their only hope for access to education.

Regrettably, however, the indifference of the teachers and administrators of the government schools is matched by the apathy of the community towards these schools. Reading reports about community orientation to government schools in urban as well as rural areas makes one wonder whether it makes any sense to speak of school-community relations with regard to such schools. It is in this context that the much touted idea of 'community participation' in schools becomes meaningful. Contrastingly, considering their profit orientation, private schools are more sensitive to the community needs. Selfish as their motives may be, they devote some attention to school-community relations even if the community members (especially in the urban areas) are not interested in it.

Finally, their orientation to primordial considerations, such as religion/sect/denomination, caste and region/language, adds another dimension to the variety of schools. There are schools run by religious/sectarian/denominational and caste groups, tacitly or explicitly proclaiming their bias in favour of their respective groups. Interestingly, such groups are often called 'communities', and in that sense the meaning of 'school-community relations', or 'community-school relations', assumes a different connotation altogether, especially if the 'community' is not co-terminous with a geographical boundary (as in the case of village community). Minority religious communities have the constitutional right to administer schools (and other educational institutions) to protect their cultural interests. Understandably, some of the schools run by religious communities or caste groups offer religious instructions to their wards. The Muslim *madrasaha*s, the Christian convents, the Brahman/Lingayat *mattha*s are typical illustrations. Often they combine religious instructions with general education offered in other schools.

The government schools – or schools run by its allied agencies like the board, corporation or municipality – are by definition secular in nature. Similarly, the private grant-in-aid schools (other than those protected under the minority rights) are expected to be neutral to primordial considerations. However, both in government schools and private grant-in-aid schools, there is a discernible majoritarian orientation. While this is understandably a function of the demographic composition of the school population, it puts the secular ethos under strain and creates an uneasy feeling among the students and teachers belonging to the minority communities.

India is a multi-religious country, and a home to all known major religions in the world. The resulting demographics of religion and inter-religious relations have significance for our understanding the school-community relations. The nature of school-community relations would expectedly vary as per the community that is characterised by

religious homogeneity (minority or otherwise) and that which is diverse in its religious composition. Lack of sensitivity to the primordial orientations of the community adversely affects both the educational process at the school and the community relations at large.

Irrespective of the level and type of school, a key factor that has a bearing on school-community relations is the heterogeneity of the students and teachers, the two key human elements in the schooling process. Apart from religious differences, caste and class hierarchies may be significant in the community. The continuing exclusion and oppression of ex-untouchable caste groups by upper and/or dominant caste groups is well known. Under compulsions of democracy, differences and hierarchies can create contestations and conflicts in the community, and this can have serious consequences for school-community relations. scholars studying community participation in schools are well aware of this.

In understanding the school-community relations, with reference to the school *per se*, the distinction between two pertinent foci needs be drawn: the *intra-mural* (classroom) and the *extra-mural* (playground). The *classroom* constitutes the main arena for most of the formal educational activities of the school. The child spends most of its school hours inside the classroom and some children are made to spend a significant portion of the time outside the school (at home or in tuition classes) for reinforcing what has gone on in the classroom. Generally, parents too place considerable, if not exclusive, emphasis on classroom transactions and their outcome as reflected in the child's educational performance and achievement. Hence, the significance of classroom and the transactions taking place there, both formal and informal, for our understanding of school-community relations.

Speaking of classroom transactions, it is necessary to problematise the formulation and delivery of school curriculum. One recalls here the thrust of what was advocated as the 'new directions for the sociology of education' in the early 1970s (see Young; 1978; Karabel and Halsey 1977: 52-61). Nell Keddie has highlighted two aspects of 'classroom knowledge' about which we could raise questions: 'what knowledge teachers have of pupils, and what counts as knowledge to be made available and evaluated in the classroom' (1978: 133). 'This', according to him, 'involves casting as problematic what are held to be knowledge and ability in schools rather than taking either as given' (*ibid.*). In India, this has been dealt with by Avijit Pathak (2002) and Padma Sarangapani (2003); it needs to be explicitly built into our understanding of school-community relations.

The playground is the second arena that must be considered in understanding school-community relations. The *playground* constitutes the main arena of most of the informal educational activities of the school. It is true that in many schools, the playground is conspicuous by its absence. The open area around schools, and the street in the case of many schools in urban areas, becomes the locus of out-of-classroom activities – co-curricular, extra-curricular and non-curricular – of the students. It is here that the social and cultural life of the community directly impinges on the life of students. The extra-mural life of the students has a significant bearing on the intra-mural transactions and the

overall outcome of the schooling process. This dimension has not received much attention from the social scientists; this too needs to be explicitly built into our understanding of school-community relations.

The Community: The Metamorphosis of a Concept

In the foregoing discussion on the nuances and implications of the multiple empirical referents of the concept of school for an understanding of the school-community relations, the meaning of the keyword 'community' was taken for granted. The term 'community' was used as if it is and has been a static concept about whose meaning there is general consensus. We should hasten to clarify that this is far from being so. The concept underlying the term community, which has been in the English language since the 14th century (Williams; 1976: 65-66), has undergone metamorphosis over time, especially during the last century or so, and is devoid of any accepted definition today. This has serious implications for our understanding of school-*community* relations.

In their one-time classic textbook, *Society: An Introductory Analysis*, R.M. Maciver and Charles H. Page write: 'Whenever the members of any group, small or large, live together in such a way that they share, not this or that particular interest, but the basic conditions of a common life, we call that group a community. The mark of a community is that one's life *may* be lived wholly within it. One cannot live wholly within a business organisation or a church; one can live wholly within a tribe or a city. The basic criterion of community, then, is that all of one's social relationships may be found within it' (1962: 8-9).

Maciver and Page were clear that communities '*need not be self sufficient.* Some communities are all-inclusive and independent of others. [....] But modern communities, even very large ones, are much less self-contained' (*ibid.*: 9; emphasis as in the original). They further clarified that 'We may live in a metropolis and yet be members of a very small community because our interests are circumscribed within a narrow area. Or we may live in a village and yet belong to a community as wide as the whole area of our civilisation or even wider. [...] Communities exist within greater communities ...' (*ibid.*).

What is important, when it came to *the bases of community*, Maciver and Page highlighted the centrality of 'locality' *and* 'community sentiment'. 'A community always occupies a territorial area', but locality, 'though a necessary condition, is not enough to create a community. [....] There must be the common living with its *awareness* of sharing a way of life as well as the common earth' (*ibid.*: 9 and 10; emphasis as in the original).[2]

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[2] The emphasis on 'locality' and 'sentiments' can be found in many older textbooks in sociology. For example, according to Alex Inkeles, 'A community exists (1) when a set of households is relatively concentrated in a delimited geographical area; (2) their residents exhibit a substantial degree of integrated social interaction; and (3) have a sense of common membership, of belonging together, which is not based exclusively on ties of consanguinity' (1965: 68).

In their delineation of the concept of community, Maciver and Page, no doubt, were influenced by the best-known distinction between *Gemeinschaft* (community), based on *Wesenwille* (natural will), and *Geselllschaft* (society or association), based on *Kürwille* (rational will) drawn by the classical German sociologist Ferdinand Töennies (1957). The general idea underlying this distinction has been part of the typological tradition in sociology from Emile Durkheim (mechanical and organic solidarity) through Max Weber (types of action orientation), Charles Horton Cooley (the primary and secondary groups), Robert Redfield (the folk-urban continuum), Howard Becker (sacred and secular societies), Pitirim A. Sorokin (familistic, contractual and compulsory relations) to Talcott Parsons (the pattern variables of action orientation).

Sociology, however, has moved far away from the conception of community referring to spatio-temporal entities, in which face-to-face interactions are by definition important.[3] The definitional criterion of the concept of community now revolves around 'identity', which has to do more with imagined commonalities even among people who may not be personally acquainted (Anderson; 1983), than with face-to-face interactions among people living in physical contiguity. (Of course, face-to-face interaction can solidify and reinforce community identity.) Accordingly, we have such expressions as religious communities, caste communities, linguistic communities, diasporic communities, etc. all hinging on 'consciousness of kind' in narrow reference group terms.

It must be observed, however, that the concept of community defined in terms of face-to-face interaction in a spatio-temporal context is nevertheless meaningful in village India.[4] The family, let alone the individual, being an autonomous unit is still new or non-existent in most villages in the country. Perhaps it is with reference to schools in villages that one can speak of school-community relations as per the conventional paradigm. It is in this context that the debate on community participation in primary education becomes important and meaningful.

Community Participation in Schools

It is a well-established fact that, while attempts have been made to spread education by expanding primary schools in rural areas and to meet the public commitment to providing a school within one kilometre of walking distance from every village, schools have not

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3 For discussions on the concept of community in Indian social sciences, see Jodhka (2001), Kaur (2001), and Upadhya (2001).

4 As Alex Inkeles notes, 'the example most commonly used, most familiar, and most directly accessible, is that of the peasant village. In such a village the peasants and their families usually live in fairly close proximity, and their common residence area is clearly demarcated and known to them. Most of the villagers' interaction is with other residents of the same village. The inhabitants will commonly consider themselves of the village, know its name, acknowledge their membership in the community, and be defined by and treated by those from other communities in accord with the standing of the village from which they come (1965: 68-69).

become entrenched as formal social institutions in villages across the country. The response to educational efforts in the rural areas is far from satisfactory. The problems confronting rural education are well known to be discussed here. There is a belief that government-directed educational effort at the school level, with its emphasis on uniformity and its lack of sensitivity to community sensibilities, makes schooling an alienating experience for children.

