Learning Curve

Issue VIII, February 2007

Azim Premji Foundation

A Newsletter from
Azim Premji Foundation

For private circulation only

From Azim Premji Foundation

Forty of us at the Foundation are taking forty days out of our routine over the next few months to participate in the 'Foundation in Education' course that is being facilitated by Rohit Dhankar of Digantar and a team of education thinkers. Recently we completed the first module of ten days at Jaipur and followed it up with the second module in Bangalore. The third module is slated to begin in March.

Immersed as we are in implementing experiments and programmes that aim to contribute to the quality of elementary education, the intensive discourse and debate gives us a fresh perspective. We felt that it is our responsibility to share a glimpse of this with all our friends, through the Learning Curve.

We all envision a dramatic change in the kind of education and learning experiences that our children receive. We want their school life to be interesting, where they can engage with and enjoy the learning processes and appreciate the context of their learning with the real life. This spirit of active learning will help the child develop an inquisitive mind, her curiosity will be sharpened, her analytical powers will bloom and she will be able to relate learning experiences to both within and outside the class room. The class room becomes a window to the world.

Often, we do not step back and question the reason why we want this change. The Jaipur workshop provided this space. The answer to this question lies in the vision we have for our society and nation. We realise that when we talk of education without recognising that education is a socio political domain, of equity, of justice, we cannot create change in sterile environment.

Our constitution states that we shall be a democratic republic where each citizen shall be entitled to freedom, equality and liberty. And as we discuss just the preamble of our Constitution, we see that what the nation's Constitution envisages can be realised only through the way our education shapes our citizens and society and it is our children who will fulfill our vision of a just, equitable and humane society. This is possible only if they develop a questioning mind, a strong sense of justice, fairness and concern for others. When teachers move the class room away from rote learning to develop the full potential of the child, they are contributing to the development of our society and nation.

The National Learning Conference to be held in May 2007, has the theme of 'Equitable Education for Equitable Society'. From this issue on, the Learning Curve will attempt to argue as well as confer about various facets of equity in education so that we can understand and debate the issue with increased clarity.

S.Giridhar
Head, Assessment Led Reforms

CONTENT

2 Guest Column
9 Musings
12 Research Update
14 Foundation Update
16 Book Case

GUEST COLUMN

Inequity in Education: Structural Dimensions of the Problem

Padmini Swaminathan

We need to talk of state-specific policies; we also need to get out of the spurious debate that sees investment in basic and/or higher education as competing fields

Literacy and formal levels of education

Levels of formal education as against levels of mere literacy are significant markers in any society; more so in one that is organised so strongly on caste, class and religious lines and where social and economic exclusions were the norm for some sections of the population for a long period in history. Post-independent efforts to universalise education as well as compensate for past discriminations have gone some way in providing a measure of justice. However, the persistence of structural constraints as well as the logged-jam effect of poverty not only militate against the accessing of existing educational facilities but also make it difficult for these sections of the population to break free of the many inter-linked shackles binding them.

At the outset, the adverse implication of conflating literacy with education, as is often done by policy makers, needs to be highlighted. For example, while the literacy base of Kerala and Tamil Nadu may be relatively high, this need not translate in to high formal levels of education. In fact available data from Census as well as from the National Sample Survey reveal that, while the literacy base of Kerala and Tamil Nadu are way above Bihar and Rajasthan [in terms of the percentage of population that is literate], Kerala and Tamil Nadu are only marginally better than Bihar and Rajasthan with respect to the category 'matriculation but below graduate'. In the category, 'graduate and above' Rajasthan and Bihar are almost equal to Kerala and Tamil Nadu, particularly in the urban areas. This holds even when we deduct the scheduled caste (SC) population from the general population and concentrate on the educational achievement of the non-SC population.

The above findings suggest that Kerala and Tamil Nadu have, through conscious state intervention, widened their literacy base to cover many segments of the population, including girls and socially deprived sections of society. Hence inequality in access to education at lower levels has, to a significant extent, been addressed in these two states. What has however become contentious in these states is the iniquitous access to higher education and to acquisition of professional skills, leading consequently to disproportionately higher levels of unemployment among an otherwise 'literate' population. In Bihar and Rajasthan, on the other hand, the persistence of stark inequality in access to even primary education between rural and urban areas and between males and females has resulted in a thin stream of the urban elite reaching higher levels of education leaving a vast majority behind.

Therefore, we need to talk of state-specific policies; we also need to get out of the spurious debate that sees investment in basic and/or higher education as competing fields.

Levels of literacy and education among social groups

An analysis of literacy data, age-wise, no doubt gives an impressive picture of the educational achievement of the younger population even for socially deprived groups, when compared to their respective adult population. However the gaps between SC/ST and Non-SC/ST are still wide within regions as well as between regions. National Sample Survey data for 1999-2000 reveal that, in the rural parts of our country, in 5 out of every 10 households among the SCs and STs, there were no literate *adult* members. The corresponding proportions for 'other' castes were 2 out of every 10 households and for Other Backward Castes (OBCs) it was 3 out of every 10 households.

Among all social groups, the proportion of families with no literate *female adult* member is far greater than families with no literate adult member. This suggests the high levels of gender differentials among all social groups.

The level of deprivation of families across all social groups is much lower in the urban areas.

Analysing Census data relating to the '*school attendance status of children and adolescents*' from a caste-gender-spatial perspective, we get the following picture:

- There is a significant *caste-gap* in school attendance; a far larger proportion of children and adolescents, both males and females, among the SCs do not attend school when compared to non-SCs
- There is a large *gender-gap* in education, which is particularly stark when we compare the school attendance status of female and male adolescents; larger numbers of female adolescents [both SCs and non-SCs] are out of the school system than male adolescents

GUEST COLUMN

- There is a *rural/urban* divide in school attendance, particularly for female children and adolescents. What is also interesting in the rural/urban divide is that while a larger proportion among both SC and non-SC female adolescents in rural areas do not attend school, the proportion of SC and non-SC female adolescents '*not working and not attending school*' is greater in the urban areas, signifying in our opinion, fewer work opportunities in urban areas for formally illiterate persons

The negative impact of the caste and gender gap in school attendance can be gauged to some extent from the data on *levels of education of the worker population*. In a nutshell these data reveal the considerably higher levels of formal illiteracy among female workers when compared to male workers; among female workers the levels of formal illiteracy is higher for SC women workers than for non-SC women workers. This phenomenon seen in conjunction with the fact of significant gender gaps in higher and technical education, has important implications for [a] the kind of jobs that women can access; [b] women workers' prospects for upward mobility; and, [c] women workers' bargaining capacity in the labour market due to their very limited educational attainment.

