Final Report of the study

Curricular Transaction in Selected Government Schools of Andhra Pradesh

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Chapter I

EDUCATION IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Background

During the past two decades which have seen intense social, economic and political change, there has been a gradual increase in the number of children from marginalized sections joining Government schools. However, the percentage of dropouts from these (Government) schools, especially from the SC / ST communities, has also steadily increased. Newspapers reported that among the children in the age group of 6 – 13 years belonging to the SC / ST communities in Andhra Pradesh, just about 1 % manage to complete class V and that, a great majority of the dropouts in this age group during the period 1995 – 2000 are girls. Those of us at Anveshi who have been thinking about and working on issues of education were disturbed by this trend. Significantly though, this trend was paralleled by the efforts of the State in the field of education. Policies on education in these years were symbolized by slogans such as "universalization of elementary education" and "education for all." The main focus has been on the expansion of facilities for schooling with enrolment figures being the prime index of progress. In this push for quantitative growth, the nature and quality of the curriculum as well as the processes of curricular transaction were sidelined.

In such a context we wanted to focus on the function and relevance of schooling for children in the government schools. We wanted in fact to know which groups of children were studying in government schools. Unlike other schools (private or alternate schools) Government schools were in principle accessible to all sections. In fact, some of the members of the research team had passed out of government schools in the 60s and the 70s. The present profile of the students in government schools however seemed to be significantly different from the time we studied in government schools. Specifically, we have noted considerable reluctance on the part of middle and lower class families to send their children to government schools. In our informal discussions with teachers too we realized that many of the government-school teachers send their own children to private schools where the medium of instruction is English right from the primary grades. We were therefore interested in understanding the contemporary function and profile of education in general, and of government schools in particular. We thought it important to

know which groups of students were going to these schools, how many of them are managing to go beyond class V? We also wanted to find out what factors are contributing to their dropping out in the higher classes? We therefore chose secondary schools for our study because we will get a chance to interview students who had managed to pass out of primary schools. For the purposes of our study this was a critical factor because, as is widely acknowledged, the first level and largest drop out of students takes place before the end of the primary school. The focus of our study was therefore on how students who had passed out of the primary school engaging with the curriculum at the secondary stage. In deciding to choose secondary schools for our study, we hoped also that we could get children to talk to us about their experiences in the educational system. The main aim of the project was thus to document the processes by which the curriculum is negotiated by children in classes VI, VII and VIII in ten different Government schools in and around Hyderabad.

The period of this study (June 2000-May 2002) coincided with a time of heightened activity and debates in the field of education. Some of the significant events related to education were: World Bank entry into the field of education; the move to make primary education a fundamental right; the preparation of the National Curriculum Framework for School Education by NCERT; changes made in history textbooks of NCERT; the case filed against these changes in the Supreme Court; the introduction of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme for education, and the Birla-Ambani report for recommending privatization of higher education. While this study concentrates on the specific situation of Andhra Pradesh, it is influenced by debates on issues relating to education at a broader, that is, national level.

The study has two major components: i) understanding what the State envisages as the proper content and outcome of school education through a focus on its policies and, ii) an empirical study of the curriculum transaction processes in a sample of ten different urban / semi-urban government schools in the state of Andhra Pradesh. The second phase involved a process of extended observations of activities in and outside classrooms, supplemented by interviews with teachers, children and parents.

The researchers have come into this project with a rich background of involvement in many contemporary social movements in general, and issues of education in particular.

Some of them have been teaching students coming from marginalized sections of society; others have been involved in research on disabled children; yet others have taught students coming to colleges from rural backgrounds. They have all been engaged in issues pertaining to the theory and practice of literacy programmes, textbooks, examinations, education policies, teachers' attitudes etc. Anveshi made it possible for this group to write up a research proposal that could accommodate such diverse interests.

A Brief Look at Earlier Studies on School Education

The importance of school education is easily conceded by a wide section of our society. However, it is also increasingly acceded that in spite of the various efforts made by the State (e.g. the Operation Blackboard scheme introduced in 1986; establishment of District Institutes of Education and Training or DIETs and initiating Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs) in 1988, enforcement of Minimum Levels of Learning (MLLs) to ensure basic competencies in language, mathematics, social studies and science subjects in 1989 and the more recent DPEP programmes that came into being in 1993), a significant number of children either do not go to school or drop out of school soon after enrolment (Dreze and Saran 1993; Sharma 1998; PROBE report 1999).

We felt that closer attention needed to be paid to the content of education especially in the context of globalization where the discourse on education was being refigured in many crucial ways. Most striking is the fact that education is now increasingly understood in market terms (Kumar 1992, 1995). There is emphasis on shaping education / educational institutions in a manner that will help produce a skilled workforce for the future. This trend of thought which began in the sixties, (e.g., Kothari Commission Report) has gained centre-stage in policy circles today. Within this conception education is no longer seen primarily as an entitlement for the poor within a democratic framework, but more as an instrument that will fuel economic growth, the benefits of which are likely to benefit the rich. The unstated assumption on the part of the State is that literacy is for the poor, whereas education is meant for the middle classes. Agnihotri (2002) for instance, has pointed out that one aspect of this assumption is that the poor need only as much education as is required in participating in the assembly line.

A review of the literature on school education in India in recent years reveals that there are three major approaches to investigating matters of school education. The first category has been largely concerned with the availability or non-availability of facilities, the infrastructure and personnel in formal schooling in different parts of the country especially where the weaker section of the society live (e.g. PROBE 1999). A second category of studies has looked closely at the experiences of children and parents from marginalized communities as they interact with the school system in pursuit of their right to education (e.g. Banerji, 1997; Sharma, 1998, Sarangapani, 2003). A third category of studies has examined the ideological biases in curricular content that render instructional activities inaccessible and alienating to many segments of society (e.g. Kulkarni, 1996 and Saxena, 1998). While the first category of studies has paid little if any attention to the content of education, the latter studies have provided a cultural critique of school curriculum and have also pointed out that the normativity of the curriculum excludes the social realities of a majority of students and thus marginalizes them.

The present study has affinity with the second and third categories of studies mentioned above. It is concerned with the experiences of children and also with the ideology contained in curricular materials and standard procedures of assessment / evaluation. However, it seeks to go significantly further by focusing on the real time transaction of the curriculum at the middle school level. As researchers interested in the processes underlying education, we felt that the factors responsible for enhancing / hindering a child's potential for coping with the education system in general, and the curriculum in particular, is not confined to classrooms.

Curriculum and Curriculum Transaction

Curriculum is normally understood as a common, officially prescribed syllabus with an accompanying package of textbooks. For instance, Jangira (1984) defines curriculum as an operational document that translates educational objectives into practice propositions and that this document arises out of a continuous process of curriculum development and curriculum transaction, with the latter contributing to the former. Within this framework, (the mandated) curriculum is perceived as a component in the multi-stage process of designing tools for teaching; that it is a fixed entity un-problematically delivered to the students. Studying curriculum transaction from this perspective would merely be an

attempt to find what the impediments, in physical terms, are to the full and effective delivery of the curriculum without questioning the dominant worldview contained in the curriculum. Such a paradigm does not allow for the questioning of the worldview contained in the curriculum and the processes of transacting those particular worldviews. If curriculum is seen as the static repository of mainstream values, school failures and dropout will naturally be attributed to student incapacity or ignorance.

In contrast, we feel that curricular transactions are a series of micro-operations which will have to involve the active and motivated contributions of several participants such as pupils, teachers, parents, school administrators, textbook writers etc. In the process, the intended (official or mandated) curriculum gets transformed in various ways owing to these mediations. From this it follows that what finally reaches or is realized in classrooms in particular schools is quite different from what is idealized at the design and formulation stage. This differential outcome is bound to vary across different schools (sites). A relevant premise here then is that this deviation from what is idealized becomes greater as the setting of the school (the locality, socio-educational status of the community members, the teachers etc) becomes far removed from the setting of the selected urban / middle class schools where these teachers, parents and the authorities share a common culture and value systems. These systems in turn are likely to be highly consonant with those of the textbook writers. Yet, the rate at which portions of the syllabus is covered, the type of questions that are asked in the examinations etc. are all the same across different schools. Rules and standards are generally based on what is optimum for the “good” schools.

This discrepancy between what is mandated and the actual reality in the classroom is something teachers and pupils have to negotiate using various strategies. Culturally incomprehensible and alienating material can cause pupils to react with hostility and defiance. Within this perspective, school failure and dropping out can be easily seen as acts of resistance rather than as the inevitable outcome of incapacity / ignorance. A major part of the children’s life at school is devoted to this component of negotiating the curriculum. We felt that it is important to capture the processes involved with a view to understand the curriculum transaction in government schools of Andhra Pradesh.

School Education in Andhra Pradesh

Our study focuses on the contemporary moment in Andhra Pradesh, more specifically the period between 1999 (when the document, Andhra Pradesh – Vision 2020 was released) and the present, i.e., 2002. The changes being stated and effected in the very frames of reference for education during this period mark a radical departure from the earlier articulation on educational matters. During this period, policies have evolved an overwhelming consensus on the need to provide universal *elementary* education. The central government, the state governments, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the World Bank, business interests, some landmark judgments of recent times, all endorse the importance of elementary education. The question before us therefore is, what does the consensus comprise of? And how is this consensus reshaping notions of knowledge, education and learning?

The *Andhra Pradesh - Vision 2020* document produced by the Government of Andhra Pradesh in 1999 is a road map for achieving economic development and sustainability for the state of Andhra Pradesh by the year 2020. It represents the vision of the government led by the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Chandrababu Naidu, and was prepared with the help of the consulting firm, Mckinsey & Company. The Chandrababu Naidu government and its programmes best characterize the various initiatives of this present moment which is over-determined by an emphasis on development. A commitment to the field of education is asserted right from the beginning and is consistently held up as an important aspect of Andhra Pradesh Economic Restructuring Programme. That education should feature as part of an *economic* restructuring programme is a significant and striking feature. In fact a chapter titled "The Agenda for Education" opens with the statement: "Education has a critical role to play in development. Recognizing this, Andhra Pradesh firmly believes that outlays in education are an investment and not an expenditure" (p. 73). Such repeated stress on the economic when discussing the importance of education should be borne in mind while assessing recent government activities in relation to education.

Of the three sections of the *Vision 2020* document, i.e. *Building Capabilities, Focusing on High Potential Sectors* and *Transforming Governance*, "The Agenda for Education" figures in the first section, i.e. *Building Capabilities.* Since *Vision 2020* is cast in a

development framework born out of a context in which structural adjustment is a crucial notion, education-related issues too are understood and discussed only from within such a location as evident from the excerpt from this document cited below:

> Education is critical to building a modern, market-based economy and raising living standards. The human capital model in theories of economic growth shows that a rise in the level of education brings a rise in the efficiency of all factors of production. Educated people use capital more efficiently; they think up new and better forms of production and they embrace change and innovation faster and quickly learn new skills…. The existence of such a productive and skilled workforce will catalyze development in Andhra Pradesh and attract investment into the State. Furthermore, education and training will themselves become an engine of growth for the economy … (p.73).

The similarities between the Vision 2020 statement and the estimates of the economic benefits of education in the World Bank publication on Primary Education in India are striking indeed. Since Andhra Pradesh is the first State to which the World Bank has given a direct loan, it may not after all be surprising that there is such a convergence of vision on, among other issues, education as well.

Therefore, in accordance with the mission stated in *Vision 2020*, the Andhra Pradesh State government launched a number of programmes in 1999 and 2000 which made everyday headlines in the English and Telugu newspapers. The government announced a series of programmes such as *Chaduvukundaamu* (Let us Study), *Aksharashankranti* (Harvest of Letters), *Chaduvula Panduga* (The Study Festival) and *Malli Badiki* (Back to School) programmes targeted mainly at school dropouts. Along with these initiatives, the State government also publicized its commitment to stop child labour. In fact, the drive to stop child labour to ensure that all children attended school and to bring the dropouts back to school were projected as programmes that were linked. A large number of personnel from different departments of the state were pulled into these programmes. The government-school teachers, and especially the Education Volunteers or the Vidya Volunteers (as they are referred to in Andhra Pradesh) were made responsible for bringing dropouts back to school.

The focus on policies is based on the reasoning that it is important to look closely at policies because they are the barometers of the political climate. They give an indication

of the shifting emphasis and sanction to a particular thought or approach by the policy makers. In our study we tried to match the intent and efforts of the State with what was happening in the school / classroom situation. We attempted to map how the incoherent and oftentimes inchoate thinking expressed in actual policy documents attain coherence in the discursive realm of their circulation. We will now turn to the details of our study.

The Project Schools

From the computerized database of upper primary and high schools in Rangareddy and Hyderabad districts maintained by the Department of School Education AP, we selected ten schools randomly. They are referred to in the report by their initials, B, D, E, J, L, N, SB, SG, U, and V. Of these, B, L, N, U & V are urban schools, and the rest, semi-urban. The distance of these schools from Anveshi ranged from 10 to 15 km in the urban group and 40-70 km in the semi-urban group.

At the start of the study, only three of the ten project schools, viz., N, V and L had women as principals, whereas, the rest of the schools were headed by men. The size of the population of children attending the ten project schools is shown in the tables below:

	Urban Schools				
Class	B	L	N	U	V
VI	156	34	51	224	190
VII	174	38	65	210	83
VIII	127	85	58	204	126
Total	457	157	174	539	328

Table 1: Student strength in classes VI – VIII in Urban Schools

	Semi Urban Schools				
Class	D	E	J	SB	SG
VI	118	114	136	79	68
VII	131	113	89	79	111
VIII	77	106	89	182	95
Total	326	333	314	340	274

Table 2: Student strength in classes VI – VIII in Semi Urban Schools

For more details see Appendix1

The caste breakup of all the students in the schools gathered from the school records show the following details:

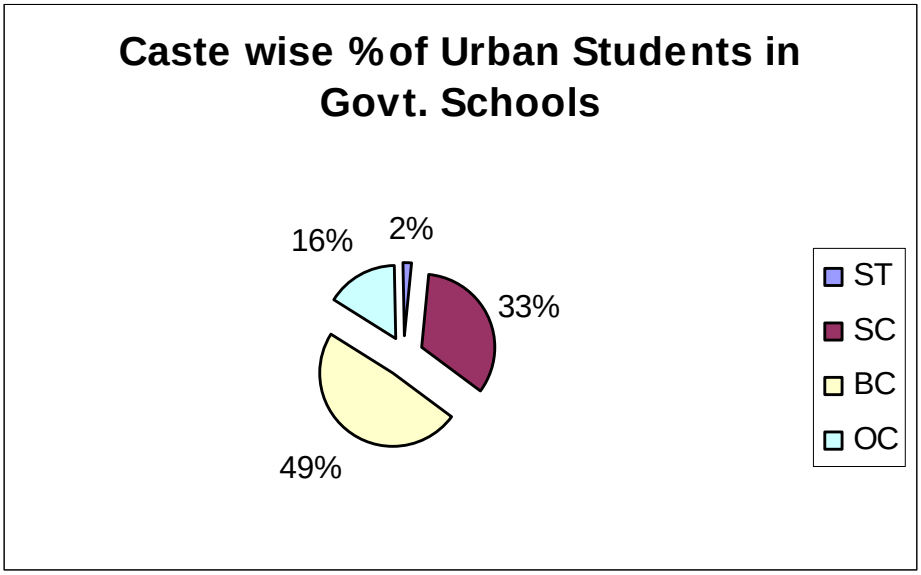


Fig. 1 Caste breakup of students in urban schools

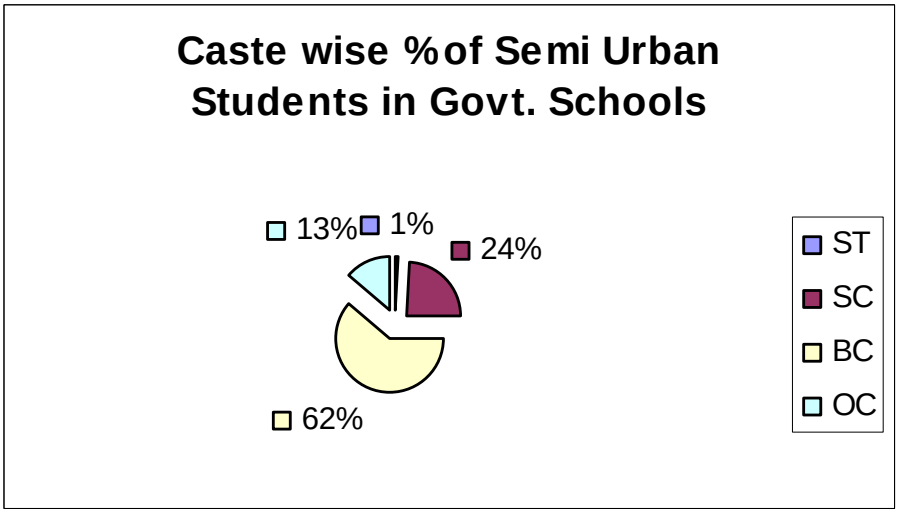


Fig. 2 Caste breakup of students in semi urban schools

As can be seen from figure 1, children from BC,SC and ST communities make up more than 75% of the total number of children interviewed across the ten different project schools. The category "Others" include Upper Castes, Muslims and Christians.

Design of the Study

The Sample

Of the 3240 children in classes VI-VIII across the ten project schools, we selected 300 children for our study. (10 children X three classes X ten schools). The main criteria in selecting ten children from each class was that they belonged to the four different caste backgrounds ST, SC, BC and OC. The caste profile of the sample is shown in figure 3 below:

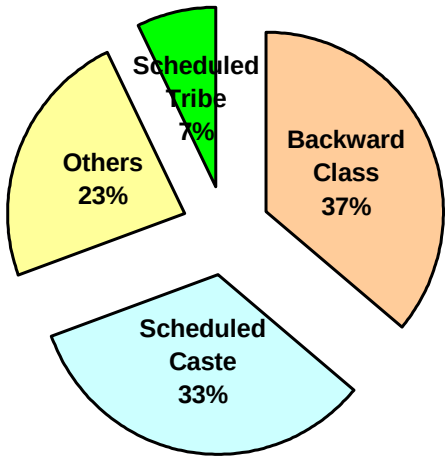


Fig. 3 Caste profile of students in the sample.

Research Assistants

The data collection was accomplished mainly with the help of three full-time research assistants (Santhosha, Elisha and Anuradha) who themselves studied in Government institutions in Telugu medium and who have also had some experience in teaching children from rural backgrounds. K.Srinivas joined the project for a brief period after the data collection process had started and helped in completing the process. All the research assistants were generous in sharing with us their own experiences of schooling in Government schools, and other aspects of their lives. They spent considerable time at Anveshi reading and discussing with the coordinator and other staff at Anveshi, literature pertaining to school education We have made all efforts to translate into Telugu most of the discussions and summaries of the talks we had organized at Anveshi on matters of education so that the research assistants could benefit from these academic inputs as much as we did. These translations also facilitated dialogicality in our interactions.

The field-coordinator (V. Sailaja) was requested to not only familiarize the research assistants with the aims and scope of the project, but design programmes specially for them so that they will be sensitized to the nature of the field work required for this project. Listed below are the activities through which the coordinator interacted with the research assistants during the period preceding the final data collection:

- Discussion on the Telugu novel Caduwu 'education' by K. Kutumbarao
- Discussion on Gijubhai's writings (Telugu translations of his books – Day dream; Master; Headache of the parents).
- Telugu translation of the writings of Prof. Krishna Kumar
- Telugu translation of the work on education by Rabindranath Tagore
- Telugu and English versions of Paulo Freire's book Pedagogy of the Oppressed
- Telugu translation of A.F. Neil's book, Summer Hill
- The story of Anitha (about a girl from a Dhobi family and her schooling) published in Manushi 53 (1989).
- Discussion on the book, Public Report on Basic Education in India (O.U.P.) 1999
- UNICEF report on the right to education 1999
- A study of cognitive mismatch between tribal children and school by L. Devaki, a paper presented at a seminar organized by the CIIL, Mysore in Jan. 1999.
- Destroying the minds and skills: The dominance of angreziyat in our education by Madhu Kishwar in Manushi 102 (1997).
- Innovations in education: Reformers and their critics . 4th edition by J.M. Rich. Boston: Allyn and Bacon (1985)
- Current issues in education by S. B. Kakkar (2000).
- Selected articles from the magazine, DPEP calling
- Selected articles from Telugu magazines such as Caduwu, A.P. Social Welfare newsletter and Telugu Vidyardhi.

The research assistants took initiative in going to certain non-project schools to get themselves acquainted with the field work that was to come at a later date. After their visit to the a given school, each one of them made detailed notes about the following aspects:

a) Classroom teaching
b) Teacher's views
c) Aspirations of parents
d) Opinions of children

They made home visits to interview parents and on occasion stayed back when there was no transportation available to return to Hyderabad at night. They collected addresses of children who had to drop out of schools for various reasons; particularly girls who were

required to get married as soon as they completed class VII. They made presentations in Telugu to the researchers periodically (which were translated into English simultaneously for the benefit of non-Telugu researchers).

The Pilot Study

A few months after they joined the project, the research assistants made a list of questions they thought were crucial to ask during the interviews – questions relating to girl children, infra-structure in the schools, teacher attitudes, pedagogic processes, examinations etc. The researchers who were acquainting themselves with the cross- cultural debates on issues of education (by referring to journal articles and books) expanded this list of questions. With this initial set of questions, the three research assistants went over to all the ten project schools several times, independently, to collect preliminary information that subsequently helped with the final data-collection. The work they undertook for the pilot study included:

Interviews with students: 68 (boys: 36, girls: 32)
Interviews with parents: 68
Interviews with teachers: 30

Aside from noting down the caste and other background information about these interviewees, they bought back extremely valuable qualitative data – much of it recorded at length in Telugu in their notebooks.

We reproduce below the details about the life of a 8^{th} class student gathered by one of the research assistants to indicate to the reader, the nature of the 'data' and data-collection in our project. This kind of information we think is very important to understand why children drop out of schools, and yet is hardly discussed by educational researchers:

Madhuri is studying in 8th class in project school 'N'. She is very thin and unkempt. Her hair is red and matted, perhaps because she doesn't apply any oil. She is very quite and didn't tell me much about herself when I met her in the school. I decided to go to her house to interview her father. He wasn't there. I found out that Madhuri's mother died four years ago and that she now lives with her father, stepmother (who works as a domestic help) and grandmother. Her father was a construction worker. After losing one of his hands at workplace, he joined congress party office where he does some odd jobs. At home, Madhuri does all the work – cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, fetching water etc. Some days there is so much work that she goes to bed only around mid-night. One of her neighbours is an anganwadi teacher. Sometimes that lady helps Madhuri with her homework.

They live in Bharat nagar, near aghapura which is just one stop away from Nampally. Their house is in a small basti populated by Muslims and Hindus, primarily people belonging to scheduled castes.The houses of the Muslims seemed to be better off than those of the Hindus and when I asked why it is so, Madhuri's grandmother replied " these Muslims sell their girl children to Dubai, so they have some money. We go and sit on the adda waiting for labour contract. Some days there is no work, so we have no money".

Madhuri's house has two rooms. In one room the walls had several pictures of Rajiv Gandhi. In the other room, Madhuri's grandmother was cooking rice on a 'stove' made up of three stones and fire-wood. The whole place was filled with smoke and soon our eyes started burning. I asked why didn't they get a gas-stove. The old woman replied, "where are we going to get Rs. 250/- for the gas cylinder? If we have 250 rupees, all of us can eat for seven days". None of the houses in that basti has a toilet. There are a few Government built latrines for men and women. I leant that each household pays Rs. 5/- per month to the person who comes to clean them. Obviously the cleaning doesn't take place often. The walls are full of urine marks and the whole place was stinking. There are muncipality dust-bins which have not been emptied for a long time. There is no direct sunlight entering their houses.

Some how I stayed there talking to Madhuri and her grandmother for nearly three hours, at the end of which I needed to go to the toilet myself. When I asked where it was, the old woman said that I couldn't possibly use one of those toilets. She gave me a mugful of water and pointed to a 'mori' near to where she was cooking and said " do it right there, it is o.k." . I was so shocked. Of course I refused. I said I was going home. Madhuri walked with me till the bus-stop. The poverty I witnessed in that basti drove me insane with anger. I got into the bus, but my mind was in a turmoil. There is nothing I can do to help these people. I cursed myself for accepting this job (of recording how these chidlren negotiate their school curriculum)...

Reconstructed from Santhosha's diary dated 20-9-2001

Teachers' workshop

In Feb. 2001, we organized a workshop to which we invited not only Government-school teachers, but also any one who was interested in issues of school education. We had over 70 participants including representatives of teachers' organizations and NGOs in A.P. and research students. This whole day meeting generated a great deal of debate on several issues concerning school education today. For details see Appendix – B.

Data collection

The insights gathered from the pilot study and the teacher's workshop enabled us to design questionnaires addressed to the various groups of people in the curriculum transaction process. We prepared the below mentioned questionnaires for collecting quantitative data in our project (see Appendix – C for English versions of the questionnaires).

Form A: Family background of the student
Form B: Student's views
Form C: Parents' perceptions
Form D: Teachers' views
Form E: Principals' responses
Form F: Classroom Observations

Using the Telugu translations of these questionnaires (with necessary modifications after another pilot study), we collected data from 300 students; 120 parents; thirty teachers and 10 principals across the project schools. It must be noted that the questionnaires helped us gather some quantitative data as well as a great deal of qualitative data. The detailed notes made by the Research Assistants in their diaries too provided rich insights into the entire process by which students and their parents interact with the educational system. We have included in this report, excerpts from their diaries in order to present nuances which are not available through statistical analysis of the data. One of the major challenges we faced during this project was to figure out how to analyze and present the data we managed to collect. The enormity of the task forced us to consider developing and using specially designed software, which we will describe next:

Data processing and analysis

We analyzed the nature of data solicited in the forms and found that it consisted of a distribution of sparse numerical data, some graded data, substantial coded inputs and extensive textual information.[1] This required a package which would serve as a hybrid platform for numerical processing, grade analysis, code based grouping/sorting, and textual processing. In addition, the package should provide access to statistics and word-processing at the same time. It was important also that the research team find the package easy to use.