In the mid-1980s, The National Policy on Education – 1986 (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 1992) recommended empowering the communities for the management of schools at the local level. This is sought to be achieved through appropriate institutions at the district, sub-district and panchayat levels – such as the district education board, village education committee, etc. – so that community members can play an active role in the management of primary education. The District Primary Education Programme, implemented in different districts, has been described as 'an exercise in decentralised planning and disaggregated target setting to encourage and promote local initiatives in primary education' (Verghese, 1996: 13). It is hoped that all such initiatives in community participation in primary education will contribute to the increase in the rates of enrolment and decrease in the rate of drop-outs from schools. This idea got fillip with the 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments.

There are various shades of meaning attached to the phrase 'participation'. Sheldon Shaeffer summarises these as follows:

(a) the mere *use* of a service ...; (b) participation through the contribution (or extraction) of resources, materials and labour; (c) participation through 'attendance' ..., often implying passive acceptance of decisions made by others; (d) participation through consultation on a particular issue; (e) involvement in the delivery of a service, often as a partner with other actors; (f) involvement as implementers of delegated powers; and (g) most completely, participation in real decision-making at every stage – identification of problems, the study of feasibility, planning, implementation, and evaluation (cited in Govinda and Diwan; 2003: 15).

With reference to school-community relations, all these meanings seem to suggest that participation lies in 'exhorting generally reluctant community members to take active interest in the education of their children' and/or 'liberalising the otherwise rigid administrative framework to make way for participation of community members in educational management' (*ibid*). Evidence, however, point to the fact that the problem of community participation in schools is 'much deeper and complex' than what theoretical literature on the subject seems to suggest.

Anjali Noronha distinguishes between two different kinds of community 'involvement' (participation) in schools: (i) spontaneous or generic kind of involvement, and (ii) political involvement. The *spontaneous* kind of involvement 'exists and evolves in society' and includes: '(a) parents being partners in their children's education by supporting them at home; or (b) parents and community leaders showing interest in schools by contributing time or resources to support school development, solve problems of space or facilities, or lend a helping hand in school matters' (2003: 100). The *political*

involvement takes the form of '(a) playing a watchdog role – supervising and keeping an eye on the teacher; (b) controlling the use of resources and their deployment; (c) raising issues for larger educational change; or (d) influencing the curriculum and the way it is implemented' (*ibid*).

Besides the government-sponsored programmes of community participation in primary education, including the total literacy mission and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, there have been experiments in alternative education, for example, the Shiksha Karmi and Lok Jumbish experiments in Rajasthan. The experience of community participation in school education – in Bihar (see Kantha and Narain; 2003), Karnataka (see Mohan, Dutt and Antony; 2003), Kerala (Tharakan; 2003), Madhya Pradesh (see Noronha 2003, see also Govinda; 2003), and in Rajasthan (Ramachandran; 2003) – so far has been mixed. Whatever success that has been achieved in this regard, seems to be associated with mobilisation of the community for social causes, as in the case of the Kerala Shastra Sahita Parishad (Tharakan; 2003: 50-51).

An examination of the community participation experiment in the larger context of school-community relations, as suggested above, is necessary. For instance, it can reveal why village education committees, that are supposed to function as school governing bodies, have done well in some cases and have become dysfunctional in others. Such an analysis will also problematise the community, which appears to have been taken for granted in policy framework for 'community participation': Who represents the community? Whose interests do they represent – the dominant castes/classes or that of the oppressed?

Viewed from the perspective of school-community relations, it is easy to understand the need for defining community participation in 'the specific context of primary education' (Ramachandran; 2003: 56). In the absence of such contextualisation, 'community participation' will remain a misused and misunderstood word in development jargon (*ibid.*). Since foreign funding agencies (including the World Bank), besides the government agencies, are talking about and advocating 'community participation' as a panacea for the ills of school education, and coming as this prescription does in the wake of the process of liberalisation, its legitimacy is also suspect. This is particularly so considering that the idea 'is being propagated vigorously when the public sector is being condemned for its "inefficiency", privatisation is being generally promoted and, under the World Bank-IMF conditionalities, the social sector is experiencing major cuts' (Saxena; 2003: 76).

Sadhna Saxena cautions policy makers, educationists and social scientists to be wary on community participation as a policy prescription: 'Given the fractured state of our social polity on the lines of class, caste, religion, region, gender and ethnicity, presided over by an overtly bureaucratic state', she fears that '"community participation" can very easily acquire dangerous and retrogressive forms' (2003: 97). She, therefore, emphasises the need to 'deconstruct and spell out' the concept of 'community participation' rather than 'oversimplify' it (*ibid*).

Epilogue: A Note on Methods

How do we go about studying school-community relations? Obviously, there is no one best method for studying a complex subject such as school-community relations. It is, no doubt, tempting to suggest 'triangulation' as the appropriate methodological strategy. We have massive data on school education from various large-scale surveys and periodical reports on programmes. We also have additional insights resulting from small-scale, localised studies, using the interview method and focus group discussions. What we seem to lack are detailed investigations of diverse aspects and of the complexities of human social interaction in the context of schools.

The use of the ethnography for researching school-community relations may be emphasised here. The significance of ethnography lies in the fact that it treats the familiar as strange and to 'make' rather than 'take' problems for investigation (see Hammersley and Atkinson; 1983). This is well illustrated by Michael F.D. Young's compilation of essays on the new sociology of education (see Young; 1978). Ethnography is the qualitative method *par excellence* (see Nakkeeran; 2006). Qualitative methodology provides scope for the reformulation of the research problem and yields insights that would be missed in a survey research. Thus, theory, as B.G. Glaser and A.L. Strauss (1967) would have it, becomes 'grounded' in data.

Among the various facets of school-community relations that ethnography as a qualitative method can explore, classroom practices, social construction of schooling, discipline and social control mechanisms, school sub-culture, status passage, oral culture of the extra-mural arena, language codes, patriarchy and gendered socialisation, perceptions and understandings of boys and girls of the capabilities and future destinations, community orientations to school and education, community involvement in school and school-related activities, the role dynamics of the teacher, etc., are important. Ethnography of the school is thus the quintessential method for a better understanding of school-community relations.

Before concluding, it may be noted that the study of school-community relations cannot be exhausted from within the perspective of any one discipline. Introducing the last of the posthumous volumes of Karl Mannheim, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Education*, W.A.C. Stewart wrote that 'At the risk of being cloven by a sociological spade or a psychological pick, I would say that if every any study was interdisciplinary, it is education. It is liable to serious distortion if any particular scholar gets his magnifying glass on just a part of it' (1962: ix). This is true of the study of school-community as well.

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RESEARCH ABSTRACTS

A Study of Organizational Commitment in Relation to Alienation and Leadership Style

Title:	A Study of Organizational Commitment in Relation to Alienation and Leadership Style
Research Scholar:	Tanu Shukla*
Supervisor:	Dr. Sushma Pandey
Department/ University:	Department of Psychology, DDU Gorakhpur University, Gorakhpur-273009
Degree awarded:	M. Phil
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Introduction

In a teaching learning situation, it is the teacher who manipulates all the elements in order to achieve predetermined objectives. A teacher who does not have commitment cannot achieve the desirable results. It is a general belief that the teachers' commitment is influenced by the conditions prevailing in the environment of institutions and the conditions characterizing the job itself. The alienation may be one of these conditions. Leaders are the key figures who can so change the work culture that all employees are motivated to work hard with the results that goals are achieved. The success of any organization depends upon the dynamic, desirable and effective leadership. The saying "as the leader, so the group", is true in achievement of educational administration.

Objective of the Study

i. The study aims to examine the role of gender, experience and type of management on alienation, leadership style and organizational commitment.
ii. To study the relationship that might exist between alienation, leadership style and organizational commitment.

* Ph. D. Scholar, NUEPA, New Delhi-110016. Email: tanushukla8@gmail.com

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iii. To investigate the role of alienation and leadership style on organizational commitment of teachers employed in higher education institutions.

Method

This study is correlated in nature. However, a (2x2x2 Management: Aided & Unaided; Gender: Male & Female; Experience: Long-term Experience & Short-term Experience), factorial design has been used to make comparison among groups on studied variables.

Sample

A total of 160 college teachers of Gorakhpur University were involved in the study. These teachers were selected through stratified random sampling techniques. A break-up of this sample of colleges, according to other characteristics forming part of this study, was as male-female; aided-unaided and of short and long-term experienced teachers. Thus in all, fifteen colleges were selected for present investigation. From every college, teachers were selected through random sampling technique. A sample of 160 teachers was drawn from the total population.

Measuring Tools

In order to measure variables, following tools were used:

1. Teachers Academic Alienation Scale, (TAAS)
2. Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ)
3. Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)

Variables, such as type of management, gender, experience, need no measurement device. These are readily identifiable from the background records.

