



Learning Curve

From Azim Premji Foundation

In the last few months, there have been two very significant developments in the direction of quality universal elementary education. The draft National Curriculum Framework was released followed by a draft Free and Compulsory Education Bill.

While a lot of debate is happening on the documents even the worst critiques of the documents would admit that these are steps in the right direction.

At personal level, the biggest merit I find of the draft National Curriculum Framework is that for the first time, a national document deals – and reasonably at length – with the classroom processes and the approach that is advisable by the teachers towards learning of children.

The biggest concern I have about the document is its implementability. And this is for two reasons. One: there is no compulsion on any state to implement the document. Two: the document itself has a number of gaps that do not help operationalization of the document. Of course, there are a number of other key issues that are being debated such as absence of direction in resolving the issue of multigrade teaching that is happening in over 75% of the schools across the country, inclusive pedagogy, more

options in pedagogy itself, not addressing the issue of accountability for learning etc.

The present draft Education Bill is a much simpler document than the earlier draft. For the first time, clear norms of a school have been provided for. Overall it is less draconian, has the focus on appropriate issues such as the right of transition till completion of elementary education, higher clarity in responsibility of the state, the centre and the local bodies, teachers being permanently assigned to a school etc. Some notable gaps are: need to redefine elementary education up to 10th standard in the given context, excessive input orientation when it comes to defining teacher duties – without any reference to learning outcomes (in fact definition of education and learning need to be attempted in the Bill), need to collapse the time periods granted for implementation from 3 years to 1 year etc.

Both the documents have openly admitted the fact that the biggest failure has been the 'education delivery and management system'. This leads to providing a much higher focus to the management aspects of education and the management experts can significantly contribute to education.

Dileep Ranjekar

Chief Executive Officer

Striking a balance

J Shankar

Everyone wants to lead a better life. This endeavor is the key to all our thinking and actions. How the concept of education has developed over the years is an indication of the efforts focused in this direction. In my view, education functions at three broad levels –

- The Critical or Essential level to cultivate the ability to live harmoniously among people and nature,
- The Idealistic or Humane level to identify and provide an outlet for the potential seeded in the individual to be realized, and
- The Base or Utilitarian level to develop the ability to earn a living.

While these three aspects exist at all stages of education, their relative importance changes at different stages i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary, secondary and tertiary stages are construed here in this article not the way these terms are defined and used today but in the background of the principal educational objective of how to

live a better life.

As the name implies the Critical or Essential aspect focuses on cultivating the ability to live harmoniously among people and nature and would be the foundation on which the other two aspects would be built, as the ability to earn a living or realise the potential in an individual cannot be at the cost of living harmoniously among people and nature.

As I see a logical and analytical approach would involve focusing on the Idealistic or Humane level in primary education, i.e. identify the potential in an individual and provide an outlet for its realization. And in the Base or Utilitarian level in secondary education, the focus would be on the ability to earn a living. This segregated approach is justified only if Primary and Secondary education is made universal, free and compulsory for all.

The aspirations of society which are based on ground realities should synchronize with its educational system, which is a result of the

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philosophical thinking of the intellectuals in the society, if education is to be relevant and contribute to the well being of all.

We are now faced with the challenge of achieving the goals of Universal Elementary Education. And achieving the targets set in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for 2010 also looks difficult. Therefore, there is need to examine the relevance of our educational system in the face of the existing ground realities.

With secondary education not being universal, the focus on developing the ability to earn a living is missing thereby reducing the value of primary education that tries to focus on the Idealistic and Humane aspects of education. This results in making the primary education system less relevant to the society even though it is free and compulsory.

We need to examine whether children drop out of school due to its irrelevance. In this context, what **Mahatma Gandhi** wrote in **Young India** is worth contemplating: "It is not reasonable to assume that the majority of parents are so foolish or heartless to neglect the education of their children even when it is brought to their doors free of charge."

What then is the solution?

Is it to integrate the ability to earn a living into eight years of compulsory, free education by diluting the primary focus, or add two more years of free compulsory education during which the ability to earn a living will be imparted and acquired by those who opt for it?

While we have this mismatch at the primary stage between societal needs and what education offers, in my view at the secondary level we have, for at least a certain sections, a disproportionate focus on earning a living, but at the

cost of societal and human progress.

This is most visible in May and June every year when 16 year olds have to take the strategic decision of choosing their academic stream and continue their education. There used to be a lot of excitement and consultation on the relative merits of each stream. But of late this has declined. This is no longer a matter of choice. For anyone who is considered bright or whose parents have enough resource, the choice is obvious -science stream. Two years later, the option will be between becoming an engineer or a doctor. Anything else is not even contemplated. The growing IT industry making lucrative job offers at campus recruitment is a critical issue behind this decision which assures them of employment.

The cost of this excessive focus on the Base and Utilitarian aspect of Secondary education by focusing exclusively on Engineering, Medicine and Management careers at the cost of the Idealistic and Humane focus of Liberal Arts will have to be paid in the coming decades. In what form will this be, one can only speculate; at the least we need to contemplate **when we develop the skills to meet the ends, have we also developed the foresight and judgment to select the right end?**

While thinking of a better life, we need to reflect on what Albert Einstein said "Therefore, one should guard against preaching to the young man success in the customary sense as the aim of life. For, a successful man is he who receives a great deal from his fellowmen, usually incomparably more than corresponds to his service to them. The value of a man, however, should be seen in what he gives and not in what he is able to receive."

J Shankar is Head, Technology Initiatives and Academics and Pedagogy, Azim Premji Foundation.

column

Guest

Crossing the bridge — learning to read

Rukmini Banerji



We are in a class for out of school children in a Mumbai Vile Parle (East) school, aimed at bringing one hundred children who had either dropped out or never been to school. Twelve year old Kishore is reading a lesson from the Standard II Marathi textbook. He stumbles as he encounters some words but still he reads on. His voice

is low but confident. His eyes are brighter with the thrill of being able to read fluently. Every few minutes he looks up to see if I am listening. He had trouble reading even simple words. But now he is going through the textbook

at a rapid pace. Although many words are still spelt incorrectly, he attempts to write an essay about himself. "How do you write 'cricket'", he asks Suvarna, his teacher, "I want to write 'I love cricket'". The correct spelling seems quite difficult, so he himself decides how 'cricket' should be spelt.