The 'quantity-quality' debate in education

The nature, type and location of educational institutions have contributed in no small measure to the polarisation that one observes today among segments of the population across space and caste. To state the problem in a nutshell, government/corporation schools have come to be identified with the poor, and among the poor, the identification of government schools is with Dalits. Increasingly, these schools have also come to be associated with inadequate number of teachers, poor quality teaching, higher percentage of teacher absenteeism – a combination of factors making it extremely difficult for children of already deprived households to transit to institutions of higher learning, entering which requires achievements of a particular order.

The theme of quality of education is as central as the issue of quantity and both have a crucial bearing on the magnitude and nature of differentiation and inequality characterising our society. Thus for example, good quality primary education depends on good quality tertiary education, and the problem is hardly solved by shifting the emphasis from tertiary to primary. The problem needs to be viewed as a whole, with the entire education sector being given prime emphasis in terms of finance and planning. Privatisation is hardly a solution; if anything, all other things remaining same, privatisation exacerbates differentiation.

Information deficit in an era of IT revolution

There is appalling dearth of first-hand information on several issues relating to education. Just to conclude with a few examples of the nature of information deficit that has crucial policy implications as well:

[a] Hardly any systematic data exist to conclude whether children are out of school and working *because* schools are dysfunctional. The presumption generally is that child labour is related to poverty of households. The phenomenon of 'out of school' children needs careful documentation and disaggregated analysis so that policies to address this phenomenon are based on facts and not presumptions

[b] The administrative set-up of the departments comprising the 'Education' sector either at the state or central level, have not received the scholarly attention that they should have. The pleas for increasing financial allocations to the 'education' sector are generally based more on comparative allocations made by other countries rather than on any convincing study of why or how existing allocations have hampered delivery of quality services

[c] While much noise is made of the need to vocationalise higher education and/or impart professional education to enhance employability of the working population, there is no engagement with the issue of what constitutes 'vocational' education, who is to impart this education and towards what end. In a hierarchically constituted society, the location of, and access to existing 'professional' institutions of higher learning contribute to development and digital divides rather than narrowing and/or closing these divides

Professor Padmini Swaminathan is Director, Madras Institute of Development Studies

GUEST COLUMN

Increasing Access to Basic Quality Education for Muslim Girls in India

Razia Patel

The expectations of all stakeholders should get addressed while making policies.

The Indian population is multi-religious, multi-lingual, multi-cultural and is spread geographically between rural and urban areas. It can be observed that, during the last 60 years, some communities have progressed well, especially among urban areas, but a large number of other communities have been lagging behind in the sphere of education. Muslims, who constitute 12.4 per cent of population, as per the 2001 Census report, are at the lowest level of literacy.

This highlights the need to prioritise and implement measures to increase access to basic quality education for Muslim women.

Muslim community's perception about education

While working on a research project on behalf of Times Fellowships in 1993, the author conducted a nationwide direct survey of Muslim families across geographical locations and cross sections of society, with the question on whether women wished to educate their daughters. The answer from 80 per cent mothers was a resounding yes. This indicated that awareness for education already exists in the community. They also expressed in their typical local ways, the importance of education with phrases like – "people can grow old, but knowledge never ages", "a human being can die but not knowledge".

Hunar, Hisab and *Himmat*

During our various interactions with the community, diverse quality expectations were highlighted, which need to be addressed while designing the various system components. When quizzed on the reasons for their desire to educate girls, the answers varied. Some of them were:

- Education is perceived as an effective tool helps women to overcome any such obstacle thus empowering them
- General comprehension of the women increases with education
- They will not need external help for voicing their concerns; women will be capable to fight for their own rights
- Girls should acquire *"Hunar"* (skill), *"Hisab"* (basic accounting), and *"Himmat"* (courage). According to the author this can be acquired by incorporating the following features in education:
  - 100 per cent students should be trained in basic hand skills for one or two trades while, simultaneously, completing 10 years of schooling
  - Spending 50 per cent of time in learning practical skills
  - Entrepreneurship training in curriculum, and the likes.

Hence, the author feels that the education system must be made flexible to have the following characteristics:

- Due to the migrant nature of the community, entry and exit points in the education system should be made flexible
- The system should provide a constant linkage between aspirations of the society and education, and should provide for feedback and correction systems accordingly
- The curriculum should be such that it creates scientific and rational temper and inculcates values such as social coexistence, tolerance and gender equality
- Infrastructure such as school buildings, playgrounds, learning materials etc., should be adequate even for small locality schools. The school should be located within 2 km radius or easy common transport availability should be ensured for all

According to the studies conducted by the author in the Muslim localities, many of the mentioned factors were responsible for restricting access, especially amongst the girls. The expectations of all stakeholders should get addressed while making policies, and it can be ensured only if there is direct representation of all these groups while making policies.

Parameters to measure access to education and the desired status

What can be measured, can only be improved. Consequently, in order for Muslim women to gain improved access to education, we must evolve some acceptable and measurable parameters to assess the community's access to educational facilities, and availability of "quality basic education".

As regards desired status on these parameters, which can be our manifesto to ensure 100 per cent accessibility to basic education, we need to brainstorm with various social organisations and representatives from the community.

A few indicators for Muslim girls are (a) 100 per cent enrollment; (b)Zero dropouts (c) Distance learning opportunities and open school facilities

Constraints in achieving increased access

During the author's field research and nationwide survey of educational status of Muslims, the following constraints were observed:

◆ Systemic constraints: The rigid nature of our current educational system does not accommodate the aspirations of minorities

GUEST COLUMN

◆ Communal conflicts: The political process in our country is increasingly becoming a victim of communalism and many short term decisions are taken in such a way as to push the community back to the point from where progress has already been made. Also some vested interests create communal conflicts, which affect peace in the community and create insecurity amongst women hence making it difficult for them to access education

◆ Socio economic constraints: Due to the vicious circle of poverty, many families cannot afford to keep their children in the education process for 10-12 years, leading to the increase in the number of dropouts. Unless we simultaneously implement changes in the social process and improve the utility of our prevailing educational system, the current educational access will not be entirely utilised by the community

Image courtesy: Rachana Vikas Trust, Pune

◆ Cultural Constraints: The quality of the current educational system does not provide enough motivation for parents to enroll their girl child into schools. Hence we need to work on two fronts –

- improve accessibility of educational initiatives for girls by way of flexible schools or open schooling,
- subsequently improve curriculum to make it more friendly for girl students thus removing gender bias.

Need for creating micro level models for educational access

Based on the identified factors, the need for effective intervention by all like-minded individuals and institutions has been highlighted.