We chose the Microsoft Access database package based on a study of available options as a compromise. This permitted the use of extensive text data, had a reasonable level of processing ability and provided statistical and arithmetic tools for handling numerical information. It also had a powerful query and report generation package which made the analysis and presentation easy. It imposed the discipline and power of relational database organization with a fair degree of transparency to the user. However, the package required a high level of application design, was not easily manageable by research professionals and therefore the task of actually conducting the data analysis came to vest in the application designer. We will discuss the implications of this hurdle, which seems quite difficult to overcome, further on.

The entry of data proved to be a formidable challenge because of the open nature of the questions in the forms. The forms demanded several spoken responses which made each filled questionnaire into a not-so-short interview. The difficulty was compounded by the encouragement given to research associates to elicit discussions and provide descriptive studies of situations. These open responses were expected to provide both a feel for the cultural life and insights into the education problems faced by the interviewed families. The responses were mostly in the style of Telugu spoken in the Telangana region. The answers provided clues in the turn-of-phrase and dialect styles which had to be translated with some imagination and skill. The number of such questionnaire-interviews (seven hundred in all) compounded the difficulty.

[1] Examples: Numerical data – income levels. Graded data – answer to question "How much do you like mathematics?" – "Very much", "Average", "Not at all". Coded data – father's occupation, such as agricultural laborer, peasant farmer, blue-collar worker, etc. Textual data – answer to the question "Describe your daily routine".

We chose the "data entry operator" on considerations which underpinned the project personnel selection in general: the person chosen to enter the data had to be interested in education and research. She was also to be reasonably conversant with the life and culture of the students, especially of the weaker sections. In addition, she would also have to be fluent in both Telangana Telugu and English so that she could translate the questionnaires which were filled in Telugu into English which was the language of the textual database. Rama Hansraj exhibited a keen interest in the project and was appointed. Her commitment and expertise made us aware, *post hoc*, of the critical nature of the inputs she provided in her translation and data entry. The task demanded sustained attention to detail, sensitive rendering of interviewee descriptions, and the discernment to edit or carry in full a text based on an assessment of its content.[2] The difficulty of this job was quite beyond our initial appreciation. While an alternate solution would have been to have a two-step translation and data entry process with two different people carrying out these tasks, it would have meant that two levels of transcription would be introduced into the questionnaire processing rather than one: One at the level of translation, and another at the level of data entry, since the latter operation did involve editing when the space provided in the fields was not adequate in exceptional cases.[3] Another considerable difficulty was finding people qualified and motivated to perform the two tasks well. We would thus recommend that the term "data entry" be replaced by *data transcription* in order to alert the user community to the difficulties inherent in the task. Other groups interested in undertaking such research, i.e., based on large samples of culturally specific textual data involving translation, would find it useful to keep note of this critical requirement of sustained and sensitive attention to language and detail in the process of data transcription.

Finally, once the data was transcribed, database queries were designed to give tabulations and groupings of responses to specific questions asked by the researchers. At this point the unwieldiness of having the package queried only by the application designer proved a handicap, especially since the nature of the querying was not restricted to routine

[2] The original text would be available for reference in Telugu in the primary filled questionnaire.

[3] If the field consisted uniformly of great lengths of text across the database, a Memo field structure is the obvious choice. However, this space and processing overhead is not warranted in cases where the field is excessively long in only about 2-5% of the responses. It is very likely that these few cases would represent the most interesting divergences in data, and hence the most important to retain. In cases where there was a significant error of assessment of field design, the flexibility of the Access package permitted resizing/reconfiguring fields mid-process without loss of data.

statistical and quantitative manipulation according to set rules, formulae and procedures. The process of querying the database for a qualitative understanding of the social situation calls for online interactive work. Actually sitting at the terminal and working the database would have given the researcher an understanding of the possibilities permitted by the flexibility and speed of the modern database structure. It would have given her a grasp of how to mold the query according to a progressively sharpening research probe. While the hardware and software were available, it was the mismatch between the skill demanded by the database package and the researchers' interests/time constraints which led to less than maximal exploitation. The current states of software art and computer non-specialist user skill do not yet allow such a finely honed use of the machine. Since this seems to be the one of the weakest links in the project as a whole, other research groups attempting such a study would benefit from addressing this difficulty. The entire database including information elicited from the students and their parents is available at Anveshi for further research for anybody interested in taking further the objectives of the present study.

The fact that most of the researchers directly involved in this project could not read Telugu came in the way of using the very rich qualitative data we have gathered through the questionnaires and interviews. Some samples of the English translations of the interviews are included in this report in boxes. A great deal of information still remains in the diaries and notebooks of the three research assistants. These too are available at Anveshi.

Some significant findings from the study

In taking up the study, we began with the following set of questions:

1. What role do Government policies pertaining to public education play in one's understanding of the curriculum?
2. What is the content of education as envisaged by the State and the textbook writers?
3. How is transmission of knowledge contained in the mandated curriculum constrained by the socio-political, economic and cultural factors in a given context (A.P. in this case)?
4. In what significantly different ways do diverse communities envisage education?

Based on our study we would like to make certain observations in relation to these questions. In fact, in relation to the curriculum in particular, we realized that while the state government is more active in formulating its administrative policies for education, it follows the lead of the center in matters of curriculum revision. The administrative intent of the state government is in bringing children from the lower economic groups into the school system. Praiseworthy as this effort is, it is not in any way matched by meaningful changes in the curriculum wherein the child from these backgrounds is addressed either by the textbooks or the teachers.

A reading of the policy documents suggested to us that the state is fully conversant with its own priorities and tries to promote them. It seems to us that the economic outcome of educating children was the most important dimension for the state government. It had almost no inkling of the aspirations of the children and parents belonging to the marginalized sections. In fact, as discussed in the section on parents, the discourse about the economics of education was influencing parents as well. Notwithstanding the several limitations of the schools, we realized through the information we gathered from the project schools that about 99% of the students we interviewed were enthusiastic about going to schools. We felt that this was an extremely significant aspect and should be built upon by learning more about these children in order to be able to envisage education that was suited to their needs. Over the course of the study we thus shifted our focus towards understanding the life of the average student in a government school. With a view to understand the day-to-day life of the children in the ten project schools of our study, we asked every child to describe his or her daily routine along with that of the parents. We reproduce below two accounts:

I get up at 5.30 a.m. I sweep the house and wash the vessels. I wash my face and drink tea. I go into domestic work in other people's houses till 11.am. My school starts at 12 noon and gets over by 5.00 p.m. I get home by 5.30 p.m. I then cook dinner and attend to other household chores. I complete my homework by 8.30 p.m. have dinner and go to sleep by 9.30 – 10.00 p.m.

VIII Class girl student from Project School "N"

I get up at 5.00 a.m. I study and complete my homework. I remove dung of our buffaloes. I take bath and eat food at 8.00 a.m. I go to school at 8.30 a.m. and return by 4.30 p.m. In the evening again I take care of the buffaloes between 5.00 and 6.00 p.m. I go to tuition between 7.00 and 9.00 p.m. I return from tuition, eat my dinner and go to sleep by 10.00 p.m.

VII Class boy student from Project School "SB"

Understanding what comprises childhood, we realized, was a prerequisite to understanding how the entire education system is structured. The consensus about childhood that is built up in a discursive manner is impacted as much by the schools as it impacts on the school system. In fact, one of our major findings has been that while an ideal childhood is posited and set up as the reference for policy making and designing of the curriculum, there is a total disjuncture between the lived childhood of the majority of the children on the one hand, and the ideal on the other. This contradiction in fact is at the heart of the process of transacting the curriculum by the different participants in the school system (For an elaboration of this point see Chapter III of this report).

We noted that irrespective of the location where they are living (urban or semi-urban), a vast majority of the 300 children are taking active part in the adult world of work to supplement the family's meager income and to ensure smooth running of the household when the parents leave for their work. In contrast, children coming from middle class or higher socio-economic status rarely participate in the management of their households. They don't get up at 5 a.m. to study; they get to eat well, drink milk twice a day, play games; read books other than school textbooks. The books they read shape their interests and their frameworks for comprehending the world. (For an interesting analysis of the way the stories of *Amar Chitra Katha* have moulded the self-image, character and imagination of generations of middle class children who grew up in the 70s and 80s, see Srinivas (2000).

It is these middle class children who, by virtue of being ideal citizens, get addressed in the school textbooks. Part of the confidence these children display must come from the fact

that they see their worlds reflected in the textbooks (think of lessons like “What the Clothes Say” and “Mother’s Day” that are included in English textbooks of the State syllabus) the media addresses them (think of the mind games, jumbles, quiz, news-scan and other columns meant for school children in major national and regional newspapers), even the policy makers seem to assume that the childhood is what is experienced by middle class and upper caste children (see the section titled “Child as a Constructor of his Knowledge” in the discussion document of the National Curriculum Framework for School Education circulated by NCERT in January 2000).

The alternative experiences in the lives of children from less privileged sections of society demonstrate that the notion of the ideal childhood is far removed from what the children actually go through. We would argue that their experiences in fact emphasize the need to challenge the mode in which ideal childhood is constructed. This is important because the concept of the ideal childhood has implications for schooling and education.

The mandated curriculum in particular views school knowledge as something fixed that comes in a prepackaged form. If curriculum transaction is unsatisfactory, it is assumed that the fault lies with the students and their illiterate parents. However, our study has clearly shown that children are not able to continue their studies in school partly because the curriculum has no connection to their lives. A significant number of them also have to support their families in day to day life (bringing water, taking care of cattle, work in the fields etc) leaving them little time to pay attention to school work. They have little or no access to reading materials other than school textbooks. One of the main differences in the urban vs. semi-urban schools is that it is mainly in the latter that girls are taken out of school to be married.

The section on teachers underscores the point that constant transfer of teachers, inadequate number of teachers, lack of teachers who are specialists in the subjects are some other factors which has had an impact on the curriculum transaction in the project schools we studied. More importantly, the apathy and lack of interest in wanting to help the child, ‘grow’ on the part of the teachers is a major stumbling block. We were also struck by the unanimous opinion among the teachers we talked to from the project schools that there was no bias of any kind in the textbooks or in the classroom situation. We found also that the few teachers who seem committed are burdened by so many non-

teaching responsibilities that they hardly get any time to reflect upon their profession or engage in professional activities.

We noted that parents who send their children to government schools do so against heavy odds. Though some of the parents interviewed for our study had some minimal level of schooling they were not able to help their children go through schooling. Some of them sought to be active in the parent – teacher committees formed by the schools (on government orders) but even they were not able to surmount social and cultural barriers to make effective demands on the schooling system.

Our study conclusively points out that for the curriculum transaction to be a successful one for the child in the government schools, it is extremely important to rethink education from the point of view of this child. The point being stressed here is not so much about whether a child from the marginalized section should be "exposed" to the worldview of the elite or not, but that the process of curriculum transaction itself should be democratized. This in turn would necessarily involve recognition of difference between worldviews and the need for a closer understanding of the life and the worldview of the child from a low-income family.

Structure of the report

Since it is not possible (nor desirable) for any one person to analyze and interpret the 'data' of this study, the researchers and the software designer who engaged with the researchers in interpreting the data shared that responsibility as well as writing of this report among themselves. One consequence of this has been that there is some unevenness in the style of presentation across different sections of this report.

The contents of the report have been organized as follows: In the introductory chapter we have provided a background to the study along with an outline of its scope. The following chapter titled "Curricular Transactions" provides more details about the findings of our study. The results of the data collected through the fieldwork are discussed under four different sections in this chapter. Specifically, using Forms A and B which elicited information about students, several aspects of their lives as well as their participation in school activities is probed and commented upon. This is included in the first section of chapter-II. The aspirations of the parents, their understanding of schools and of education

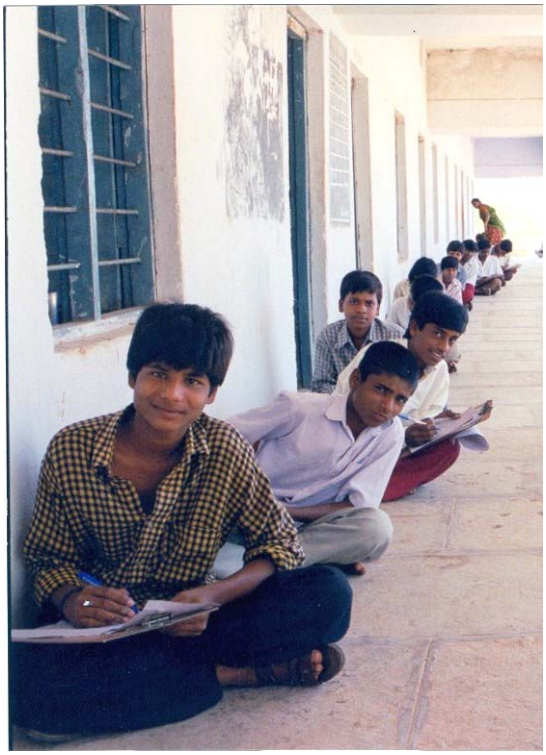
forms the next section, and is based upon information collected with the help of Forms A and C. The section after that provides information on teachers and their role in helping children negotiate the curriculum. This section is based on the information collected with the help of Forms D and E as also the two workshops conducted with teachers. The information elicited with the help of Form F is used in section four to comment on the pedagogic processes taking place within the classroom. It is based on classroom observation and comments on the range of activities that take place within the classroom situation. The fifth section of the same chapter examines textbooks and guides in terms of their content and language. The concluding chapter (chapter III) titled "Some Reflections" discusses the implications of some of the findings the study has thrown up. It highlights the totally skewed understanding that marks the designing of the policy documents, the curriculum and the construction of an ideal childhood, especially in relation to the lived reality of the child in the government school.

Chapter II

CURRICULUM TRANSACTIONS: MAJOR FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

Section 1: School Children

The computerized database pertaining to the 300 children with whom we interacted during the fieldwork enabled us to delineate the below mentioned major findings pertaining to children:



Caste background of the families

As mentioned before (See Fig. 3 of Chapter II), the families of children selected for this study had nearly equal representation from Backward Caste (37%) and Scheduled Castes (33%); Scheduled Tribes consisted of only 7% of the 300 children and the category 'others' include forward caste people (Reddys, Kammas), Muslims and Christians (23%).

Socio-economic background of the families

A majority of the children came from low-income working class families. While many of them reported that they lived in their own houses, they described their houses as having one or two rooms with a thatched roof, a tiled roof, asbestos roof or a slab. Some of the

children who were originally from a village, who have migrated to the city reported owning houses such as those mentioned above in their villages, but they are currently staying in the city, in a rented house paying rents ranging from Rs. 200-450 per month. A small number of SC children reported to be staying in quarters provided by the Government. Most of the children whose parents owned land could give us information about the exact amount of land they owned. The database can provide detailed information about the distribution of land-ownership, however, we feel the average figures are sufficient to underscore the fact that on the whole the children we interviewed came from very poor families. The average figures of land owned by families in different caste / community groups is as follows:

Forward caste	4.36 acres
Backward classes	3.05 acres
Scheduled caste	2.0 acres
Scheduled tribes	2.38 acres

(These averages exclude landless families in each group. Figures for Christian and Muslim families have been excluded because the sample is too small).

The lowest income of the families was Rs. 2171 per month and the highest was Rs. 5588 per month (the average income being Rs.3115). Since the family size varied between 3 and 11, with an average of 6, we estimated the average income per head in each family, we added the earnings reported for each wage-earning member of the family living in the same household and divided by number of people. This index for a family size of five (with a maximum number of records of 102) turned out to be Rs. 658 per month and the same for a family size of 11 was Rs. 508 per month. The maximum income for a family size of 3 people was Rs. 724/-. The average expenditure reported was Rs.2504/- per month.

In spite of the fact that a majority of the 300 children we interviewed assisted their parents in augmenting the income (this point will be elaborated later under ‘Work done by children when not in school’) there is very little money for food, clothes and other essential items in these families. For instance, we noted that only 14 out of 300 children get to drink one glass of milk a day while the rest drink tea every morning. 63 of the 300 children do not eat anything at all during the school hour. They don’t go home either

during lunch hour. A considerable number of children said that they eat guavas, peanuts and / or chickpeas which they buy near their schools.

Interview with a VII class girl student from project school 'N': from Santhosha's diary

She lives close to the school and works as a domestic servant. I asked her to describe her out of schoolwork. "I do the dishes, wash clothes, water plants, sweep the yard, get the children ready for school. I put their shoes on, put on the tie and uniforms and send them to school. After that I wash the bathrooms, sweep the hall, mop it, fold the bed sheets and change them once a week. I get the wheat ground in a flour- mill. All this work is done between 7a.m and 12 noon. They give me tiffin and tea. At 12 noon I come home, change into my school dress and go to school. I return from school around 5 p.m. Between 5.30 and 7p.m I go for tuition. Tuition teacher is a friend of my sister. She doesn't charge anything. Sometime I stay back after the tuition and do my homework before coming home. Sometimes my mother asks me to run errands. My sister works in the Electricity department. Her husband died, so she got this job. In 1993 my father died. My brother is married and is working. My mother also goes for work, stone cutting. I earn Rs.200/- per month. I have a sister who is in III class. She also goes to tuition. My sister-in-law is a nice person. I wish I could become a doctor, but I doubt if they will let me complete 10th class.

Occupation of the parents

In the entire sample of 300 children, 3 children had no mothers and 18 children had no fathers (they passed away). Of the remaining parents more than 90% of the mothers belonged to the categories of House-workers, unorganized blue collar workers (e.g. beedi makers), agricultural workers, servant maids and petty business people (e.g. idli-cart owners) whereas 90% of the fathers' occupations can be described as unorganized blue collar workers (e.g. construction work); agricultural workers; petty businessmen (e.g. pan shop or hair-cutting saloon); organized blue collar workers (e.g. office peons) and peasant farmers. The numbers not accounted for by the figures 2 and 3 below belong to categories such as bonded labourers and rural or urban artisans.

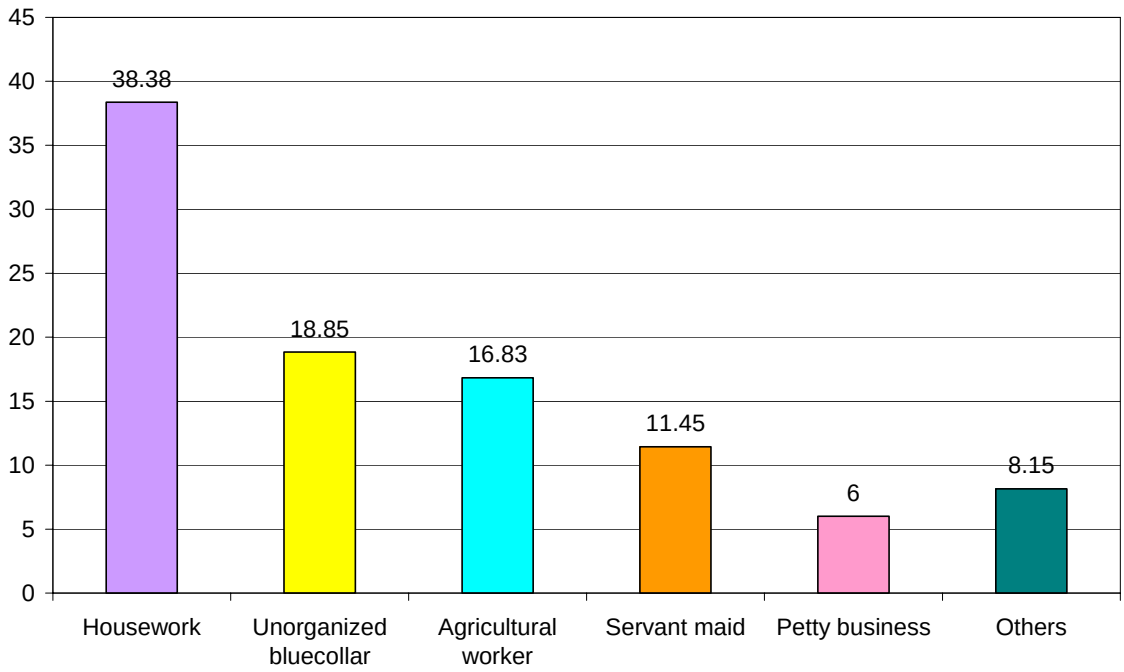


Fig. 4: Percentages of mothers in specific occupations

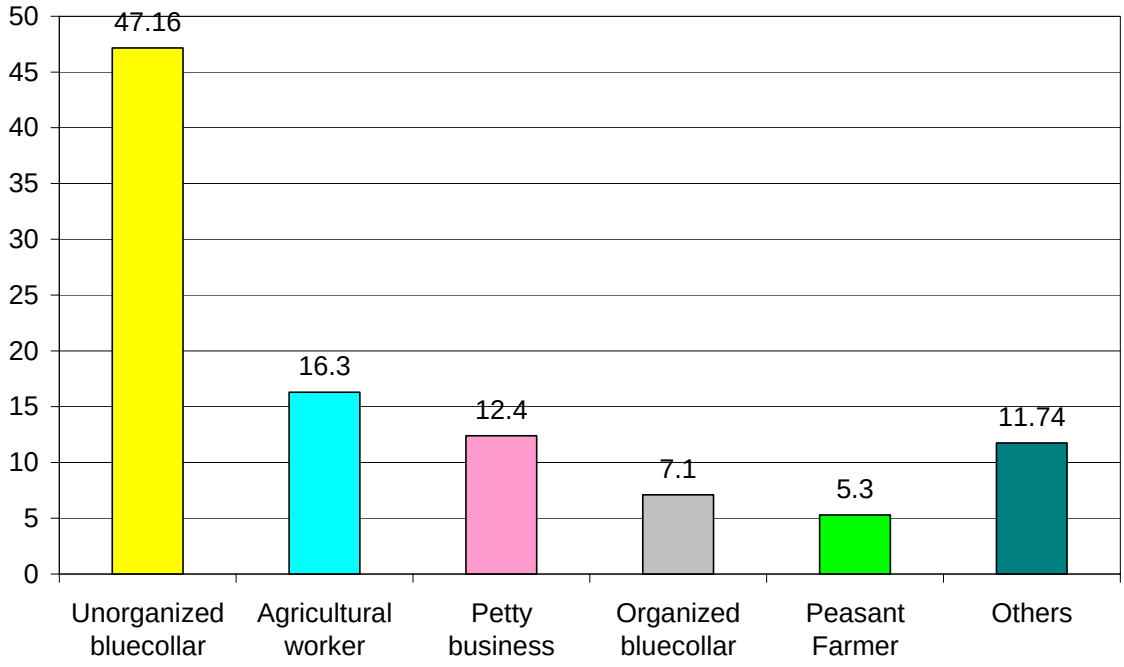


Fig. 5: Percentages of fathers in specific occupations

The first three bars in the bar-charts displayed above describe the occupational status of nearly 75% of the parents we interviewed. In terms of urban / semi-urban divide; families living in the semi-urban areas tended to involve in agricultural work or petty business and those in urban areas tended to be unorganized blue collar workers such as construction workers, cooks, cleaners etc.

Educational background of the families:

Each child was asked to give the name, age and educational level of each family member living in the same house. The highest level of education of at least one member in the households of the children in the sample ranged from 1.3% (no education) to 45.7% (7th class) with a few having graduate level family members. The often expressed opinion that the government school children come from families of uneducated parents / siblings was not upheld by our data. There might have been slight difference between urban and semi-urban households on this measure, but we have not probed that factor.

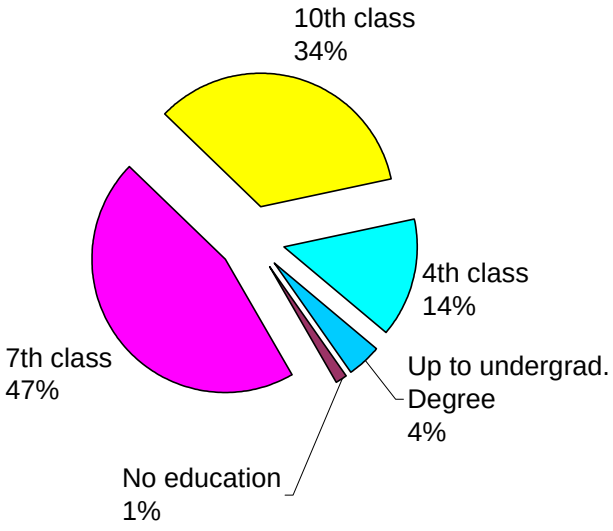


Fig 6:Educational level of family members

We did not assume that the educated parents or older siblings would have the time to help the child with his / her homework. It turned out that most members of the families worked outside and were not available to help children with their home work. Many of these children could not afford to go to tuitions. Reading materials like newspapers, magazines, storybooks, dictionaries were virtually absent in the homes of these children whether they were living in urban or semi-urban localities. Specifically, 38% of the total children reported that they had no reading materials other than their school textbooks at home. The

others made use of old magazines, song books, old textbooks containing their favourite lessons and news papers (mostly Telugu dailies such as *Eenaadu* or *Vaartha*) borrowed from tea shops or other places they work. More than 50% of the children belonging to 'other caste' category also reported not having any reading materials in their homes. A significant majority of the children across different communities reported that they don't have access to any community libraries.