Procedure

The study was conducted in two phases. Firstly, subjects were contacted individually. The researcher established proper rapport with each subject selected for the study to elicit sincere and candid responses. Each subject was introduced about the problem of the study and it was assured that their personal views and information would be held confidential. After receiving their consent, they were requested to fill up the background information, i.e. age, name, education, family, socio-economic status, etc.

In the second phase, after getting appointment, the subjects were approached on specified time and place. Sequentially, they were given all the three questionnaires and requested to complete the work as quickly as possible. After accomplishment of this work, measures were collected and they were praised for their cooperation.

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Results

Obtained data were scored according to the defined rules given in manuals and were treated statistically in terms of ANOVA, Correlation and Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis.

A close perusal of results indicated that teachers differed significantly on degree of alienation. Results revealed that alienation was found more in non-aided college teachers than in teachers of aided colleges. Alienation was reported more in female teachers than in male teachers. Level of alienation was found to be more in less experienced teachers than more experienced teachers.

Initiating structure style of leadership was found higher in aided college teachers; both style of leadership was found higher in male teachers than in female teachers. Results revealed that more experienced group of teachers perceived their principal adopting consideration style, and less experienced group of teachers perceived their teachers adopting initiating structure of leadership.

In order to find linkages between leadership style, alienation and organizational commitment in teachers, correlation was computed. An inverse relationship was found between organizational commitments of teachers. Results also showed that there occurs positive relationship between initiating structure of leadership and positive relationship was also found between consideration style and organizational commitment of teachers. It reflects the direct and positive relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment of teachers.

Step-wise, multiple regression analysis was calculated to assess the contributing role of alienation, leadership style on organizational commitment of teachers. Results evinced that alienation contributed negatively in the prediction of different domains of organizational commitment. Consideration and initiating structure styles of leadership contributed negatively in normative commitment. Results further indicated that initiating structure of leadership style contributed positively in the total organizational commitment in teachers.

Discussion

By and large, it is assumed that teachers of aided colleges do not have much interest in discharging their responsibilities because in these colleges, doing the duty with no emotional involvement is the common characteristics of bureaucracy, which largely forms the major component of administration of aided colleges. But contrary to the view, alienation in non-aided colleges has been found higher. The reasons may be substandard work conditions prevailing in non-aided colleges, dissatisfaction due to lack of better future prospects, absence of academic motivation, all these alienating them from their work. Female teachers are managed by principals of institutions. As such they are not free to regulate actions and enjoy free working conditions as male teachers do. Doing the duty with no personal interest and ineffective system of colleges force them to suffer mental trauma, as a result alienating them from their work. Alienation was found more in

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less experienced teachers than more experienced teachers. The reason may be that the young teachers are likely to be professionally more attuned towards the job than the middle aged groups and when they discovered absence of academic maturation, it created alienation in them.

Results reveal that teachers in aided colleges report to their leader more about initiating structure of leadership than teachers of unaided college teachers. The reasons may be that unaided college teachers are more concerned with the achievement of organizational goals. Their responsibilities are shared and decision-making is based on consultation and participation among the teachers, whereas the aided college teachers do not benefit from free working conditions and their decisions are made exclusively by their leader. Teachers of aided colleges perceive their leader to be relationship-oriented, so it fosters an environment of working together and taking pleasure in free working conditions.

Leadership style was influenced by the gender difference also. Female teachers perceived their leader to be adopting initiating style of leadership. The reason may be that females are more emotional than males, so they view their leaders least concerned of values it inhibited them to regulate their actions freely. On the other hand, male teachers perceive their leader to be working towards the interest of the teachers since they had the opportunity to work in free holdings so they get satisfaction from their work culture and draw meanings from organizational setup. Teachers having more experience find their leader more relationship-oriented than the less experienced teachers. Having spent comparatively more time in the institution has attuned them to the conditions prevailing in the institutions. They felt satisfied with the system and were more emotionally involved in discharging their duties.

Teachers of aided colleges were more emotionally attached to their work and dedicated towards the organization. Absence of academic motivation in non-aided college teachers lowers the level of commitment in teachers. The aided-college teachers know the costs associated with leaving the organization, hence are more committed. Unaided college teachers are not bound by their emotions, and therefore are less dedicated to their duties. Female teachers feel dominated by male teachers and so they are not obligated to continue their job. In the beginning of the career, young teachers are more committed to their work, because of enthusiasm. Individuals in an organization are not emotionally attached to their profession so there is loss of sense of values in them. Overall commitment of the teachers is found significantly related to initiating structure style of leadership. Teachers find channels of communication with their principals to be very strict. As such, they do not perform their duties properly, which effects their commitment towards work.

Research in every field of knowledge occupies important place. The present research seems to be significant in its own context. The information obtained may be more useful for those concerned with management of higher education institutions. Some possible reasons which make the teachers more prone to be alienated may be identified and effects controlled through specially designed strategies. The efforts should be made to shape and

train the education administrative behavior that is conducive to the development of commitment in teachers. It can be concluded from the findings that the participative management is effective for group productivity. Mutual trust, warmth and respect in the relationship between heads of the institutions and teachers are the key ingredients towards the betterment of the system. The finding implies that this information should be disseminated to the main authorities of the institutions in order that they may realize the importance of teaching learning situation.

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National University of
Educational Planning and Administration
(MHRD, Government of India)
17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Post-Doctoral Fellowship (PDF)
Programme at NUEPA, 2010

Applications are invited from eligible scholars/candidates desirous of undertaking post doctoral research in specialized areas of educational policy, planning and management at the National University of Educational Planning and Administration. Candidates, preferably below the age of 35 will be considered for these fellowships.

The amount of Fellowship for pursuing Post-Doctoral research will be Rs. 18,000/- per month. Interested candidates may visit the University website *www.nuepa.org* for further details regarding eligibility, application modality and other terms and conditions. Details are also available on the Notice Board of the University. Last date of submission of application form is 20th April 2010.

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BOOK REVIEWS

MULKEEN, Aidan and DANDAN, Chen (2008): ***Teachers for Rural Schools: Experiences in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda***. African Human Development Series, Washington DC: World Bank, ISBN 978-0-8213-7479-5 (Paperback), Pages: 119, Price: not mentioned

Teachers for Rural Schools: Experiences in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda delivers an educating and illuminating account and perspectives on rural education with its peculiar problems of teacher deployment, utilization and management in Sub-Sahara African countries of Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda. Noted are also references to other countries such as Ghana, South Africa, Zambia, Chad, Ethiopia, and Sierra Leone, using them as specific cases to illustrate particular issues about rural education and teacher deployment. The scope of the book also goes beyond the identified issues as it gives a glimpse of the teacher training process as well as educational funding of each of the countries under study. It is, therefore, an excellent resource to experts in basic education development, international education, comparative education, teacher education and educational administration. In reviewing the book, the principal criteria include content, organization and reference sources.

Starting with an executive summary of all the countries' reports, attempt was made to establish the link between educational attainment and economic advancement/poverty, with a brief mention of Sub-Saharan Africa's rating in the world development index. This is not being alarmist as, apart from reiterating established truths, it serves to show the gravity of the problem at hand. Though an executive summary, it is detailed enough to satisfy a cursory reader as it highlighted the challenges of education in rural regions of Africa such as teacher deployment, and its overlapping issues like access, quality, attainment, enrolment, attrition, pupil-teacher ratio, gender, urban-rural disparity, teacher utilization and management and school supervisions. Reference was also made of efforts and developments by each country in addressing some of the issues showcased. In what is termed as 'promising solutions', the researchers' suggestions were articulated on ways of solving the problems.

The preview notwithstanding, the subsequent parts of the book are divided into chapters. Chapter one which was a general introduction more or less served same purpose as the executive summary. Though in a deeper sense, it gives a kind of correlation and comparability of reports of issues being discussed, the policies and practices within and across the countries, often backed by data, and citing specific instances and cases of even other African countries not within the scope of the study. The exposition of these issues illuminated the general problems of education in Africa as majority of her regions are still rural in outlook. Three interesting realities were, however, inferred from this chapter.

One, attempts to solve one problem often lead to myriad of others; two, African problems are rather entwined and can only be solved through multiple approaches; and three, despite the presented general trends and issues, each African country has its salient uniqueness as what works for one may be disastrous for another. This makes the 'promising solutions' suggested in the executive summary not conclusive. This may also account for the use of the word 'promising' as against 'total' or 'absolute'.

The reader is taken through subsequent chapters in terms of reports by each country under study. The reports are comprehensive enough and organized under similar themes such as teacher demand and supply, deployment, utilization and management, all backed by sub-themes. From these accounts, the reader has a sense of experiencing the situations as they affect these countries. Though the countries are geographically different, they are presented to have similar experiences, maybe due to comparable background experience of being former colonies and third-world countries. Salient experiences that are general to all the countries are explored such as teacher recruitment and deployment system, which can be central (Malawi), provincial (Mozambique) or school line (market system) as in the case of Lesotho. Incomplete schools, mixed classes, cluster schools, shifting, and multi-grade teaching (which is not a desirable alternative in developing countries, and which is not included in the curriculum of basic schools and teacher training programmes) are common experiences. Strategies for redressing deployment imbalance were explored, though gender imbalance seems particularly knotty, which has serious implications for the achievement of a key EFA goal- achieving gender equality in education. The teaching load of teachers is also relatively similar.