In one of the periods I narrated the story of "Mohini and Bhasmasura" to his class. Later, the children acted out the story and Kishore masterfully played the role of Bhasmasura, the demon. For a few days after that, he would refer to himself as Bhasmasura.

Santosh is Kishore's friend. He is about the same age. Sitting cross-legged under the window, leaning against the wall in his classroom, he is completely absorbed in

reading. Santosh had never been to school. In just two months, his reading standard has reached up to the Standard II level. He says he wants to go to a big school now that he is studying well. No one from his family has ever been to school.

The aim of the "bridge course" is to prepare children so that they can join a regular class in the municipal school in the next academic year, at their appropriate age and academic level. When the programme started, this dream seemed far-fetched. Today it seems quite possible.

The incredible "miracle" of starting to read has happened to all children in Santosh and Kishore's group. Suddenly the world has changed for them. Earlier, alphabets seemed to be just strung together; they pronounced them, one by one, painfully. Then, all these strings of alphabets together began to make sense. They started finding words and sentences everywhere. Children began reading constantly, completely self-propelled, and totally engrossed. In a few days, they read a large portion of the Standard II textbook. Kishore and Santosh now want to finish the Standard II book and move to Standard III content, then Standard IV and then ahead....The path is clear.

The experience of crossing the threshold to reading is intensely magical every time it happens. Kishore and Santosh realize that their life is changed forever.

A whole new world has appeared in front of them, and they have the means to navigate through this wonderland. Their teacher Suvarna is quietly proud to have brought about this transformation. She now only watches, listens but helps them when they stumble.

Santosh is still shy but his eyes glow. As I take leave of them they wave. And even before the door shuts behind me, they resume reading and its soft noise fills the room.

Reading is the first and most critical step. There are many more steps to take. But without this first essential step the world beyond cannot be accessed. For those children who are not in school or those who are in school lagging far behind, learning to read fluently fills them with hope and confidence. The 'magic' of reading is very visible: to the child, to the parents, to the teachers and to everyone around him. It is this magic which is the foundation for the subsequent steps; the stronger the magic, the better the foundation. Reading is the springboard from which children can explore the vast world that lies before them.

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School Development Planning

Dr S N Prasad



At present there is no practice of designing and developing an institutional plan in a systematic way, especially in government and government-aided schools. The planning process is limited to the financial requirements towards teachers' salaries and contingency expenditure to be met from

government grants. Such a budget estimate, prepared at the school level, is consolidated at the block level and later at the district level. Infrastructure development work like provision of additional classrooms, toilet and water facilities, appointing teachers, supplying teaching-learning materials, teacher training, etc., is planned and administered centrally at the state level. District wise allocations are then made and distributed subsequently, often at the fag end of the financial year. Academic goal oriented planning is almost unknown at the school level.

The Department of Public Instruction provides teaching-learning materials to the schools directly. The process is highly centralized and often the materials supplied are of little use as the specific needs and existing infrastructure

of a particular school are never taken into consideration.

The *Samudayadatta Shaale* programme, i.e. taking the school to the community, which has been in practice in the state of Karnataka for some years, incorporates a rudimentary planning process at the school level by the real stakeholders. This programme talks of the need for extensive training of head teachers, teachers and School Development Monitoring Committee members (SDMC) in the skills of development planning, implementation and monitoring. But this needs to be replaced by a more comprehensive school development planning.

Head teachers, who are the key figures in determining to a great extent the internal efficiency and effectiveness of the functioning of schools, rarely receive any training or orientation in educational planning and management. Institutional level planning and management receive very little attention in any kind of personnel training programmes within the school education sector. It is in this context that a proposal for building capacities, in particular among school heads, for School Development Planning (SDP) has been visualised. The goal is to make each school a self-managing autonomous organizational unit. Government schools have neither independent

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identity nor a mission and vision. They are being run through a centralized planning and implementation process. They are system-based and generic in nature. SDP should help develop a sense of ownership and unique identity in each school and among the local stakeholders. In turn, this will also lead to a new framework for accountability with regard to school performance, not based on external expectations but based on plans and targets set from within by the players themselves. This, of course, will require a transformation of the role of local administrators from one of controllers and norm-builders to that of resource persons and facilitators of change and development.

Why Development Planning?

Development planning encourages schools, head teachers, teachers and the community to ask four basic questions:

- Where is the school now?
- What changes do we need to make?
- How shall we manage these changes over time?
- How shall we know whether our management of change has been successful?

Development planning helps the school to provide for itself practical answers to these questions. This needs time and energy but the gain is that the school is enabled to organize what it is already doing and what it needs to do in a more purposeful and coherent way.

Development Planning is more than a document; it is the process of creating the plan and then ensuring that

it is put into effect. The plan is a statement of intentions, which reflect the school's vision for the future. The process involves reaching agreement on a sensible set of priorities for the school and then taking action to realize the plan.

A good institutional development plan should result in enhanced quality of performance of the school and its students. It is, therefore, also necessary to assess and monitor such a performance. An action plan that is being considered for precisely such a purpose is the establishment of an independent organization, called the Karnataka School Quality Assessment Organization (KSQAO), to assess and monitor the quality of schools. This organization is to be charged with the task of developing and administering an effective assessment and monitoring process that is vital to the improvement of quality and standards of performance in schools. The outcomes of the development plan will naturally come under the scrutiny of KSQAO when it starts functioning. In turn, the planning process itself may be influenced positively under the watchful gaze of the quality assessment organization

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Update

News

Child Friendly School Initiative

A holistic intervention for all round development of a child through:

- Head teachers – school management and leadership – both administrative and academic.
- Teachers – subject matter expertise, motivation and higher orientation to child centric practices.
- Parent body engaged in school – demanding accountability, relevance of education and playing an effective role in school management.
- Education officers – being an effective academic resource as change agents of school and classroom culture.
- Focus on issues related to sanitation, health and gender issues.
- **Our reach: 560 schools.**

Feedback for Head teachers

Surpur, the headquarters of the most backward taluk in North East Karnataka, was the venue of a feedback session for Head teachers and School Development and Monitoring Committee (SDMC) presidents from April 25, 2005 to May 6, 2005. The feedback pertained to the evaluation of children from 303 Government Primary Schools in the area participating in the Child Friendly School Initiative, a programme of Azim Premji Foundation in partnership with UNICEF and the Karnataka Government.