As an example, the author would like to briefly mention a case study of a pilot project at Pune conducted in this regard in two schools. Five major stakeholders were identified at these schools, namely, the students, parents, teachers, the school administration and the municipal government officials. The author's team was the sixth stakeholder which represented social activists seeking changes. Informal and formal meetings of each of these groups were organised, formal surveys were conducted, and data regarding their views on the state of affairs at these two schools were also collated. Subsequently, cross group meetings between parent- teachers, government officials and school administration were held. This was followed by a brainstorming session on ways of improving the situation at the grass root level. There were many issues such as building repairs, absence of furniture, inadequate laboratory facilities, high rate of student dropouts, indiscipline and poor results. A common action plan was created, and the group monitored these actions over one year. The teachers and parents decided to counsel dropout cases individually. The impact of the above mentioned entire programme resulted in changing the school environment completely; students and teachers started enjoying various cultural programmes and outstation picnics with enthusiasm leading to increased attendance in schools.

Actions recommended

Based on the background discussed, the following actions are proposed :

- A systematic status and need-identification study for minority community (girls and other children) involving Non Governmental Organisations (NGO's) and social activists, and all stakeholders of education
- Institutionalise community involvement in the educational system at every level by following the model described, at *every locality in every school*. Only active participation of the community can make and achieve the changes effectively
- Social audit of schools by local community, including minority audit
- It is the general perception that to provide access for Muslims to education, Madarasa education should be prioritised. However, the author opines that the role of Madarasa education is limited in the overall development and empowerment of Muslim children. This move may lead to further ghettoisation of the community. Muslim children require modern mainstream education. Access of Muslim children to mainstream education is an important issue, and should be acted upon accordingly
- This emphasises the need for more and more open schools and flexible access to education by making entry and exit points at multiple levels.

Image courtesy: Rachana Vikas Trust, Pune

Thus we need to instill and reinforce the confidence within the community in the education system by making qualitative changes, creating community involvement in the whole development process by way of participation of the community through local educational committees. Access should be ensured for the girl child by the community by way of a holistic participatory approach.

Dr Razia Patel is Chairperson, Rachana Vikas Trust, a Pune based NGO. She is also Chairperson and one of the founding members of the Bhartiya Muslim Mahila Andolan

GUEST COLUMN

Whose Children Are They?

Kiran Kamal Prasad

Equitable education in India implies, among other things, quality universal elementary education.

It was a one day orientation in Kolar for the various officials of the education department. Block Education Officers (BEO), Block Resource Coordinators (BRC), Cluster Resource Centres (CRC) and Head Teachers from the three taluks in the district were in attendance. This marked the beginning of a unique programme launched by Azim Premji Foundation and Jeevika in collaboration with the Education Department, in 2001. The main focus was to achieve quality universal elementary education in the four selected taluks of the state.

We began by ascertaining facts regarding out-of-school children. A head teacher from a school in Shidlaghatta taluk claimed that there were no children out of school in his village! But the BEO of the taluk refuted this claim immediately. An honest and earnest officer, he contradicted the teacher saying, "Let me walk with you down that street in the village, and I will identify a dozen out-of-school children right in front of you!" How a teacher who was familiar with the village, could declare without any qualms, that there were no out-of-school children in his village was indeed astonishing. Was it mere ignorance, or was it deliberate? How could an officer, not directly connected with the village but with enough sensitivity, confidently contradict the head teacher's statement?

I will attempt an explanation in the second half of the essay.

Of the children, adults and women, who remain illiterate in India, most of them belong to the scheduled castes (SC) and scheduled tribes (ST). To some extent, they may also belong to the backward communities and minorities like the Muslims. Importantly, it is the government elementary schools that mainly cater to the children from these communities.

This is so even when we have a fundamental right to education for those between 6 to 14 years of age which has been acknowledged by the 86th amendment to the Constitution of India in 2002. We did not require this amendment at all since a Supreme Court Judgment in 1993 had declared the fundamental right to education as part of the fundamental right to life, as enshrined in Article 21. Furthermore, there is a fundamental right specifically regarding children, *viz*, the right against employment in hazardous occupations, mines and factories. Yet, the amendment will remain as ineffective and redundant as the directive principle on universalisation of primary education was for half a century, unless the amendment is backed by a legislation to make adequate provision for children's education. *There is no such central legislation so far.*

The central draft bill on education to make the fundamental right to education a reality has, instead, been sent to states as a model for them to draw up a suitable statute! The reason for this has been identified as paucity of funds.

The Tapas Majumdar Committee in 1996 had assessed the demand for universalisation of elementary education at Rs. 13,700 crore each year, for a period of 10 years. The 93rd Constitution Amendment Bill in its financial memorandum, mentioned a much reduced requirement of Rs. 9,800 crore per year. Instead of providing for this smaller sum, the Union Budget is content in allocating a further revised sum for the "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan" project.

Seventy per cent of the expenditure on universalisation of primary education is to be borne by the State governments. But they are unlikely to do so as they are starved of funds. In no country has universal education been achieved without the state assuming the primary responsibility.

Japan, at the close of the 19th century, and Russia, at the beginning of the 20th century, achieved universal primary education within a matter of a decade through immense state support.

There are some crucial questions that need to be asked at this juncture. Why is the state of India so reluctant? Why is the concern of millions of children not a focal point for our policy makers? Who are the policy makers and whose children are they concerned about?

The answer to a great extent lies in the caste system the country has inherited. The caste system is not a division of labour; but a division of labourers, as pointed out by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

Coming back to the incident cited at the beginning, it is possible that children outside the head teacher's caste (as per his own admission), did not matter to him and those children hailing from the ex-untouchable castes would have been

GUEST COLUMN

beyond his reckoning. The teacher, as most of our officers and policy makers, was evidently from the so called, "high caste".

Another striking feature of the caste system in India is the utter antipathy to manual labour and the concomitant exploitation of labour leading to an inequitable remuneration.

If we are serious about achieving equitable education and universalisation of quality elementary education, we require bringing about, among other things, the following:

1) *The appointment of a large number of teachers from SC, ST and Backward communities*

   Given the upper limit for reservations, there cannot be more than 22.5 per cent from SC and ST communities and more than 27 per cent from the OBCs. In most of the villages in Karnataka, as much as 80 to 90 per cent (and in some villages it may even be 100 per cent) of child labour are from dalit communities and hence they do not even get the opportunity to attend school! Hence, 80-90 per cent or rather even 100 per cent of the teachers should be selected from these communities.

2) *The next best alternative available is to recruit a sufficient number of volunteers, from these communities, who will supplement the workforce in formal schools*

   In Karnataka, there are a large number of dalit youth who have completed secondary education or graduation but are unemployed due to the poor quality of elementary education they may have received in school. However, due to their talent and zeal to perform they can be an asset to the community. They should be recruited in large numbers, supplementary to the main workforce, or as 'barefoot' teachers and be given a reasonable remuneration. They could function as intermediaries between the government schools and the community (comprising of dalits, tribals, backward castes and Muslims). They should be motivated and trained appropriately to perform tasks like community mobilisation, parent motivation, identifying child labour and mainstreaming them, conducting bridge courses and coaching classes outside schools, supplementing teaching in the schools etc.