Despite little differences in case studies, the countries' collective experience showed that deployment of teachers in all cases are not effectively done, and that in an attempt to solve access problem, quality is often compromised, which tends to indicate the access and quality are mutually exclusive in Sub-Saharan African education. A critical food for thought!

The organization and narrative mode allow the reader to flow easily with the accounts and reports. Each report is composed of several defining parts that maintain a sense of continuity throughout the volume. A background is given on each country's teacher administrative policies and practices before going into specific problems of study. A summary of key issues is presented at the end of each chapter. Within each report are assortment of tables, figures and graphs that describe through extensive data collection, evidences to support claims, perspectives and projections. There are no abstractions and explanations are given in concrete terms which make the book an interesting read. The data are devoid of bogus statistics and they are presented in simple and readable style, as they are self-explanatory.

Unfortunately the tables seem weighty as even minute issues, in some cases, are illustrated with tables. There was also evidence of over-reliance on government generated data, which sometimes may not show the actual pictures/accounts of issues, often for political reasons. The question is what efforts were made by these researchers to authenticate the data given by the Ministries of Education and other government

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agencies? Some data are also given on projections. There is need for further study to determine in future if and when the projections are attained. Finally, given the multi-lingual nature of the African communities, language of instruction has always being an issue with quality achievement in rural schools in Africa, hence, the medium of instruction should have been given prominence in the reports. Only Lesotho made slight reference to this, and this was scantily done.

The above concerns notwithstanding, ***Teachers for Rural Schools…*** is a great effort by the practitioners of education development (ministry officials, international organizations, teachers' unions, and school administrators) to converge on issues germane to Africa and basic education and by exploring and comparing notes over such, with a single purpose of finding collective solutions and borrowing from each others' experiences. Among several efforts at improving rural education in Africa, the book has an added edge with its focus on teacher deployment. With this collective effort, one major verity is established- the role of teacher and teacher education programmes in national development. It is, therefore, imperative that Sub-Saharan Africa makes vigorous efforts to produce adequate and qualified persons to take up the teaching of her citizens, in order to 'improve the base of human capital' and 'attain the level of growth needed to reduce poverty and reach the Millennium Development Goals' (p.1), by 2015?

Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education
Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria.

Adeosun A. Oyenike
aadeosun@unilag.edu.ng

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MERCY Tembon and LUCIA Fort (eds.) (2008): ***Girls' Education in the 21st Century: Gender Equality, Empowerment and Economic Growth.*** The World Bank, Washington DC; p. 334.

The book addresses the challenges for educational development of girls and the determining factors for gender inequalities in education based on empirical evidence of different countries. The book is the product of a two-day symposium on "Education: A Critical Path to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" held at the World Bank during October 2-3, 2007.

There are three parts of the book. Part I entitled 'Education Quality, Skill Development and Economic Growth' consists of five chapters. It addresses the issues related to education quality, skills development and economic growth. Part –II examines the equity aspects of education discussed in the next five chapters. The country specific ground level experiences for promoting gender equality are presented in 7 chapters in Part – III. The last chapter recapitulates the main findings, concluding observations and future action plan to achieve gender equality in education.

The opening chapter (Chapter 1) provides the major insights of all the chapters of the book. In other words, a thematic review of the entire book is lucidly presented by Mercy Tembon in this chapter. In Chapter 2, an attempt is made by Eric Hanushek to examine the linkages between educational quality, economic growth and better economic institutions with empirical evidence of both developing and developed countries. The author argues that not mere school attainment by the students but quality in terms of skill development is one of the strong determinants of individual earnings, income distribution and economic growth. By taking cross-country examples, the author has established the association between better performance in school and increased earnings of individuals. The author recommends to introduce policy reforms to provide quality education to girls for enhancing their participation in the labour market to enhance their earning ability.

Chapter 3 examines the quality and equity aspects of the learning outcomes in mathematics, science and reading from a gender perspective by using the results of PISA (programme for international student assessment) in all OECD countries in 2003. He observed that girls always perform better than boys in reading while boys show significantly better performance than girls in mathematics. The gender difference is mostly due to lack of inputs and motivation for girls in mathematics. The policy tends to be performance related rather than a general policy for girls' education.

Chapter 4 presents the returns to education across gender particularly based on the review of the studies by Psacharopoulos and Patrions. Some of the major insights of this chapter are: i) overall returns to education of females are higher than males; ii) Private returns to education at any primary level in most of the developing countries are lower for girls than boys. Based on the empirical evidence, the author emphasized not only increasing enrolment but improving quality by providing various incentives for eliminating gender gap in education.

In Chapter 5, the relationship between education and labour market outcomes for women in Pakistan labour market is examined using the data collected from the 3rd round of Pakistan Integrated Household Survey (PIHS) in 1998-99 and RECOUP Household survey in 2006-07. The effect of education on earnings is examined through Mincerian earning function model. The authors observe that education does increase gender equality in labour market outcomes and reduced gender gap in earnings. But the benefits of education start reaping only after 10 years of schooling and very rarely women in Pakistan go for higher education after secondary level due to socio-cultural norms. Significantly higher returns to education for women than their male counterparts suggest that '*education can be a pathway*' to gender equality in labour market in Pakistan which is highly segmented with wide gender gap in access, quality and outcomes in respect of education.

The main constraints of gender equality in education and strategies for improving access, equity and quality in education in different countries facing poverty and conflict are discussed in 5 chapters in Part –II of the book. Chapter 6 documents the patterns of in equalities in educational attainment within and across countries using 220 sets of household data collected from more than 85 countries. The author argues that the

inequalities associated with economic status are typically larger than those associated with gender, orphan hood and rural residence. The educational gap associated with economic status within the country is much larger than across countries. Disability of children rather than economic status contributes significantly to differences in educational attainment. Differential policy options rather than one uniform policy as suggested by the author are likely to be more effective solution for improving overall educational quality.

Chapter 7 discusses the issues regarding the education of socially excluded girls in developing countries. The author reviewed some of the action programmes to promote education for socially excluded girls along with some policy recommendations from both demand and supply side. On the supply side education policies need to address discrimination and broaden school options while on the demand side incentives for households to send girls to school in terms of conditional cash transfers, scholarships, stipends and school feeding programmes are recommended.

Various approaches used to achieve EFA and MDGs in education are evaluated in Chapter-8 from gender perspectives. The main approaches discussed by the author are WID, GAD, Post Structural, and Right Based and she found that different approaches contribute differently to gender equality and quality education. The author strongly recommends for Child Friendly Schools (CFS) that will address all the relevant issues to promote gender equality. In Chapter 9, the author has highlighted how Gender based violence (GBV) is deep rooted and culturally accepted in Benin, despite the adoption of new law to prevent such practices that affect the education of girls in schools to a great extent. This type of violence negatively affects girls' educational performance, achievement, self-esteem and overall health (both physical and psychological) which ultimately results in loss of national productivity. The author has recommended some practical solutions to address GBV in order to promote girls education. Some of the global policy developments that promote gender equality are discussed in chapter 10. Appropriate strategies for promoting gender equity in education in the context of crisis, post-crisis and state of fragility are recommended.

Part-III of the book presents the experiences of different countries to improve girls' education. Various examples of best practices from Afghanistan, Columbia and Bangladesh to promote girl's education are presented in Chap 11 to 13. The issues relating to economic and socio- cultural barriers to education are examined with empirical evidence in these chapters. The authors recommend several concrete measures to promote gender equality and empower women by incorporating cultural values and practices. The study on Bangladesh suggests for future research to assess the overall impact of educational institutions particularly Madrasas as one of the providers of education.

In chapter -14 the authors argue out the case for improving agricultural training including that for women in Africa as their enrolment in this branch of education is found to be extremely low particularly at the post secondary level. The enrolment of women at the post secondary level is constantly declining over time. The authors recommend to

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make special efforts to support agricultural post secondary education and mainstreaming gender into these efforts through various measures. Chapter-15 discusses the achievements of the Forum for African Women Educationist (FAWE), one of the leading NGOs, advocating for girl's education in Africa over the past 15 years. FAWE has established institutional relationship starting from grass root level community to the Ministries of education in order to promote girls education by overcoming the constraints of their education in Africa. Chapter-16 examines the intervention strategies adopted for achieving gender equality in basic secondary education in the Republic of Yemen by 2015. Since the gender gap in education is one of the major constraints of development, the authors recommend sustainability in its education reforms by improving the access and quality in education simultaneously and reducing the poverty in rural areas through integrated, multidimensional and strategic interventions.

The book concludes with detailed discussions of all the previous chapters along with the recommendations of World Bank operations to improve girls' education based on empirical evidence. It is also brought out clearly that the current policies and programmes do not percolate to those who really need them the most. This calls for new directions to promote gender equality, empowerment and economic growth in the 21st century through girls' education. Five strategies are recommended for this purpose i.e. quality and learning outcomes, access and equity, improvement in post primary education, research and development and strengthening partnerships. These strategies if translated into policy properly and implemented as part of World Bank operations, would no doubt, be able to achieve gender equality, empowerment and economic growth on a sustainable basis by 2015.