Representatives from 30 schools each were called daily and trained on preparing an action plan to make their schools child friendly.

A baseline survey had been conducted earlier to assess the status of learning achievements of children in Class 1 to Class 4 of these 303 schools. Raw data pertaining to each school was analyzed and summarized into concise individual reports, which reflected the existing situation under the following heads:

- Enrolment** – measured in terms of out-of-school children in the village or habitation.
- Attendance** – measured in terms of regular attendance of enrolled children.
- Competency** – as reflected in the evaluation carried out by the Foundation

Explanatory notes in the report helped head teachers and SDMC presidents in interpreting / understanding the feedback.

The invited head teachers and SDMC presidents were also introduced to a manual brought out by the Foundation to assist them in the implementation of School Development Plan. The plan aimed at the overall development of schools which required the support from both - teaching staff and community. The manual helped them in monitoring the implementation of the plan. The message that the head teachers and SDMC presidents, being the representatives of the teaching staff and community, played a vital role in the development of their school was reinforced.

The Foundation clarified its role as that of a facilitator. It exhorted the participants to be the arbiters of their own change. The workshop defined the existing relationship between the Foundation and the participants as that of partnership as against dependency. Consequently, emphasis was placed on collaboration with identified partners.

A highlight of the workshop was the participation of Mr. Vijay Bhaskar, Education Secretary of the Karnataka Government. Interacting with a group of head teachers and SDMC presidents, he spoke of the effectiveness of external evaluation and its validity and methodology. He referred to the glaring disparities in the school progress reports and external evaluation results.

Referring to the alarming levels of absenteeism, which was as high as 20 per cent, Mr. Vijay Bhaskar said the parents' perception was that hardly any teaching took place in classrooms and, therefore, they did not bother to send their children to school. This necessitated the need to introduce accountability at the primary school level as crores of rupees were being spent on primary education, he said.

Learning Guarantee Programme

- Promoting accountability in the educational system for equitable excellence through assessment driven reforms.
- **Our reach: 3400 schools.**



Training for the action research programme

In Madhya Pradesh

Over 1500 schools in the two districts of Madhya Pradesh – Datia and Vidisha – are participating in the Learning Guarantee Programme that was launched by Government of Madhya Pradesh earlier in the year. Evaluation of these schools, under the Learning Guarantee Programme (LGP) will replace the annual examinations to be conducted in April 2006. The Rajya Shiksha Kendra at Bhopal along with the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) has developed question papers that will seek to assess understanding and application and move away from traditional testing of rote memory. A team of volunteers working closely with the Janashikshaks (cluster resource coordinators)

in these two districts are in the process of creating awareness and interest among the school teachers and parent teacher associations in these schools.

The Collectors of these two districts have also extended their support to the Programme which will be on the agenda at their monthly meetings. Collectors have sent appreciation letters to each of the Janashikshak motivating them to work closely with their respective schools.

The Foundation, with the guidance and support of Prof. A.K. Jalaluddin, has commenced an Action Research Programme in one educational block in each of these districts. The experiment is being implemented in 37 schools – one school in every cluster of the selected block. The action research will study the impact of introducing specific pedagogical processes that build confidence and ability for independent reading and learning among children. This study seeks to demonstrate that such practical experiences will be a more effective way of orienting teachers as opposed to the current cascade mode of teacher training. It would be interesting to see how this unfolds over the next six months of the academic year.

In Karnataka

The Learning Guarantee Programme aims to stir and create accountability in the system and among education functionaries for the quality of learning that children receive. The evaluation of 1443 schools in the North East Karnataka pilot, followed by the various research and analysis provided a rich load of information. The Principal Secretary and Commissioner for Public Instruction invited over 300 educational functionaries from the eight educational districts of North East Karnataka to share these findings. Workshops for evolving region specific action plans at the block level that will enable enhanced performance by schools participating in the Learning Guarantee Programme were held in May 2005 at Gulbarga, Raichur, Bijapur and Hospet.



Workshop with educational functionaries for evolving action plans

The workshops began with the officers being provided a detailed analysis of learning achievement, pertaining to their block and district. The findings of the research; factors that enable successful schools to perform the way they do were presented and discussed. Creating a churn and mood for introspection was a key element in these workshops. The officers then formed block wise teams to analyze and discuss the information provided and come up with specific and time bound action plans that could help schools in their region to improve from their current level.

The participation was enthusiastic. In one cycle, vital data was being shared with so many functionaries who would in turn share it with some 500 Cluster resource persons (CRP). It is hoped that the CRPs would use the crucial information with the head teachers in their respective areas and put them in an action mould.

In Uttaranchal



Participants at the assessment tools workshop

Uttaranchal is trying to move away from the traditional rote memory text based questions to competency based questions. The Learning Guarantee Programme is providing the base for this paradigm shift. Two districts (Uttarkashi and Udham Singh Nagar) have been chosen to implement the programme as a pilot from where it will be taken to the entire state.

Dehradun was the venue of a three-day workshop in August, 2005 to provide expert guidance and inputs for the change over and discuss competency based assessment tools developed by the state academic resource group. The expert panel was drawn from various institutions across the country. SSA Uttaranchal invited all the DIETs in the state to get an exposure to the new pattern of testing and sensitize them. It was also an opportunity to expand the academic resource base to develop

a new set of question papers.

Questions like what does competency mean, are we testing content or competency, when does it become relevant to test content, why frame questions that are not from the text book, what do we mean by testing of ability or skill or application etc. were thoroughly discussed and debated. The participants discussed what constitutes a good question and what constitutes a good question paper. The critical thinking and debate also generated the much-needed conviction that this reform in testing methods and tools would create the need for a change in the teaching learning process. Question papers (EVS, Hindi and Math) were drafted and discussed in separate groups by subject experts.