[Interview with Uma Rani student of class VII in school SG and her parents. Interviews conducted by K.Santhosha, Research Assistant. Translated by D.Vasanta. Date of interview with Uma Rani 26-2-2001]

Uma Rani: *My father's name is Pentaiah known in the locality as basket weaver Pentaiah. My mother is Pochamma. Both my parents are not educated, although they can sign their names. Our caste profession is weaving baskets, but now-a-days we are selling fruit on a push-cart. We are four children in this family – I have three older brothers, two of them failed 10th class and now, they are selling fruit. The third brother is now in 10th ZPHS Boys High School. I am the youngest in the family. My father earns Rs.200 – 300 per day. I like going to school. Our teachers teach well. I like Science and Hindi subjects. I learn useful information from Science Subjects. I like Hindi because Prameela teacher teaches well. I think children should go to school and study, they must do home work regularly. If there is no homework some of us will never study at home. Besides, without doing homework how can we pass the examinations? If we don't study as children how can we earn name and fame when we age grown up?*

In textbooks, we learn a lot about 'hygienic surroundings' – many people, especially those who are not educated neglect their surroundings. They throw their trash all over. English is the most difficult subject for me. I wish they would teach all the subjects either in Telugu or Hindi. My brothers encourage me to study. Sometimes they clarify my doubts (in relation to homework) and teach me difficult lessons. I used to go to tuition earlier. But since it costs Rs.40/- I am not going now. Besides, tuition master comes home late and offers tuition between 7-8 pm. I can't walk back home that late in the night. So I stopped. I will study till the 10th class and stop. I wash dishes morning and evening I sweep our home. The only games I play are in the school….kho kho, kabaddi… I like them. They also teach us songs and dances. Teachers are happy when we do our homework. The only book I get to read at home is 6th class Telugu textbook – especially the lesson on Madam Curie. I believe she studied everything she could in her own country, went abroad to do research and invented a cure for cancer. I like this lesson a lot….I learnt Hindi by writing a lot. My hands ache, but I keep writing. When relatives come to visit, I cannot study because many of them come with young kids who make a lot of noise. My people are nice to me. I never get beatings from anyone.

Uma Rani's parents (Interviewed by Santhosha on 27-2-01)

Yes, we are sending her there (school SG) because it is a Government school. In our community (medari or basket weaving people) there are not that many educated families. Only our children are going to school. But they are not teaching well, otherwise why will so many children fail exams? I will educate her at least till class X, after all, she is a girl – she needs to acquire some knowledge to survive. We never go to school to enquire about her studies. Since one of my sons failed I told my daughter to quit studies. She said "No, they teach us quite well in our school, please let me complete 10th class". I must say that once they started going to school my children learned to stay clean and dress well. She returns from school, washes dishes and does her homework. We don't ask her about school and she doesn't tell us anything. For some days she went to tuition. After that she stopped saying that none of her friends are coming to tuition. Since we are not educated we don't know what to do with the textbooks. We want our children to get education, although we doubt if they will get jobs. These days you have to bribe to get any job. We are saving some money for her marriage – Rs. 100 a month, we are depositing in a bank. Two of my sons went to school. I was very upset when they failed because I wanted them to go to college. I don't want them to sell fruit to survive. The younger children would rather go to school rather than attend family get together in another town. When relatives come to stay with us, they keep a lantern on top of my fruit cart and study outside the house. All our relatives like my daughter because she is so serious about her studies. But she doesn't visit their homes. No one among my relatives completed 10th class. That is why I would like her to study at least till the X class. Government gave us this house. We belong to another village, but came here looking for a livelihood.

Help with the home-work

When asked about their neighbourhoods, 235 of the 300 children of our project (78%) reported that they do have educated people in their neighbourhoods but that they do not help them with their homework. In some cases, the employers of their parents or their own employers, family members (immediate and relatives) and friends help out. The details are shown in figure – 5 below:

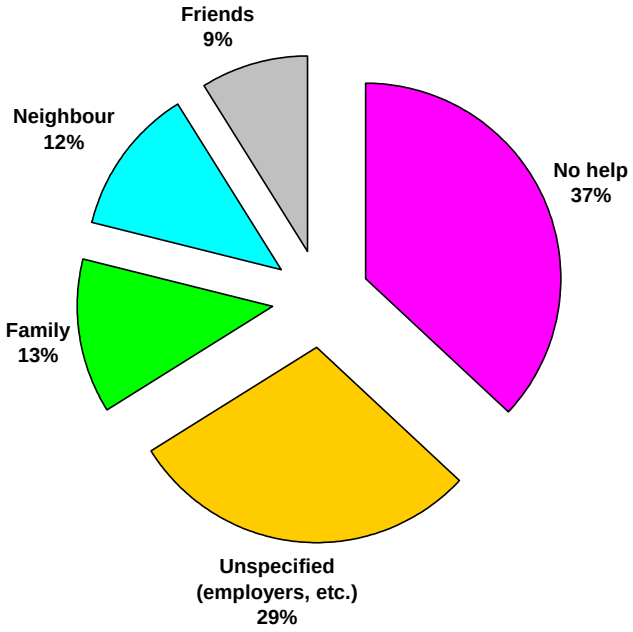


Fig 7:Percentage help sources in homework

Subjects liked/disliked by children

A majority of the children (61.4%), both boys and girls, liked language subjects like Telugu, Hindi, English. 201 of the total 300 (67%) reported that the subject they feared most is Maths (see Table below). 30-40% of the children preferred Science or Social Sciences over Maths or English. The reasons given for liking language subjects are as follows:

- We can understand it well.
- Lessons are interesting.
- I like poetry and stories.
- I score well.
- I find it easy to read and write.
- Teachers teach the subjects well.

We have also noted that the homework related to Telugu and Hindi in particular are being done at home but that pertaining to science and maths, for which they need help, tends to be done at school with the help of friends. Sometimes children borrow their friends' notebooks.

Use of Guides

We noted that the explanation for a given lesson is much simpler in the guides than in the textbooks even when the same writer wrote the lesson! We were surprised to note that the illustration of the same lesson is different in the textbook vs. guide, the latter being simpler. We wondered whether the secondary school children of our study are managing with the help of the guides. However, the results revealed that a majority of the children in the Government schools do not use guides, primarily because they cannot afford to buy them. Only 22% of the students reported that they make use of guides or what is called "All-in-one" (one guide for all subjects). From Figure – 6 below one can note that the percentage of children using guides goes up slightly, among both boys and girls in the VII class compared to classes VI. This could be attributed to the fact that students have to face a public examination in the VII Class. In our sample slightly higher percentage of girls in class VIII reported to be using guides compared to boys of the same class.

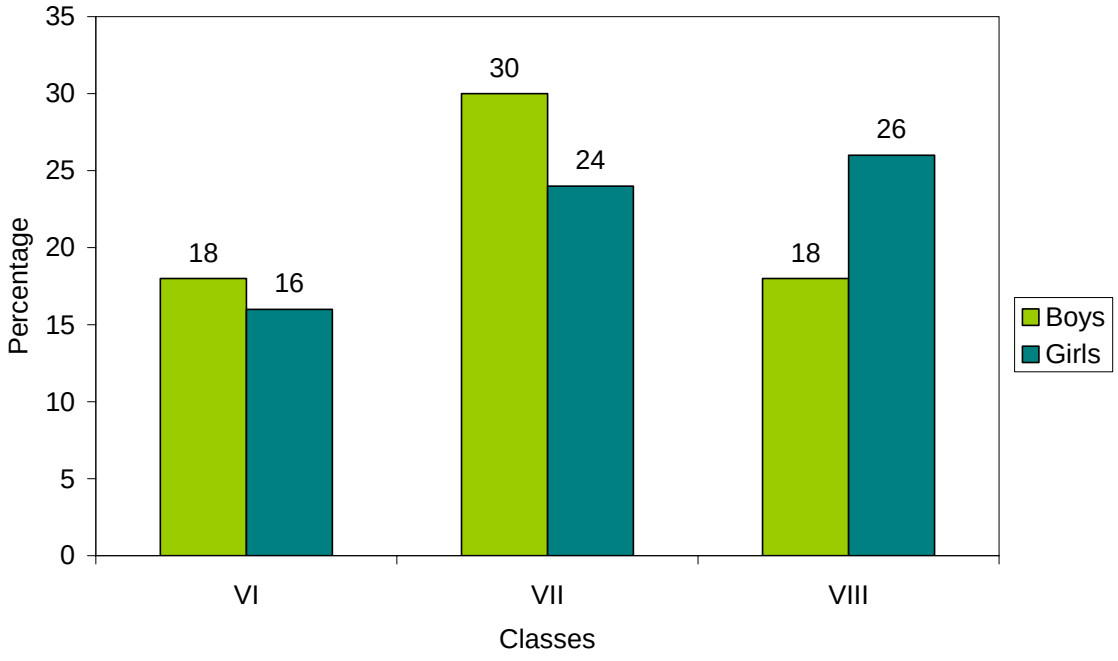


Fig 8: Use of guides

Home Language / School / Textbook Language

In response to questions such as (1) Do you think the language in the textbook is the same as the one you use at home (2) If not, in what way are they different (3) In which language should you receive instruction, 66 of the 300 children said that they don't know or that the home language and the text book language are similar (eg. Urdu medium children). Among the children who said they are different included a very small group of tribal children from Erukala community, Muslims and a few children who speak Kannada or Marathi at home. Among the large group of children who said the textbook language is very different from home language (73%), some of them offered explanations which are summarized below:

Home Language	**Textbook Language**
Very simple	I have to by-heart every lesson in the textbook
Easy	Good and smart
Easy to speak	Poems are difficult
Loose and Easy	Textbook language is bad. Tongue twister
Normal	Stylish
The Telugu spoken by elders is not same as the textbook Telugu	Hindi and English are different. Telugu same
Rash	Very good
Easy but crude	Good and neat
Less respectable	More respectable
Easy	Difficult to pronounce
Meant for speaking	Meant for reading and writing
Fluent	Not fluent

Table 3: Opinions of children regarding language

Majority of the children also stated that the medium of instruction should be Telugu. This view was endorsed by parents as well as teachers.

Punishment

Fifty percent of all the children we interviewed reported that they were punished in school regularly. More boys reported punishment. As far as community wise differences are concerned the punishment rate is much higher for the ST students (77%) with boys outnumbering girls. Roughly the same trend holds for corporal punishment. With the

exception of one or two parents, a majority of the 120 parents we interviewed did not object to the punishment their children received in school.

Uses of Literacy

Despite odds, 80% of the children are able to put their writing and arithmetic skills to some use in their daily lives. Broadly speaking about 42% of the children from the SC sample and 32% of the children from the BC sample read and write letters for self and others, read out advertisement material, hand bills, etc. About 35% of the children from these communities help in maintaining petty accounts at home (eg. related to purchase of rations, maintaining accounts in parents' petty business)

Work done by children when not in school

About 13% of the children reported that they do not do any work outside school. This includes children who either go to tuition, do their homework or watch TV.

Caste/community	Total sample	Number of children reporting no work	Percentage
Backward Classes	108	7	6.5%
Scheduled Caste	100	15	15%
Others (excluding ST, Muslims and Christians)	53	18	34%

Table 4: Percentage of children who do not work.

In contrast, a vast majority of the government school children (both boys and girls) help their parents in their household work, or in places of work like farms, shops, etc. Very few children work for wages, except for a small proportion of girls who work as domestic servants, especially in the urban areas. While quantitative information is not available, one can gain insight about the nature of the work being done by these children (both within the house and outside) by going through the following statements made by them:

- I go to saloon shop and work with my father.
- I look after the goats.
- I bring water and work in the fields.
- I bring water on a cycle and sit in my father's pan shop.
- I distribute milk packets.
- I graze cattle.
- I clean the cowshed, watch the bulls and bring water.
- I do cooking and other household work.
- I wash vessels, bring water and clean the house.
- I help in laundry work.
- I go to the hotel and help my father.
- I work in the vegetable market.
- I work in the tailor's shop.
- I help my mother at the idli bandi (cart on which idlis are sold).
- I cook food, wash vessels and look after my brother.
- I take care of the buffaloes.
- I do all the housework.
- I clean the owner's vehicle.
- I work as a servant maid.

The other pattern we observed is that within each community, more number of girls help their mothers while the boys help their fathers or take up other work for wages. As opposed to many boys from BC and SC communities who help in household chores, a very small proportion of them from other castes do so. Boys from the other castes reportedly engage in activities like:

- playing games.
- watching TV.
- going to tuition.

A closer examination of the daily routine of all the children revealed that many children from BC, SC and ST communities (higher proportion of boys than girls) also watch TV regularly, for a specific period of time (one hour usually) around 8 PM, after having completed their non-school work. Some of them watch TV in their neighbours' houses. Only 54 out of the total 300 children (18%) reported viewing TV on a regular basis.

'Drop-outs' – the unofficial account

Each of the 300 children were asked if they knew of anyone who dropped out of school in the previous school year. 136 of the 300 children (45%) not only named the children who dropped out, but gave reasons why they had to stop school – together they reported 263 children across the ten project schools who stopped going to school during the period of our project. They didn't always mention whether the person dropped out was a girl or boy or one their siblings, but our database can be examined for information on whether higher proportion of children dropped out from schools classified as semi-urban rather than urban. The explanations for their friends dropping out of schools given by the children can be classified into six different categories, viz., work-related, family-related, school-related, migration, marriage and others.

The work-related reasons for dropping out applies mainly to boys who leave school to work in a small hotel (often a tea-shop), construction site, cycle shop, wine shop, cloth shop, auto-repairing shop, ironing, tailoring, stone cutting, selling vegetables or fish and, in few cases, they were given away by parents as bonded labourers to rich landlords. The family-related and marriage reasons apply primarily to girl dropouts. The former pertain to death of a parent or a sibling, financial problems or having to look after siblings. The school-related reasons include failing exams, fear of punishment from teachers or class-leaders, unsuitable school timings, lack of sufficient attendance, etc. The category labeled as 'unspecified' also includes 'I don't know' responses from children who knew of their friends who have dropped out but were not sure why they dropped out.

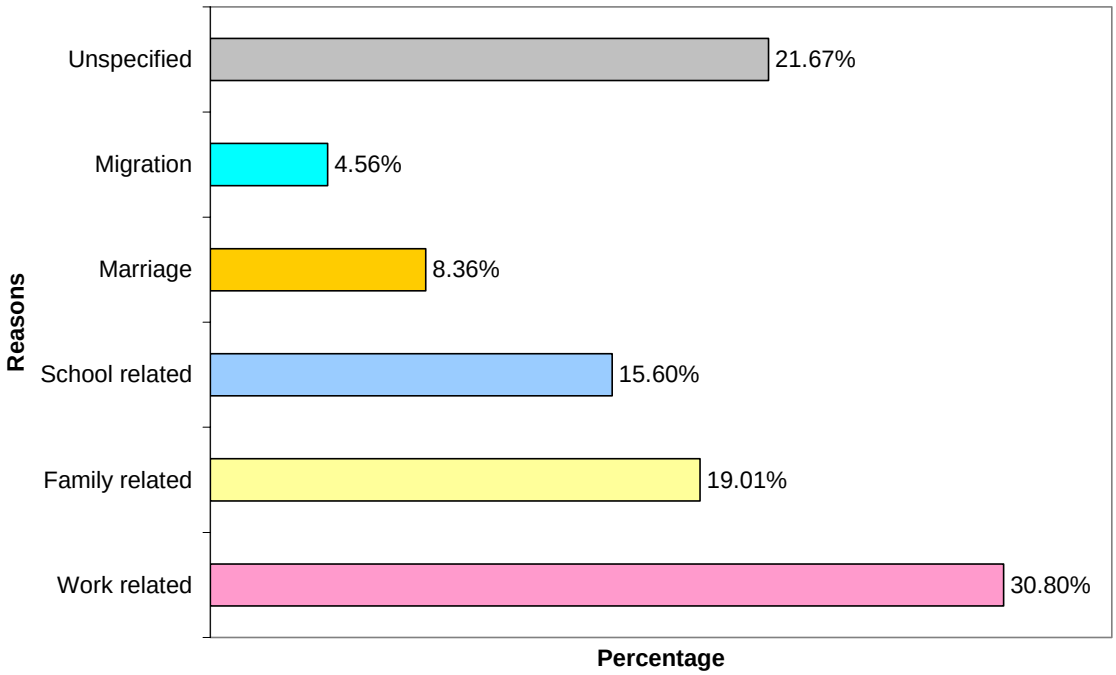


Fig 9: Reasons for dropping out of school

Interest and motivational factors

Each child was asked directly whether she / he likes going to school or not, and to give reasons for both kinds of responses. With the exception of four children, the rest of the 296 children (98.66%) said that they like going to school because they can acquire knowledge, to become eligible for employment, to find and spend time with friends, to improve one's quality of life, would like to become a teacher, to escape household drudgery, etc. Almost all of them said that it is not good to drop out of school. They said that they like participating in the programmes organized by their schools on January 26th (Republic Day), August 15th (Independence Day) and September 5th (teachers' day). A smaller group of children said that they also like *Janmabhumi* and 'clean and green' programmes introduced by the State Government in recent years. The reasons cited by the four children for not liking the school are:

- I don't like to go to school. Instead, I want to go to Masjid and learn to read Koran.
- I don't like to go to school because they don't teach us well.
- Teachers don't come regularly to our school and besides the school timings are not convenient for me.
- I like going out of town and hence I don't like to go to school.

Nearly 50% of the children have dropped out for reasons not related to income. Among the 30% for whom the reason for dropping out of school is related to income, we found that many assist their parents in their work. This pattern suggests that neither the students nor the parents are responsible in any simplistic way for the high level of dropouts in the secondary schools in A.P. The often cited reason for dropping out of schools, 'forced child-labour' (by parents) should be weighed against less talked about reasons such as the ones mentioned below that came to light in this study:

(1) not having access to reliable drinking water,
(2) not having enough food to eat,
(3) punishment from teachers,
(4) lack of reading materials and
(5) lack of educated adults to help them with their homework especially in the science and maths subjects.

Interview with the mother (M) of M.B., a student in the project school L. The interview was conducted by Elisha (E) on 14.2.2001. Translated from Telugu by D.Vasanta.

M.B. is in VII Class English medium in project school 'L'. He has one younger sister. His parents are uneducated. Father is a tailor and mother runs an idli cart and supplies breakfast to people in the neighbourhood. They came to the city about 12 years ago. In the primary school M.B. did so well that the teachers advised the parents to admit him in an English medium (private) school which they did. In that school where M.B. studied in classes III to V, the fees was Rs.75/- per month which was increased to Rs.150/- per month. Unable to pay this amount, M.B. was shifted to the present school. His mother hopes that he will complete at least 10th class so that he can get some job.

E: Do you find any difference between this school and the school he attended earlier?

M: The private school in which he studied his III, IV and V standard, the instruction was good; they gave lot of homework, they had games, competitions, prizes — my son won some prizes in the IV standard. He was also quite motivated about studies. In the present school, there is no fees, but no instruction either. He is not at all interested in going to school. He says classes are not held regularly because teachers don't come. If they are held, they are very noisy. It is a total waste going to that school. Instead, he would rather learn some work. He hardly does any homework since he joined this school. In his VI class, he hardly went to school for two months in the entire year but they promoted him to VII Class.

The data presented thus far, came from 300 children and it is based on questionnaires A and B. Next we will present findings based on questionnaire – C from 120 parents of children from the ten project schools.

Section 2: Parents

Parents were interviewed according to a structured questionnaire (Form-C in Appendix – 3) to elicit their perceptions about the schooling of their children. Questions dealt with satisfaction with the overall process, expectations regarding the outcome of schooling (for sons and daughters), economic and logistic difficulties of sending children to school, need for tuitions etc. We had originally also planned to probe differences in responses to these questions across different communities in the urban and semi-urban locations. However, this differential analysis could not be carried out due to logistic problems. The following are findings based on responses from 120 parents.

The selection of the 120 parents was done on the basis of their availability and willingness to interact with the research assistants. A majority of the parents interviewed were mothers. The distribution of the parents interviewed in terms of caste, average income and family size is given below.

Socio-economic status of the parents

Serial number	Number interviewed	Caste	Average income per month	Family size
1.	43	BC	Rs.3299	5.2
2.	3	Muslim	Rs.4367	6.3
3.	24	OC	Rs.2713	5.6
4.	35	SC	Rs.3139	5.5
5.	15	ST	Rs.2950	5.3

Table 5: Profile of parents interviewed

Though the selection of the parents was random, their caste composition more or less matches the figures of the total population of 300 children and their families. The average income and family size are uniform across caste groups. For instance, though the OCs own double the amount of land (see the description of the socio-economic background of the families in the previous chapter) than what the STs or SCs do, in terms of income they are not better off than the other castes. The average income is around Rs.3000 per month and the families may be classified as poor. The differential socio-economic status across caste groups expected in the larger society is not captured in this group of parents. Poverty seems to be the leveller and, then, it is only the very poor who send their children to Government schools, irrespective of their caste.

Majority of the men are engaged in unorganised blue-collar jobs. Most of the women do housework as housewives. A large number of BC and SC women work as servants. However, as opposed to the other groups, a good proportion of SC women are agricultural workers (see chapter –2).

From these parents we were able to elicit information about the following:

a. Utility of education
b. Maximum education desired for sons and daughters
c. Preference for type of school
d. Opinion regarding the necessity for and actual expenses on tuition and education
e. Teacher preference – male or female.

These issues were probed through the guided questions in the questionnaire, but the research assistants went beyond the questionnaire to engage the parents in an extended dialogue about matters related to their lives and difficulties faced in educating the children. Thus, a major part of the information gathered from the parents in our project was of qualitative nature. The observations reported below reflect the major patterns of attitudes / aspirations of parents. We would like to point out that there is richer information available in the larger qualitative database which could be accessed for further research from Anveshi.

Utility of education

In response to a combination of questions that referred to the reasons why the parents wanted the children to be educated, almost all the parents gave 'securing jobs' as the primary motivating factor. One of the mothers who is a housewife pointed out that 'they should not work like us as labourers. We want her to become a teacher' (SG VII 10). In fact, most of the parents saw education as being instrumental to an opportunity for their children to escape the poverty and deprivation that they themselves suffer. Some of the parents said that they themselves would have had a better deal in life only if they were educated. Quite a few of the mothers expressed the hope that education of the children, particularly girls, would lead to economic self-reliance. Perception of economic-self-reliance related mainly to securing government jobs. The favoured occupation for the daughters was teaching in schools. These parents, who themselves were mostly engaged in unorganized blue-collar jobs, saw a white-collar job for the children as a giant step towards social mobility. And, this they thought would be made possible by education.

Some of the other reasons given for educating the children were – they could read and write letters (most parents being uneducated had to rely on others for this); they could teach the younger siblings at home so that there would be no need for tuitions for them; or, they could do the accounts at home.

Shobha is 12 years old studying in Class VIII in School N. She has one elder sister, one younger sister and a younger brother. Her father is an auto driver and mother a cook. Shobha and her sister work as domestic servants to supplement the family income which was reported to be Rs.4,200/- per month. They belong to Erukala caste (Schedule Tribes). They live in the outhouse of a family where Shobha's mother works as a cook. They don't pay any rent. The little property they have includes an auto, a cycle, T.V., tape recorder and a gas stove. Shobha's grandparents from both sides weave baskets and sell them for a living. Shobha's parents who are illiterate hope that their childrent never become basket weavers. Shobha's mother said, "There are hardly any doctors in our community and I hope my eldest daughter (Shobha's sister) will become a doctor and Shobha, a teacher."

Shobha's mother wants one of her children to become a doctor because her sister died of diabetes. She did not receive adequate medical attention. She herself got married at the age of 14 and had her first child when she was 16 years old. Since her children can't practice caste professions, she will educate them as much as possible.

A few exceptions apart, the aspirations of the parents with regard to the utility of education generally match the State's agenda on education as primarily 'economic' (see the section on Government Policy on Education in the Introduction). The hope that education would help build skills in the children that would enable them to take advantage of opportunities created by the State through its economic policies is quite evident. The message of the State seems to have effectively filtered down to the parents. While the possibility of economic empowerment through education is feasible for the middle classes because of their existing social-cultural capital, one is not sure to what extent the education being imparted in Government can achieve similar results for the children we studied. Given the two-tier education system (private schools for the rich and government schools for the poor), it seems unlikely that the children of the poor parents can achieve economic empowerment solely on the basis of the curriculum given to them as a package, i.e., without the socio-cultural opportunities that readily available to the middle classes.

Hardly any parent mentioned the 'intrinsic' value of education that is 'of direct importance to a person's effective freedom' (Dreze and Sen 1995). The motivation for educating the children conforms to the personally and socially instrumental goals given by Dreze and Sen, i.e., 'getting a job and more generally for making use of economic opportunities'; 'better utilization of the available services'; and 'reduce the distressing phenomenon of child labour' etc. Education is perceived as the panacea for much of the economic deprivation that these people are subjected to. Broadly speaking, these goals of

education also happen to be those that benefit people who are willing to operate within system-generated 'opportunities' and institutional objectives and are therefore 'domesticated' (in the Freirean sense) to that extent. Interestingly, Dreze and Sen's fifth value of education entails 'empowerment and distributive roles' by which 'greater literacy and educational achievements of disadvantaged groups can increase their ability to resist oppression, to organize politically, and to get a fairer deal'. This, indeed, is a liberating as well as a subversive function attributed to education. But can education be domesticating and liberating at the same time? The responses of the parents are generally restricted to the economically instrumental function of education, as nowhere does one find any indication of their relating it to 'the ability to resist oppression'. Our education system in general is so instrumental and geared towards economic goals that the above observation may hold good for middle classes as well, although this needs empirical verification.