On the whole, the book is one of the few valuable books and a quality production in girls' education. It is a compact volume with focused analysis of the specific problems of girls' education emphasizing on the challenges faced by different countries. The book provides various strategic interventions to promote gender equality in education in 2015 with illustrations from different countries of the world. The empirical evidences presented in the book can easily be replicated to different countries. The exhaustive reference materials related to girls' education will greatly help to the researchers, students and teachers in education. The analytical clarity and logistics of the chapters of the book have crowded out the limitations of the book which are negligible. The key messages, country wise examples and specific policy recommendations presented in the book will no doubt help countries to eliminate gender inequality and empowering women. The World Bank and all the authors deserve gratitude for their endeavour in bringing out such an important volume.

MIG-I, 62/2, CS Pur Housing Board Colony
Bhubaneswar-751016, Orissa

Sailabala Debi
s_debi_99@yahoo.com

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Praveen JHA, Subrat DAS, Siba Sankar MOHANTY and Nandan Kumar JHA (2008): ***Public Provisioning for Elementary Education in India***. Sage Publications India Private Limited, New Delhi. pp 454 (ISBN-978-81-7829-832-0) Price: Rs. 575.00 (HB).

The book under notice is a revised version of the study's some aspects of financing of elementary education in select states of India at the current juncture. The study was supported by Aga Khan Foundation, India. It focuses on elementary education in the context of the ongoing efforts towards universalizing elementary education in the country. The book tracks budget expenditures and budgetary planning process in the current flagship programme of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) across four states – Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, and Rajasthan. The study addresses the causes of fiscal crises in states in the era of policy reform and policy measures required in improving the flow of public expenditure on education.

In the 'Foreword', Dayaram writes that there are several concerns central to the contemporary discourse on public provisioning of elementary education in India. These range from the adequacy of the magnitude of public expenditure, and the composition of such expenditure to the bottle necks in the states that can restrict the impact of public expenditure on educational outcomes. It is emphasized that much less is known about the intricacies of state budgetary provisions for education, including how they were in balanced or shaped by recent reforms in the sector, for example – decentralized planning in the districts.

The study has focused on the period 1993-94 to 2004-05 for analysing the education budget of the selected four states along with those of the central government. Sarva Siksha Abhiyan has been taken as a case study to examine the institutions and budgetary process in elementary education in the four states. For the last two years i.e. 2004-05 and 2005-06, much greater attention has been given to the data related to SSA. The primary information collected with regard to implementation of SSA pertains to February 2006 and April 2006. The information focused on planning for implemented of SSA in two districts of each of the four states. The respondents were primary government officials dealing with SSA at the state and district levels, grass-root activists/heads of NGOs working on issues related to elementary education in the selected states were also interviewed. Here the primary attention has been given to two educationally backward states – Bihar and Rajasthan. The analysis of two states – Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat has been done to supplement the analysis for Bihar and Rajasthan (p.31).

India began its journey towards universal elementary education since the dawn of independence, though efforts were made for free and compulsory education earlier. In 1950, the Indian Constitution emphasized that the state shall endeavour to provide free and compulsory education for all children upto 14 years within ten years (Article 45), But, the country still had about 3.53 crore children in the age group of 6-14, who were out of school in 2000-01. However, the right to education is an important issue that requires immediate attention. The constitution (86 amendment) Act 2002, seeks to make free and compulsory education a Fundamental Right for all children in the age group of

6-14 years by inserting a new Article 21-A in Part III (Fundamental Right) of the Constitution. Article 21A says that State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of age group 6-14 years in such a manner as the state by law determine (India – 2009), Subsequently, the Rights of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill 2009 was passed by both the houses of Parliament. The President described the Bill as landmark legislation for achieving the goal of universal education. (*The Hindu*, August 15, 2009). The Act has come into force with President's accent and notification (*The Hindu*, September 3, 2009) In this context the authors note that India's is a vast country and to provide compulsory education to more than 100 million children across 1.1 million habitants and numerous social groups/sub groups requires not simply launching a modestly funded scheme, but a much more serious and comprehensive programme of action. The current allocation for elementary education are very much below the requirements given the short falls with respect to the above objectives current policies and programmes continue to be inadequate.

The scheme of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched by the Government of India in 2001 to pursue universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) in a mission mode. SSA is a centrally sponsored scheme in which assistance under the programme was on a 85:15 sharing arrangement between the central and state governments during the Ninth Plan, at 75:25 during the Tenth plan and at 50:50 thereafter. Subsequently, the sharing arrangement between the central and states for the Eleventh Plan has been modified. Accordingly, the share of states in SSA is to increase progressively from 35 percent in 2007-08 and 2008-09 to reach 50 percent in 2011-12. The goals of SSA are: all 6-14 age children in school/EGS centre/bridge course by 2003, all 6-14 age children complete five years primary education by 2007; all 6-14 age children complete eight years of schooling by 2010; focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life; bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary and upper primary stage by 2010; and universal retention by 2010. However, the progress has been slow and gaps are quite significant.

The study found wide gaps at the state and district level. At the state level, it was found that around 8.1 percent of primary schools in the country do not have any class rooms. In Rajasthan alone such schools account for as high as 22 percent of all primary schools. Around 15 percent of all primary schools run with simple class room in India. In Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat and Rajasthan, single class room schools account for 34 percent, 15-54 percent 15 percent and 4.4 percent, respectively. While in Gujarat and Rajasthan the pupil-classroom ratio is around 34 and 36, in Andhra Pradesh it is around 43 students and in Bihar 85 students depending on a classroom for their primary education. Around 1-18 percent primary schools, 3-8 percent primary cum upper primary schools, 5-56 percent upper primary and high school's run without any teacher posted in the school. In Bihar and Andhra Pradesh around 15 percent, and in Rajasthan around 39 percent primary schools are single teacher schools. In Andhra Pradesh, 49 percent schools do not have drinking water facility. Around 57 percent primary schools in Andhra Pradesh, 84 percent in Bihar, 55 percent in Gujarat, and 51 percent in Rajasthan

do not have toilet facilities. Around 90 percent primary schools in Andhra Pradesh, 62 percent in Gujarat, 94 percent in Rajasthan and 99.5 percent in Bihar do not have electricity connection, but 2-3 percent schools in Bihar have computers. Lastly, more than 20 percent primary schools in Bihar and Rajasthan operate without a blackboard (p.104).

At the district level, it was found that around 40 percent primary schools in Rangareddi are private run but control more than 50 percent of total students. Proportion of single classrooms is highest in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat districts. In Dungarpur, only, 0.6 percent schools are single classroom but 46 percent schools are single-teacher schools. Pupil-classroom ratio is highest in Bihar districts, 10 in Purnia. Pupil-Teacher Ratio is highest in Bihar districts, 89 in Purnia and 82 in Gaya. Retention rate is highest in Rangareddi – 56.6 percent and lowest Purnia – 30 percent (p. 104).

The authors stress that a decent quality of infrastructure for school education accessible to all sections of society has to be primarily the responsibility of the state from the perspective of equality and justice. Despite realizing UEE, there has been a compression of budget expenditure (as a proportion of NSDPI by most of the states. The decade from mid-1990s onward has witnessed that many states in India are confronting a serious crisis in their fiscal health. Their response to the fiscal crises has been a reliance on CSS for Plan expenditure, and the expansion of school facilities through low cost, non-formal arrangements such as the appointment of para-teachers. By 2001-02 grants for CSS as a proportion of total central grants to the states has reached 22.7 percent for Andhra Pradesh, 23-9 percent or Bihar, 23-3 percent for Gujarat, and 32-9 percent for Rajasthan. The major factors affecting resource absorption capacity of the states were attributed to the bottlenecks in the planning and budgetary process being followed by states in SSA.

The authors note that adequacy of planning process in a district can play very important role in determining the success of utilization of SSA funds in that district. If the district level officials are not aware of the varying needs across the different habitants under the district, it might become extremely difficult for them to disburse available funds in an effective manner. The formulation of district plans for SSA in Bihar and Rajasthan has not followed a consultative/ participatory process.

Regarding the utilization of funds by the selected states, the authors observe that the pace of utilization of funds in Bihar has been relatively higher for activities which do not require the creation of additional capacity for programme implementation at the grass roots level, such as school grants, teacher grants and one time grants for TLE, and maintenance and repair work. On the other hand, the pace of utilization of funds has been slow for activities which require strengthening of programme delivery system at the grass root level. Al though Rajasthan has performed better in utilization of funds for civil works in case of rest of activities it too presents a skewed pattern of utilization. Activities that do not require any significant spreading of programme delivery mechanism at the sub-district levels spent funds at a much faster rate, while most other activities have suffered from a slow rate of fund utilization. A positive feature about SSA in Gujarat

seems to be the priority for teacher training in the total expenditure in the state. The overall pace of utilization of funds in Andhra Pradesh shows a remarkable improvement in 2005-06 in comparison to previous years. The expenditure on management costs rose from 3.3 percent in 2004-05 to 3.9 percent in 2005-06. The pace of utilization of funds shows a remarkable rise.