An action plan has been drawn up for the next three months. A core group will develop a revised sample question papers for distribution in schools participating in the Learning Guarantee Programme.



Experts planning the launch of LGP

In Rajasthan

The Government of Rajasthan has announced the launch of Learning Guarantee Programme in the state with a pilot in Tonk and Sirohi districts. The education functionaries of both districts as well as representatives from organizations such as Vidya Bhavan Society, Unicef, Rajasthan University among others were brought together to discuss and develop the plan for the launch of the programme. A similar discussion was held with over 90 cluster resource persons and block functionaries to seek their views. Apart from being an opportunity for a focus on school quality, the programme is being seen as a means of creating a shift in assessment, moving from rote learning test to testing understanding and application through competency based test. An academic resource group drawn from

a pool of teachers, cluster, block and DIET will develop the question papers and will offer these for critique and improvement at a workshop where external experts and institutions will be invited. Azim Premji Foundation which is partnering with the Government of Rajasthan in this initiative, will also draw upon other organizations such as Vidya Bhavan Society to help in the implementation of the programme.

Technology Initiatives

Contribute to quality enhancement through:

Computer aided learning

- Digital content development that addresses the issue of playful, interactive, child centric learning and assessment.
- Teacher training using technology to trigger actions related to child centric learning in the classroom.
- Our reach: 9332 schools

Others

- Education MIS system building to enhance management abilities and building capacity in the Government system.
- Solutions for developing abilities of mass training to build capacity among teachers, community members and education functionaries.



Visitor interacting with children at Dundh school

Computer Aided Learning Expansion to new states

In Rajasthan

Computer Aided Learning programme was launched in 187 upper primary schools across all the 29 districts. About 30,000 children would benefit from this programme. This programme, a partnership between Government of Rajasthan and Azim Premji Foundation was inaugurated in the Dundh Upper Primary School of Jaipur District on August 1, 2005, as part of Rajasthan Education Initiative. Rajasthan Education Initiative was jointly organized by the Government of Rajasthan and World Economic Forum to bring together public, private and not for profit organizations for joint work.

- **In Gujarat**, the Computer Aided Learning programme was launched in 517 schools across all districts;
- **In Karnataka**, the programme was expanded to a further 540 schools;
- **In Punjab**, our content in Gurmukhi is deployed in 1299 schools.



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister handing over the CDs to the State Education Minister

In Tamil Nadu

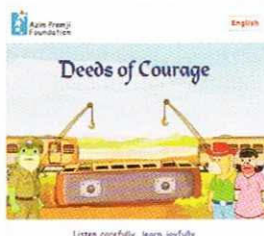
The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Ms Jayalalitha, released 54 multimedia CD titles in Tamil produced by Azim Premji Foundation at a function in Chennai on August 9, 2005. These titles covering class 1 to 8 will be used in the 412 computer aided learning centres across the state. These centres have been set up by Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in partnership with Azim Premji Foundation.

For these schools in the above mentioned states the Foundation team has trained Master Resource Persons on implementing Computer Aided Learning Programme, who have in turn trained teachers and is jointly monitoring the programme.

New CDs Released

Eleven new titles were released taking the number of CDs released by the Foundation to 91. The new CDs include:

- Four CDs for learning English language (for classes 3 to 5) – *Deeds of courage, Tell a tale, Harish weds Harini, and The Cruel king;*
- One for learning Oriya language (for class 3) – *Gilluro Bahagarro.*
- Four CDs for learning Telugu language (for classes 1 to 3) - *Katha-*



Upakatha, Vikramuni Parakramanu, Atta- Patta, Janapatha Sampadhu

- Two CDs for learning Tamil language (for classes 1 to 3) - *Naadodi Ulagam, Kattukkulle Thirivizha*



Education Management (EM)

The National Policy on Education 1986 and many other reports before and after the policy addressed in details the aims of education, the process in which the education will be delivered and also threw light on the kind of education that needs to be supported in India. It dealt with important issues like 'all round development' of the child, the kind of professionalism to be promoted in every aspect of education and the public private participation that needs to enhance the quality of education.

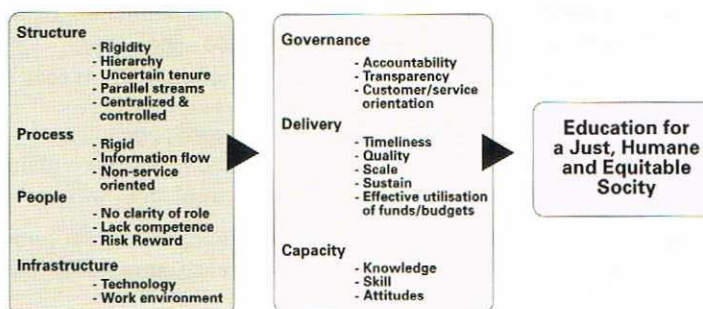
While a significant improvement has been achieved in availability of access, quality and equity of education have still remained elusive to the masses. The current status of education is nowhere near the status promised by the National Policy on Education. While debate needs to continue on what kind of education is relevant for the

country and the kind of financial resources to be provided to achieve the goals of education, the reality is significant funds are already deployed in elementary education.

Increasingly the administrators, educationists and other professionals are accepting that the biggest issue to be addressed is the efficiency and the effectiveness of the "delivery system" of education. The draft National Curriculum Framework as well as the Education Bill have explicit references to the need of improving the "Education Delivery System". There are deeper issues that are related to the overall "Management of Education" at every level.

Probably the most important issue is that of building "accountability" for the quality of education at every level of the delivery system. Beginning from the teachers in the school to the Education Minister of each state, clear

Issues with current delivery system



- What are the goals of education system
- How are education system to achieve goals

outcome based accountability needs to be built.

The above may need a fundamental review of the organisation structures, people processes, building competencies among people and financial resources.

More importantly, there will be a need to infuse management expertise at every step in the delivery system to ensure that achievement of quality universal education for all becomes a reality.

With these needs in mind, we at Azim Premji Foundation

aim to build expertise within the Foundation to be able to analyse, understand, advocate and contribute to important managerial aspects of the education delivery system.