Savitha's mother was a member of the parent-teacher (vidya) committee for two years. She said she was never informed of the meetings. Once she was asked by a teacher to sign a cheque for Rs.10,000/-. Soon after that she was removed from the committee "God knows what the teacher did with that money" commented Savitha's mother. She also complained that when children fail, some teachers take bribes (Rs.70/-) from parents and pass them. It is men teachers who engage in such malpractices. She says the Government schools will work better if teachers pay some attention to the kids and whether they are learning anything or not.

Savitha's mother also commented "How I wish I was educated! When I see people like you (the research assistants) I feel happy. What use of these DWCRA groups and Ambedkar groups? They just teach us the letters of the alphabet and how to write one's name. That is all the education we get!

There were some rare parents who pointed out that education is not useful for their day to day life. They felt that once educated, the children became unfit to continue in their traditional vocation such as agricultural work. Some parents while acknowledging that education may help the child later to get a job, stated that at present the family did not benefit from the child's schooling.

Maximum education desired for sons and daughters

The preference for educating the boys more than the girls is evident from the following table.

	Daughters	Sons
Beyond 10th class	56 (46.6%)	89 (74.1%)
Up to 10th class	39 (32.5%)	17 (14.2%)
Under 10th class	9 (7.5%)	5 (4.2%)
No response/ NA	18 (15%)	9 (7.5%)

Table 6: Education level desired

The reason offered for such preference is that the daughters have to be 'married off' soon and since the sons have to be bread-earners for the family, more education enhances their chances of securing government jobs. Those parents who wanted to educate their daughters beyond the 10th class, said that girls should be economically independent and preferably become school teachers or get government jobs.

Interview with the father (F) of a 8th class girl from school U. Interview conducted by research assistant Anuradha (A). Translated from Telugu original by D.Vasanta

A. Why do you say girls don't need education beyond 7th class?

F. Life is different (tough) these days. If they get small part-time jobs in some company they can earn Rs.500-600 a month. In addition if they work along with their mothers, they can earn Rs.500-600 more. My elder daughter worked like that and earned enough money for her own marriage.

F. She is constantly asking for money for school fees, dance competitions, games. They want money to decorate the school. Of course I don't give always. I tell her to stop going to school. She says give me at least two rupees. I can't give, I don't have. That is why I tell them not to go to school. She says I don't have a pen or pencil, give me money… I have to buy notebooks for the whole year. Where can I get money for pens, pencils school dress? I believe they got beaten by the teacher… that is why I tell them stop going to school. There is no need of education. I am not interested in educating you.

A: What will be her future if she drops out of school?
F: She should do domestic work in a couple of houses and make a living. Am I educated? I never went to school and learnt the alphabet. I learnt things on my own after I grew older, after my marriage. My wife is not educated either she gets a daily wage of 3-6 rupees. I used to work in a cycle-pump shop, but I lost that job. Maybe I should buy some cycle tyres, sit on the road and repair punctures in cycle tyres to make some money . I am quite free now. I worry about my daughter. How is she going to grow up, get married, find some work… I have so many troubles. I have not inherited anything from my parents. Me and my family have to survive with my own hard earned income – we are six of us in this one room. My elder son is a vagabond and my wife can't do hard work after she had family planning operation.

…. Our children will only go to Government schools because education is free there if they have the physical and mental strength. They can study others will stop. They also get most of the textbooks free. Of course we have to buy some books. If one has to pay monthly fees and advance fees, one must be very rich or must have inherited lot of property from family or must have a job where the salary is in the order of Rs.5000 - 10000 per month. People like us who earn 500, 600 or 1000 rupees a month can't send our children to private schools. Here (in Government schools) our children can go with torn clothes or hardly any clothes. No one will object. Do you think they can go to private schools like that? No way. They will ask us to buy new clothes, they don't care about our financial problems. Not that this doesn't happen in Government school, but much less.

A. How much will you educate your children?

F. I explained to you my circumstances. I will pull along as much as possible. It is up to them. Once they are grown they can take up some physical labour. My daughter is old enough. I want her to find some work in a company or office. Even if she sweeps and brings drinking water she will get Rs. 500 or 600. I can save on her school expenses of Rs.100 – 200 and save at least Rs.400 or 500 per month which I need for myself. If I had some education I would have at least become a security guard and earned good salary and all of us would have been in a better position.

School preference

The following table shows the parents' preference for Government or private school for their sons and daughters:

	Private school	Government school	No opinion
Girls	8 (7%)	99 (82%)	13 (11%)
Boys	19 (16%)	89 (74%)	12 (10%)

Table 7: Parents preference for type of school

Majority of the parents prefer government schools to private schools. The reasons given are: a) they do not have to pay any fees, b) they cannot afford private schools, c) they get free books and bus passes.

Some parents felt that there is less punishment in Government schools than in private schools. They stated that many children drop out of private schools because they cannot bear the severe punishment. The parent of one girl said that discipline in Government schools was flexible – 'Éven if my daughter has fever and

Majority of the parents prefer government schools to private schools. The reasons given are: a) they do not have to pay any fees, b) they cannot afford private schools, c) they get free books and bus passes.

We also noted that lack of punishment is a positive factor for preferring government schools. For instance, some parents felt that there is less punishment in Government schools than in private schools. They stated that many children drop out of private schools because they cannot bear the severe punishment. We have tried to explore the connections between punishment and social class / caste. A majority of the parents denied the existence of such a connection and quite a few were reluctant to engage in a discussion on this point. From the responses of a few children from ST communities, we got the impression that these children receive severe verbal punishment, but this was not confirmed in the interviews with parents. For example, one of the children from ST community told us that the teachers referred to him as *udatalu tineewaadu* 'a person who eats squirrels'

Among the few that gave a preference for private schools, there seems to be a general consensus that a) the standard of education is better in private schools and, b) there are better prospects for securing a good job if one passed out of a private school. The parent of one boy (SG VII 3) said ‘a private school is better for my son because he has to get a job and he should look after us and keep up the family name’.

Many parents said that the preference for government schools is not a matter of choice. If they had the resources they would send the children to private schools.

Need for and access to Tuition

All the parents agreed that it was necessary for their children to go for tuition. However, a majority of them could not afford to engage tutors. Parents of some girls said that they were willing to send them for tuition but there were no tutors available in the neighbourhood and it was not safe to send the girls to far off places.
The reasons given for the need for tuition are different and are as follows:

a) 25 parents said the tuitions were essential because the teaching in school was not sufficiently good and no one from the family was educated enough to help the children with their homework and other difficulties. The classroom teaching had to be supplemented by the tuitions. One parent frankly admitted that the child does not listen to them and says ‘you people don’t know anything’. This makes us wonder whether the kind of socializing process that the existing education system is imparting is also not responsible for alienating the children from their family and community values. Four parents stated that the children needed tuition because they went to government schools – if they went to private schools they would not need tuition.

b) 21 parents said that they were unable to get the children to study at home. Left to themselves, the children waste their time playing or watching TV. If they went for tuition they could be disciplined to some extent.

c) 9 parents were of the view that the tuitions were particularly essential to pass in the public exams in the 7^{th} and 10^{th} class.

Although supplementing the school teaching is a felt necessity, a large number of children do not receive any academic help outside school. The following figures show that of the

300 children studied, more than one third have no one to help them even with their homework. The number of children getting help for homework is as follows (for more detailed discussion, see Chapter –1).

Neighbours	36
Family	39
Friend	26
Someone (unspecified – irregular)	88
No one	111
Total	300

Teacher preference

The table below indicates the 120 parents' preference for male or female teachers for their children.

Female teachers:	71	(59.2%)
Male teachers:	9	(7.5%)
No preference:	40	(33.3%)

While one third of the parents were indifferent to the gender of the teacher, the rest were clearly in favour of female teachers. Only 9 out of 120 parents indicated a preference for male teachers.

The reasons for female teacher preference were:

a) 41 parents said that women make better teachers because they are more responsible and take pains to teach properly.
b) 23 parents felt that women have more patience and the students feel free to ask them to repeat a point that they have not understood properly.
c) 14 parents said that female teachers understand the problems of the girls better and it is easier for the parents to talk to them. They also felt that for girl students it is better to have female teachers. One parent pointed out that men teachers tend to 'flirt' with the girls and it is not nice if a male teacher 'punishes' a girl.
d) 3 parents said that the women teachers are more punctual and take less leave.
e) 4 parents were in favour of women because they don't punish the children.
f) Many parents pointed out that male teachers don't take their work seriously. They don't teach anything. They come to school to 'talk politics', 'read the newspaper' and chat with others.

The reasons for preferring men teachers by 9 parents included:

* Six parents said that men make good teachers because they are strict and can control the students. Three of them felt that men don't hesitate to 'punish' and that is very necessary.
* One parent thought that men teach 'with more attention'.
* Two parents preferred men because they were more punctual and took less number of leaves than women.

From the above observations about 'teacher preference', one could probably gain an understanding of what characteristics are valued in a good teacher. However, a deeper probing is essential before making generalizations in this regard.

Section 3: Teachers

The gaining of book-based knowledge from teachers by attending lessons and doing homework remains the dominant image of school education. For most people, the major part of the students' day at school is spent attending to lessons or other activities supervised by the teachers. Parents' contact with the school – whatever little it might be – is with the teachers of their wards. Teachers thus most directly and physically represent the system that students and parents engage with. Thus they formed the dominant element in the processes of transmission and negotiation we have explored in this study. The data we have tried to collect with regard to teachers is focused primarily on their perceptions of their professional roles and their attitudes towards the children and their communities. Even while observing teachers in class, our concern has been more with the social dynamics and cultural messages in the situation than with the appropriateness or effectiveness of the instructional activity per se.

This section presents the findings regarding

i) the demographic features of the teachers working in the project schools, and
ii) the perceptions and opinions of a sample of teachers of Standards VI – VIII

Data Collection Scheme:

Information obtained from and about teachers in the project schools was oriented to the following points / questions:

1. Demographic characteristics of teachers in government schools
2. Teachers' perceptions and beliefs regarding
   a) their duties, responsibilities, role
   b) the learning process, factors affecting learning of their pupils
   c) the relevance, adequacy and effectiveness of various components of the curriculum; syllabus, textbooks, evaluation pattern
3. Teachers' relationships with Principals (administration), views on government policies
   Teachers' professional concerns and self-image

Data related to these points was obtained through three modes/sources:

- teachers' workshops (2 in number) where they could express their views in discussion sessions
- a questionnaire designed for administration to teachers
- interviews with teachers (based on but not restricted to the items in the questionnaire)

(In addition, demographic information relating to all teachers was obtained from the schools.)

The information obtained through these different modes has a degree of overlap. Some of the findings given here are thus impressionistic and interpretive to a certain degree. Few extracts from the transcripts of interviews with particular teachers are presented in this section as an illustration of teachers' voices.

Findings:

I. Demographic features

1. Information from the personnel registers of the project schools indicates a total of 172 teachers on the rolls at the beginning of 2001 – 2002.

a) There are 70 women and 102 men teachers. One school with a core staff of 6 has 11 Vidya Volunteers and MVF teachers attached.
b) The caste- community distribution (for 130 teachers) is:

   FC/OC: 55%, BC: 34%, SC: 8.5%, ST: 7%, Muslim: 4.6%, Christians: 6.0 %

2. More detailed information is available in respect of 13 teachers who completed the questionnaires [Form D], and another 10 teachers who were interviewed by the RAs.

a) There is wide variation in age, ranging from 23 to 54 years. The distribution over this range is roughly even.
b) Years of experience varies from less than 5 to more than 30, with a slight cluster in the 10 – 20 interval.
c) In the group of 23 teachers, all but one Hindi pandit have Telugu as the mother tongue

d) Among the 23 there are 6 with PG degrees, the rest being trained graduates (B.Sc: 11; B.A.: 6). Nearly all of them have a husband / wife who is college educated. A number of spouses are also teachers. Most of them have children who are in school or college. Though the question of where their own children go to school was not specifically raised, there are indications in the interview responses that many teachers send their children to other schools.

II. Teachers' perceptions and opinions

a) There is no agreement about *how* children learn. All the options (imitation, analysis, reasoning, observation) are endorsed, and each one is given priority by some teachers while ranking them. Only memorization is consistently seen as unimportant. [The teacher's subject appears to be a factor here]

b) In the questionnaire responses many factors affecting (contributing to) learning are endorsed: literate parents, social milieu, classroom environment, interaction with other children, rapport with teacher, wide reading. Fear of the teacher, punishment and the use of guides are generally regarded as negative influences. Teachers who were interviewed tended to emphasise the 'parental support' factor very forcefully – sometimes to the point of blaming them for poor performance of their wards. What specific kinds of support they expected was not indicated clearly in their remarks [Note that the questionnaire format did not ask for this elaboration]

Interview with a Woman teacher (B.N) of project school – E conducted by Santhosha on 29-1-2002. Translated from Telugu by D.Vasanta

B.N studied upto BA, Bed. She belongs to maala caste (SC). She comes from Vemulavada Village in Movva mandal, Krishna district. She teaches social studies. Her father works in the Police Department. Mother can barely sign her name. Grand father was a teacher. She and her sister are graduates. Her sister got married and stopped going to college. B.N managed to do her 10^{th}, Inter, degree and B.Ed after she got married. She completed B.Ed in 1991-92 and got this job in 1995. Her husband works in the Telecommunications Department in Hyderabad. She has 3 children. One son and daughter have done M.Tech. Younger daughter is doing Engineering. All of them studied in private schools.

B.N: I like this profession a great deal. The main drawback is most of the parents are not educated. They don't come to meetings we have children who cannot recognize the alphabet and they are being admitted into 6^{th} class! Government should strengthen primary education system by providing more teachers. If the foundation is weak. We can do nothing. There should be more exercises and examples in the text books and more feed back too. There should be more teaching aids and encouragement at individual level – which we are not able to provide because of over crowded classrooms. More over the syllabus is so heavy that we can't pay attention to individual students. The teacher-pupil ratio should be 1:40

S: Are you happy with the textbooks?

B.N: No, there are some mistakes and high flown language. Children can grasp concepts if the language used is familiar to them. I am not satisfied with the textbooks.

c) The questionnaire responses (N=10) to various points relating to them textbooks in use suggest that:

i) Most teachers feel that the language of the textbooks is familiar to their students. The implication is that the dialectal variations characterizing the children's home language and school language are not significant.

ii) It is acknowledged that the language in the books is often difficult and needs simplification. This relates mainly to the style of presentation.

iii) Many feel that the content is generally relevant, but does *not* match the age level of the pupils.

iv) Responses to the issue of textbook content being 'related or distanced' from the lives of children are incomplete and unclear. **However, there is virtual unanimity regarding the absence of any bias (gender, caste, region based) in the books.**

v) It is generally felt that the exercises in the textbooks promote analysis and deep understanding.

vi) The need to improve textbooks is widely endorsed. The main points related to simplified language, better ordering, more examples / illustrations. The basic relevance and suitability of content is taken for granted. A few teachers however mention the need to make the content more related to the real experiences of children.

vii) All respondents assert that teachers should contribute to the textbook development process. Their experience in the classroom and their contact with (knowledge of) children are considered important resources.

d) The present syllabus is too heavy. This is a factor interfering with the effective teaching.

e) Under methods followed, lecture, discussion and demonstration are often mentioned. Lesson plans are used sometimes and supplementary materials are available. But the heavy syllabus, and according to some teachers irregular attendance prevents proper teaching. A concern for helping weaker students is expressed by some.

f) Nearly all teachers agree that present examinations do not effectively test the students abilities, given the emphasis on memorization. The focus on theoretical knowledge rather than practical ability is pointed out by some.

g) Almost all the teachers felt that the non teaching duties assigned by the government came in the way of effective teaching process.

Interview with a teacher who teaches Hindi to classes VII, VIII, IX and X in project schools 'N' – Santhosha's diary.

Teacher: *What do you want me to say…..I am going to retire in four years. Why don't you go and ask those who have just joined service? I have been teaching only for the past 3 months. So, I am not responsible for anything. The teacher who was here before me taught only 3 lessons. I completed the portions. What can we teach them? They learn the letters of the Hindi alphabet in VI class and jump to full-scale lessons in VII. How is it possible for us to teach when they can't comprehend simple words.*

Look at me. I am the only Hindi teacher for classes VII to X. I come from Mehdipatnam in an auto. I have to keep moving from one class to another the whole day. It's a big headache. There is a grade II Hindi teacher post vacant but the head mistress is not bothered about getting another teacher.

This Janmabhumi is another headache – did you read in the newspaper Eenadu about a school child who died because a school wall collapsed over him during Janmabhumi work? We teachers are required to go house to house and ask questions such as 'Do you have (cooking) gas? How many children do you have etc. sometimes they get angry and say how is it your business? Last year the children and teachers had to work in hot sun for 40 days. Third headache is the teacher trainees from some teacher training college who come in hoards and expect us to work with them.

The aided teachers are a confused lot. They are neither Government employees nor private. Why can't the government make use of the staff of the Municipality to do the Janmabhumi work? If the results in our schools are poor, the Government should not ask us for explanation – they have no right to.

h) The perception of guides is overwhelmingly negative. They are irrelevant and can even be harmful as they encourage 'by-hearting'. Good teaching makes them redundant. It is however granted by some that they can be of some help when there is no support at home, or the teacher is absent.

i) Most teachers report that students do not go for extra tuition. The financial means not being available is mentioned as a factor. Two mention an estimate of 50% of children going for tuition. A few say that Std.X students go for tuitions. Government teachers are not allowed to take tuitions. A few give help to neighbourhood children as a social service. Tuition is seen as of no use because there is only repetition of what is done in class. The fact that it is tiring for children and that time spent on tuition prevents children from getting proper exercise. The only advantages noted (by a few) is that personal attention can be given, and that tuition helps when preparing for examinations.

j) The problems of girl children that many teachers mention are: distance from home, poor transport facilities, absence of separate toilets. A few mention eve-teasing at co-educational schools and on buses. Some teachers clearly assert that there are "no problems".

k) Inspections are generally regarded as useful and relations with principals are reported to be satisfactory.

l) In-service programmes are seen as desirable, but there is no indication what the duration and frequency of actual participation in them has been for individual teachers.

Project school SB. Teacher V.S Interviewed by Santhosha on 27-1-2002
Translated from Telugu by D.Vasanta.

S: Did the teacher training course help you?
V.S: No. During training the class strength is assumed to be 30 or 40. In the schools where we are posted we have to manage 70-80 children per class. The Government policy is all wrong – what's the point of blaming the training. Our school children bunk classes to go and see cinemas. Their parents have no time to worry about them they come to school only when we strike off the name of child who is continuously absent. These children are not able to do their home work. Parents can't help them because most of them are uneducated. They have no value for teachers here.

My wife studied up to 8th standard. My son is in class 4; daughter in class 2 and younger son in L.K.G. All of them go to private school.

S: Why did you put them in a private school?
V.S: We (Government school teachers) don't trust ourselves. Most of the teachers send their children to private schools.

S: What do you read?
V.S: Books dealings with the subjects I teach. We use Telangana dialect with children because they speak in that dialect. There should be communication between teachers and parents. The teacher needs to know how much time a student spends studying at home. After all they spend more time at home rather then is school.

m) Most teachers see themselves as better off than those serving in private schools. Some feel that they are better trained and teach more effectively. Some also mention the opportunity to serve the downtrodden as a positive feature

n) The additional duties given to them are mentioned by some as a disadvantage. That better facilities and flexibility are found in private schools is acknowledged by some.

On the whole, the professional self image of the teachers in the sample is high. They feel they are qualified, experienced and competent. They are doing a fairly good job despite the problems of dealing with children who come with many ‘disadvantages’ further aggravated by poor facilities.

The picture that emerges from the responses of the respondents as collated and analyzed here is broadly in keeping with the opinions expressed at the workshops we conducted with the teachers.

Discussion / Interpretation

In conventional terms, the teachers in the project schools are properly qualified, generally have considerable experience. Further, their level of competence seems adequate. This statement is based on the fact that no serious and widespread complaint along these lines was noted during the extended period of contact with the schools by the research assistants and team members. They are minimally satisfied with the administrative aspects of their working conditions as government employees. While they do point out many deficiencies in the infrastructure and facilities available at their schools, they do not strongly assert that their primary work as teachers – teaching the subjects they are responsible for – is seriously affected by this condition.

The teachers are aware of defects in the prescribed syllabus and related texts and examination schemes. However, their focus is largely on general issues like the sheer weight of the curriculum, complexity of the language used, and the age-linked inappropriateness of topics. There is virtually no concern relating to the suitability and accessibility of the cultural experiences and the world view embodied in the curriculum to children from non-mainstream or marginalized communities.

It is generally accepted that the expert-designed prescribed curriculum targets the 'good' school both in terms of physical facilities and, more importantly, in terms of a home-community culture that can be taken for granted. The extensive data we have obtained pertaining to children and parents show clearly how far removed their lives are from any urban middle class norms.

Against this background, the finding of a mismatch between the social groups from which teachers and students come has important consequences for the process of schooling. .As

noted above (item 1 under findings) more than half the teachers are from OC/FC categories, while 85% of the children in these schools are from BC and SC communities [see Introduction]

This discrepancy has significant implications for pedagogy. Teachers will need to identify with learners (their worldview) in order to understand how to help them access the essential concepts, principles, etc. that comprise the substantive core of the curriculum. We argue along with many other observers of the educational scene that the unfamiliar cultural idiom in which this core is housed can have a mystifying effect; it can also be alienating. This causes impediments to learning in the manner assumed in the design of the curriculum. In such a situation, teachers need to take on the task of mediation to help overcome these further difficulties faced by the students in addition to the conventional (and, of course, necessary) straightforward explication.

A majority of them assume that the children of the poor lack “experience” to acquire the knowledge packaged in the curriculum. They are obviously referring to the experience of children from middle classes – children who possess reading materials (other than school textbooks) at home, children whose parents buy them comic books, story books and expose them to the wider world outside their home and school.

Notes from Anuradha's diary dt 8-1-2001. 3rd period class VI project school 'B'. Translated from Telugu by D.Vasanta.

The teacher who teaches social studies is seen coming towards the class VI children gathered under a tree. The teacher came and said "Haven't I finished 9th lesson?". All the children answered in unison "Yes sir, you did". Some of them began opening their text books. One student said he lost his text book. The teacher responded thus: "If you had purchased it out of your money, you would not have lost it. Because it's a free book supplied by the government, you lost it. I believe in the next Janmabhumi programme the CM is going to sanction clothes. Go and lose those clothes also." He then began his lesson on "Population in the major cities" He told the children to copy the first question at the end of the lesson. He told them to read and write the answer which he said is in 1st para fourth line. He told them to search the answers contained in the other paragraphs of the lesson for the rest of the questions. He went to sleep and when he opens his eyes one child commented "The 'kumbhakarna' woke up – watch out" (I believe he pounds them hard on their backs). The others pretend to write the lesson in their note books. The teacher noticed that some children were writing answers from lessons other than what he told them. He began beating them saying "You go and complain to your parents that I beat. Why are you not writing what I have asked you to write?"

The admittedly limited data we have on teachers' perceptions and attitudes point strongly to a near total absence of any awareness and concern relating to the wide gulf between the lives and daily experiences of the majority of children and the worldview contained in the curriculum. Their instructional efforts by way of explication will thus be of limited effectiveness in promoting learning, given the added difficulty faced by learners. The data from the classrooms (lessons) clearly bears this out. The dominant activity pattern is one way transmission from the teachers to largely passive learners. What is given in the syllabus/textbook is presented. There seems to be no occasion (opportunity) for learners' voices—their doubts, misconceptions, misgivings -- to be heard. Teaching in this mode cannot be responsive in any dynamic sense to the actual learners present in each school and class. Further, there is no indication of any serious interaction between parents and teachers that might sensitize each other. This process— if it occurs-- could lead to more thoughtfully conceived planning of instruction that attempts to address the culture gap issue.

As things stand, the large discrepancy between the class-caste background of the teachers and that of the students is a factor predicting ineffective and unsatisfying engagement with syllabus content on the part of the students. We do not argue that this is inevitable. Nor do we claim that this type of culture gap is the only or main reason for experience of

the curriculum being unsatisfying. But given the premise that large areas of the mandated curriculum are not immediately accessible to the students it follows that a degree of 'extra' understanding and effort by way of mediation on the part of teachers is necessary. Our finding is that this additional resource is not available to any meaningful extent in these schools. The point to be noted here is it is not the personal failures on the part of the individual teachers that is the cause, but the difficult and unwieldy syllabus they have to complete, further aggravated by unsupportive professional environment in which they work.

Section 4: Classroom Observations

As stated in the beginning of the last section the teacher is the primary contact the student has with the education system. The focus of our observations in the classrooms was not to "evaluate teacher expertise" but to study the cultural framework in which the teaching occurred, the relevance of the instruction process, the intellectual space provided for the children to grow, and the hospitality of the classroom environment in which the children spend a large part of their school years.

The data pertaining to the classroom process was collected in three different ways: one, having research assistants record their observations in a notebook; two, audio-recording of the lesson and three, use of a proforma designed to capture the spatial and temporal aspects of a lesson (Form-F).

Classroom observation in Project School 'E' class VII social studies from Anuradha's diary dt 10-1-2001

Even before the teacher entered the classroom, one girl student was making everyone read a lesson aloud. Another girl was there to maintain discipline. There is one leader for each row of benches. It is the leader's duty to look through the assignments etc. Only then they pass on the notebooks to the teacher. Learning by rote and clarifying doubts are also the duties of the readers. The teacher came, discussed a few questions from the question papers of previous years and made them give the answers to those questions. The children in the last two rows don't participate in anything. When one of them raised his hand, the teacher insulted him saying "You are uneducable. What can you answer?" The other children began laughing.