3) *The primary workforce of our schools consists of teachers from non-dalit and tribal communities*

   So is the case with the officers and policy makers. Therefore, unless youth from these communities are prepared in large numbers to address the issue of primary education, they will be unable to deliver as per expectations, irrespective of the strides that we may have made in the space of policies and structures.

4) *Implementation of living wages for the agricultural labourers and traditional artisans*

   Children from these families are mostly found to be working as labour. To begin with, bonded and other forms of forced labour must be stopped completely and the minimum wages must be implemented; the minimum wages must be raised continuously in keeping with the rise in the cost of living index. The concept of minimum wages must eventually be replaced by that of fair wage and then of living wage. If wages of daily labourers are made fair, coupled with the proper implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (whose scope has also to be widened further), there is no other incentive that will be required to encourage them to send their children to school.

What prevents parents in poor families from sending their children to school? It is not because they do not recognise the value of education for their children, but it is their sheer helplessness to make ends meet in spite of working tirelessly through the day, that prevents their children from attending school. Given a chance, they would strongly desire quality education for their children.

Besides implementing the existing legislations on bonded labour and minimum wages, all sections of society must lend their support for the long standing demand of enacting a comprehensive legislation for the workers of the unorganised sector, both at the Centre and in the State.

The children, to whichever community they may belong, are a national asset. By not investing in them, it is only the country that is ultimately to lose!

Kiran Kamal Prasad is Chairman, Jeeta Vimukti Karnataka (Jeevika). Jeevika is working towards eradication and rehabilitation of bonded labour in Karnataka.

GUEST COLUMN

Common School System: Is There Any Other Option?

Anil Sadgopal

Apart from accumulating abundant wealth, the G8 nations share something else too. These nations have a well-functioning public-funded school system founded on the principle of neighbourhood schools. Without a Common School System (CSS) in some form or another, none of them would have reached where they are today. Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, China, South Korea and Cuba achieved universal school education decades ago. This success transcends ideological history or present economic persuasion. Can India hope to be an exception to this historical experience?

We were also moving towards CSS until mid-1970s. A substantial proportion of today's academia and professionals belonging to that generation had received quality education in either government or *private but aided* schools. It was around this time that the upper middle class started shifting to private *unaided* schools, primarily in pursuit of English-medium education and competition-based and career-oriented curriculum. This is due to failure of the government policies to establish the relevance of either the Indian languages or the prevailing school curriculum for entry into careers. This "great escape" is precisely what triggered the decline of the public-funded school system.

The crisis was foreseen by the Kothari Education Commission (1964-66) which recommended CSS as the National System of Education with a view to "bring the different social classes and groups together and thus promote the emergence of an egalitarian and integrated society". The Commission warned that "instead of doing so, education itself is tending to increase social segregation . . . this is bad not only for the children of the poor but also for the children of . . . the privileged groups" since "by segregating their children, such privileged parents prevent them from. . . coming into contact with the realities of life . . ." Both the 1968 and 1986 policies resolved to move towards CSS.

There are three confusions regarding CSS. First, CSS is misperceived as a uniform school system. On the contrary, it is the present education system that follows a rigid curricular and pedagogic framework circumscribed by the Examination Boards and now international affiliations. Attributes such as compulsion, comparison and competition are reinforced, restricting choice, academic freedom and team functioning. Modern educational theory, however, expects each school or a school cluster to respond to local contexts and reflect social diversity. The rigidity can alone be challenged when flexibility, contextuality and plurality are accepted, among others, as the defining principles of CSS. In this sense, CSS becomes the most urgently needed reform.

Secondly, CSS is myopically projected as acting against quality, talent and merit. The present system based upon paying capacity, privileges and false sense of superiority has alienated the most powerful sections of society from the government schools. As a consequence of this "great escape", the government school system has lost its voice of advocacy in policy-making fora. Further, the Structural Adjustment Programme, resulting in withdrawal of resources from the social sector, has led to a policy of 'multi-track' education justifying poor infrastructure, multi-grade teaching and para-teachers. Schemes such as World Bank's District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and today's Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan collapsed precisely because of pursuing this design. What we need is systemic reform, rather than schemes.

Third, it is wrongly claimed that CSS will not permit a private school to retain its non-government and unaided (or aided) character. Again, CSS implies that all schools – irrespective of the type of their management, sources of income or affiliating Boards – will fulfill their responsibility as part of a national system. All what is expected is that they operate within the Constitutional framework and function as genuine neighbourhood schools. With 86th Constitutional Amendment, 'free and compulsory' elementary education has become a Fundamental Right. This means that the very notion of fees, at least until class VIII, has become anti Constitutional!

Powerful forces of privatisation are trying to divert public attention from CSS. Private schools running 'afternoon centres', 25 per cent reservation for poor children and now the Eleventh Plan proposal of voucher system for backdoor funding of private schools, are some of the clever ways to rationalise exclusion. This will only postpone giving every child an equal opportunity to acquire knowledge, develop her potential talent and, above all, articulate her vision of India.

Professor Anil Sadgopal is Former Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Delhi

MUSINGS

National Instructional Design Workshop - A Report

M K Senthil Kumar

One of the biggest challenges facing the Indian education system today is how to ensure that 5.5 million teachers in 1.2 million elementary schools have the support they need to improve the quality of classroom processes. Teachers need opportunities to strengthen their subject matter knowledge, gain access to educational tools that facilitate interactive learning, and utilise instructional strategies that promote student achievement.

Technology-based tools that are developed using proven instructional design methodologies, and which integrate the technology into the instructional process, have potential to improve quality. Computer software, video and radio programmes, when designed effectively, encourage more interactive teaching styles and allow students to construct their own knowledge through experiential and participative processes. Today, many state governments in India have made large investments in technology hardware and are seeking ways and means to support their investment.

The National Instructional Design workshop held from 1st to 3rd November, 2006, got off to a start with a 3 minute short film. The film brought memories of reading the copy of a commercial advertisement which went something like this… 'it is universal knowledge that children '*walk*' to *school* and '*run back*' *home*! However, here were children approaching an ostensibly quotidian lifestyle with unparalleled *joie de vivre*. They romped to school in joy and worked with computers as though it was the most common thing to do. Yet curiosity and innocence was writ large on their faces, as they were eager to explore, experiment, experience and learn.

QUEST Alliance, in partnership with Azim Premji Foundation, brought together international and local instructional designers, policy makers and content providers to share lessons and explore ideas about how instructional design can produce technology tools that are capable of improving educational quality.