Initially the team in Education Management (that will consist of experts in operation management, people development, financial management and legal aspects) will work through the Policy Planning Unit but will soon operate independently with the state Governments that express the desire to evaluate its management practices.

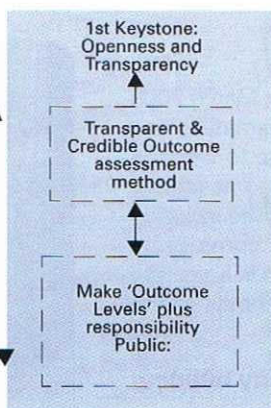
"Key Stones" for transformation

2nd Keystone: Alignment

- Re-align the Learning delivery structure & process with outcome
- Integrate SDMC role & process with outcome
- Transformation of the cluster & block into a 'Self-directed Team'

3rd Keystone: Initiative

- Targetted capacity Building
- Extra-ordinary Recognition-On achievement of learning guarantee Teams plus individuals
- Targetted 'Cross Learning'



Key Shifts

| From | → | To |
|---|---|---|
| Activity Orientation | | Outcome Orientation |
| Internal and upward accountability | → | External accountability to community |
| Diffused roles and process with block as primary unit of delivery (Personality dependent) | → | Roles and process convergence with cluster as the primary unit of delivery (Systems pro-activeness) |
| Push | → | Pull and Push |

Goal

All schools reach learning guarantee status in 3 years

Workshops on National Curriculum Framework



Experts at the Jaipur workshop

Azim Premji Foundation facilitated a debate on the draft National Curriculum Framework recommendations by organising workshops at four locations across the country in July 2005. The locations were Bangalore, Kolkata (in partnership with Vikramshila), Jaipur (in partnership with Digantar) and Bhopal (in partnership with Eklavya). The respective state governments too collaborated. The objective was to provide a forum for debate on the recommendations of National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2005.

Over 200 educationists, government functionaries, NGOs, teacher educators, and teachers took part in the discussions at these workshops providing meaningful insights into the document, which aimed at improving the quality of elementary education.

A summary of the recommendations that emanated from these deliberations has been sent to the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Azim Premji Foundation believes that this exercise will enrich the interpretation, contextualization and implementation of the curriculum.

Recommendations:

- This vision document for transformation of Indian school education has no real theory of change embedded in it. Would it, therefore, have a similar fate as of several earlier? Also, it needs to be written in a much simpler language to enable a larger cross-section of population to read it and with no gender bias.
- It does not address the most important issue of accountability; it now rests on the child if learning is not taking place, and not on the system.
- Many of the ideas mentioned here are not new – for instance, rote learning. An analysis of why we are stuck in it even though it has been criticized for long was needed.
- The framework hopes that local bodies would create the curriculum. But it does not discuss issues which might arise out of that like, for example, clash between modern and traditional viewpoints.

- Children have been missed out. They do have their viewpoint on what should be taught, how it should be taught and how it should be assessed and, therefore they should have been consulted. Also, it does not address the different needs of adolescent children adequately.
- The recommendation on language teaching should have been based on sound research. It is said that children can learn many languages in the early stages of development. Why then restrict to a three-language policy?
- NCF talks of inclusive education – multiple abilities, multiple-intelligence, etc. This idea should have extended to inclusive pedagogy too. Focusing on constructivism, to the exclusion of other pedagogies, might be limiting.
- It does not mention the role institutions like National Council of Education Research and Training, National Council of Teachers Education, etc. should play in translating its vision into reality.

(The summary recommendations and the minutes of the workshops are available on www.azimpremjiifoundation.org)

Policy Planning Unit (PPU)

The Policy Planning Unit was established in March 2003 as a collaboration of the Government of Karnataka and Azim Premji Foundation. It has the mandate to work on policy and programme issues pertaining to academic capacities, administrative and technical capacities including financial and budgetary aspects; and community mobilisation aspects of the education system in Karnataka and provide recommendations and policy inputs to the Department.

Organisation restructuring and capacity building among education functionaries

The goal of achieving Universal Elementary Education has eluded the nation despite clear goals, timelines and resources being assigned towards the same. It is acknowledged that one of the critical reasons for slower progress on achieving universal quality education is the "education delivery system" itself. The 'Organization Restructuring and Capacity Building' programme is aimed at enhancing both the systemic and individual capacities of the education department through its three mandated components – Academic, Administrative and Community.

As a part of enhancing the systemic capacities, the PPU has through PricewaterhouseCoopers Ltd. initiated an organization study of the education delivery system that would study structure, processes, financial resources, capacities of people etc., and make concrete recommendations for addressing issues and obstacles coming in the way of effective delivery.

IT Training of Education Functionaries

As a part of the Administrative component, Education MIS version 1 has been developed by Azim Premji Foundation in partnership with Government of Karnataka. To ensure successful and effective implementation of Education MIS and also for facilitating e-governance in the department through a 'culture' of using IT, the PPU has initiated through CMC Ltd. IT training for Education department officers across 19 of the 32 educational districts. Initial and advanced ("Level 1 and 2") training programmes are being implemented in 17 of these districts.



Ms. Manjula, Additional CPI inaugurating the Pramata IT Training in Bidar

Since the objective of the programme is to create an 'IT culture', it covers all officers (around 70) at the district and block levels. The goal is to enable a paradigm shift from relying on a few 'data entry operators' and 'programmers' to all officers being comfortable using Information Technology as an integral part of their work. Training on website creation and maintenance (Level 4) has been completed. Level 3 training will focus on Senior Management of the Department and will aim at addressing their requirements with respect to reporting and decision support.

Initial feedback indicates that the programme has helped in demystifying IT and its use and ensuring 'e-literacy'. The challenge is now to ensure that post training the officers use computers in their daily work.