Classroom observation in Project school 'SG' : Class 7, Science
Lesson from Santosha's diary Dated 19-1-2001

Title: Primary Cells

The teacher sat on a plastic chair and stretched her feet onto another. The children were talking to each other loudly. She pulled one student by her chunni, took the chunni into her hands, wrapped the duster in it and hit one of the students on her fingers. Having brought some order into the classroom, she proceeded to demonstrate an experiment. However, the tester was not working. The light didn't come on. She told the children that they should practice the experiment at home. She then took out a battery, peeled off its cover and kept looking at the textbook. She said that the cell was made of Zinc.... a sticky substance. She then yelled at one student " where are the tongs? I told you to bring tongs, why didn't you bring it?" The student replied that she couldn't fine one at home. The teacher then said, what about a scissor or at least a knife? When she found out none of these implements were available, she decided to continue her demonstration. She broke the cell, showed the children the carbon rod inside the cell. She pushed one end of the rod into a lemon and made sure that the other end touched the tongue of one of the children close to her. She said you should experience a ticklish feeling because now the current is flowing through it. The child agreed....

Classroom observation, Project school 'V' Class VI B, Subject: Science
From Santhosha's diary dt. 5-1-2001

Lesson: Respiratory system

The teacher read out the entire lesson from the textbook. She helped the students locate the answers to the questions (at the end of the lesson) by marking them on her book and calling the lines out. The children were staring at her with blank faces. I asked the teacher what she thought about the lesson. She said that it was o.k. but that she wasn't sure if the children understood anything. "It is not possible to design lessons to meet their standards; I don't have much experience. I started coming to this school only after I passed the recent DSC examination and got posted here a few months ago". She also said that she was educated in English medium and that therefore she is finding it difficult to teach in Telugu. About the school, she said that there were too many children and it is impossible to control them.

After she left the classroom, I asked the children what they thought about the lesson. They said they understood it. I asked them to tell me what they have learnt about respiration. They replied " We have been taught this lesson only today. The teacher marked the portions we have to study and copy. We will do that tonight. We will answer your question tomorrow. Our teacher never asks questions about a lesson that she just taught".

Proforma for classroom observation

This instrument was designed to record class topography, teaching environment and the lesson in progress. We adopted the fairly well established research method of observing teacher talk and student talk in the sessions, ensuring that the observers' attention is structured to cover the whole session rather than focus unduly on recording an atypical event. The proforma was structured to provide adequate observation time for detailed descriptions of actions and events during the session.

The procedure we adopted was to have the research assistant sit through the complete lesson, record the observations and have a follow up discussion with a few students whenever possible. A total of 45 different periods across different project schools and subjects for the VI, VII & VIII classes were recorded.

Their observations have been broadly divided into two: 1) Observation about spatial and structural organization. 2) Observation about temporal progression of the class session.

The spatial details

A normal picture of an average classroom in India is of 60 students, seated on benches that accommodate about four children. There is a blackboard that is visible to all, enough light in the room, and a teacher whom everyone looks at expectantly. Usually classrooms are made bright and cheerful with quotations or slogans, science charts and pictures of national leaders and sometimes even gods and goddesses.

Government schools that we looked at more or less conform to this description, with some differences. While a room may be large enough to accommodate a section of about 55 students, when sections are merged, which often happens, space becomes a problem. If the classroom has benches, then those are not enough for everyone. So some have to sit on the ground. Classrooms would have a blackboard but visibility may be poor. Normally each room has about 2 to 3 windows, but if the strength increases or windows have to be closed because let's say there is a temple outside or a public garbage dump, then students would find it difficult to read what is written on the board. A veranda can be used as a classroom. That means that there would be plenty of light. But they would have to contend with the noise and the excessive warmth of the sun on hot days.

While each section may have a manageable number of students, often the strength can swell up to 145 as a result of clubbing 2 to 3 sections. Clubbing sections is very common. It could be because teachers are not available, or that someone has been transferred or given some other duties. As a result, in the absence of a particular teacher, another teacher could be asked to teach a subject that he / she doesn't normally teach. As an example, the craft teacher was asked to take up English because the English teacher had been transferred. These are some of the specific realities of the government schools that we observed.

The actual classroom transaction activity is interesting. It shows how teachers and children are negotiating the curriculum. Most classrooms are noisy. And it is in this noise that the curriculum is transacted. There is a general view that for teaching to be effective, students have to be attentive. That may not necessarily be true. For example, the English period in one of the schools is noisy. The teacher makes the children write the hard words on the board, explains the meanings and completes the lesson, "The Little Match Girl". At the end when questions are asked, the students are not able to answer. The students' opinion about the teacher is positive, but the research assistant's opinion is not so. She felt that the teacher couldn't control the class and that she also hit the students with a scale. Then there is another class which is very quiet. The reason is not that the students are enjoying the class activity but because the teacher carries a stick and is in the habit of throwing things, especially compass boxes.

When children are asked whether they understood the topic taught, they say yes, they did; or no, they didn't; but are too scared and nervous to ask the teacher; or they feel that though the topic was taught well by the teacher, it is beyond them to learn it. This is said especially about English and Maths. Some say that they will take the help of a cousin or an aunt. These are the ways in which children negotiate what is taught in the class.

When an average class has about 80 students, it is difficult to keep noise levels down. Children sitting at the back may not be focused on the topic of the day. This may be for various reasons: they are not following the lesson, or they can't see the blackboard, or they didn't follow what was taught earlier and is crucial in understanding a particular concept. Also there is a notion that those who sit at the back are not "good students" and will anyway not follow. Teachers normally make students who are attentive and study

well sit in the front. Students could be sleeping, reading something else, cutting jokes, or simply uninterested.

The transaction is a mix of cajoling, some amount of encouragement along with some scolding, verbal abuse, sometimes roughing up too. In one of the classes, geometry was being taught and only two boys had compass boxes. Most children in that particular class had no idea of what was being taught; or how to learn it. There is also the pressure of completing the portion, so even if more than 50% of the class is inattentive, the teacher proceeds to complete a particular chapter. Teachers' attitude could vary from enthusiasm to indifference to harshness. Some teachers can give a tongue-lashing as well as beat up children, slap them or throw things at them.

Normally, each section has two class leaders. They are responsible for maintaining silence in the class, collecting notebooks to give to the teacher, making students read, giving dictation, asking questions, dictating the examination timetable, ensuring that there is chalk and duster and the board is clean, taking attendance if the teacher is absent, writing noisy children's names on the blackboard and so on. Some leaders can also beat their classmates and the teacher may not reprimand the leader. The class leaders are feared and respected. In fact, we have had instances where children have claimed to have been hit by class leaders and hence dropped out of school.

In most schools water is available. Surprisingly, in a school that is within city limits, there is no drinking water for children. They are expected to carry water from home or go to the nearby hotel.

There are children with physical disabilities. Chief among the conditions mentioned are polio, stammering, weak eyesight or complete blindness in one eye, hearing problems and limping. Ravichandra, a class VIII boy in School D, is unable to see with one eye and has been operated twice. The other eye has some light. Sunitha of the same class also has poor eyesight. In class VI of the same school, two girls have a limp and another is polio-affected. Lingaswami of class VIII in School E has polio while Linga Basavaraju and Srisailam of the same class cannot see with one eye. They get teased occasionally. Some of them manage to get help from their classmates but basically they have to manage their schooling as best as they can.

We also provide here a list of some popular quotations, charts, posters that are put up for children to read and understand. It gives us an idea of the notions and images that children are exposed to.

Quotations:

Teachers can bring about national integration.

Teachers must have tolerance, for it gets reflected in the future of the students.

Give respect and take respect.

Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.

Silence must be observed.

Teacher is God; father is God; mother is God.

Without education, man is a beast.

Do not betray others.

Do not speak ill of others.

Help the poor.

Health is wealth.

Truth always wins.

Charts:

Nutritive foods / Taj Mahal / Tungabhadra & Chambal projects river / Oxygen, hydrogen, sulphur di oxide preparation / Grafting / How does a seed become a tree? / Mathematical formulae / Nylons, and many more.

Posters:

Gandhi / Ganesh / Durga / Ambedkar / Saibaba / Azad / Veereshalingam / Tilak / Shivaji / Bhagat Singh / Patel

Temporal aspects of the lesson

Temporal observations were divided into five intervals:

First 5 minutes: Ignore and allow for the class and teacher to settle down.

5-15 minutes: Coded observations, free descriptions and comments.

15-25 minutes: – do –

25-35 minutes: – do –

35-45 minutes: – do –

We designed the coded observations with a broad knowledge of previous research in the field as a guide, ensuring that as much of the normal activity as possible could be described by the code, leaving adequate spare time for comments and observations. The codes were divided into two parts, one for the teacher's activity, and another for the children's activity:

Teacher's activity		**Children's activity**	
Description	**Code**	**Description**	**Code**
Controlling the class	**A**	Keeping quiet	**P**
General lecture	**B**	Listening	**Q**
Subject lecture	**C**	Writing	**R**
Writing on the board	**D**	Answering questions	**S**
Asking students questions	**E**	Asking teacher questions	**T**
Scolding students	**F**	Making comments	**U**
Encouraging students to speak	**G**	Talking to other students	**V**
Punishing students	**H**	Disturbing the class	**W**
Giving and collecting homework	**I**		

Table 8: Coding sheets used to record teachers & children's activities in the classroom

When the fieldwork was completed we found that it was not an easy task to make sense of the several coded observations. The computerized tabulation according to the different codes did not yield any patterns due to the range of coded observations and the non-mnemonic nature of the codes themselves. We first reclassified the different observation codes into fewer and more easily remembered groups:

Type of teacher activity	Group	Type of student activity	Group
Disciplinary	D	Submissive	S
Teaching	T	Learning	L
Encouraging	E	Responsive	R
Undecidable	U	Undecidable	U
		Indisciplined	I

Table 9: Grouping of classroom activities

We then applied the grouping of codes as follows:

Teacher's activity			Children's activity		
Description	**Code**	**Group**	**Description**	**Code**	**Group**
Controlling the class	**A**	**D**	Keeping quiet	**P**	**S**
General lecture	**B**	**T**	Listening	**Q**	**L**
Subject lecture	**C**	**T**	Writing	**R**	**L**
Writing on the board	**D**	**T**	Answering questions	**S**	**L**
Asking students questions	**E**	**T**	Asking teacher questions	**T**	**R**
Scolding students	**F**	**D**	Making comments	**U**	**U**
Encouraging students to speak	**G**	**E**	Talking to other students	**V**	**U**
Punishing students	**H**	**D**	Disturbing the class	**W**	**I**
Giving and collecting homework	**I**	**T**			

Table 10: Correlation of codes and groups recording classroom activities

We examined the final temporal data according to the grouped codes, looking for disciplinary activity, teaching, encouraging, etc., as types of teacher talk, and for submissive behavior, answering questions, asking questions, making comments, etc. as types of student talk.

The following broad observations were made on the basis of separate tabulations according to subject, class, teacher, time period and school.

***Observations*:**

1. While most of the activity was a combination of discipline and teaching, there were very few instances of the teacher *encouraging* the students to speak. There were also very few instances of the students being *responsive* by asking the teacher questions about any thing. There is also no necessary match between encouragement and responsiveness on a one-to-one basis every time.
2. Indiscipline seemed to be either sporadic or restricted to a specific class.
3. Teacher activity and attitude do not follow any uniform or predictable patterns. They seem to follow strategies which differ at least according to classes and subjects. Disciplining teachers were, counter intuitively, also encouraging in two cases.
4. An emphasis on discipline was observed in classes conducted around lunchtime: these grouped around 12:45 PM and 1:30 PM in the period-wise classroom observation data.

General:

a) The coding helps draw some fairly well grounded inferences about teaching and learning activity in the classroom transactions.
b) It is possible to trace the code groups of interest back to the original questionnaires in order to get a better understanding through the descriptive entries in the table.

Inferences:

The main observation is that while the teachers stress the question of discipline and "teach" according to regimentation and routine, very few are found to encourage students to respond, question and comment on the material taught. The students too are either submissive or learning passively with very little responsiveness in the classroom. This observation in the temporal study is corroborated by the diary entries of the research associates.

Our understanding of the children's cultural context through the interviews is that they have negligible reading material, almost no access to libraries, little or no help with homework and minimal engagement with literate adults. This composite lack represents in a concrete way the absence of a cultural environment conducive to schooling. Thus, the children face a challenge of social transition through education in a government school where they are often first generation learners with inadequate support at home.

The challenge of this social transition is compounded by the lack of familiarity with the alien curricular content (see our analysis of textbooks). This formidable educational context cries out for a teacher-student relationship where encouragement and responsiveness would constitute a kernel around which teaching and learning could occur in the best sense. However, our observations of the class in progress show that encouragement and responsiveness are absent or minimal. Since this absence is manifest in all the 6^{th}, 7^{th} and 8^{th} class sessions observed, the urgency of an annual examination is not a cause. This implies that the lack of encouragement and responsiveness is structural rather than due to pressures of schedule, and is a clear indicator of the weakness of the educational transaction. Regimentation and routine also suggest that the teacher is unable to grasp the cultural challenges these children face, a fact which has been underscored in the teachers' attribution of the children's problems with learning to "lack of experience" (see discussion of the "Teachers" section). Thus there is inadequate reflection about how to make the educational transaction engage with the world the children live in. It would seem therefore that "doing our jobs" according to habit and routine needs to be replaced by reflection about the challenges presented by schooling in our social context. We need to explore ways to share the burden of the child who faces these social challenges alone. May be one needs to initiate "an active social dialogue in which teachers, learners and their community, and not just academics and pedagogues are fully respected participants (Kumar 1987).

Limitations and possibilities:

While the use of video could have yielded sharper insights about who the teacher tends to ignore, how he or she treats groups or individuals, etc., this would have made the process both cumbersome and unrepresentative. We felt that the presence of a video camera would disrupt normal classroom functioning. In fact even the presence of the researchers would have frozen the teaching-learning activity. Hence we took a conscious decision to involve research assistants who, through several visits to the project schools prior to data collection, were able to establish some rapport with the teachers. We feel that the major strength of our data collection especially in the classroom setting rests on this procedure. The audio-taped material and the diaries maintained by the research associates who observed these sessions provide qualitative insights which tell us a great deal more about the environment, the attitudes and the teaching approaches of the teachers, and about the student activity overall.

Classroom Observation: Transcription of the tape-recorded lesson by Anuradha from Project school 'D' (transcribed by D. Vasanta) Subject: English, Class: VII

Teacher (*enters the class)*: Open to Page No 115.

(*He points to the picture on the page.*)
I am going to read some sentences about this picture
Sita is sitting on a broken chair.
Teacher*: Explains meaning in Telugu.*
Repeats the sentence twice.

- Her sister Radha is standing near Sita.
- Where is Sita sitting?
- Broken chair.
- Her sister aameyokka chelli, peeru Radha.
- Her sister Radha.
- Where is she standing?
- Near Sita.
- Radha is standing...

Children (*chorus*): Near Sita.

Teacher: She is a student.

- Who is a student?

Children (*chorus*): Sita.

Teacher: No! Radha.

- Radha is not married.
  (*repeats in telugu*)
- Why is she not married?
- Because she is a student.
- You are all students. You need not get married yet.
- miiku pelli ayyindaa? miiru vidhyarthulu, inkaa chaduvukuntru.
- Radha is also a student. That is why she is not married.
- She is not...

Children (*chorus*): Married!

Teacher: Sita is wearing a white saree.

- Saree telusu kada? Sita tella chiira kattukundi?
- Elaanti chiira kattukundi?

Children (*chorus*): Tella chiira.

Teacher: Who is wearing white saree?
Children (*chorus*): Sita.

Teacher: Sita is wearing a white saree.
- She doesn't like coloured clothes.
- Rangula dustuvulante aameki ishtamu ledu kabatti,
- She is wearing a white coloured saree.
- Sita's little son, (little son ante chinna koduku), is walking towards their dog. *(repeats this sentence without the Telugu)*
- But his mother is not worried. (*explains in Telugu*)
- The dog won't hurt the child. (*Telugu*)
- It is good natured (*Telugu*)

Teacher reads all the sentences in the story without explanation in Telugu.

Teacher: Discuss with your friends. Not in your village (*laughs*). Friends in the class room O.K.?

Teacher: Children now turn to page 116. Questions and answers.
- I will read the question.
- What do you call a girl with blue eyes? *Asks in Telugu.*

No answer.

Teacher: A blue eyed girl. It is there in the text book. Under the example.
- Eye ki, 'd' add cheseeru.
- What do you call a chair with broken leg? *Repeats in English and then in Telugu.*
- A broken chair.

Children repeat.

Teacher: Kaallu virigipooyinaayi kadaa. A broken legged chair.

Teacher: Look at your text book. It's there. A broken legged chair.
- Are you understanding?

Teacher: This is a very difficult question. You cannot say. I will tell you this one.
- What do you call a gun?
- Gun, do you know gun?

Children: tupaaki.

Teacher: What do you call a gun which has bullets in it?
Repeats in Telugu.
- A loaded gun.

Concluding Comments

Our findings discussed in sections 3 and 4 of this chapter relate to teachers, their attitudes and opinions as well as their performance in the classrooms. We have pointed out the lack of awareness on the part of the teachers of the mediation necessary to make the curriculum accessible to the students from marginalized communities. Some of the classroom observational data also revealed a general tendency to teach in a transmissive mode with very little dialogic interaction with the students. We do not wish to interpret these findings as reflecting any inherent insensitivity or authoritarianism on the part of the teachers. Instead, they probably reflect external pressures on the teachers. For instance, they have to deal with large classes; follow a heavy syllabus, teach subjects for which they have not been specially trained; engage in a whole lot of non-teaching responsibilities etc. The point we would stress is that it is the larger ideological framework that allows such conditions to persist in the state schools that should be addressed. We reiterate the importance of the role of the teacher in public education and our concern is to find ways of enabling teachers to fulfill their role.

Section 5: Government School Textbooks

The innocuous-looking government school textbook is a forceful entity. The textbook is a concrete manifestation of what is regarded as “Curriculum”. Considered central to any teaching-learning exercise, it is a symbol of authority, both to the teacher and to the student. To the teacher, it represents the authority of policy makers and of textbook-writers who are expected to translate policies into the pages of the textbook, as also of the examination system which will test the student in the contents of the textbook. To the students, the textbook symbolizes the authority of the teacher. The child earns the wrath of the teacher if textbooks are not carried to school, or if lessons are not learnt well.

As part of our study we have tried to understand how textbooks facilitate the transaction of the curriculum and whether they achieve what they set out to do. We are mainly concentrating on textbooks of Classes VI, VII, and VIII used in the government schools of Andhra Pradesh.

An aspect that we want to look at and for which enough attention has not been paid is the title page and the preface to the textbooks. It is here that one can see the figures who mediate the curriculum for the student. We include here a sample of ‘A Note to the Parent’, a part of the Preface to the new English Reader 3 of Class VIII, reprinted 2000.

A NOTE TO THE PARENT

From New English Reader III, Class VII
Published by Government of AP (2000)

1. Your child is in the third year of learning English. In the class the teacher will help your child do the following:

   (1) Listen to a few simple stories read out in class.
   (2) Talk about things of interest with the teacher and the classmates.
   (3) Read a number of 'stories' in English.
   (4) Write a few simple sentences and paragraphs.
   (5) Read and enjoy a few simple poems.

2. It is important for you to remember a few things.

   (I) There is a section labelled ‘For the use of the teacher’ at the beginning of each Unit. Do not make your child read memorize of recite any part of it.
   (2) In class, your child will listen to the stories when the teacher reads them out. Do not make him/her, read the story. Do not expect him/her to fully understand the story or know the meanings of all the words. The stories are for developing the ability to listen to and understand spoken English.
   (3) Your child will be doing some writing at home, using the Reader and the Workbook. Do not offer too much help when your child does his/her homework. The teacher would have made enough preparation in class for the task. Let your child make the effort at doing the homework by himself/herself. Help him/her only when it is absolutely necessary.
   (4) Your child will need three prescribed books for learning English in this class - the Reader, the Workbook and the Supplementary Reader. It is important that your child possesses his/her own copy of all of them.

WISH YOU AND YOUR CHILD ALL THE BEST

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It is a telling example of how cut off the textbook writers can be from the lived realities of the majority of the children and their parents. In this context it is interesting to ask who the textbook writers are? What are their concerns? How are they situated in relation to government policies? In the General Science textbook of ClassVI, we noticed that there are three levels at which the textbook gets sifted. There is the category of authors and translators, then of editors, and finally the overarching Chief Editorial Board. In spite of these different levels, it is extremely disturbing that the final textbook that gets approved and taught in the classrooms does not reflect even minimally the culture of children studying in government schools.

In this section, we provide some cursory and broad analysis of Telugu, general science, English and mathematics textbooks of the Andhra Pradesh State Board for Classes VI, VII, & VIII.

Some observations on textbooks

Telugu

The question of textbook language, especially in relation to Telugu, has been a matter of interest to the group. The data on the class background of the children who study in government schools has shown that most of the students are from the backward classes and the scheduled castes, and a few from the scheduled tribes. In this context, what is striking is how distant the textbook language is from the language used by children of these class / caste backgrounds. We found (and many children too pointed out) that the idiom in the Telugu language textbooks is literary and has very little affinity with the spoken form. The issue of ‘pure’ and ‘impure’ forms of language is indeed not new and normally it is the so-called ‘pure’ form that is privileged in textbooks. In the case of Telugu, it is the sanskritized form that receives recognition by textbook writers over the other varieties found in Andhra Pradesh.

We also noticed that no attention has been paid to the number of words that a child can possibly learn in a lesson. For example, in the Telugu textbook of class VI, there are lessons where more than 25 new words have been introduced. Surprisingly, the glossary doesn’t gloss all the words. Sometimes explanations are confusing and go round in circles. There are lessons where the most crucial words have not been glossed, without which comprehension can be seriously hampered. It may be argued that children shouldn’t be spoon-fed; they should be encouraged to find the meanings on their own. But that would be possible only if resources were available. If not a library, then at least a dictionary should be handy. But as our study showed most children do not have books other than their textbooks at home. Even if they were to possess a dictionary they would receive very little help at home in using it.

It was also noticed that hardly any thought had gone into arranging the lessons in their order of difficulty. This is again especially true of language textbooks. The Class VI Telugu textbook, for instance, has an interesting story about a young girl who wants to be

a pilot. That lesson could have been the first. Instead, the first lesson is a story about three fish that works primarily at a symbolic level and may pose difficulty in comprehension.

We would like to emphasize that there can be no objective method to find out what is or isn't interesting to children. This point was very effectively brought home to us by one child. A chapter on Marie Curie, we thought was rather drably presented and not enjoyable for children to read. Besides being lengthy, it is filled with details about her life, work and honors that she received. But one of the research assistants, during her interviews with children, came across a child who told her that she loves Madame Curie's life story. And even though she is now in Class VII, she has not given away her Class VI Telugu book because she wants to read that story for inspiration.

This is a complexity that needs to be highlighted, for judgement about what is and isn't interesting can only be subjective. It is hardly feasible to take a comfortable position and say with certainty that a particular lesson may not be of interest to children. But the point that we are making through this is that however poorly written and uninspiring a lesson may be, government school children are able to find something positive and useful even in such lessons. The question one is forced to ask then is: Can bodies that are involved in preparing textbooks be more in touch with the reality of children's lives studying in government schools, so that schooling can be a more positive and less traumatic experience?

One of the issues that interested the group was that of representation, especially in the language books. Whose world gets reflected in the books that children read at school? We came across an interesting lesson in the Telugu textbook of Class VI to illustrate this point. This is a lesson on Fine Arts, and as a contrast on the same theme, we have G.Kalyan Rao's piece from *Antaraani Vasantham* (Virasam Publications, Hyderabad, 2000), a widely acclaimed Dalit novel. D. Vasanta has translated both the pieces from Telugu to English.

From the Telugu textbook:

We see many beautiful objects all around the world. Some of them are natural in that they are created in nature. The others are artificial and man-made. At first human beings made use of objects found in nature in their original form. Man would hunt for something he needed. Slowly he learnt to make what he wanted out of naturally available objects around. The primitive man, who at one point lived inside the hollow of trees and caves, learnt to build a house. Today we see houses of different sizes and shapes made of different materials. Some of these constructions are so beautiful that people from all corners of the world come to look at them. Our Taj Mahal is an example of such (man-made) constructions.

We would like not just beautiful houses but beautiful things inside the house – chairs, tables, vessels, clothes, jewellery, carved doors, beautiful (flower) pots, flower baskets made out of brass, glass and porcelain … are things that give us happiness.

Construction / designing of such beautiful objects constitutes useful arts. We use all these in our daily life. Such art objects we use in daily life are called handicrafts. There are at least 64 different arts in our culture. However, there is no consensus on which 64 arts are actually arts. What this means is we cannot count art forms. Whatever we do, if we do well, it is an art.

Unlike chairs, houses, vessels that we use in daily life, there are arts which are not used routinely by everyone. … Music, dance, poetry – something we see and hear and derive pleasure from – these are fine arts while useful arts (handicrafts) help humans in their physical world, fine arts provide mental happiness to human beings, contributing to the broadening of their minds.

The most important thing about fine arts is beauty. The happiness one can derive from these arts cannot be defined or described. We can talk about the happiness we get whenever we eat good food or meet people we like because there is a clear-cut benefit. This is not so with the happiness caused by fine arts. It's an out-of-the-world happiness; you have to experience it; no one call tell you what this happiness is.

Drawing and painting are visual arts – line drawings and portraits can both explore the form. You can use colors to depict the wholeness of the object. The paintings done centuries ago are still available to us on the walls of the caves. One can draw on paper, metal, clothes. Ajanta and Ellora are the best examples of cave paintings. Leonardo da Vinci, Picasso, Ravi Varma are names of famous artists, you must have heard about them. … The famous Telugu artists are Damerla Rama Rao and Adavi Bapi Raju ….