The objectives of the workshop were as:

- Sharing lessons and explore ideas on how to improve the quality of content development for educational technology tools
- Presenting a systematic methodology for the design and development of e-content
- Raising awareness among policy makers, practitioners and educational technology providers about the importance of good instructional design in creating quality content
- Developing a set of recommendations that will be used to draft a framework to guide practitioners and policy makers in developing and investing in technology-based tools.

Dileep Ranjekar, CEO, Azim Premji Foundation, while framing the objectives of the workshop discussed the Foundation's experiences so far in this area. He observed that across the world and especially more so in India, the evidence of technology significantly contributing to children and their learning is largely non-existent. Consequently, there is a strong need to bridge the gap between what is happening in school and what we want to happen.

Dr. Badrul Khan, founder of *bookstoread.com*, distinguished e-Learning as one which deals with *open* and *distributed* learning environment, unlike the traditional *closed* system of Instructor-led classroom-based instruction. However, he cautioned that to develop quality e-learning, we need policies and standards in place, and the government should play an important role here.

One of the key learnings from the workshop was that technology is no more resisted as earlier and that resources are not a big issue. It is the question of teachers perceiving the relevance of using technology to create live learning environment as envisioned in the National Curriculum Framework 2005. With some interesting sessions on Design and Development, Evaluation and Needs Assessment, the workshop reinforced the belief that it was critical to improve the quality of content development for educational technology tools in India.

As the discussions and deliberations continued over a span of three days, the workshop was seen as a move towards stimulating a dialogue around instructional design for educational technology as a serious discipline in India. Further research and development in the field, the need for communication and sharing of lessons, and capacity building in the area of teacher training, is a requirement that has to be met at the earliest. As a follow up to the workshop, QUEST is drafting a policy framework which can inform decision-makers at all levels of the education system.

Presentations of the National Instructional Design workshop are available at: http://www.eeaonline.org/questresources.asp

M.K. Senthil Kumar is Head, Content Development, Azim Premji Foundation

MUSINGS

Educational and Economic Status Quo of Scheduled Castes

Rishikesh B S

Out of roughly 3000 Castes estimated to exist in India, as many as 779 have been designated, as 'scheduled castes' (SCs) accounting for 16.3 per cent of the total population. For hundreds of years this entire section of the Indian population was discriminated against on the basis of their social status. However, since Independence the Government of India has been following positive discrimination policies in various spheres, especially in the education sector, towards the upliftment of the SCs. This article places available facts in the education sector to understand where the nation stands vis-à-vis the development and the empowerment of the SCs after more than 50 years of concerted efforts in this regard.

Any data on enrollment and literacy figures shows that there has been a 'significant increase in overall literacy rates and 'school participation rates' across the country since the early 1990s'. Various data sources including the National Family Health Survey–II (1998/99), Reproductive and Child Health Survey 2002-2004, the 2001 Census, routine monitoring information from the Department of Education and papers based on these data show that 'gender and social disparities have also declined to an extent with an overall increase in school attendance'. (Jenkins & Barr) There has also been a considerable decrease in the drop-out rates. It is important to compare the figures for SCs to the national average on the same aspect and to the figures of 'others' (high caste groups) to get a perspective on the status of SC population.

Enrollment

The country is said to be approaching 'near universalisation of enrollment at the primary stage with the Gross Enrollment Rate for classes I to V having increased from 90 per cent in 2003-2004 to 98 per cent in 2004-2005 and the net enrollment rate having risen from 72 per cent to 82 per cent'. (Jenkins and Barr)

Table 1 : Gross Enrollment Ratio (6-11 years)

Age Group	Gross Enrollment Ratio (% age)	
	Total (All)	SC
6-11 years (classes I-V)	98.2	88.3

Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) is the total enrollment of pupil in grade or cycle or level of education, regardless of age, expressed as percentage of the corresponding eligible official age-group population in a given school year.

However, during the same period when the total GER (for all categories) is compared to the SC GER the disparity is significant at the primary level enrollment itself as seen in table 1 above which shows SC GER to be only 88.3 per cent compared to the national average of 98.2 per cent.

Never attended school

Similar to the enrollment aspect, when the percentage of children of ages 7-17 attending school is taken into account, huge disparity can be seen on two aspects - 'currently attending school' (Net Enrollment Rate) and having 'never attended school' as shown in the table below:

Table 2 : Percentage of children age 7 – 17 years by schooling outcomes

Social group	Never attended	Ever attended	
		Dropped out	Currently attending
Hindu Other	7.8	10.7	81.1
Hindu SC	20.8	13.0	65.7

Source: National Family Health Survey, 1998/99 (In Jenkins and Barr)

Data indicates 20.8 per cent of SC children age 7-17 never attended school compared to 7.6 per cent of children from high caste and only 65.7 per cent of SC children age 7-17 are currently attending school compared to 81.3 per cent of higher caste groups. (Jenkins and Barr)

Drop-out

The table below shows that the drop-out rate for the SC children has decreased only by 1.27 per cent - once again showcasing the existing disparity.

Table 3 : Drop-out rate

	1996-97	2002-03	Decrease in percentage points
All categories	40.20	34.89	5.31
SC	42.74	41.47	1.27

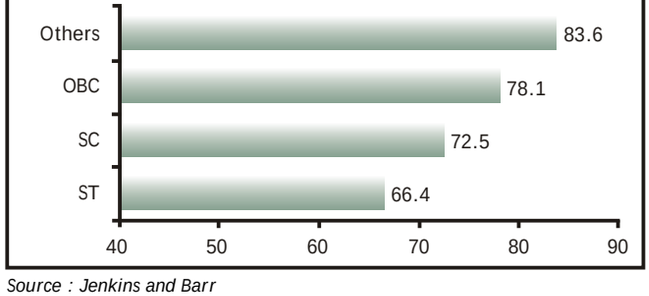
Source: Selected educational statistics – 2002, Education in India – 1996-97 (school education)

Attendance

In 2005, the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) Baseline Survey, supported by UNICEF, was undertaken in 43 districts in the country. The survey shows disparities in 'attendance rates' and 'learning achievements' between children from scheduled caste and others.

In the age-group of 6-14 years, 72.5 per cent of SC children are found to be attending school compared to 83.6 per cent of children from 'others', indicating that the disparity between the

Graph 1 : Percentage of Children Attending School (NSSO, 2005)

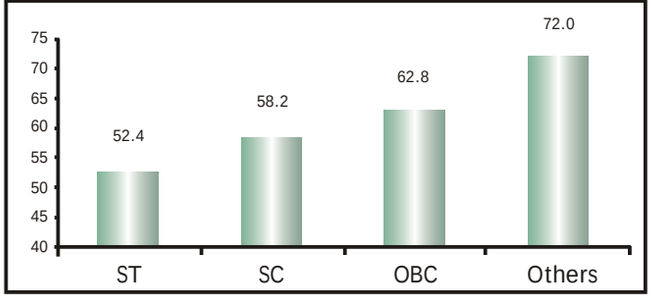


Source : Jenkins and Barr

SCs and 'others' not only exists in enrollment and completion levels, but also in attendance levels.