Strengthening DIETs

District Institutes of Education & Training (DIET) are the primary vehicles to achieve capacity building of school teachers and evolving teaching learning practices that are conducive to achieving the quality goals of education. The Policy Planning Unit has initiated a 'Strengthening DIET' programme that will address the aspect of continuous development of the DIET faculty and develop keen interest and accountability among the DIETs towards academic performance of the schools in the district. A core committee

performance of the schools in the district. A core committee of DIET faculty and functionaries along with a few academicians outside the Government has been formed to study existing DIETs and their current status. This committee will work closely with the DIETs to lead the change process in the DIETs by suggesting various reforms, managing the change process and address capacity building needs of DIET faculty.

In an effort to increase and improve communication within and between various departments and also to enable peer sharing and learning, the PPU has helped in the setting up of email lists (Yahoo groups) for DIETs and College for Teacher Education (CTE) members. Special training was also conducted for DIET and CTE members. There has been a significant increase in the level of interaction between the DIETs through email and this would be a channel for constructive information sharing including reporting.

Community role in School Performance

Karnataka was among the first state to invite structured participation of the community in the school management through establishment of the School Development and Monitoring Committee (SDMC). The PPU has planned a programme aiming to enhance the SDMCs' integration into school development and management. Federating SDMCs, enhancing ownership of SDMC in the 'School Development Plans' and sharing of best practices are some key components of this project.

Visioning and Alignment workshops

Two workshops were held with the senior management of the Education Department in April and August 2005. These workshops, facilitated by Rajiv Narang of 'Erehwon Consulting', have identified that, having made significant improvements in the access and enrolment aspects, the state must pursue the goals of its Learning Guarantee Programme – 100% enrolment, 75% children achieving 90% average attendance and at least 60% children in the school acquiring the expected learning outcomes. It was decided that the learning outcomes will be assessed through methods that will measure the comprehension and application of the learning as opposed to current methods that focus largely on memory and rote.

It was recognised that such a challenging goal would necessitate transformation in several people processes and structures, and the state will be willing to undertake the same. The key shifts would include moving from the current 'activity' or 'task' orientation to an 'outcome' or 'result' orientation; moving from the currently predominant 'inward' / internal accountability to 'outward' accountability to the community and other external stakeholders; and from a 'personality' based to an 'Institution' based delivery system.

The Karnataka School Quality Assessment Organisation (KSQAO) will spearhead assessment of all children in 2nd, 5th and 7th standard in all 45,000 Government schools

across the state in January 06 and Azim Premji Foundation will partner with the Government of Karnataka to ensure effective completion of such assessment.

E-Governance

As a part of the e-governance initiatives of the education department, the PPU has guided the preparation of an 'e-Governance Perspective Plan' for the education department. This plan discusses the needs and projects that the Department would implement over the next 3-4 years. The PPU has also worked with the e-governance unit to create the website www.karnatakaeducation.org.in. This site has the 'school search' and the 'office search' facilities that would enable any person to obtain information on any Government Primary School or office in Karnataka. The school search feature provides relevant details to individuals and institutions interested in adopting schools under the school adoption programme of the Department.

Research & Evaluation

The Government of Karnataka has decided that periodic evaluation of its schemes and programmes would provide knowledge and insights into their design and implementation. PPU is facilitating some of these research studies by identifying issues, developing terms of reference, identifying competent agencies and coordinating the research with such agencies. Policy Planning Unit also facilitates the monitoring of the research quality through a steering committee and also by its participation in the research design, field study and analysis.

The research studies in progress include (a) the supply of free text books (b) evaluation of Mahiti Sindhu programme (c) Evaluations of the Accelerated Reading Programme of the Akshara Foundation (d) the functioning of DIETs & CTEs of Karnataka.

The Government of Karnataka supplies free text books to students in Government schools under the 'free text books' scheme. The Mahiti Sindhu programme has completed the 'Build, Operate, Transfer' term of five years, under which NIIT, Aptech and Educomp have conducted computer aided learning in 1000 high schools. The findings would help in determining the future shape of the programme. The 'Accelerated Reading programme' aims at enhancing the reading skills of primary school students over an intensive 45 day programme. DIETs have completed ten years in Karnataka and their evaluation would feed into the 'Strengthening DIET' programme.

A feedback study on the Trimester system was conducted by the PPU to understand effectiveness of the system and identifying the roadblocks and bottlenecks faced in its first year of implementation itself (2004-05). The Government has implemented some of the recommendations of the study during the current academic year 2005-06.

Research Update

Randomised Evaluation Study in Andhra

The Government of Andhra Pradesh and Azim Premji Foundation are jointly carrying out a Randomised Evaluation study in 600 government run elementary schools across five districts spread across Telangana, Rayalaseema and coastal Andhra regions. The study is aimed at improving learning outcomes for children in these schools.

Specifically, the research study will focus on evaluating various policy options available to the state government and compare the effectiveness of additional spending on various schooling inputs with additional spending on teacher incentives.

The evaluation is being carried out using an 'experimental' design. The sample of schools includes control schools and treatment schools. Treatment schools are those where either an input or an incentive or both are provided while control schools have neither. A critical feature of this study is that the allocation of schools for control group and treatment group is done randomly.



The 600 schools have been selected using stratified random sampling from the comprehensive list of schools in the districts. The stratification ensures that the schools are from villages with a wide range of initial literacy levels and across different demographic characteristics at the village level. The quality of learning will be measured by carrying out student assessment tests.

The study commenced in June 2005 and will continue till April 2006. It is hoped that the findings will come out with interesting inputs for policy guidelines to improve the overall ability and effectiveness of providing education services.

Factors Differentiating Winning Schools Learning Guarantee Programme: 2004-05

D D Karopady

INTRODUCTION

Factors contributing to success of schools in the second year of the Learning Guarantee Programme- 2004-05 were studied among a sample of 240 schools- 68 winning schools, 72 other participating schools and 100 non participating schools. The instruments of data collection were similar to the ones used in the previous year to permit comparison and ensure uniformity.

Non-participating schools were included to understand

their profile vis-a-vis participating schools. The sample size of teachers on whom data was collected was 990 - 250 teachers from winning schools, 233 teachers from other participating schools and 507 teachers from non participating schools.

The key findings from the study are summarised below. These are presented in five sections - Infrastructure Indicators, Teacher Indicators, School practices, Community/Administration Indicators and other open ended questions.