"Fine Arts" by G.Kalyan Rao

Fine Arts – what are they? We are told that there are sixty-four different art forms. How did they come about? How many of them have provided livelihood to people? Skinning the dead animals is an art, softening that skin is an even finer art. Making pots out of mud or even wood is an art. Milking the animals, making butter, turning that into ghee, extracting oil out of til (sesame), coconut, castor seeds or even useless weeds is an art. Weaving cloth out of cotton, ploughing the soil, sowing the seeds, harvesting the crops, identifying locations where one can get sweet ground water, making ropes and baskets using palm fruit fibre, palm leaf, bamboo sticks or even the useless bulrushes that grow near the streams and lakes … making sickles and pickaxes out of melted metal, building houses … how many different arts there are!

They are all part and parcel of this village life. They are integrated with ordinary people's lives … they are not ordinary arts though. They are extraordinary!

People who skin the animals, carve the wood and weave baskets are great artists indeed.

G Kalyan Rao understands fine arts from the point of view of an artisan. Everything that you do with your hand has beauty. What one makes with one's hands is useful and has a purpose to serve. The piece reflects a world where what the potter makes or the barber does has a value and a utility. In the earlier piece, however, fine arts and handicrafts are described in a manner that makes it evident that not everyone can have access to them. The implication is that there is a certain sublimity about them and only those who have the eye and the ear (and possibly wealth) to appreciate them can know the pleasure that they give.

General Science

We discovered that textbooks of Class VII, in terms of ideas and concepts were not as difficult as those of Classes VI and VIII. One possible explanation could be that children have to appear for the public exam in Class VII. To give an example, the Class VI General Science textbook (English medium) starts with 'Science in Everyday life', followed by the second unit titled 'Measurement'. It is a lengthy unit of 26 pages, excluding exercises, where children are supposed to learn the different systems of measurement for length, area, volume, mass, time and temperature. They are also taught the multiples and sub-multiples of these units. This is followed by 'Air, Water and Weather', and 'Housing and Clothing', both of which are fairly simple and could have

preceded ‘Measurement’. Further, each unit is divided into sub-units at the end of which there are exercises. This is to test the child’s understanding immediately after the completion of the sub-unit. In the case of ‘Measurement’, the exercises come only at the end of a long chapter.

A common problem that ails general science books is that they are crammed with information. There is no sifting of information. For instance, the first chapter of Class VII general science is full of names of scientists and their discoveries and inventions presented in an incomprehensible fashion. Students are obviously expected to memorize these names and inventions in a disjointed and meaningless fashion. There are about 17 scientists mentioned in a chapter of less than 4 pages.

> *… But the person who realized the necessity of the implement to convey the principles, experiments and inventions or discoveries to the future generation was John Guten Burg of Germany [1397 to 1468]. The printing machine is the reflection of his thoughts. Recording scientific knowledge has become very easy with that machine. There are many organisms which are not visible to our naked eye. Some of those organisms cause diseases. Jackarins Johnson discovered (sic) the Microscope in 1590. In 1653 Leeuwenhoek of Netherlands discovered the living organisms which are invisible to our naked eye, those are the unicellular organisms of Phyllum Protozoa.*

Unit 2 of the same book is on Measurement where the students are taught the Triangulation Method. The concept is taught through an activity. But the activity is described in a manner that’s completely unfathomable and bewildering. I attach here a copy of what is given in the book.

UNIT - 2

MEASUREMENT

2.1 The Triangulation Method

Measuring very long distances :

You learnt in your earlier classes measuring short distances with a scale and longer distances using a measuring tape. In this unit you are going to learn how to measure very very long distances — like the distance between planets etc.

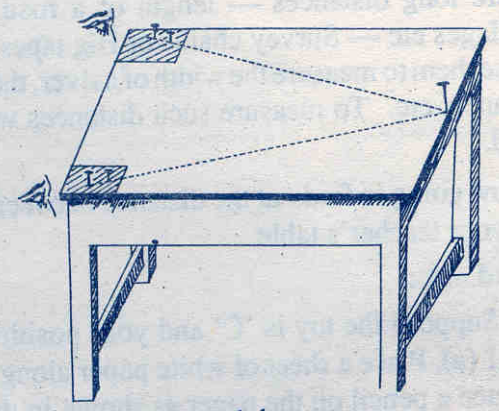
To measure long distances — length of a road, distance between two villages etc — Survey chains or Big tapes are used. But we cannot use them to measure the width of a river, the distance between two planets etc. To measure such distances we use the Triangle Method.

You are now going to find out the distance between you and a toy placed on your teacher's table.

Let's do and find out :

Activity : Suppose the toy is 'C' and your position is 'A'. Look at figure 2.1 (a). Place a sheet of white paper along the edge of your desk. Place a pencil on the paper as shown in the figure. Bring your eye behind the pencil. Now adjust the position of the pencil such that it is along the line between the toy and your eye. Draw a line (using another pencil) along the first pencil placed on the white paper. Now move to the other end of your desk (B). From that position also you look at the toy and draw a straight line (as you did from position A) along the edge of the pencil. If you extend these two straight lines on the sheet of paper, see that they cut on the paper at 'C'. You should be careful while moving the sheet of

paper from A to B. We can measure the distance between A and B. Suppose it is one metre. We cannot draw such a long line on the sheet of paper. Therefore we take a scale of 1 cm = 20 cm. and we can draw AB = 5 cm. This is done using dividers. Widen the divider points such that the distance between the points is 5 cm. Using this, mark A′ and B′ on the two straight lines you have drawn on the sheet of paper. Join A′ and B′. Now you have a triangle A′B′C′. Look at Fig. 2.1(b). Now measure the lengths of A′C′ and B′C′. Change this into the actual distance of AC′ and BC′ by multiplying the values by 20. In this way the distance between any two places/points in the class-room can be determined.



Method showing calculation of distances
Fig. 2.1

We calculate the distances by constructing a triangle. Hence this method is known as the triangulation method.

The heights of hills, mountains, temple towers, the widths of rivers, distances of stars are calculated by this method.

In the same book, the topic “Removal of hardness” has been explained. Instead of explaining how hardness can be removed, the page is filled with chemical formulae that are rather unnecessary and can in fact be quite confounding.

Unit 9 is on the human body. Here's a sample of how the kidneys are described.

Each kidney is made up of about a million functional units which are in the form of very small tubes. These are called nephrons. A nephron is made up of two parts. They are the Renal capsule and the tubule. The renal capsule is a double walled cup. This is called as Bowman's Capsule. Inside the Bowman's capsule there is a network of very small blood vessels. This is called as glomerulus. The Bowman's capsule and the glomerulus are together called as Malpighian capsule. The Bowman's capsule opens into a funnel. This funnel opens into a tubule. The first part of the tubule is not straight but has several bends or convolutions. This opens into another tube which is like a hair pin. This is called the loop of Henley. The part of the renal tubule after the loop of Henley is again convoluted and finally opens into collecting tubule.

In the Class VI book, the small and large intestines are described in this manner.

The large intestine is about 1.5 metres long. The first part of large intestine is called Caecum. The opening of ileum into caecum is guarded by a sphincter which acts as a valve. At the base of the caecum is a finger like appendix. In man appendix is reduced and functionless. In animals like horse and rabbit, the appendix is well developed. It helps in digesting cellulose that is present in the food. The second part of the large intestine is called colon. It has an ascending limb, a transverse limb and a descending limb.

While the subject matter is itself quite dense, it is further complicated by meaningless words which children are expected to commit to memory.

English

The new Class VI reader and workbook for non-English medium students was published in 1994. It is meant for students who study English as a third language. Talking in relative terms, it can be said that both the reader and the workbook come close to reflecting the profile of children who would be using these books. The pictures, names, and issues dealt with in the books may not be as alienating as in other English language books. Though I must mention here that when we spoke to a teacher who is immensely interested in issues relating to the textbook, his response was very interesting. He cited the lesson "Environment" from the same book that I've held up for commendation. This is a story about a small family of mother, father and daughter. The father is an engineer in the city and the mother and daughter live in a village where the latter attends school. One day, they receive a letter from the father who says that he doesn't like city life because it is very polluted and stressful and would like to return to the village. The letter arrives at half

past nine in the morning. Yadaiah, the teacher I've referred to earlier, pointed out that postmen in rural areas do not show up at the doorstep at half past nine in the morning as mentioned in the textbook. Also, it is not clear from the conversation between the mother and daughter whether the father is coming home for good or only for a couple of days. Obviously common sense points to the second possibility. However, the impression one gets from their conversation is that consideration for the job is secondary.

The Class VI books have many positive aspects. There are plenty of pictures and structures are taught through these pictures. The books have been carefully proofed; letters are big and clear; the printing quality is satisfactory indeed. I've pointed these out because the language books, especially of English, often abound in errors. Printing quality is dismal and the letters are small and the text is densely packed. All these turn out to be major hurdles in learning a language.

The Class VII English reader for the non-English medium students was revised in 2000. Compared to the Class VIII textbook for the English medium students, this book is a significant improvement. Right at the beginning, teachers are explained in detail the objectives of teaching English, the principles governing teaching English as a second or third language. Further, there is a lesson plan given, along with the time a teacher can allocate to developing LSRW (Listening, Studying, Reading and Writing) skills. While this may seem idealistic, since very rarely do periods go as planned and more so classes where teachers have to deal with more than 60 students, it can nevertheless serve as a useful guideline.

Each unit begins with a listening exercise. The teacher is expected to read out a story given at the end of the book in small print (indicative of material meant for the teacher). There are questions which the teacher asks and the students would have to give the answer based on their understanding of what has been read out. The speaking skill has also received a great deal of emphasis in this textbook. Again, each unit has a conversation which children are expected to read, followed by a role play exercise. Pointers and sample dialogues are provided to help children along.

It is the reading part of each unit that is problematic. The mismatch in the competency level expected in the listening and speaking exercises as opposed to what is expected in the reading passages is striking. The reading part is far more complex in terms of

vocabulary and also ideas. Moreover, the topics chosen have been presented in a manner that the stress is on supplying facts and not on facilitating language learning. Some of the reading passages are on Dolphins, Olympic Games, Hovercrafts, Vikram Sarabhai, Fossils, Crocodiles, Kites, Fingerprints, Air Pollution etc. In addition to this, the workbook has lessons on Whales, Ant-eaters, Pearls, Sea Shells, UFOs. Snakes and Ants are creatures children would be able to relate to. But consider the barrage of material they have to plough through. One or two such topics can be acceptable but for the whole book to be filled with these indicates that much more thought has to go into designing a textbook. It needs to be emphasized yet again that we are here talking about non-English medium students of Class VII who have only two years of English behind them. They are expected to know words like: oceanarium, extraordinary, hover/hovercraft, fossil, preserve, evidence, dinosaur, reptiles (explained as “any group of cold blooded animals”), armoured, amphibians, pollutants, corrodes, etc.

What we found rather disturbing were the themes chosen for reading. Most of these would not be familiar to children studying in government schools. When we make an observation of this kind, we’re aware of the intense subjectivity of our opinion. Nevertheless we make it, because it seems from the data we have collected for our study, dolphins, hovercrafts, would be alien to the lives of most children attending government schools. Matters are further complicated by the focus on information on these subjects. Even interesting topics like Kites, Air Pollution, Fingerprints, Olympic Games are presented in a drab and uninspiring fashion. Of course, the teacher would have to depend on her/his resourcefulness to make these interesting and relevant.

Let’s take a quick look at the English textbooks of students who study in the English medium. The Class VI workbook focuses on comprehension, vocabulary and language exercises. The comprehension passages are short (about 10-12 lines) and incomplete. Most of them are pretty unimaginative and drab. There’s one on coins and how coins should be taken care of, if one were a coin collector! Three passages are taken from E.F.Dodd’s *Stories from Famous Poems*; a couple of passages from Tom Sawyer, and so on. The first passage is a tale from the Arabian Nights, and this is how it goes:

> *Mansur was a magician. He lived in Africa. He read in one of his magic books about a wonderful lamp hidden in a hole in the ground in China. Aladdin and his mother lived in China. They were very poor; they lived in a hut and often had not enough food to eat.*

The very first paragraph lacks coherence. The student would be left wondering what the connection between Mansur and Aladdin is. Obviously there is one but the shift from Mansur to Aladdin is not a logical one and this is a definite failure of the use of language.

The supplementary reader II of Class VI is a simplified version of Homer's *Iliad*. This time it is not Anglo-Saxon names but about 70 Greek names spread over 93 pages that students have to contend with!

Most interesting are the assumptions that the author and the editor have made in choosing this story for supplementary reading. They say in the Preface:

> *"This book tells young people an old story. Or is it a young story for old people? … This story however, is worth retelling once more for young people in India against the Indian background. That is what has been attempted in the following pages, with the following ideas among others.*
>
> *"Children who are getting their schooling in the English medium are likely to be exposed to English literature and Western literature to a considerable degree. And Western literature echoes and re-echoes with the sounds of Homer's words. Therefore it may be useful for schoolgoers to be reasonably familiar with the people and events in his story."*

If this is a young story for old people, what, one wonders, are young children doing reading it? Moreover, their exposure to Western literature is only as much as those students who study in the regional medium. There is no reason to suppose, as the author and the editor have done, that their exposure would be greater as compared to the regional medium students. In fact, evidence points to the contrary. Be it English medium or the regional medium, their backgrounds and competency in the use of English language are similar.

There is a story in the Class VIII English reader for the regional medium students titled "The Deaf Friend". The story is meant for improving listening comprehension. The teacher is told not to make the pupils read it, not to explain or translate each sentence, not to drill or use the story for any kind of testing. The story is about an adult deaf man who

is making plans to visit his normal hearing friend (a merchant) who is sick. The deaf man decides to ask three questions to his ill friend and even anticipates the answers he is likely to receive. The merchant, who was very sick and not inclined to talk to anyone, gave answers that did not match what the deaf friend had anticipated. The end result is supposed to be humorous, for the deaf man is oblivious of the discomfort he has created for his ailing friend.

One of the members of this project who has worked extensively with children with speech and hearing difficulties expressed her anger and concern at the way “deafness” is treated in this lesson. From the title to the questions, it is evident that the writer has no idea of what it is to experience deafness. In fact, she pointed out that the lesson is demeaning to the entire community of deaf people. Why would a deaf person prepare a script of what conversation might take place? Deaf people are extremely sensitive to non-verbal cues. Normal hearing people are not robots who utter sentences without noting facial expressions or body movements. School children, she noted, learn nothing from this lesson of the effects of deafness on comprehension of spoken language. If this lesson was intended to create humor, the writer should have chosen a topic other than deafness, since it is misrepresenting the intelligent hearing-impaired children who are beginning to find a place in regular classrooms.

Mathematics

In the preface of the Class VI book, the authors declare ‘Keeping in view the role of mathematics in cultivating the child’s thinking and learning skills, an approach that emphasizes the discovery and understanding of mathematical concepts has been adopted in the book’. But the books do anything but that. Newer and newer concepts are thrust on the students regardless of whether or not they are at an age to understand them and whether it will be of any use to the student to learn these concepts. There is no attempt made to lead the students to think and discover on their own what they are being told. The difficulty seems to be in deciding how much of current mathematics has to be taught to school students and how to communicate the evolved concepts in such a way that it is accessible to students. These are serious problems, which cannot be addressed without quality research in teaching of mathematics and designing a meaningful and relevant curriculum that takes into consideration the diverse socio economic and cultural backgrounds from which students come and the variations in individual interests at

school-level.

There is no justification offered anywhere in the book as to why abstract concepts usually of interest only to mathematicians are introduced to schoolchildren who come from a variety of back grounds and who will take up diverse careers. A student who would take up biology or literature or history would gain very little from learning if the rational numbers were ‘closed’ with respect to the operation of multiplication or if the set of real number is a ‘group’ with respect to the operation of addition. And how would a child in class VI understand the commonly used word ‘closed’ in the specific sense in which it is used in Mathematics? . In class VIII, they are even expected to learn to use abstract symbols for standard operations like + and x. By introducing these abstract terms or notions no new mathematical knowledge about real numbers, no new property of real numbers that would be of interest at their level is passed on to a student.

In the section on **number systems** introducing the set of Integers (i.e. the set of numbers, …… -3, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2 3…) by saying, the set of Natural Numbers is not ‘closed’ with respect to taking additive inverse or, introducing Rational numbers (i.e numbers of the form p/q, q not zero) by saying the set of integers is not ‘closed’ with respect to taking multiplicative inverse is unlikely to appeal to many students of class VI. The stress seems to be more on introducing standard vocabulary than on making students recognize special properties of numbers. In Class VII the reasoning given to say that square root of 2 is irrational is not convincing enough. Instead the authors could have simply stated that square root of 2 is not a rational number and you will learn a proof of it later. The and in Class VIII one is taught a proof of the fact that square root of 2 is not a rational number. While a few students may be able to grasp the proof, I think it would be beyond the level of a typical student in class VIII.

The students are told that the set of natural numbers has successor property: for each number there is an immediate successor, which is got by adding 1 to the number. And then they are told that this is not true for the set of rational numbers: ‘between any two rational numbers there are infinitely many natural numbers and this property of rational numbers is referred as density of rational numbers’. This information would convey very little, because it assumes that the student is comfortable looking at the numbers with the classification as rational and integer in mind always: 5 and 4 ½ are not just two numbers;

one of them is an integer and the other, a fraction. More likely the student only thinks of a few fractions like ½ and 3/5 and cannot really understand what it means to say that there are infinitely many rational numbers between ½ and 3/5. It is also quite likely that the student would say that the number 3 is the successor of 2½.

Often the numerical example used to illustrate and as exercise to aid the grasp of a new concept involve big numbers or complicated expressions. This would only hinder the student in understanding the concept as it diverts attention from learning the new concept to working with a large number. Using small numbers and easy _expression would make it easy for the students learn better. Here are two examples:

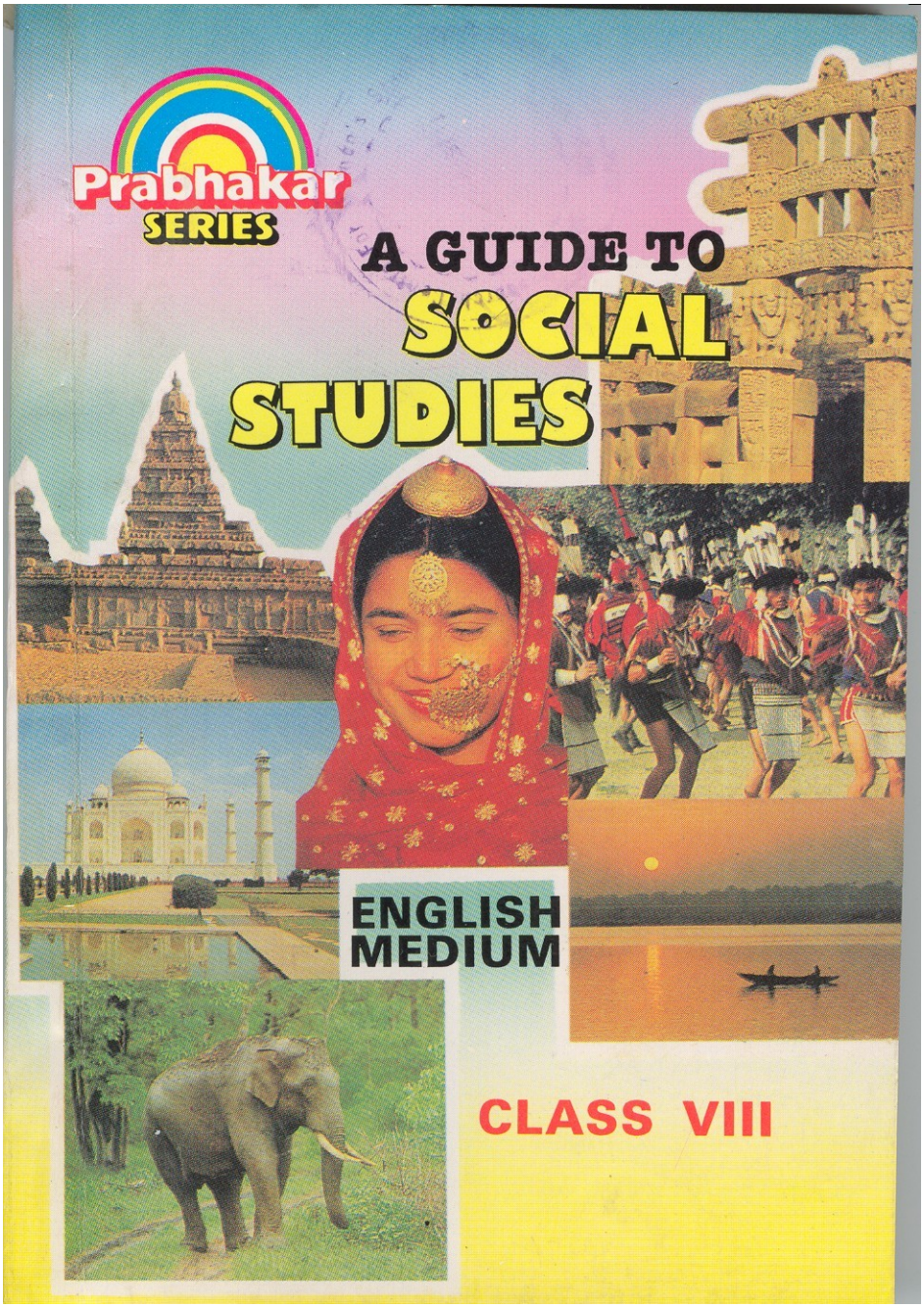
- Convert the number 56 to its binary form. The answer is 111000. *Most of the student's time would be spent in dividing 56 by 2 several times.*
- There are two cans containing 60 and 165 liters of milk respectively. Find a can of maximum capacity, which can measure the milk, the two cans in integral number of times. *This is an exercise problem given to apply the concept of greatest common factor! Also the use of the term 'integral multiple' is too technical and could have been replaced by a more commonly understandable expression.*
- What is introduced as **'business mathematics'** could well have been named differently so that examples that relate to the students every day life could have been used in talking about ratios and proportions.
- Class VI book reinforces the gender stereotypes. In almost all the examples, the vendors, traders, builders and even 'persons' are men.
- Again **abstract algebraic** _expression and manipulations are introduced in class VI. More time should have been spent on trying to explain by examples, how introducing a variable would be useful. Instead, at one go, students are introduced to more than one variable. It is not clear why a student will understand 5x^2 is different from 5xy or why in the _expression kx, k is the coefficient and not a variable. Right away students are expected to learn to find (x^2y-4x^2+xy^2)+(5x^2+ 5xy^2)+ (7x^2y+ 2x^2).
- In this chapter alone 24 new terms have been introduced.
- There is very little use of one part of mathematics in another -- geometry does not interact with algebra or business mathematics; and ratios do not figure in the examples in geometry. This clear compartmentalization gives an impression to the

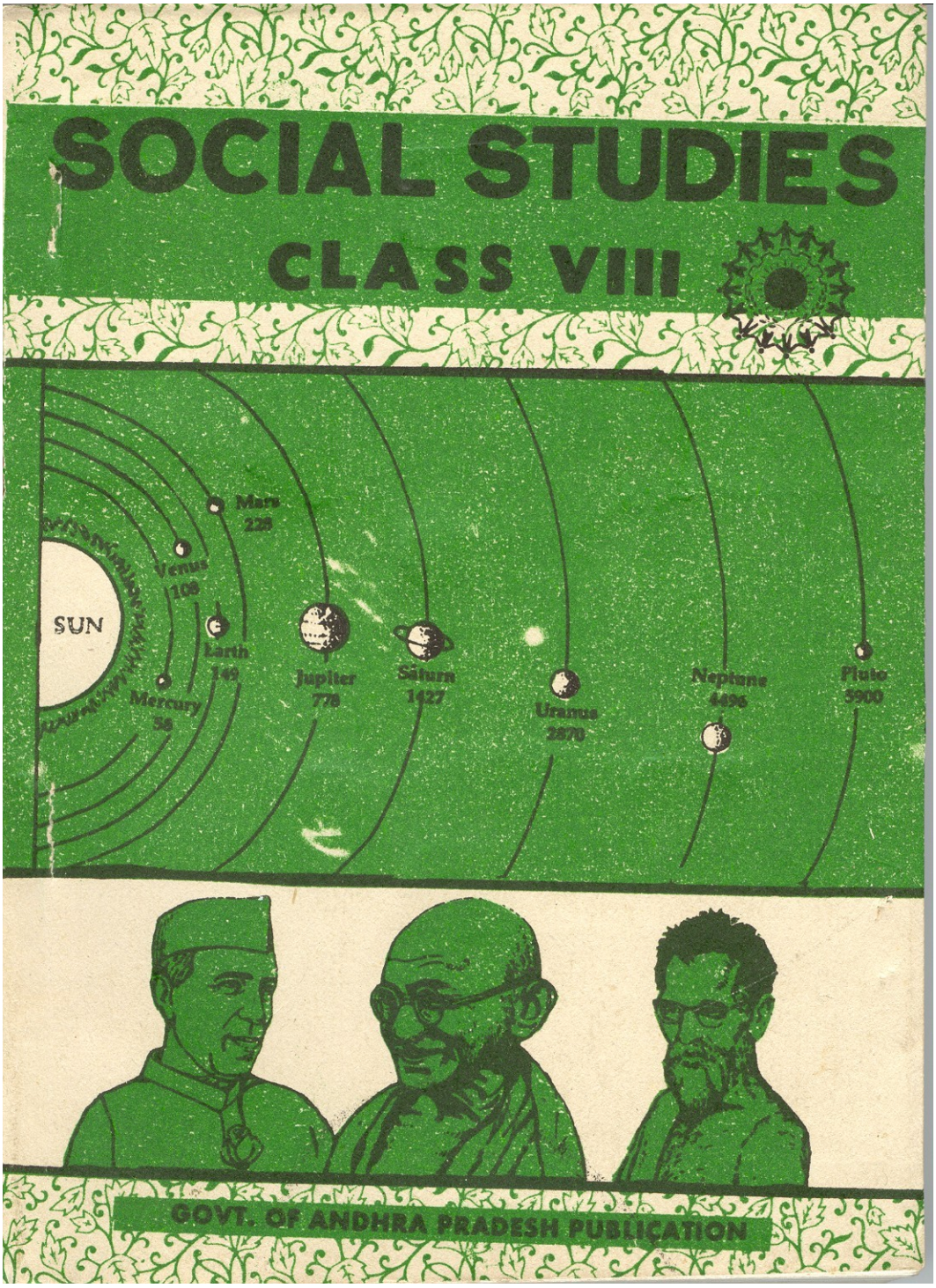
student that there is no interconnection between the many parts of mathematics that they are learning.