For the implementation of UEE programme, two studies are cited i.e. Tapas Majumdar, and Central Advisory Board of Education studies. Tapas Majumdar Committee 1999 suggested that the additional expenditure for achieving UEE based on the norm of two classrooms and two teachers per school and reaching gradually to a PTR of 30:1 by the tenth year would be Rs. 1,36,922 crore over a ten year period from 1998-99 to 2007-08. The amount was expressed at 1996-97 prices. The CABE committee 2005 presents the estimates for the period 2006-12. It assumes that public spending on education was raised to 6 per cent by 2006-07 (but it was not done), the required additional expenditure amount to an average of Rs. 53,467 crore per annum or about 1.1 percent of GDP on conservative estimate. Recently HRD Minister said that Rs. 2,00,000 crore would be needed for RTE over the next five years. The HRD Ministry estimated a short fall of Rs. 60,000 crore, but the Prime Minister had made a public commitment to find the revenues. (*The Hindu*, September 1, 2009)

The study concludes that to revive the fiscal health of the poorer states without causing any deficiency in public investments by the states in social sector such as education, the federal fiscal architecture of the country will have to be reviewed and the centre-state fiscal relation will need to be redefined (p. 422) Among other aspects, the study recommends that the conditionality of the debt write off scheme introduced by Twelfth Finance Commission under which the states are required to cut down their revenue deficits by a pre-determined proportion every year must be reviewed. The FRBM Act should be scrapped, both in the states as well as at the Centre and the central and state governments should provide greater resources for SSA over the next five years with a view to address adequately the relevant needs in the elementary education sector.

In sum, the book looks at the functioning of the SSA in some states and also the constraints in achieving the goal of universalization of elementary education in the country. No doubt, finances play a crucial role to meet the objective of UEE, but non-financial factors such as the commitment and involvement of all stake holders concerned with educational of children are needed. We are rightly concerned about out of school children who constitute a significant number and they should be brought into the educational stream. However, much needs to be done for those who are already in the system to provide them education of at least minimum standard of acceptance at a reasonable cost. The book will be interest to both specialists and generalist. A useful contribution.

B-58, Inderpuri
New Delhi-110012

P.C. Bansal

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Shalini ADVANI (2009): ***Schooling the National Imagination: Education, English, and the Indian Modern.*** New Delhi: Oxford University Press. ISBN-13:978-0-19-806275-2, p. 205; Price: 575 (Hardbound)

The book deals with the multi-dimensional aspect of language and nationalism in India. The issue is placed in the context of the competition between English, once considered to be a colonial legacy and today a symbol of modernity, and regional languages as cultural elements of Indian nationalism. There are two levels of discussion of the language issue in the book. At the theoretical level the author discusses the place of English in Indian nationalism and national development. At the practical level the book deals with English as a subject matter of teaching-learning in the school curriculum in so far the knowledge of English is considered desirable, if not necessary, for individual citizens of the modern India. Thus the book deals with the place of English as a language within the educational system in India as well as the pedagogical aspects of English language within the school curriculum. The author has undertaken these tasks in the book with a socio-historical investigation into the place of English in India and a pedagogic analysis of English in the school curriculum and the instrumental role of the school curriculum in the formation of national identity and development. In the author's own words, the "work examines English studies in the school curriculum in India, and uses this as a lens to explore the shifts in the construction of nationalism, modernity, and identity in independent India" (p.1).

The book is organised into three sections. The first section deals with the national education policy in general and the English language policy in particular in India. The three chapters in this section place English language as part of the modern Indian nationalism through a historical analysis starting from the colonial period. The second chapter of the section, entitled "Language and the Postcolonial Predicament" is an excellent socio-historical analysis of the language issue, especially English since the colonial period through the postcolonial India. The third chapter of the section, "Education for Nationalism" presents the policy attempts made after the independence for pursuing nationalism through education.

The second section of the book explores how the policy on education (or the role of schooling in the formation of the secular and nationalist citizenship) has been realised in the school curriculum. This is done through an examination of the school textbooks in the post-independence India and identifying the differences between contemporary textbooks and those of the late sixties and early seventies. Here a comparative analysis of three sets of state-produced textbooks has been undertaken by the author, viz. the books of the NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training) at the national level, of the SCERT (State Council of Educational Research and Training) of the Uttar Pradesh state government, and of the SCERT of the Kerala state government. The author draws several interesting and important conclusions from the study of the textbooks. They include the shift in the contents of the textbooks to an "inclusive political culture" wherein the "definition and construction of the nation has shifted from valuing

homogenisation to acknowledging the existence of difference" (p.93), extensive "descriptions of the rural idyll, focussing on its beauty and productivity" (p.96), absence of the mention of rural hardships (p.118), silence on the question of caste in India (p.119), and neglect of the role of the majority subaltern groups in national movement (p.120).

The second section has also a chapter entitled "Engendering the Nation" that analyses the role of women and family as presented in the textbooks. The author concludes that "in both the old and the new books, wives and mothers as house workers constitute the most visible face of ordinary women" (p.131) and "the education system is locked into a masculine, nationalist rhetoric, which makes women a pure and uncritical signifier of Indian nationhood and nationalist tradition" (p.145). The chapter in itself presents a good content analysis of the textbooks from the gender perspective. The reader, however, has not been able to place it coherently under the theme of the book, viz. nationalism and language (in particular English) education in schooling in India.

The third section is largely based on an ethnographic study of classroom situation where the teachers and students are engaged in the teaching-learning process. In the chapter, entitled "Using Texts: An Ethnography of the English Classroom" the author presents the classroom situation in teaching English from three schools in the urban Hindi-speaking belt of north India – located in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. The first two are Hindi medium schools and the third English medium. The students belong to the same category of first generation learners. The observations of the author clearly depict the pedagogic inadequacy in the process of teaching-learning English. "Neither the textbooks nor the teaching strategy which they impose with, enable them to acquire English for life or even for success in the examination" (p.167).

The concluding chapter of the book, entitled "Nationalist Pedagogy, Sub-national Identities, Transnational Desires" is a good discussion on the dilemma of the dialectics between English and regional languages as they exist today in India. The author reiterates here the real situation, mentioned in the introductory chapter, of "a widely and casually accepted link between English and the modern. Simultaneously, there is a conception of a modern which is *not* English but regional, an Indian modern located in a multiplicity of different regional languages, one that is not dependent on English for the making of the modern self" (p.2).

The book is forthright in presenting the reality of the dominant role of English not only in colonisation during the colonial period, but also in the nationalism of the modern India in the post-independence period, despite the stiff competition from the regional languages on account of ideological compulsions and the elitist features of English education. The book is not shy of stating that the role of English in post-independence India is no more what it was under colonialism and that English is very much Indian and part of nationalist and modern India. In author's own words: "English no longer carries the burden of its past, the colonial marks of its origin. Instead, it is re-inscribed with new meanings. Everyone in India – the poor and the marginalized – wants to learn English. It is a language that is Indian, like many other languages are, but it is perceived as enabling

access to the world" (p.22). This shift in the discourse on the place of English, as the author observes, has been fashioned by the growing power of the new middle class that has been increasingly taking to English education. At the same time the book is honest in presenting the dilemmas of the dialectics between English language and regional languages in India. The author has succeeded in showing what is unique to language education in schooling in India, viz. that "the location and space of English as a language produces a different complexity and deeper anxieties over identity in a nation with history of colonialism" (p.3). In sum, the book has a clear and interesting objective, an excellent theme in the socio-politics of language education in India, and the author has pursued it successfully.

Rajagiri College of Social Sciences
Kalamassery, Kochi – 683104

Jacob Aikara
jaikara@rajagiri.edu

Elspeth PAGE and JYOTSNA (eds.): ***Exploring the Bias, Gender and Stereotyping in Secondary Schools.*** Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London.

The present book is a pioneering work on examining gender issues in textual and contextual situations in selected co-educational and single sex secondary schools of seven commonwealth countries. These countries represent four main regions of commonwealth namely-Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Within these regions the countries that have been selected for undertaking in depth research on exploring gender bias and stereotyping in secondary schools are – India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Samoa, Seychelles, and Trinidad and Tobago. Located in different socio-cultural, economic and educational context effort has been made by authors of all the seven narratives to analyse in a holistic manner issues related to equity, equality and quality in the entire schooling processes that includes textbooks, classroom processes, outside classroom activities, student teacher and peer group relationship. The focus of all the case studies is to see whether the secondary agents of socialization reinforce attitudes and beliefs among children that conform to the existing social milieu of their respective countries or do schooling process generate situations of contestation whereby children are empowered to question and critique existing power relations.

The rich tapestry of each research study that forms part of the book has been undertaken at a very opportune time when world over governments and the civil society are struggling to achieve the targets set by Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Achieving these targets in a stipulated time frame has guided the road maps of several countries for formulating their educational policy or revisiting it if required. In this regard the two MDG goals that is relevant in the domain of education are-achievement of universal primary education and promotion of gender

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equality and empowerment at the secondary levels. The educational policy and the vision and mission statements of all the countries have taken cognizance of this fact.

In the domain of education as reflected in the present book, some of the selected commonwealth countries are at varying stages of educational development. Malaysia, Samoa, Seychelles, and Trinidad and Tobago have achieved near universal primary education which countries like India, Pakistan and Nigeria have yet to achieve. These countries also have endemic problem of gender disparity in education at all levels with participation rate of girls being lower than the boys at all the stages. In the context of secondary education the former countries as depicted in the book are plagued with the problems of lower participation rates of boys and their relatively under-performance. The diagnostic researches that form different sections of the book analyse gender dynamics in classroom settings and schooling processes to unravel complexities of issues that impact equity, equality and quality education.