Achievement

Graph 2 : Percentage of Children (6-14yrs) who can read and write (NSSO, 2005)



Source : Jenkins and Barr

There is a glaring disparity even among the achievement levels of SC students when compared to others with the percentage of children who can read and write among 'others' being 72 per cent, while only 58.2 per cent of the SC children are able to do so.

If the achievement of SCs from only rural areas is looked at, the story is grimmer. Eric Calpas in his study *'Social Hierarchy and Human Resource Development: Education of Scheduled Castes in India'*, says that 'scheduled castes in the rural context show a 70 per cent failure rate before the completion of primary education'.

Poverty

Strong linkages have been seen between education levels and poverty. Therefore, as expected, disparities continue when we compare the poverty levels for SCs with others.

Table 4 : Population below poverty line (NSSO, 1999/2000)

Population below poverty line (per cent)	India	SC
Rural areas	27.09	36.25
Urban areas	23.62	38.47

Source: National Sample Survey Organisation (In Jenkins and Barr)

The table above shows that 27.09 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line in rural areas, and among the SCs it is 36.25 per cent and so is the case in urban areas. Quoting Kabeer. N 'the SCs were 19 per cent more likely to be poor than the rest of the population'.

Education and poverty are closely interlinked. 'Poverty of education is a principal factor responsible for income poverty; and income poverty does not allow people to overcome poverty of education.' (J.B. Tilak)

Further, there are differences among scheduled castes themselves. The causes are 'generally economic, but even with economic equality, scheduled castes remain at a disadvantage compared with non-scheduled castes'. There is thus a 'triple disparity', (Calpas) which puts SCs at disadvantage. This includes regional, social and gender differences. Political factors also contribute significantly to unequal education opportunities. (Calpas)

Way forward

A few ideas to bridge this disparity:

1. By using the recently available statistics and simple regression coefficients Jandhyala B G Tilak has found that 'secondary and higher education makes a significant contribution to reduction in absolute as well as relative poverty'. He categorically states that 'literacy and primary education do not matter for poverty reduction as the threshold level seems to be upper primary education'. Though we are approaching near universalisation of enrollment at the primary stage with the GER reaching 98 per cent in 2004-2005, at secondary and higher education it is below 50 per cent and 10 per cent respectively.

He puts across 3 main arguments for the country to focus on secondary and higher education. He argues that 'primary education rarely provides skills necessary for employment and children relapse into illiteracy as soon as they drop-out. Secondly, it serves only as a terminal level of education and thirdly, even if it is able to economically uplift the people it is only marginal. From say below the poverty line to just above the poverty line, with the imminent danger of falling back below the poverty line. More focus is required in the area of secondary and higher education, when planning for special provisions for SC students so that the positive impact of the provisions are truly felt.

2. The National Policy on Education (NPE) says "The central focus in the SC's educational development is their equalisation with the non-SC population in all stages and levels of education. The policy focused on incentives, scholarships, reservations, recruitment of teachers, location of school buildings and 'constant micro-planning and verification to ensure enrolment, retention and successful completion of SC students (GOI, 1986)'. However, many of these have a diffused effect due to what Eric Calpas calls the 'political factor'. There is a case for a 'quasi-independent body' like the Election Commission to be constituted, to run our Education system, which will be based on the principles of our constitution, not compromising on critical issues related to secularism and equity.

3. There has been a substantial increase in the enrolments figures of the private schools with 6 per cent of rural children and 19 per cent of urban children studying in private unaided schools. The figure is said to further increase to 31 per cent when children studying in private aided schools are also included (World Bank, 2001). Decline in the quality of the Government schools is said to be the prime reason for this. Therefore it is of primary importance to do all that is required to strengthen the Government schools so that SC children (and the other disadvantaged sections) studying in the government schools get better educational facilities compared to the private schools thereby aiding the critical 'uplift'.

References:
1. Social Exclusion of Scheduled Caste Children from Primary Education in India.Jenkins, Robert and Barr, Eimar, www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/files.pdf
2. Post-Elementary Education, Poverty and Development in India. Tilak, Jandhyala B G
www.cas.ed.ac.uk/research/projects.html
3. Social Exclusion and the MDGs : The Challenge of 'Durable Inequalities' in the Asian Context, Institute of Development Studies paper presented at the Asia 2015 Conference
4. Calpas, Eric, http://www.stjohn.ac.th/arc/countr2.htm
5. Data Sources: Census of India; Educational Statistics; NFHS, NSSO

Rishikesh B.S. is Member, Research and Documentation, Azim Premji Foundation

RESEARCH UPDATE

Indicators of Effective Schools

A Study of Learning Guarantee Programme Schools in North East Karnataka

Introduction

Why are some schools successful in achieving the Learning Guarantee Program (LGP) measures while the others are not? What are the features that differentiate the schools that qualified for an LGP award and the schools that did not qualify? An attempt is made in this study to find answers to these questions. The pedestal for the present study is the "Learning Guarantee Programme" initiative undertaken by Azim Premji Foundation that allowed for comparison of schools based on their performance in the Programme. Under the programme, schools volunteering for participation had to achieve pre-determined levels on three measures to qualify. The three measures were:

Enrollment : 100 per cent of children in the 6 – 11 age groups in the habitation are enrolled in school

Attendance: Minimum of 90 per cent of the enrolled children attended at least 70 per cent of total of working days in school during the academic year

Learning achievement: Minimum of 60 per cent of all children enrolled in classes 2, 3, 4 and 5 scored 90 per cent on competency based tests

The present study was carried out among schools that participated during 2005, the last year of the programme in North East Karnataka.

Methodology

The schools were divided into four categories –

Category 1: Consistent qualifier schools, participated in LGP and qualified for the award in all the three years – 2003, 04 and 05;

Category 2: Non - Consistent qualifier schools, participated in LGP and qualified for the award for one or two years but not in all three years;

Category 3: Schools which participated all the three years in LGP, but did not qualify for the award, but showed consistent improvement in performance;

Category 4: Consistent non-qualifier schools participated in LGP but did not qualify for the LGP award and whose performance was not consistent.

A data-mining approach, to identify the indicators of effective schools, coupled with school and classroom observation, was applied to examine the various indicators selected for the study. Indicators developed by the Child Friendly School Initiative (CFSI) of the Foundation being run in Shorapur, Karnataka, were employed. Data was collected by teams of trained interviewers. Two interviewers spent two days each in the sample schools. The sample size comprised 102 schools including category 1 – 14, category 2 – 18, category 3 – 36 and category 4 – 34. While schools in category 1 were purposively selected (almost all in the category) the others were identified from their respective categories using a random process.