- While the content of number systems, algebra and geometry seem to increase from one year to the next, business mathematics seems to remain the same. And so in class VIII the student is at one level learning to deal with abstract symbols in the place of ordinary addition and multiplication and on the other is still finding GCD and LCM of numbers.
- In **Geometry** the difference between line and line segment could be done with more attention so that the idea that a line can extend infinitely makes sense to a student. And just defining a pair of lines as parallel if they do not intersect could be confusing.
- On the whole **geometry and mensuration** have received better attention. Note: x^n is to be read as x to the power n and so x^2 is x squared.

Guidebooks

We have also paid some attention to guidebooks that students use, despite the fact that they are very expensive. We found that guidebooks are designed to look more attractive than the textbooks, and they explain the text in a nutshell using simple sentences. It was interesting to note that some textbook writers can also double as writers for the guidebooks. One of the writers who contributed to the Telugu textbook has also written for the guidebook using simple and accessible language.





It may not be very easy to dismiss guidebooks because they do mediate the transaction of the curriculum for the student. A very obvious manner in which some publishers of guidebooks (VGS Brilliant Series for instance) do this is by paying detailed attention to the layout of the page. This may sound banal but just a visual comparison of the layout of the text indicates how communication of an idea or concept is facilitated. One understands the rationale of highlighting certain things, or boxing them, or using a bigger

or smaller font size, as the case may be. The textbooks, on the other hand, do not pay attention to such details. That can be overlooked, one would think, considering the cost at which these books are produced. What cannot be ignored however is bad printing. There are whole pages where the text has not been clearly printed, compounding the difficulties of children who normally have a problem with subjects like English and Maths.

Chapter III

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE STUDY

We began this study with a belief that curriculum is not a pre-packaged entity and that curriculum transaction is a process of negotiation (engagement) involving the child, the parent, the teacher and the textbook. The empirical part of our study attempted to characterize the nature of this engagement. Considering the fact that the study period was as short as two years, we feel that we have succeeded in laying out the complexities involved in negotiating the curriculum in a set of ten government schools. It must be noted that studies such as ours which focus on the educational processes require innovative methods of data collection and analysis. We have had to develop those specifically for the purposes of our study. The computerized database developed using input from 300 children and 120 parents has so much information that more analysis and commentary can be done by those interested in furthering the objectives of this study.

The other aspect of our study was to understand the role of the State in configuring the content of education. To do this, we looked at some policies and examined the prefaces, forewords and lessons in selected textbooks to see how policies influence the content. We noted that policies, which are often perceived as a distant and administrative phenomenon, in fact closely influence the way the child is configured within the set up of the government school. At a general level, our study thus sought to understand the frame of public education. Through the study we recognized the extent to which this frame continues to be dominated by the notions of ideal childhood and ideal citizenship. Even in this aspect of our study there is scope for further probing about the intent and content of the curriculum through interviews with textbook writers, which we could not conduct in view of the limited time we had to process the rest of the data. However, we do feel quite strongly that understanding of what comprises childhood is central to understanding of the entire education system. We will elaborate this point further in this section.

Ideal Childhood

The hegemonic ideal of childhood is not confined to school or textbooks but pervades the entire discourse of school education. It is a part of the contemporary society's belief that ideal childhood (children should be in school and not at work, playing, carefree and sheltered from the sordid facts of adult life) is necessary and attainable. For instance, the

characteristic features of 'childhood' for middle class white people in the USA are said to be: vulnerability, dependency, need for protection, lack of responsibility, ignorance, inability to produce or provide and only capable of consuming (Holland 1986: 46). This definition stresses what the relationship between an adult and a child should be in a particular social class. Even though it is a power relationship, it is somehow made to appear reasonable and completely justified. As argued by Susan Bissel (2003), "the image of an ideal childhood is perpetuated irrespective of whether it really exists anywhere in the world". In our study too we noticed that it is the tension between the normative notion of ideal childhood and the ground reality which shapes the process of curriculum transaction.

The normative notion of childhood is central to the project of modernity elsewhere as much as in India. The visual culture in any society (e.g. TV, advertisements and photography), uphold this notion. International child-welfare agencies use it as a guide to distribute and monitor their funds. That the schools also reinforce this image is evident in the text cited below :

You want me to tell you who is an ideal student? Well, it consists of first of all, to be able to follow directions. Any directions that I give. Whether it's get this out, whether it's put this away, whether it's turn to this page or whatever, they follow it and they come in and they are ready to work. It doesn't matter high skill or low skill, they are ready to work and they know that's what they are here for. Behaviourally, they are appropriate all day long. When it's time for them to listen, they listen. The way I see it, by sixth grade the ideal student is one that can sit and listen and learn from me…

Response of a White sixth-grade teacher

- *From the book, Bad Boys: Public schools in the making of Black Masculinity by A. A. Ferguson. The University of Michigan press 2001: P. 91*

Yet speaking against the background of the day to day life of the children in the ten project schools of our study (see chapter –II), we find that there is no match between the conditions of ideal childhood and the responsibilities and struggles that these children experience on a daily basis. Irrespective of the location where they are living (urban or rural), a vast majority of the children in these government schools take active part in the adult world of work to supplement the family's meager income and to ensure the smooth running of household when their parents leave for work. Their lives bear little

resemblance to the life of the middle class child who gets to eat sufficient nourishing food, enjoys leisure-time activities and reads books other than textbooks.

The findings of this study stress the need to rethink the values that underpin public education and get reflected in government policies, planning documents on curriculum, teachers' attitudes and textbooks. We find that curriculum documents address the upper caste urban middle class child and are shaped by the norms of the world inhabited by this child. The image of the child who can be disciplined to become the ideal citizen and a national asset dominates curriculum planning. As mentioned in the first chapter, while the State is active in formulating its administrative policies for education, it more or less follows the lead of the Centre in the matters of curriculum revision. Every single A.P. Government textbook (either for Telugu medium or English medium instruction) reprinted in the year 2000 contains a preface in which a Government Order is cited through which national policies and recommendations for curriculum revision (made by the NCERT) are accepted and implemented. This means that there is a consensus in the national and state discourses on public education – its frame, the intent and the content.

It is significant that official policies in recent years increasingly view the human being as a national and economic resource. For instance, the National Curriculum Framework prepared by the NCERT in 2000 states that "A human being is a positive asset and a precious national resource which needs to be cherished, nurtured and developed with tenderness and care." A certain set of values is requisite to make the human being an asset. The National Curriculum Framework emphasizes the prominence of value education in school curriculum for "inculcation and sustenance of personal, social, national, and spiritual values like cleanliness and punctuality, tolerance and justice, a sense of national identity and respect for law-and-order, and truthfulness." All the values listed in this statement subscribe to a dominant middle class ethic. In fact, the highlighting of nationalism and patriotism as desirable ideals of education cannot but have a charged meaning in the contemporary political context of Hindutva. Also the reading of the vedantic concept of "vasudhaiva kutumbam" into the modern idea of the global village, as it is done in the National Curriculum Framework, represents the goals of the new competitive middle class that aspires to combine the hegemonic power of a brahminized tradition with the individualistic ethic of globalizing modernity.

However, children from marginalized sections of society bring a different set of values (often in conflict with mainstream or "national" values), which they acquire in terms of their real-world experiences, to school – values that often clash with those associated with the ideal childhood /ideal student (so for instance, assisting their parents by doing physical labour beyond school hours might be something they value more than producing neatly written homework assignments). In a hard-hitting study of how public schools in America reinforce the cultural representations of racial differences, Ann Arnett Ferguson (2001) explores how childhood is constituted within a social order divided sharply along class and race lines. Anxieties about basic necessities that are part of the real world for many Black children shadow their school day unlike the white children from well-to-do families. The adults in the lives of many Black children fail to provide safe havens, they cannot champion their cause in school, nor can they free them from everyday worry. For these kids from "bad neighborhoods" childhood is constituted in the context of vulnerability and they begin to anticipate adulthood differently relative to those who fit the idealized image of childhood. These children know that their parents are a weak force in front of the institutional powers and that therefore they have to learn to take care of themselves and defend themselves. In this process however, they get labeled as 'at risk' or 'unsalvageable' and receive harsher punishment than the "obedient" White children.

We noticed some similarities with this situation in our study as well. Much of the evidence we have collected is in the form of teachers' comments " there is no syllabus that is good enough for these working children"; "we can't expect much from them because their parents are illiterate" etc. The secondary school children we have interviewed have already internalized the fact that the fault lies with them as evident in a girl who told one of our research assistants "The teacher is good and there is nothing wrong with the lesson either. But **I** cannot understand – **I** will never understand". With the help of one of our project schools, we conducted a workshop with children who have dropped out of school along with their parents. In this workshop, there was child who left school after completing class VI, and now working in a barber-shop, who was completely silent on why he left. He just didn't want to talk about it. We have to evolve ways of finding out what these differential values and aspirations children from marginalized groups carry with them to school.

The imaging of the child as ideal citizen in the policies percolates down to the curriculum and textbooks. The SCERT guidelines for curriculum development states that "Curriculum in schools has to develop the key qualities like punctuality and regularity, cleanliness, self-control, industriousness, sense of duty, desire to serve, responsibility, creativity, fraternity etc." The preface to the Social Studies textbook for Class VIII requests teachers to make use of the content given in the book to properly develop (i) a sense of National Integration, (ii) International Understanding, (iii) Love for World Peace, (iv) Patriotism, etc, among the students and train them as good citizens.

Hidden beneath the listing of the attributes that constitute the ideal citizen there is a perception of poverty as dangerous and in need of management. When we realized the State curriculum is influenced by the policies and directives evolved at the Centre, we also examined some of the NCERT textbooks. We cite below an excerpt from a lesson titled "The Indian Society and Children" from the Class VIII Civics textbook:

> *As you know ours is a developing country. Most of the children are half-fed and half-clad. Their dwelling places stink with filth and odour. Poverty, malnutrition and lack of education is leading to increase in cases of child delinquency and juvenile crimes. What is child delinquency? It is a kind of misbehaviour on the part of the child which hampers his mental growth. He indulges in various kinds of anti-social activities. Instead of becoming an asset to his home or family, he becomes a burden to his family. A delinquent child is further prone to other vices like drug addiction which further affects him physically and mentally. Child delinquency is not a feature of the Indian society alone. The Government of India is taking all possible measures to check child delinquency in this country. Special acts are passed for care, protection, maintenance and training of delinquent children…*
>
> *One of the questions at the end of the lesson: "What do you understand by the term 'Child delinquency'?"*
>
> Excerpted from Class VIII Civics textbook prepared by the NCERT Titled *Our country today: Problems and Challenges* (1999: p34)

The smooth "logical" link made between poverty and criminality in the above passage is worthy of note. While it is true that liberal jurisprudence would, where appropriate, attribute crime to difficult socioeconomic conditions, arguing "poverty, malnutrition and lack of education is leading to increase in cases of child delinquency and juvenile crimes" is nothing short of preposterous. The child who is not an "asset to his family" is also

marked as a “burden”. The obvious assumptions of this passage undermine the sense of self and identity of those who come from homes that do not have the “order” and affluence of an urban middle class home (recall the description of Madhuri’s home by Santhosha in the introductory chapter of this report). The poor child is imaged as the subject of supervision and correction by the State. As pointed out by Talib (2003), the curriculum as a whole provides justification for the state of affairs in the society at large in that it constructs a symbolic pyramid of stratification where the lowest layers of men and women are condemned to a life of misery. The apex of the pyramid holds the highest goals and aspirations (of people from the privileged sections of society). The gap between the apex and the base is made to look natural (reflect on the classroom observation session records given in boxes on pp. 66 and 75 and also read the box item titled, ‘A note to the parent’ on p.79).

Working school children

Different children depending on their exposure to adult responsibilities experience childhood differently and therefore the educational system should become sensitive to the needs and perspectives of working children (see Kabeer, Nambissan and Subramanian 2003 for an elaboration of this point). Our interaction with the children and their parents revealed that ‘work’ or ‘labour’ is not a simple reason that is contributing to high dropout rates among secondary school children in A.P. Of the 130 million children in the 6-11 years who are not in school, nearly 60% are reportedly girls. In A.P., according to NALSAR report 2001, 78% of the girls drop out of school by the time they reach 8th standard. If extra-wages are what the illiterate parents are after, why will they take out their girl children, a miniscule proportion of whom work for wages (often as domestic servants)? It is instructive to note what the children have to say on this topic of ‘work’:

Why should we not work?

R who sings folk songs against child labour vehemently pleaded the case for permitting children to join parents in their work after the school hours and during holidays. "Why should we not work after school hours? What should we do after 3 p.m? I used to go to the fields with my parents from my 3rd year onwards. I grazed the milch animals and goats. If I go with them I will learn farm-work and will assist parents in making more money, which is a dire necessity. If I do not do so, I will forget the farm work and my study may not fetch me any income. I get Rs.15 while adults get Rs.20 for the farm labour."…. H supported this idea and said, "I do not understand why everyone says that we should not work when we are also studying."

Excerpt from the report prepared by NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad

These working school children are far from attaining the ideal childhood. We need to go beyond rights framework (and the slogans, "education is a fundamental right of every child") to think about the ways and means of 'educating' these children.

The Rights Framework

The rights framework is often invoked to remove the child from labour and increase his/her access to school. The extreme form of rights approach would insist that no child should be at work, and all children should be at school. The M. V. Foundation, an organization that has been working in the Ranga Reddy district of Andhra Pradesh for instance makes no distinction between hazardous and non-hazardous work or for that matter between child work and child labour (see Wazir 2002). It also defines schools as institutions for the protection of children's rights against exploitation (Kabeer 2003). Underlying the laudable mandate of the M. V. foundation, viz., universalization of education and elimination of child labour is the assumption that child work or child labour is detrimental to learning.

But our research in the project schools demonstrates that sharing of family responsibilities, both economic and familial, is a precondition for the survival of majority of children (the readers will have to recall our findings in relation to the overall income of the families). Most of the children interviewed by our research assistants do not work for wages and do what can be classified as "family work", such as looking after the goats, bringing water, working in the fields, grazing cattle, cooking and looking after siblings. Some of the children assist parents in their petty businesses or work as domestic help. We

cannot ignore the ways in which these children's education—schooling, homework and tuition—is woven round their work schedule. In fact, a closer study of their lives might throw challenges at the received notions we have about 'learning'.

The people who are arguing for 'the right to education' are not contending with the facts that there is no universal definition of childhood and that the reason for dropping out of school is not child labour alone. They include dysfunctional schools, corporal punishment, migration, unable to pay the minimum fees and/or buy the books, frustration in the community due to exploitative conditions, a sense of betrayal, disability etc. – factors which never get discussed sufficiently (Jain, Mathur, Rajgopal and Shah, 2002).

The working child is a reality and our thinking in relation to pedagogy has to acknowledge labour as a crucial segment of most of the learners' lives excluding those of a privileged minority. As proposed by Talib (2003), pedagogy and curriculum should undergo a massive devolution of meaning in favor of the local context of the learner's life settings and consider labour as a basis of learning and livelihood. The question of how the local context of learner's life can become part of the curriculum (considering the heterogeneity of the learners) and how to get teachers to unlearn what they have internalized through their training are questions that beg further enquiry. We are not in a position to provide answers to such challenges.

The Curriculum, the Textbook, the Teacher and the Child

Since the vision of the State is guided by its economic and administrative priorities, the rhetoric of transaction that peppers policy documents does not get translated into the curriculum, textbooks and teaching situations. The concepts of "culture-specific pedagogy" and "local contexts" and "relevance" recur in curriculum documents at the centre (e.g. NCFSE – 2000), but the changes at the level of the curriculum are mainly cosmetic. When 'curriculum transaction' is viewed, as it often is, as translating educational objectives (set by experts who are often not school teachers) into practice propositions (by the teachers), the underlying assumptions is that every child in the classroom is the same; that the concept of "childhood" has a fixed meaning across socio-economic classes and communities and that if a given child or a group of children are not doing well in a particular subject, the reason must be incapacity on the part of the child(ren) or ignorance on part of parents about matters of education.

Since the curriculum is so entrenched in the discourse of ideal childhood, it takes a whole lot of things for granted when it comes to the educating children from lower castes and low economic groups. We interviewed 300 children from the project schools and found out that despite the help they rendered in augmenting family income, their families are constantly dogged by the shortage of money for essential necessities. Just about a handful of children get to drink a glass of milk everyday and many of them do not eat anything during school hours.

Our data does not uphold the prevalent notion that government school children come from families of uneducated parents/siblings. However, the educated parents/older siblings work outside and barely have any time to help children with their homework. Many of the children cannot afford tuition and there is a near-total absence of any reading material other than textbooks in their homes. In fact something like a dictionary is an unfamiliar concept to most of the children. Guides certainly are more commonly used learning aids, but because they are highly prices, they are not accessible to most families. A significant number of children reported that they did not have any access to community libraries.

Thus there are massive gaps between the lives of the children going to the Government schools and the textbooks they use. To give an example, the Class VII English Reader for non-English medium students abounds in topics that are full of words/concepts like oceanarium, hover/hovercraft, fossil, reptiles (explained as “any group of cold blooded animals”), amphibians, pollutants etc. The question then arises, if the object of the Reader is to raise linguistic (as against scientific) competence then why would it attempt to do so through such an alien cultural idiom that would merely succeed in intimidating the learner. Also the terminology of the Reader presumes a certain level of “modernity” in the learner who it addresses and would probably mesh with the knowledge-world of the urban middle class child without much difficulty.

Given the incomprehensibility and the inaccessibility of textbooks meant for Government Schools, one would assume that the teacher has enhanced responsibility in the classroom. Yet the teacher is often an overworked and in some cases (semi-urban schools) inadequately trained person, having to manage an overcrowded classroom and fulfill non-teaching responsibilities. There is also a large discrepancy between the class-caste background of the teachers and that of the students which blocks any political

understanding of the contexts of the latter. While most teachers acknowledge the language of the book is often difficult, they do not seem to have reflected on the aspect of the relevance of textbook content to the lives of children. There is a lack of concern regarding the viability of cultural images and worldview contained in the curriculum to children from different communities (see chapter –II for a detailed discussion).

The Present Function of Education

The Vision 2020, a document that is fairly representative of policy directives emerging today in relation to education, as also the programmes taken up on the ground, reveal certain distinct trends. A significant feature of the present moment is that policies related to education now have the child from the lower income group as their addressee. This is also the child from the lower caste who will in all likelihood drop out of school.

The commitment to universal elementary education at the national and the state levels constitutes an uncritical acceptance of the global drive to educate the poor (as characterized by the objectives of the Jomtien conference) into minimal levels of literacy and modernity. Given the lack of any critical engagement with the idea, the State's approach to universalizing elementary education is guided by a bureaucratic vision rather than giving attention to the value and relevance of education in terms of the cultural and economic realities of the lives of the children who are to be educated. There is no reflection in these documents on *why* there should be universal elementary education or what its benefits are, and the best way of ensuring them. Numbers become the most important criterion in planning for education. The administrative function of the government thus gets fore-grounded repeatedly in its statements on education. Moreover it provides the justification for all areas of education, from the framing of the syllabus, to teaching, to the transaction of the curriculum. In fact, the administrative intent encompasses the definition of education to the extent that teachers are treated as part of the administrative and bureaucratic machinery.

While the child from low-income groups becomes the focus of a good part of the state thinking and machinery, it is not accompanied by a similar centring in the thinking about curriculum and its transaction. A major critique of the drive to educate the poor is that it is designed as a mode to prepare the requisite workforce for the future. The push towards vocationalization of education/literacy in the *Vision 2020* document is a case in point.

The other important criticism is that educating large numbers allows a certain access to population that has to be schooled and disciplined into minimal levels of modernity. This criticism would relate to the disciplining and supervising function which we have referred to earlier.

One of the findings which emerged from our study was that government schools mostly serve children sent by their families as candidates for a social transition that provides access to a culture marked by education. This finding is most clearly supported by the parents' responses to the questions about the uses of education during the interviews. From this point of view, these children are quite different from those who belong to families which have a multigenerational acquaintance with the education system, for whom the advantages already in place are only being consolidated by schooling. These factors were borne out by our study. The profile of the government school children is such that they necessarily need active mediation in order to engage with the curriculum. In principle, the mediation could be provided either by the teachers, or the parents or any other who may be educated themselves. However, they do not receive adequate help from any of these quarters and it is this fact which is missed out by the policy makers as well. The point is not to blame individuals for not offering this mediation, but to engage in collective thinking about the nature of this mediation and how it can be provided. As part of our efforts to understand how to study the 'education system', we began collecting material that deals with accounts of individuals and their struggles to get educated – accounts published in India and abroad. Some of this material informed us about the connections between culture and classroom teaching. We feel that one way of enabling teachers especially those from the privileged backgrounds to focus on the heterogeneity of the life-worlds of their pupils is to make available reading material that was not part of their training programmes. This certainly is one of the major outcomes of our study – the realization that socio-cultural factors do impact on the process of curriculum transaction and therefore we must engage with teachers and help them reflect on the pedagogic implications of such a finding.

The Reader will include information about topics such as, the life histories of working school children; perspectives of people from marginalized communities who have struggled to remain in the education system; information regarding children with special needs who are in regular schools; excerpts from the writings of educational philosophers;

policies pertaining to education; critiques on textbooks and curriculum and more. We hope this Reader will contribute towards increasing the complexity of debates on current day public school education in our country.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Details of Project Schools

I. Name of the school: **Government High School, V**

Class	Number of Teachers F/M	Total number of students Boys / Girls	**SC** Boys / Girls	**ST** Boys / Girls	**BC** Boys / Girls	**OC** Boys / Girls
VI	40/6	56 / 63	22/ 35	-	30 / 25	4 / 3
VII		45 / 38	14/1 1	2 / 0	22 / 20	7 / 7
VIII		63 / 63	24/ 24	-	33 / 31	6 / 8

Total strength (1^{st} to 10^{th}) : 1100

II. Name of the School :**Government Girls High School, N**

Classes	Number of Teachers F/M	Total number of students	**SC**	**ST**	**BC**	**OC**
VI	12/2	51	20	-	31	-
VII		65	33	1	31	-
VIII		58	22	-	36	-

Total strength (6^{th} to 10^{th}) : 284

III. Name of the School : **Government Boys School, L**

Classes	Number of Teachers F/M	Total number of students	**SC**	**ST**	**BC**	**OC**
VI	8/9	34	5	-	2	27
VII		38	2	-	4	32
VIII		85	2	-	11	72

Total strength (6^{th} 10^{th}) : 305

IV. Name of the School: **Zilla Parishad High School, U**

Classes	Number of Teachers F/M	Total number of students Boys / Girls	**SC** Boys / Girls	**ST** Boys / Girls	**BC** Boys / Girls	**OC** Boys / Girls
VI		101 /124	36 /47	1 / 3	56 / 62	8 / 2
VII		80 / 130	47 / 47	1 / 3	30 / 64	12 / 16
VIII		86 / 118	18 / 26	5 / 1	52 / 69	11 / 22

Total strength (6^{th} to 10^{th}) : 1029

V. Name of the school: **Zilla Parishad High School, J**

Classes	Number of Teachers F/M	Total number of students Boys / Girls	**SC** Boys / Girls	**ST** Boys / Girls	**BC** Boys / Girls	**OC** Boys / Girls
VI	3/11	86 / 50	25 /13	-	60 / 30	3 / 7
VII		50 / 39	13 /5	-	34 / 32	3 / 2
VIII		37 / 52	7 / 13	-	27 / 34	3 / 5

Total strength (6^{th} 10^{th}) : 414

VI. Name of the School: **Zilla Parishad High School, SG**

Classes	Number of Teachers F/M	Total number of students	**SC**	**ST**	**BC**	**OC**
VI	6/5	68	9	2	39	18
VII	*	111	18	-	48	45
VIII	*	95	13	-	55	27

* Information is not available

VII. Name of the School : **Zilla Parishad High School, DM**

Classes	Number of Teachers F/M	Total number of students Boys / Girls	**SC** Boys / Girls	**ST** Boys / Girls	**BC** Boys / Girls	**OC** Boys / Girls
VI	1/ 11	66 / 52	14 / 11	-	44 / 33	8 / 8
VII		73 / 58	12 / 8	1 / 0	50 / 45	10 / 5
VIII		46 / 31	7 / 8	0/1	36 / 19	3 /3

Total strength (6^{th} to 10^{th}) : 494

VIII. Name of the School : **Zilla Parishad High School, E**

Classes	Number of Teachers F/M	Total number of students Boys / Girls	**SC** Boys / Girls	**ST** Boys / Girls	**BC** Boys / Girls	**OC** Boys / Girls
VI	3/7	52 / 62	13 / 15	0 / 2	36 / 44	3 / 1
VII		62 / 51	17 / 10	1/0	41 / 37	3 / 4
VIII		46 / 60	9 / 14	0 / 1	35 / 41	2 / 4

Total strength (6^{th} to 10^{th}) : 490

IX. Name of the School : **Zilla Parishad High School, B**

Classes	Number of Teachers F/M	Total number of students Boys / Girls	**SC** Boys / Girls	**ST** Boys / Girls	**BC** Boys / Girls	**OC** Boys / Girls
VI	7/5	80 /76	32 / 25	1 / 1	39 / 39	8 / 11
VII		92 / 82	23 / 31	5 / 5	56 / 38	8 / 8
VIII		53 / 74	18 / 21	2 / 2	29 / 43	4 / 8

Total strength (6^{th} to 10^{th}) : 650

X. Name of the School : **Zilla Parishad Boys High School , S**.

Classes	Number of Teachers F/M	Total number of students	**SC**	**ST**	**BC**	**OC**
VI	6/11	79	26	3	35	15
VII		79	31	3	40	5
VIII		182	68	4	83	27

Total strength (6^{th} to 10^{th}) : 642.