All the research studies in the present book are basically qualitative in nature. Information of the narratives has been largely derived from existing secondary and primary sources. In connection with primary sources the focus was to examine how gender sensitivity is woven in curriculum and its transaction in all schooling processes in a holistic manner. This includes the hidden curriculum that is visibilised in the language of address, attitude of teachers, assignment of roles and responsibilities, peer group interactions, in single sex and co-educational schools. All the case studies have adopted triangular method in eliciting information on the present theme by organizing focus group discussions with stakeholders, organizing interviews and conducting in-depth classroom observations. The methodology adopted was to capture all the nuances of the field situations. Classroom processes in selected single sex and co-educational schools were observed. Since each schooling experience is unique within and outside the country there could be no uniform generalisation.

The present book has contributed in a big way in demystifying the notional belief that providing access to all children is in itself not a complete reflection of equity and equality in education. In fact, classroom processes and all schooling activities that include classroom management, pedagogical approaches, children's participation within and outside classroom settings, attitude of teachers, peer group interactions, language of address, assignments of roles and responsibilities cumulatively impact gender issues in education. They either strengthen biases and stereotypes or attempt to negate it. The sample of the all the case studies encapsulates a critical mass of school going children who are adolescent boys and girls. It has been rightly stated that this stage of children's development is a bridge between childhood and adulthood, wherein identity formation takes place. Socialization practices in the family, community and in the schools has a bearing on influencing attitudes and behaviours of children at this impressionable age. These processes often shape behaviour pattern of children that are related to masculinity and feminity.

It is significant to note that the common denomination that cuts across all the in-depth case studies, relate to perpetuation of societal biases and stereotypes that is

reinforced by the entire schooling ethos. Tailor made masculine and feminine roles that largely views women as nurturer and carer and men as prime bread winner and decision maker are woven in all textbooks related to sciences, social science, mathematics, and languages. In countries where textbooks do reflect women's contributions in conventional and in the unconventional domains such as India and Trinidad and Tobago, they have been done it in a tokenistic manner. Very often the approach followed is add women and stir. Women are either suffixed or prefixed in textual materials. The contextual situation also conforms to the existing social milieu. The pedagogical processes followed in most of the classroom settings as mentioned in the book have been teacher centred with very little spaces been given to children's participation. In situations where schools and teachers worked on an already tested model for good teaching and resource management such as Malaysia were unable to address biases and stereotypes in curriculum and curriculum plus activities. Pure sciences for boys and arts and languages for girls were accepted by teachers as something that was normative and was also taken for granted and accepted by both the sexes. In terms of facilities regarding sports, games and library, little attention was given to girls in the select schools of Malaysia. In Samoa, Trinidad and Tobago, Pakistan and India, schools represented the mini society which was a site of conformity and not deviance. They reproduced social cultural capital that reflected the hegemonic dominance of patriarchy.

The understanding of gender as a social construct by teachers and those in the school management appeared to be extremely limited. Gender issues in education were often understood as biological difference between sexes. This was visible in the case studies of Trinidad and Tobago, and Seychelles. In the Indian case study gender was understood as providing equal opportunities to both sexes. In the Malaysian context the teacher's perception of gender was mirrored with stereotyping. This was reflected in their perceptions that boys were less responsive and less responsible and that they could not be controlled, falling back on the notional myth that 'boys were boys' and for girls it was believed that they were well behaved, responsible and would do well in the exams. These preconceived beliefs regarding behaviour patterns of both sexes as mentioned in this narrative reinforces the impression that role reversal was something that was not possible and teachers assigned tailor made roles ascribed for boys and girls by the society.

An important issue that is flagged in the book relates to addressing conflicts and social tensions in schools. In this context there is a mention that teachers in nearly all settings did not play a very proactive role in addressing situations of physical and emotional violence. Reasons for perpetuation of different types of violence varied from country to country and instances of ensuring physical safety particularly to girls was seen as a major challenge across countries. Issues related to puberty were not sensitively handled by teachers in Malaysia. Gender based inappropriate behaviour patterns and instances of violence as referred in the book could have serious ramification on the enrolment and participation of girls in secondary education. Piecemeal efforts as stated in some of the studies relate to adoption of gender segregate activities and in assignment of task that would ensure minimum interaction among sexes. In Trinidad and Tobago and

Seychelles school tried to adapt codes of conduct and version of personal and social education to address high rates of teenage relationship and pregnancy. However, measures adopted were not sufficient to address behavioural problems and conflicting issues among the adolescent children.

The educational and occupational aspirations of future voices of each sample countries were coloured with stereotypes. Girls generally wanted to pursue education and professions that were an extension of their private domain and boys wanted to be future bread winners of the family. This aspect was found in all case studies.

Presently the book is extremely relevant in countries where the research has been conducted as it has suggestive policy implications for making educational processes at the secondary level gender inclusive. Such holistic researches can also be undertaken in other countries to explore whether their educational processes address issues of equity and equality in a substantial manner. It has also attempted to remove mirages in the understanding of gender equality, that equality of access and provision does not ensure substantive equality. It encompasses a broader canvas that includes educational processes its outcomes and overall achievement. While the methodology adopted has captured every details of classroom processes and schooling practices, it could also have looked into some of the link institutions such as PTA's and other related ones to see whether they in any way influence the perpetuation of societal biases and stereotypes or help in gradually undoing it. It could also include perceptions of parents to see how they socialize their children since infancy as boys and girls to know how personality traits related to boyhood and girlhood are formed.

The book is a must reading for all those involved in education policy planning, researchers and students.

Department of Women Studies, 5th Floor
Zakir Hussain Block, NCERT, New Delhi-110016

Gouri Srivastava
gourisrivastava_7@rediffmail.com

Kuldeep MATHUR and James Warner BJORKMAN (2009): ***Policy-Making in India - Who speaks? Who listens?*** Har-Anand Publications Pvt. Ltd., pp.184, Price: Rs 395.

Public policy is said to be "as old as the history of human governance" and policy analysis developed over centuries of history. Scholars quote from the studies made in ancient India and Greece on political analysis. Robert Dahl, for instance, refers to political analysis receiving " an extraordinary degree of sophistication among the Greeks some 25 centuries ago under the tutelage of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle." History and tradition apart, in modern times the research studies carried out by scholars like Harold Lasswell, Daniel Lerner and others and the setting up of public policy schools earned for the discipline a new identity and stature in the twentieth century. Some Indian scholars,

who studied under them or those inspired by their work, attempted to make serious studies on public policy in independent India but the study of policy process has remained "a neglected dimension of Indian scholarship" as the authors of this work Kuldeep Mathur and James Warner Bjorkman point out.

This is a timely publication authored by two highly experienced professors of Public Administration and Public Policy with several prestigious publications to their credit. Kuldeep Mathur has held important positions like Rector of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Director of India's National Institute of Education Planning and Administration and Member of UN Experts Committee on Public Administration. J.W. Bjorkman, Professor Emeritus at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, was on the faculties of Yale and Wisconsin universities and Executive Director of the International Institute of Comparative Government in Lausanne, Switzerland. Since 1990s they have carried out a number of research studies on public policy and also a comparative study on the roles of bureaucrats and technocrats in policy making in the areas of health and education in India and The Netherlands.

"The current product is the third book of our collaboration," they inform in the preface.

The neatly organized nine chapters of the book cover a wide range of ideas and issues. The first chapter titled ***Policy Studies in India*** offers an overview of the subject and the methodology adopted. "Several queries guide this study" begin the authors raising such questions as, how public policies are enacted in India, the actors and institutions that provided information to shape the options from which policy choices were made and the changes that have occurred over time since a dominant party system gave way to coalition politics. In the chapters that follow focus is on institutional framework for policymaking, the major role players such as politicians and civil servants and agencies, research institutes and commissions of inquiry, ending with 'trends and perspectives 'in the practice of policy making in India.

Jawaharlal Nehru, often called the architect of Indian democracy, so dominated the national scene that his decision to assign a superior role to the scientists and economists in policy making and make the Planning Commission 'the exclusive theatre' for the formulation of economic policy was justified by the argument that economic strategy required it. The induction of technocrats and experts into policy making process muted the role of the public and the elected representatives who "had little say in wider deliberations about India's future." Policy and research groups multiplied and specialists and experts played a major role in the deliberative processes. Public discourse was 'characterized by pervasive technocratic influence'. The authors opine that "the development strategy espoused by Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi neither alleviated poverty nor strengthened the country industrially. Economic disparities among the people and the regimes and regions within the country increased over the years. Politics began to be dominated by demands for equality, justice and development." Political leadership failed to respond to the demands of long term policy making. Bureaucratic control over policy making grew at the expense of leaders and elected representatives. P.C. Alexander

former Private Secretary to the Prime Minister is quoted to show how ministers abdicated their power and responsibility by sending files to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi for approval. As the Prime Minister did not discourage the practice it continued and "a new practice of ministers voluntarily subjecting their decision making powers to the authority of the PM even in cases where it was quite unnecessary." Ministers, the final arbiters of public policy as initiators, selectors and legitimators of public policy voluntarily subjected their decision- making powers to the authority of the Prime Minister.