FINDINGS

Infrastructure Indicators

(All figs in % of schools)

| Indicator | Winning Schools | Other schools | All Participating Schools | Non-Participating Schools |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| No of schools | 68 | 72 | 140 | 100 |
| Lower Primary Schools | 66.2 | 65.3 | 65.3 | 62.0 |
| Higher Primary Schools | 33.8 | 34.7 | 34.7 | 38.0 |
| Facilities | | | | |
| Bus reaches within 0.5 kms of school | 61.8 | 66.7 | 66.4 | 67.0 |
| Pucca building | 95.6 | 95.8 | 95.8 | 93.0 |
| Aanganwadi on premises | 35.3 | 36.1 | 36.1 | 40.0 |
| Drinking water | 75.0 | 56.9 | 58.0 | 60.0 |
| Usable toilets for children | 55.9 | 45.8 | 46.4 | 50.0 |
| Separate Teacher's toilets | 25.0 | 13.9 | 14.5 | 14.0 |
| Compound wall | 30.9 | 27.8 | 27.9 | 33.0 |
| Electricity | 44.1 | 27.8 | 28.7 | 38.0 |
| Play ground | 50.0 | 41.7 | 42.1 | 56.0 |
| Avg. no of class rooms | 3.71 | 3.08 | 3.12 | 3.95 |

Avg: average

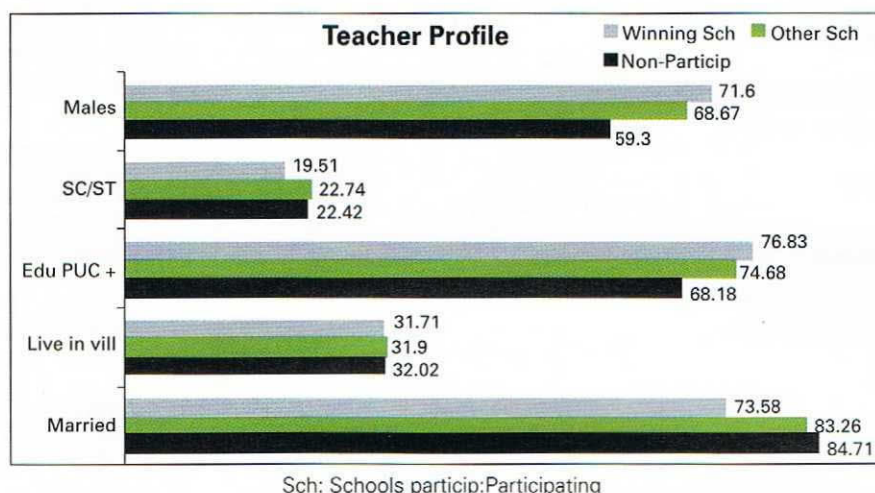
As can be seen above, there are no significant differences in the indicators across the three categories except on one parameter. These findings are similar to the findings of the study for the 2003-04 schools.

Teacher Indicators

The key measures on this aspect are summarised below.

| Indicator | Winning Schools | Other Schools | All Participating Schools | Non-Participating schools |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Number of Teachers | 250 | 233 | 583 | 507 |
| Male teachers | 71.60 | 68.67 | 69.57 | 59.30 |
| Teachers SC/ST | 19.51 | 22.74 | 22.40 | 22.42 |
| Average age (years) | 35.73 | 36.53 | 36.49 | 36.92 |
| Average experience (years) | 9.84 | 9.17 | 9.25 | 9.70 |
| Education level – PUC or more | 76.83 | 74.68 | 75.63 | 68.18 |
| Live in the same village | 31.71 | 31.90 | 31.06 | 32.02 |
| Married | 73.58 | 83.26 | 82.18 | 84.71 |
| Head teacher profile | | | | |
| Male | 83.82 | 88.89 | 89.48 | 82.83 |
| SC/ST | 19.41 | 29.17 | 27.52 | 24.24 |
| Graduate and above | 28.36 | 22.22 | 23.00 | 19.19 |
| Live in the same village | 20.90 | 26.39 | 26.23 | 25.25 |
| Married | 82.09 | 88.89 | 88.18 | 90.91 |
| Average age | 39.27 | 40.06 | 40.02 | 41.27 |
| Average experience (yrs) | 14.34 | 13.10 | 13.24 | 15.04 |

PUC: pre-university course



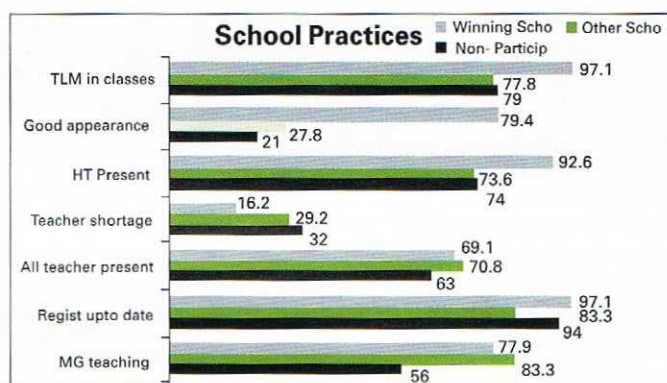
On the teacher related measures, the findings again indicate that there are no statistically significant differences between winning schools and other participating schools. There are, however, significant differences between non-participating and all participating schools on a few measures. The proportion of male teachers in participating schools is significantly higher. Also, the teachers in the participating schools have, on an average, higher educational qualifications than in non-participating schools. Whether the teachers live in the same village or not does not seem to have any clear bearing on the participation or success of the school.