Indicators

Under the CFSI, 5 groups of characteristics of quality schools have been identified. These include:

- community participation,
- school environment,
- classroom environment,
- classroom learning process and
- teachers' professional development.

Indicators are developed for each characteristic covering a total of 36 sub fields. These indicators are comprehensive in nature and hence, these indicators are used in the study to see how many of the indicators are associated with the LGP participating schools. Of the 214 indicators, 142 indicators, mostly quantitative in nature from all the 5 characteristics, were selected for this study. The report is based on the analysis of the quantitative data collected for the indicators in terms of their presence or absence in the 102 sample schools.

Findings

The findings of the study are summarised below. The presence (1) or absence (0) of the indicators is used as the basis of analysis. Mean score for each indicator is calculated for all categories of schools. The mean for each category of schools would thus lie between 0.0 (which means none of the schools in that category demonstrate that indicator) and 1.0 (the indicator is present in each school in that category). A mean score of 0.9 or more is considered as 'strongly present' (the indicator is present in at least 90 per cent of the schools in the category) while a mean score of 0.1 and below is considered as 'largely absent'.

Of the 142 indicators studied, 27 are fully present in all the category 1 schools (mean score of 1.0) while only 3 are present in category 2 schools. In category 3 and 4 schools this number is 0 and 1 respectively. Similarly, 48 indicators are strongly associated with category 1 (mean of 0.9 or more) while the corresponding number for category 4 schools is only 10.

RESEARCH UPDATE

Indicators	Category 1 Schools	Category 2 Schools	Category 3 Schools	Category 4 Schools
Mean score 1.0 (fully present)	27	3	0	1
Mean score 0.9 + (strongly present)	48	27	16	10

This shows the wide chasm between the category 1 schools and others.

Strongly present indicators:

Community participation: 5 out of 13 indicators (38.5 per cent) are associated with category 1 schools. These relate to the School Development and Monitoring Committee (SDMC) existence and formation, maintenance of admission register and mid day meals.

School environment: 7 out of the 53 indicators (13.2 per cent) from this characteristic are associated with category 1 schools. These relate to safety, cleanliness and availability of drinking water.

Classroom environment: 9 out of 20 indicators (45 per cent) relating to classroom environment are associated with category 1 schools. The most striking aspect here is the group of indicators on 'girl child' - equal opportunity for the girl child is given in class leadership, she is grouped based on the learning needs and girls freely participate in sports activities.

Classroom learning process: From this characteristic 21 indicators out of 43 (48.8 per cent) are strongly present in these schools. These span a wide range of class room activities. Teachers come to school on time and utilise all the teaching hours assigned to them in teaching. Students are evaluated every month and remedial teaching is provided to the appropriate students. Subject wise competency based question papers are prepared by the teachers and used to measure learning outcomes. Progress reports are prepared for all students and shown to the parents.

Teachers academic development: 6 of the 13 indicators (46.2 per cent) are associated with category 1. According to the teachers, the training objectives are fulfilled and the training materials, seating, activities are all useful and in tune with the objectives of training.

In addition to the above, strongly differentiating indicators were identified where the mean score for category 1 schools is at least 0.9 and difference in means between category 1 schools and category 4 schools is 0.3 or more. There were 31 such indicators. These comprised

Community participation (1 indicator)

- The kitchen is kept clean

School environment (12 indicators)

- School premise is free of broken windows / doors, paper / glass and other waste
- School premise has lawn, flower plants and trees
- School premise is maintained neat and clean
- The floor, walls, corners of walls and roof are free of cobweb and dust
- Children use waste basket and clean it every day
- Clean drinking water is stored in clean vessels daily
- Used water flows into the school garden
- Separate toilets for boys and girls, and are used
- Running water is available in the toilet tap and there is a mug
- The toilet's interior and the basin are free of stink and moss
- Toilets are cleaned daily under the supervision of teachers
- School toilet is in good condition

Classroom environment (2 indicators)

- Every class room has a designated learning corner
- Study corner has diverse and effective materials which help children in individual and group study

Classroom learning process (14 indicators)

- Number of hours teachers taught, and number of teaching hours assigned, match
- List of all classes and subject-wise lessons/ competencies are available
- Materials based on learning outcomes are available for each class and each subject, and are organized in enough quantity and kept wthin the reach of students
- All children are engaged in learning activities with necessary materials
- Learning material used suit the needs of planned learning / evaluation
- Teachers involve students in activities such as dialogue / question-answer / other suitable activities after the *Keli Kali* programme
- Based on the learning level, remedial teaching is given for students who are not up to the mark, who are evaluated once again to make sure that expected learning level is achieved
- Class-wise, 60 per cent of students have gained 90 per cent competency in all subjects as per the annual teaching programme
- Evaluation is done under the trimester system for classes 5 to 7 and the progress is recorded
- Subject wise competency based question papers are prepared by the teachers and used to measure learning outcomes

RESEARCH UPDATE

- Answer books of students have been evaluated and they are shown to the students/ parents who have signed them
- Evaluation material / question paper is prepared / used based on learning standards
- Question papers are based / used on the fields of knowledge, application, analysis, consolidation
- Based on evaluation feedback all teachers have given remedial teaching to the needy students and have confirmed learning

Teachers' academic development (2 indicators)

- Trainers have acquired information from the school on the type of training required to become effective teachers
- The school calendar has been consulted before fixing the duration and dates of training

As can be seen above, the largest number of differentiators is again from the characteristic of Classroom Learning Processes.

Conclusions

The analysis seems to suggest that the indicators used in the study (selected from the CFSI program) are good measures of 'effective schools'. The 48 indicators strongly present in category 1 schools and the 31 'strong differentiators' can be used for assessing 'quality schools'. The findings in many ways confirm the findings of the studies carried out in 2004 and 2005. The consistent qualifiers have greater teacher involvement, good TLM in the school, cleanliness and good appearance of the school. The teachers in the category 1 schools travel that extra mile to achieve superior outcomes and spend extra time with the children.

The differentiators between category 1 schools and category 4 schools (which are perhaps representative of the average schools in the region) are particularly revealing. A bulk of these differentiators belongs to the classroom processes and the attitude and involvement of the teachers. They clearly point to the efforts put in by the teachers notwithstanding the environment and infrastructure facilities.

This update has been prepared by the Research and Documentation team, Azim Premji Foundation

FOUNDATION UPDATE

Technology Initiatives

The Foundation has been experimenting with Computer Aided Learning through the use of CDs by children with teacher facilitation. Over the past three months, two master CDs were released–titled 'Division' and "Rainbow Toys – Addition". With this, the total base of master CDs has increased to 110 CDs, in 18 languages. In Andhra Pradesh, state specific content CDs were reviewed by the joint team of the Foundation and the Government.