In describing the role of the bureaucrats as policy advisers, two models are presented 'partnership or self interest', and 'gatekeeper.' Civil servants who belong to the former category 'optimize strategies in order to advance career opportunities for promotion within a bureaucracy' while those belonging to the latter act as gatekeepers 'who control access to information and play a more decisive role in policy making.' The authors point out how bureaucrats 'serve their own interest in advising their political masters and dilute their own professionalism in order to do so.' The bureaucracy has turned out to be a self-perpetuating elite retaining its critical role despite several reforms that have taken place during the last fifty years. Instead of becoming an instrument of change it has grown into an obstacle to development. Colluding with the political leadership for 'short-term gains' the bureaucrats have ceased to be the "Platonic guardians of the old ICS mythology."

The process of liberalization that began with the return of Indira Gandhi gained momentum under Rajiv Gandhi's leadership. The economic reforms initiated in the 1990s altered the policy research environment to a considerable extent. The earlier phases witnessed low quality research output and even an 'absence of policy research environment in Indian universities.' The third phase has been characterized by the proliferation of think tanks and research instituted, all trying to influence public policy making though social scientists, except economists, feel hesitant to go near the echelons of power.

The last two decades have witnessed the rise of coalition politics and neo-liberal economic policies. The rise of coalition politics may have resulted in 'a policy of survival instead of a politics of policy' as the authors observe. Development strategies have, however, undergone changes in consonance with the requirements and challenges of the times in this age of tremendous technological changes. Public-private synergy calls for structural reforms and innovative approaches. The need for 'an institutional framework that would impel the three societal actors – state, market and society – to work together' has been recognized. Public policy should aim at public interest not vote banks. Scholars and researchers should bear in minds that "policy is an arena of contestation, of bargaining and compromises, and of negotiation and politics" and exploring the complex policy making process in 'the complicated political system that spans one-fifth of humanity' is crucial and necessary.

Commending the work of Kuldeep Mathur and James Warner Bjorkman, Professor Jean Blondel of European University Institute, The Hague, writes in his foreword that "the book examines most concretely, with numerous examples, the detailed "anatomy", so to speak, of all the elements which have contributed to the "practice" of decision

making in the sub-continent." The 'short volume is exemplary', as Blondel says, for examining the anatomy of the bodies concerned with policy making and also the key changes that have taken place in the 'philosophy' or 'ideology' of the government of India 'from Nehru to the early years of the twenty first century.' India, in spite of the recurring hiccups and the obvious imperfections, remains, for Blondel 'a fascinating example, probably the most fascinating example in the contemporary world.' Professors Mathur and Borkman have, in Blondel's words, "rendered a major service to the political science community by showing that one can dissect thoroughly and clearly the model which India constitutes, while also examining carefully the transformation which the political system underwent in the process."

Compacting a wealth of information, laced with lucid analysis and diagnosis of the malaise with clinical thoroughness and precision, into a book of just 184 pages including appendices, references and index, makes this work a fascinating and thought-provoking work. Brevity is the soul of profound scholarship also.

Centre for Policy Studies
Visakhapatnam

A. Prasanna Kumar
gourisrivastava_7@rediffmail.com

Donald BUNDY, Carmen BURBANO, Margaret GROSH, Aulo GELLI, Mathew JUKES and Lesley DRAKE (2009): ***Rethinking School Feeding: Social Safety Nets, Child Development and the Education Sector***. Directions in Development: Human Development. Washington DC: World Bank 2009, pp. 163 (Paperback), ISBN: 978-0-8213-7974-5.

Most countries have some kind or other form of school feeding programmes. Essentially they are designed with two objectives, educational and health-related, viz., to improve participation of children in schooling, and second to improve nutritional status of children. The educational objectives seem to have been important, as the programme largely figures in the educational policy, plan and budget documents. Since the feeding is also done in the schools, it is considered a part of the education programmes only. The programmes are also seen largely as welfare programmes. In the overall context of global financial crisis and dwindling public budgets, there is a danger that such welfare programmes may get axed either fully or partially. But as Bundy et al remind us in the paper prepared by the World Bank Group and the World Food Programme, the school feeding programme assumes special prominence in the context of global food, fuel and financial crises as a potential safety net, and as a social support measure, as they can also be seen as a measure to reduce poverty. School feeding programmes figure now in the poverty reduction strategy papers (PSRPs) of many countries.

Though the school meal programmes are offered in many counties, there is no unique model. There are at least three types of feeding that are offered: cooked meals in schools

during lunch time, snacks or biscuits – mostly packed food, and thirdly, rations. Though all the three types are related to attendance in schools, they may have varying effects. Generally it is felt that hot cooked meals provided during the lunch time is the best one, in terms of both nutrition and school attendance of children. Children with filled in stomachs may be able to concentrate on studies and are likely to perform better both in curricular and extra-curricular activities in the schools than others. When the feeding programme which means provision of packed food like biscuits, may ensure attendance of children in schools, but children may take the food home to share with others in the family, which may be good from the family point of view, but may not have good effect on the performance of children in schools. Often it is found that this is highly inadequate from nutritional point of view. Similarly monthly rations may not have as much effect as provision of cooked meals on both school attendance and school performance. Bundy et al list the benefits, the costs and trade-offs of the three types. Snacks may not ensure enough nutrition and rations may not ensure nutrition to the child. Snacks and rations require less infrastructure facilities, as no cooking facilities are required. Of all, provision of snacks figures out to be the cheapest method: about US$ 13 per child per year, compared to US$ 40 per child in case of cooked meals and US$ 52 in case of provision of monthly rations.

On the whole, a review of experience of many countries shows that many countries do implement one or the other type of school feeding programme. As the authors of the book note, the programme is least adequate in those poor countries where the need for such a programme is the highest. In countries of North America, Russian Federation, Australia and in some Latin American countries, the programme is available in most schools 'sometimes or always'; in most countries of Asia and in a very few countries of Africa and South America, school feeding is available 'in some way and at some scale'; and in a large number of countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, it is available 'primarily in most food-insecure regions.' It is also planned, in general in many countries, to have universal coverage, i.e., to provide feeding to all children going to school, except in Sub-Saharan African countries where it is confined to the most food-insecure regions only. Thirdly, most countries have taken up this programme as a programme to stay, rather than as a short term or a transitional programme, though few have clear plans for its sustainability. Hence, one notices no 'exit' strategy, which seems to have been a recurrent theme in many reports of the international organisations. Fourthly, the programme is heavily supported in most countries by state, though there is some involvement of private players and some types of public-private partnership are adopted; fifthly, though the programme is supported by state, budgetary resources are obviously finite and in some countries it is dependent upon external assistance; and lastly, in almost all countries the programme concentrates on school going children and the objective is primarily educational – improvement in school attendance, reduction in dropout and improvement in learning.

Apart from presenting briefly experiences of many countries in boxes, Bundy et al present quite a few important aspects of the school feeding programme: what is school

feeding (chapter 2), why school feeding (chapter 3), need to plan for its sustainability (chapter 4), costs and tradeoffs of various alternative types of school feeding, and their coverage – universal versus targeting (chapter 5), and procurement and institutional arrangements required for the programmes (chapter 6). They also provide valuable guidelines on how to design the programme (chapter 7). The appendices also give us tools for revisiting the programmes for reassessment on its effectiveness, and for planning for its sustainability. The authors strongly plead for developing plans for sustainability of the programme. The best way of making the programme sustainable is to mainstream the programme and to make it an integral part of national policies, plans and budgets on education.

A couple of important aspects that the study underlines are noteworthy. The authors highlight the economy-improving functions of the school feeding programmes, in terms of the demand for food and non-food items used in the school feeding programme and creation of employment in their production, and in implementing the programme. This aspect has not received much attention in national planning and implementation of school meal/feeding programmes. Second, the study stresses on efficiency and effectiveness of the programmes, including those of alternative types and modalities of school feeding programmes. This is an important issue many developing countries are concerned with and experimentation seems to be going on. The study seems to be favouring adoption of public-private partnership modes in implementing the programme. Lastly, the book suggests targeting the programme when resources are finite. This might become a highly controversial suggestion in many countries. The authors also argue for studies on assessment of relative merits of school feeding and other social safety net programmes and impact studies of different types of school feeding programmes. Some of these aspects are not taken into consideration by many educational planners, as it is considered at the same time as a welfare measure. Nevertheless, the book is an important contribution to the meager literature on the subject and may serve as a valuable one for the educational planners and policy makers around the world.

An important aspect that is surprisingly ignored in the whole study is the equity effects of the school feeding programmes. There can be a very important equity gains if the programme involves provision of cooked school meals to the children and if the programme is universal in coverage. When children from different socioeconomic strata sit together and eat the same food, the potential equity gains can be enormous. Hence, even in those societies where it is not found to be cost-effective otherwise when measured in terms of school attendance, dropout rates or learning levels of students, the programme can turn out to be highly cost effective, if the equity gains are also considered. This should make policy planners not to prefer provision of biscuits, however energy inducing they are, in lieu of cooked meals, not to prefer any method of targeting the programme only to the poor, and not to worry about cost effectiveness of the programme defined in a narrow framework

Department of Educational Finance, NUEPA
New Delhi-110016

Jandhyala B.G. Tilak
jtilak@nuepa.org

National University of Educational Planning and Administration
17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016

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