School practices

The key measures are as follows

| Indicator | Winning Schools | Non-Winning Schools | All Participating Schools | Non-Participating schools |
|---|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Number of schools | 68 | 72 | 140 | 100 |
| TLM in class rooms | 97.1 | 77.8 | 78.9 | 79.0 |
| Good school appearance | 79.4 | 27.8 | 30.7 | 21.0 |
| Up to date student register | 98.5 | 86.1 | 86.8 | 94.0 |
| Up to date teacher register | 97.1 | 90.3 | 90.6 | 96.0 |
| HT Absent | 2.9 | 16.7 | 15.9 | 16.0 |
| HT Present | 92.6 | 73.6 | 74.7 | 74.0 |
| HT post vacant | 4.4 | 9.7 | 9.4 | 10.0 |
| Average no. of working teachers | 3.76 | 3.18 | 3.21 | 5.0 |
| Schools with temp teachers | 8.8 | 9.7 | 9.7 | 13.0 |
| School have shortage of teachers | 16.2 | 29.2 | 28.4 | 32.0 |
| All teachers present | 69.1 | 70.8 | 70.7 | 63.0 |
| Student and teacher registers are maintained up to date | 97.1 | 83.3 | 84.1 | 94.0 |
| Multi grade teaching involved | 77.9 | 83.3 | 83.0 | 56.0 |

TLM: Teaching Learning Material HT: Head teacher Temp: Temporary



MG teaching: Multigrade teaching

The in-school dimension seems to throw up several significant differences. A clear characteristic of a winning school is the presence of lot of teaching-learning material in classrooms, neat appearance, and leadership skills displayed by the head teacher as compared to other participating schools. The non-participating schools seem to be carrying out multi-grade teaching to a much lesser extent than participating schools.

Community/Administration Indicators

Summary of indicators for School Administration

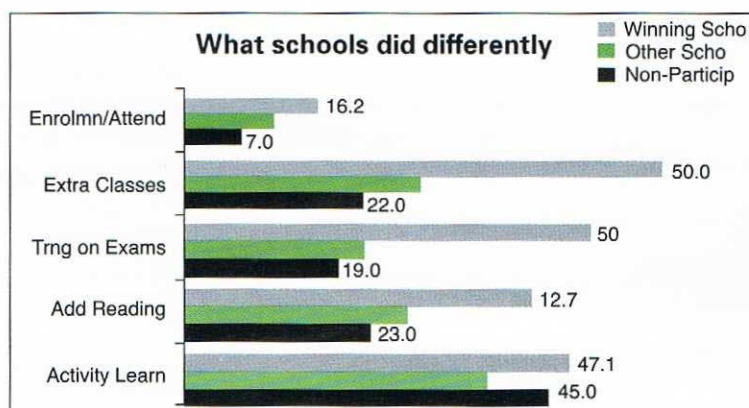
| Indicator | Winning Schools | Non-Winning Schools | All Participating Schools | Non-Participating schools |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| SDMC takes active interest | 98.5 | 93.1 | 93.3 | 93.0 |
| Panchayat takes interest | 45.6 | 27.8 | 28.8 | 27.0 |
| Help received from SHGs | 35.3 | 11.1 | 12.5 | 14.0 |
| Avg. no of SDMC meetings between June-Dec 2003 | 7.79 | 7.40 | 7.42 | 5.77 |
| Avg. no of CRP visits between June-Dec 2003 | 6.86 | 5.73 | 5.80 | 4.97 |

On these measures too, the story is similar. The winning schools have a better and supportive environment than others. The community (the panchayat, the SDMC as also some SHGs) is clearly seen to be more active in the winning schools. The data shows statistically significant difference on these measures.

Open ended responses

Initiatives Taken to Improve the performance of Students

| Activity | Winning Schools | Other Schools | Non-Participating Schools |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Focus on Enrolment and Attendance | 16.2 | 11.1 | 7.0 |
| Extra Classes | 58.8 | 29.2 | 22.0 |
| Orientation on Exams | 50.0 | 22.2 | 19.0 |
| Additional Reading Material | 42.7 | 27.8 | 23.0 |
| Activity Based Learning | 47.1 | 37.5 | 45.0 |



Enrolmn: Enrolment Trng: Training

This data again shows the active involvement of and extra efforts put in by all the stakeholders in the winning schools: teachers have walked the extra mile, the parents/ SDMC have contributed their mite and, in a small way, the education functionaries have also done their bit. Clearly, the entire system seems to have contributed to ensuring success. This is almost similar to the findings from other studies as also those of last year.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this round of study seem to be a repeat of the findings obtained last year from a similar study. In many ways, the findings reinforce the key aspects differentiating the winning schools from the other schools. Most infrastructure parameters, many teacher demographics, where s/he stays, etc. do not have any major bearing on the LGP performance outcomes. But the most critical differentiators are: an 'efficient teacher system' in terms of commitment, discipline and efforts of the head teacher/ teachers, and an 'involved community system' comprising active and supportive SDMC and parents.

Interestingly, the 'non participating schools' do not differ much from participating schools on most infrastructure and teacher parameters. These schools, in other words, are not very different - visually or at superficial level - from the non-winning schools. The differences essentially are in the 'teacher system' and, more importantly, the community support.

D D Karopady is Head, Research and Documentation, Azim Premji Foundation.

Book Case



1. India - Development and Participation: Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, Oxford University Press, 2005. This book explores the role of public action in eliminating deprivation and expanding human freedoms in India. The authors place human agency at the centre of stage, and stress the complementary roles of different institutions in enhancing effective freedoms.

2. The Myth of Community - Gender Issues in Participatory Development: Irene Guijt and Meera Kaul Shah, Vistaar Publications, 2002. The book provides many insights into how women can be involved more equitably and appropriately in participatory processes and how gender issues can be tackled more meaningfully. The contributors discuss the crucial role that can be played by conceptual clarity, appropriate methods and methodologies and supportive organizations and institutional structures.



3. Total Quality Management in Education: Marmar Mukhopadhyay, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, 2001. First Indian book on this subject, it covers philosophical underpinnings of TQM, its instrumentalities as well as methods of strategic planning and implementation in schools.

4. Frames of Mind: Howard Gardner. Gardner questions the fundamental assumption that intelligence is a general capacity that all have to a greater or lesser extent; and it can be measured by standardized verbal instruments. This covers only the linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences, but there are musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic intelligences as well.



CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Azim Premji Foundation has moved to its new office effective 4th July 2005.

The new address and phone numbers are:

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The Foundation invites articles on related topics, anecdotes, and feedback from its readers so that we may, together, realise the dream of seeing every child in school and learning. Please send your contributions to the Foundation at the address given above.