Assessment Led Reforms

Learning Guarantee Programme (LGP) has been the vehicle for experimenting with assessment led reforms. Currently, this effort is going on in two districts each of Gujarat, Uttaranchal, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. During the last quarter:

Gujarat team completed the base line and self assessment of 867 schools and conducted the second workshop for developing the assessment tools. Gujarat team has brought the assessment finalisation process for LGP, to a closure. Simultaneously, efforts were made to communicate with the participating school to understand the LGP better and how to bring about improvements.

Uttaranchal team conducted meetings with the head teachers in each of the 13 blocks to discuss the competency based approach of teaching-learning. A team of volunteers reached out to 497 schools to share information about last year's process, papers and issues in bringing significant improvement in the schools.

Rajasthan team completed 100 per cent of assessment in Sirohi district and 85 per cent in Tonk district. Head teachers and volunteers have been assigned to assess and enter the score on the answer sheets.

Madhya Pradesh team conducted a four-day workshop for Question Bank Development with members of State Council of Education Research and Training (SCERT), District Insitute for Education and Training (DIETs) of Datia and Vidisha, and some Cluster Resource Centre (CRCs).

Child Friendly School

Shorapur

This is an experiment being conducted currently in one block of Yadgir district, of Karnataka to identify the key

factors that significantly raise the learning levels of children. The approach is to work out a school improvement plan for each school and to ensure its implementation. The improvement plan has led to the development of 214 indicators, considered essential for a Child Friendly School. During the quarter, Shramadaan was carried out in two Government schools to inculcate the culture of self-work towards housekeeping and beautification. Consequently, follow up and supervision to monitor the achievement of 214 agreed indicators is in full swing.

Chittoor

This experiment is being conducted in 7 mandals of Chittoor district with similar objective as that of the Shorapur experiment.

During the quarter, a day-long workshop with the DIET faculty was organised. Of the 19 faculty members, 12 participated in the workshop. Several action items were agreed upon to enhance the effectiveness of the Chittoor DIET.

Research and Documentation

Research tools for observing school environment and classroom processes were developed and tested in few schools of Bellary district. The objective of the research is to develop attributes of good teachers and schools.

Preparatory work for the 'Scholarship Study' was launched in the districts of Nizamabad and East Godavari of Andhra Pradesh. The study is to understand what governs the behaviour of parents on choice of schools when the cost of sending the child to school is not being borne by them.

Comparison of competencies assessed in the LGP tests in Karnataka, Uttaranchal and Madhya Pradesh was carried out for a better understanding of competency web. This understanding will be used in designing the question papers for the upcoming LGP assessments.

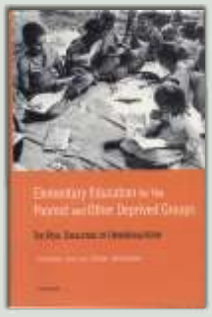
Education Management

Education Management is focused on understanding how the effectiveness of Government managed education system can be enhanced. During the quarter, a management development programme for the identified education functionaries of Government of Karnataka, under the World Bank funded project, commenced with the help of Centre for Leadership and Human Resource Development (CLHRD), The Canara Bank School of Management Studies and Indian Institute of Sciences. This programme would focus on, among other issues, self-management, leadership and systems management.

The second phase of IT training has been successfully completed in 12 districts, training more than 700 officers, with total person days trained exceeding 7,500.

A project to understand functioning of Community vis-à-vis education has been launched in Surpur taluka of Yadgir district and two clusters in Hunsur taluka of Mysore district. These clusters were selected in discussion with officers in the Block Education Office, Cluster and Block Resource Centres, teachers and parents, Gram Panchayat leaders and members of these clusters.

BOOK CASE

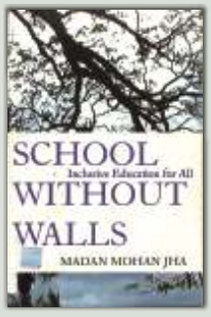


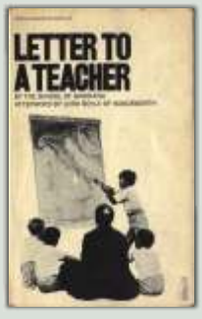
Elementary Education for the Poorest and Deprived Groups: The Real Challenge of Universalization. Jyotsna Jha and Dhir Jhingran. Manohar 2005.

A comprehensive study of the factors that prevent universalisation of elementary education in India based on both economic and social contexts. It explores the linkages between decision-making about schooling of children in the most marginalised groups and how these affect school participation in various contexts - as enablers as well as depressors of such decisions. Lastly, it analyses current policy frameworks through such a perspective.

School Without Walls: Inclusive Education for All. Madan Mohan Jha. Oxford: Heinemann New Delhi: Madhuban Educational Books 2002.

This book combines research in policy and practice within the framework of rights, social justice and equity to develop models for more inclusive education for children with disabilities, learning difficulties and other disadvantages. Simply written, the author makes a persuasive case for inclusive education in India which needs to be seriously considered given the deep prevalence of inequities. This book is based in the author's research in England and personal experience in India.



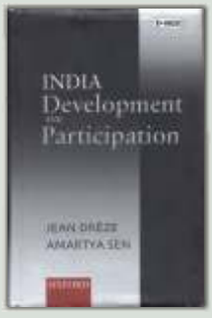


Letter to a Teacher. By the School of Barbiana. New York: Random House 1970.

If you can imagine eight poor boys living in the mountains in Italy writing about their experiences of being educationally marginalised then you have only the starting point of this wonderful little book. These boys go from experience to analysis with an ease that would put anthropologists and even policy makers to shame. Quintessentials of educational divisions such as language, behaviour, attitudes, class, pedagogy and subject matter are all woven together to make an eloquent and profound statement about the nature of educational deprivation that plague large parts of the world even today.

India: Development and Participation. Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen. Oxford: 2005 (2002).

Is there a need to broaden the discourse surrounding development in India? This book is an emphatic reason why it is critical to do so and how to go about it. Wide ranging in emphasis, covering population, gender, health, environment, education, security, democracy, and setting them within a comparative perspective while sharpening the specifics of the Indian context, the authors go well beyond the simplistic divisionary debates such as pro or anti liberalisation, to stress the complementary natures of institutions in enhancing effective freedoms.



Azim Premji Foundation
#134, Doddakannelli, Next to Wipro Corporate Office, Sarjapur Road, Bangalore 560 035, India
Tel : 91 - 80 - 6614900/01/02 Fax : 91 - 80 - 66144903
E-mail : learningcurve@azimpremjifoundation.org
Website : www.azimpremjifoundation.org