Appendix B

I. Report of the first teachers' workshop

(*February 10, 2001*)

A Report on the Workshop Teachers' perspectives on School Education

This workshop was organized by Anveshi Research Centre for Women's Studies on February 10, 2001. It was held at the Literacy House, Andhra Mahila Sabha, Osmania University Campus during 10.00 a. m – 5.00 p.m. The main aim of the working was to seek the views of different teachers about school education.

Over 70 Participants belonging to the categories—School Teachers (Government and Alternative Schools); Representatives from NGOs interested in issues of Education; Education researchers; Anveshi members; Faculty members from Osmania University (including AMS); University of Hyderabad; Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages; National Institute for Hearing Handicapped (Southern Regional Centre) and National Institute for Mentally Handicapped, Secunderabad took part in this workshop. A list of all the participants is given at the end of this report.

Besides Rekha Pappu, who presented Anveshi's education project, its aims, work done so far, future plans etc., there were two other speakers: Mr.Yadayya (morning session) and Mr. Sridhar (afternoon session). The main points from these three presentations and the gist of the discussions (transcribed and translated into English) are summarized in this report.

Rekha, in her presentation discussed the scope of the project, the major assumptions, the methodology adopted including the selection of the Project Schools, selection of the Research Assistants etc. She also talked about the NCERT Curriculum frame work for School education, responses to this document by Anveshi's Education project members as well as many other Educationists across the country. The contents page of 'Seminar' volume containing these responses was circulated to the workshop participants. She mentioned that despite these protests and objections to the contents of the NCERT curriculum framework, the Government has recently announced that the framework is going to be implemented with little if any changes. She wondered why this issue did not attract much attention in the print media as the issue of 'Saraswati Vandanam' did ;. How come the education policies change with every ruling party which comes into power, she asked. Despite the fact that the People with Disabilities Act 1995 was passed over five years ago, sufficient attention is not been paid to the particular needs of children with disabilities who managed to enter the main stream education. Rekha informed the participants that a Reader on school education is being prepared and that newspaper reports on school education from National & Local press are being documented at Anveshi and that interested teachers are welcome to use Anveshi's library resources.

D.Vasanta translated into Telugu the major points from Rekha's presentation, specifically about Anveshi's interest in school education; the project and its objectives; the debates around the NCERT curriculum framework- 2000 and the reader on school education that is being prepared by Anveshi's education committee.

Sheela Prasad who was chairing the session introduced Mr.Yadayya and invited him to speak about his work with the society for Students Teachers Educationists and Parents (STEP) to the audience.

Yadayya started his presentation with details of how he shifted from freelance journalism into the field of school education and the kind of work he has been doing in this field in and around Hyderabad (in the districts of Ranga Reddy, Medak, Khammam & Nalgonda). During 1989-90, he was a volunteer teacher in the MV Foundation and thus had an opportunity to work with child labourers belonging to deprived sections of society. He noticed that the text books meant for classes I & II were also biased towards children from the middle class and that the child labourers in the MVF schools could not relate to the language used in these textbooks. He stated that teaching young children coming from middle & upper classes using textbooks which make use of their home language is a totally different matter compared to teaching those very books (I & II classes) to 11 or 12 year old children from poor-rural background. He thought it made no sense to teach them the alphabet & then the words. To bring them in to 5th class directly, one needs to invent ways of hastening up the process of word-learning. What they did was to generate the vocabulary needed for teaching from the children themselves. This can be done by making them tell stories, sing their songs, play games, say rhymes & riddles. We learnt a lot about their language in this process and then using their words we created the 'textbooks'. Within three months they learnt a lot-not just the alphabet, but a huge list of words and how they are used in meaningful contexts. **He stated that the textbooks must never be made by the experts, who will later have no connection with the classroom, the teachers or the learners. Textbooks can be produced only after considerable interaction with the learners who are going to use those books**. He said that often teachers think that parents object if new experiments or methodologies of teaching are tried out. In his experience that was never so. They accepted teaching that did not begin with the alphabet, that did not insist on slates. He agreed that the curriculum & contents of the textbooks in the secondary schools is more complex than the initial literacy acquisition. He started that there is an the urgent need to critique the existing textbooks for the many biases they contain. He illustrated his point with the help of a lesson in the VI class English textbook.

The problem with the social studies textbooks are even worse, he contended. He criticized the practice of changing curriculum with changing governments (with reference to Telugu textbooks in AP.). He also took issue with the contempt the middle classes have towards learners from deprived sections & their parents. The experiments in the alternative educational set ups (e.g. Ananda Bharati) must be replicated in the mainstream schools. If the attitude is not right, we cannot expect any changes in the system as a whole. In the present system neither the teachers nor the children are happy. We need to debate what our responsibilities are in bringing about changes in the system the way it is today. **Why are so many Dalit students failing or dropping out of schools? Why aren't Dalit organizations, politicians and ordinary people debating on this issue – he asked.**

Discussion following Morning Session

Both the papers were discussed at length. The major points that emerged out of this discussion may be summarized as follows:

1. Is it not possible for Anveshi to produce an alternative textbook for social sciences at the level of class IX ? Why should Anveshi do post-facto analysis of existing textbooks and generate a research report as the outcome of this project. There are any number of reports (e.g. Ambani Report). One should intervene more aggressively by generating an alternative curriculum.

2. **One teacher member of the APTF also requested Anveshi for 'support material' for classroom teaching, some kind of handbook for teachers.**

3. Unless everyone is willing to send their children to Government schools, the quality of teaching will not improve. The amount Government is spending on every child from classes I –V (approximately Rs.15000/- per child) is getting wasted when the child drops out. When the same child returns to the school after 3 years break, Government is beginning literacy training (alphabet acquisition) all over again through schemes like *akshara sankranti* and wasting more money from state budget. Why can't children from privileged classes study along with children from deprived classes. Why aren't liberal minded people sending their children to Government schools?

4. The others felt this may not be feasible, but that attempts should be made to change education policies. However everyone agreed that when Government schools work well, Private schools will close down.

5. Some others (who are pushing for alternative textbooks) felt that we should have a workshop with the textbook writers and find out why they are writing the way they are (e.g. a lesson like 'visit to Kashmir valley' in the Telugu textbook of VII class) what learning outcomes they are expecting out of such lessons. Anveshi should create a space where like-minded people will debate on the disparities between society-textbooks and the actual lives of students.

6. One retired teacher opined that part of the problem is also due to the teachers who are insincere and irresponsible, who go to school only to take salaries. That education has become a business and that even in private schools, if students have to succeed, parents have to work hard.

7. One teacher from Kerala said the situation is different in Kerala where some Government schools are competing with private schools.
8. **One teacher-trainer responded saying that the teachers are not prepared adequately to meet the current day challenges of teaching first generation learners, teachers need supportive environment. No teacher is happy about doing a bad job of teaching.**

9. The others felt that the selection process through which teachers are taken in must be made stringent. Their aptitude for teaching must be assessed properly. There should be personal interviews and in service training programs.

10. Some teachers brought to Anveshi members' notice that sometimes teachers contribute from their personal funds enough money to buy food for children who come to school without eating anything.

The morning session was concluded with Sheela's comments on the parallels between health and education sectors, which she feels need to be scrutinized further.

Afternoon Session

In the afternoon session Sridhar, a member of the APTF spoke about the education system and about the problems faced by the teachers. He said that education has always been designed to suit the needs and requirements of ruling (monied) classes. The changes right from the time of our independence till date in the school set up i.e. Govt. to private to English medium to Navodaya schools have been set up to meet the changing requirements of these elite classes. In this process the Govt. Schools weakened . In a country where literacy rates are below 50% this is a dangerous thing to happen. It is important for us to ponder over the context in which Govt. schools are being neglected. **This is the time when a large number of Dalits and women who were denied access to education for centuries are coming into the education system.** The Govt. aided schools are in the lowest rung of the ladder where children from the poorest homes are attending. Amidst debates on Government's responsibility to provide education free of cost to every child under the age of 14 years, **at a time when enrolment rates of children from weaker sections are increasing, the condition of Govt. schools is becoming worse.** 90% 0f the children (especially the girls) who are studying in Govt. schools are child labourers working not only in their homes, but outside, in the shops and markets as well. It is not enough for Govt. to declare alternative education schemes for children who dropped out of schools or those who never went to schools. They should think of these child workers who are in the schools. Govt. should pay attention to

1. physical infrastructure of the school
2. curriculum that has no connection to the lives of a majority of the children
3. examination system full of loopholes.

On the one hand no attention is paid to these three factors and yet there is much concern about drop-outs by 7^{th} or 8^{th} standard. There is a problem with the term 'drop-out'. The more appropriate term is 'push-outs' because they are being pushed out of the system, he said.

The Government which ignored the regular school system completely is not thinking of making of ideal citizens through education- it is busy formulating schemes to turn the children into literate individuals. Literacy campaigns are now alternative approaches to Govt. schools. During the past couple of years the Govt. has not even sanctioned contingent grant towards purchase of essential items like blackboards chalk pieces and stationary. At the same time crores of rupees have been spent for unplanned schemes (e.g., fly-overs etc.). Privatization of education has led people to

perceive school as a commercial establishment. Govt. says that there is no returns to match the expenditure they are incurring on running the schools. The bench mark for measuring the performance of the Govt. school teachers is the pass % at SSC level. Since private schools are achieving better pass percentages Govt. is questioning the quality of teaching, the ability of teachers and declaring that it is time to close down the Govt. schools. It should be noted that the 'successes' in the private schools are attributed even by the Govt. to good management, but when it comes to Govt. schools the failures are attributed to 'poor teachers'.

How justified is the Govt. in rating a school by the number of SSC pass certificates it grants in a year? Can the value of education imparted be assessed by the number of certificates issued ?

How can one ignore the violence prevalent in the large number of private educational institutions in the cities… violence related to consumerism, sexual harassment etc… What kind of society can be built with children educated in such institutes ? We need to debate this point. Frankly, today schools are reflecting the colonial ideologies, patriarchal attitudes and hierarchical caste structures in society.

It is in this context we are opposing the practice of assessing a teacher's capability by means of student's performance. One should bear in mind there are at least two types of factors which are capable of influencing student's performance; first, *school related factors:* such as the physical set up, the curriculum, amenities available, teacher and teaching methods, admission procedures and grouping of students among others. Second *home-related factors:* social, economic, cultural and educational background of the family, support from the family members and self learning capacity.

Often the home-related factors have a strong influence on the school related factors and therefore it is necessary for us to estimate the impact of these factors and correct where possible. Beyond these, perhaps one can make the teacher responsible. The recent problems we are facing in the Government education system are:

(1) fixed/consolidated salaries (2) appointment of special teachers, apprentice teachers, *vidya* volunteers, (3) appointment of teachers on contract basis. These are all serious problems contributing to the insecurity experienced by teachers today.
The point we would like to stress is, there is a relationship between privatising education and the practice of paying fixed salaries to teachers. Further, all these changes are weakening the Government school structure at a time where a large number of people from poorer sections of the population are entering schools.
Fixed salaries is nothing but enforcing a bonded labour on the candidates who under trying circumstances received enough education to become teachers.

The list of 'Professional problems faced by the teachers is increasing day by day and yet teachers are continuing to go to schools with a insecure feeling. **The Government which never bothered to implement the recommendations of the various committees is today blaming the teachers for all ills. They are being treated like criminals. They are being insulted devoid of any autonomy, the teacher is the weakest link in the education chain today.** The teacher has no powers in discharging his/her professional responsibilities. At the same time teachers are

required to take part in a whole lot of non-teaching programmes… the list of which is increasing. Since the teachers have no role in the education system or even the school, they have been alienated from the society. The school may have come closer to the community in terms of physical distance, but it is far away from the point of view of curriculum, opportunities, facilities, role of members of the community etc. Once the school is distanced from the community, the teacher too became inaccessible to the society at large.

The teachers attitude towards the education system, school, children, their family background certainly influences the way they are fulfilling (or not full filling) their responsibilities. In the present day context, teachers working in the Government / aided schools have to play many roles beyond discharging their professional responsibilities. They must take on a leadership role in solving societal problems. However, every individual, whichever field he/she is in, aspires to go up, compete, if necessary. So some teachers are also involved in issues not related to the field of education. Many of them don't feel responsible for the problems in the society – beyond their homes. The reasons for this are not hard to imagine. In the consumerist society, everyone is willing to think of individual gains and not societal values or human relationships – teacher is no exception.

The teachers unions should get involved in making teachers feel more responsible towards their profession – evolve necessary strategies to achieve such a goal. Only then one can strengthen the movements for teachers rights. We must fight against the undemocratic trends in the education system. Bringing about a democracy within schools will surely bring about much needed changes in the other structures of our society. We must oppose double standards in education and fight against privatisation. We must demand for the implementation of the recommendations of the Kothari Committee with regard to common school system; free education that is in consonance with the life styles of a majority of our people and for education that will ensure a better future. We must also demand a congenial working atmosphere for teachers who should not be subjected to undue mental on economic pressures. For this to happen there should be a national salary structure; one management which will over see the varied educational schemes existing today. We must fight for an education that values physical labour. We invite everyone to join this struggle. APTF is doing its best to continue this struggle. I end my talk with the opinion of an official from education Department at the centre. "We must provide the country with the schools that are worth something. Right now our schools are trash".

Discussion following Afternoon Presentations:

Sridhar: Since the Government is saying that the performance of children in residential schools is better, let them start more residential schools and allocate sufficient funds. Why is the Government taking responsibility for teachers` salaries alone?
Prasad: There is no comparison between the structures and enrolment in central schools and state – run schools.
Sridhar: We also need to pay attention to the violence a school child is subjected to. Why are they driven to committing suicides if they fail in the exams? Why isn't the education system giving them the confidence about life with or with a 10^{th} class pass

certificate? Why is it that in certain Government schools teachers are buying chalk pieces out of their personal funds? We should not blame teachers for everything perhaps 10-20% of the teachers in Government schools are dysfunctional and not motivated, but others do work.

Discussion on children with special needs

A teacher representing the National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped Secunderabad initiated the discussion. She pointed out that A.P has established a Handicapped welfare department and a Commissioner has been appointed to look into their needs. There is also a directorate of handicapped welfare and the DPEP has also paid some attention to Special Education in that they have conducted teacher training programs. However, more needs to be done to take care of the disabled children in regular schools (the so-called mainstreamed children). These children are not getting appropriate education. The added problem is the very poor pay structure that exists today for specialist teachers who are working with these children.

Discussion in relation to the questions posed by Anveshi team

There was considerable discussion on the notion 'good student' in which many teachers participated. Their responses may be summarised as follows Good student is someone

1. Who listens to the instructions of the teacher.
2. There can't be any bad students therefore there are no good students either
3. Good-bad are subjective terms and can't be applied to students.

Rekha and Vasanta: we think there is a great deal of uniformity on the notion of a good – student. Teachers address their questions to good students they look at them often.
Padma: Yes, the notion of *adarsh vidyarthi* certainly exists. Stories exist about students who are obedient who speak politely, who inspire other children and so on. These characteristics come straight out of sanskrit *slokas* and popular literature. Quite a lot has been written about how 'bad students' get punished. A lot is spoken about the teacher pupil relationship. Don't we are know about good *guru-sishya* relationship obedience '*shraddha*' is a common word that comes to our mind in this context.

MVF teacher : Teaching is about understanding the students. So, there are no good/bad students. Instead there are good or bad teachers.
Our education system needs teachers who understands the needs of the students.

Discussion on Syllabus

As an English teacher, I feel I have enough time to cover the syllabus. I take extra time to prepare for the class. The problem is the disparity between what is relevant for rural vs. urban children. Even Telugu medium children know a lot of English words, but we must investigate what they are in the rural context.

In my view Maths syllabus is too large. It is impossible to cover all of it. We can't impart the knowledge to the child especially in the rural areas where parents can offer little help. There is a great deal of fluctuation in attendance. So they forget what they learnt earlier and we have to start all over again when they come back to school.

MVF teacher: I spoke to 120 students about Anveshi workshop and the education project. They are all in VIII class. They all want better access to English medium education because then they will have wider choices. Being in a Telugu medium they are not able to perform well at the intermediate level. English medium should be introduced, according to them, right in standard I and not standard VI.

Discussion on Minimum Levels of Learning

Padma: MLL brings in a particular kind of model of the learner – as if the learner is a computer which one can program at every stage. It does not permit us to view the child as actually involved in constructing the knowledge. The Micro levels of learning are determined and controlled by the teacher personally. We should have a different concept of learning by children. Teachers need guidelines or learning objectives not specific learning objectives. MLLs don't leave enough room for the creation of learning.

Jim: For Maths, MLL has a different function. Children need to learn to add, subtract and multiply. The teachers sincerely want the children to understand simple fractions compound fractions and then learn decimals and so on. Yes, MLL is useful as a guide to the teacher, but teachers should criticize it and not accept it as their duty.

Srinivas Prasad: Children come with a lot of knowledge. The successful learner produces the right answers which are fixed… answers which tie up with the middle class culture. There are other kinds of right answers and we need to see them. This however places a tremendous responsibility on the teachers
Yadaiah: Children come to school with particular experiences from a particular socio-cultural context with a lot of knowledge about many things. Are we really respecting their knowledge? Are the teachers discussing with children what their problems are? If we keep discussing among ourselves, how will we solve the problems?

The workshop ended around 5.30 PM with a vote of thanks to all the participants.

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8. B.Chakradhar, Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad.
9. D.Velyadri, Ph.D. Scholar, Osmania University, Hyderabad.
10. J.Lalitha, College of Teacher Education, Andhra Mahila Sabha, Hyderabad.
11. Joan D'mello, Asst. Director, National Institute for Hearing Handicapped – Southern Regional Centre, Hyderabad.
12. K.Lalitha, President, Anveshi, Hyderabad.
13. Bindu Menon, Research Scholar, School of Social Sciences, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala.
14. Sheela Prasad, Centre for Regional Studies, University of Hyderabad (Secretary, Anveshi).
15. I. Ramabrahmam, Academic Staff College, University of Hyderabad.
16. Meena Hariharan, Academic Staff College, University of Hyderabad.
17. Geetha Durairajan, English Language Education, CIEFL, Hyderabad.
18. M.Sreenivasa Prasad, Ph.D.Scholar, English Language Education, CIEFL, Hyderabad.
19. Dr.M.Vani, College of Teacher Education, Andhra Mahila Sabha, Hyderabad.
20. Ajanta Sircar, Center for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta.
21. Rama Melkote, Executive Committee member, Anveshi, Hyderabad.
22. Shyamala, Anveshi, Hyderabad.
23. J.Chaitanya, Anveshi, Hyderabad.
24. S.Jayasree, Anveshi, Hyderabad.
25. Padma M. Sarangapani, Educationist, Bangalore.
26. Rita Ghosh, Ph.D. Scholar, CIEFL, Hyderabad.
27. Swati, Ph.D. Scholar, CIEFL, Hyderabad
28. K.Madhavi, Teacher, Ananda Bharathi, Hyderabad.
29. S.S.Lakshmi, Ananda Bharathi, Hyderabad.
30. Aditi Mukherjee, CAS in Linguistics, Osmania University, Hyderabad.
31. Jacob Tharu, English Language Education, CIEFL, Hyderabad.
32. M.Sumithra, Ankuram,Women and Child Development, Hyderabad.
33. R.S.David
34. J.Saritha
35. B.B. Sarojini
36. Greenweld Jusay
37. Rekha Pappu, Coordinator, Anveshi
38. D. Vasanta, Dept. of Linguistics, O.U., E.C. member, Anveshi
39. Veena Shatrugna, Treasurer, Anveshi
40. V. Vasudha, Lawyer, General Body member, Anveshi
41. Vijaya Vanamala, Joint secretary, Anveshi
42. S. Jaya, Coordinator, Anveshi
43. Madhumeeta Sinha, Admn.officer and member, Anveshi

44. Jhumur Lahiri, General Body member, Anveshi
45. Geeta Ramaswamy, Hyderabad Book Trust & G Bmember, Anveshi
46. Satish Poduval, Central Institute of English & Foreign Languages, Hyderabad
47. R. Srivatsan, Independent Scholar, Hyderabad
48. Kanishka Narang, Student, Hyderabad
49. V. Sailaja, Anveshi
50. Santhosha, Anveshi
51. Anuradha, Anveshi
52. Elisha, Anveshi
53. Santha, Hyderabad Central University
54. Lakshmi Rao
55. Sree Lakshmi, Anveshi
56. Rajya Lakshmi, Anveshi
57. Minaz Fatima, Anveshi
58. Vijaya, Anveshi

II. Workshop with parents of children who have dropped out of one of our rural project schools 'J' held at the school premises

(February 2, 2002)

Anveshi organized this workshop with the help of a teacher from project school 'J' who visited Anveshi and had discussions with members of the education committee. He said that the number of girl children dropping out of school is increasing year after year and that it is in part related to the practice of child marriage in that area. In spite of the efforts of M.V.F volunteers and members of the child committees to motivate the children and their parents, the problem of dropping out is continuing. He requested Anveshi team to come to their school to have discussions with the parents of the dropped out children as well as the teachers.

Members who attended the workshop
Aditi
Anuradha
Rama Hansraj
R.Srivastan
D.Vasanta
S.Jaya

Although official letters were sent to the homes of several children who had not been coming to school regularly, only the following parents / guardians turned up for a discussion which began around 11 a.m. and continued till the lunch hour.

1. Chandramma, the grand mother of a girl student who completed 7th class but did not join 8th class
2. V.Suvarna mother of two girls who are studying in this school whose brother stopped coming to school after completing 7th standard.
3. P.Lakshmi, mother of the girl who dropped out after 8th class.
4. Susheela, mother of girl who dropped out after 6th class and got married

We also talked to the M.V.F. volunteer who is teaching in this school and several other school children as well.

<u>Main observations based on discussions in the morning session.</u>

Chandramma narrated the story of her son (father of the girl student who dropped out) who has a serious neurological problem and is bed ridden. The mother is looking after the 2 acres land they have. She and her three grand sons are not in a position to cook and take care of the house. Hence the girl was asked to stop going to the school. Chandramma is very angry with the MVF volunteers and the child committee members who went to their house to motivate them to send the girl back to school. She says 'How are we to live if there is no one to cook food and look after us?'

Suvarna whose son stopped school after 7th class says that her husband died. She had to have hysterectomy for which she spent Rs.12000/- about four months ago. They had to sell off the one acre of land they had in order to pay off the debts. Her older son who studied upto Intermediate is now working in a medical shop in the city. They are now

living on his income. She has two girls studying in 4th and 6th class. This boy lost interest in studies after his father died.

P.Lakshmi and susheela told us that there is a serious problem in this village of boys who have dropped out of school hanging around the streets and harassing the girls who are going to school. There are cases of girls eloping with the boys or even committing suicide (they quoted an event that took place a few weeks ago involving a girl student of this school committing suicide because of sexual harassment). They said that they have no choice but to marry off girls who are not good at studies.

The M.V.F volunteers said that any child below 14 years who is not in school is a child laborer and that they do door-to-door campaigns to motivate parents not to send their children to work. They also offer free coaching in home work between 4-6 p.m in the school for 7th and 10th class children in Maths, English and Science. They encourage each bright student in the class to help at least one peer who is a slow learner. When children stop coming to school for over 10 or 15 days, they hold a meeting with the child committee members and then make plans about motivational campaigns.

We asked the children how is the child committee constituted? Who are the members of that committee? They replied, 'Those who are clever; who score good marks; who are not afraid of anything. The responsibility of this committee is (1) gather information about child dropouts, (2) go to their homes and persuade then to come back to school (3) report about the child marriages they have heard / witnessed. The child members and the teachers meet once a week on Wednesdays to discuss these matters. The committee is made up of 2 leaders from each of the 5 classes. To our query what do the leaders do, they replied "prevent fights; control the class; when the teacher is absent, help the children who are a bit slow in studies.

We asked them, what are your major problems?
They replied.

- Not enough class rooms
- No drinking water
- No toilets
- We would like to have a library.

Only 9th class students mostly boys said that they get to read the headlines in Telugu newspapers. Most of the boys get to play both at school and at home but the girls get to participate in games only in school.

Some of us felt that the children's responses were not spontaneous. There seemed to be a big gap between what the child committee members and the MVF volunteer had to say and stories narrated by the parents.

We tried talking to the children who have not been coming to the school for sometime, but who were brought to the workshop. The girl who had to stay home to look after her ailing father, grand mother and two brothers said "My day starts at 5 a.m. and ends at 10 p.m. In addition to the house work, some times I also go to the field with my mother. I never get a chance to play. I hardly get 10-15 minutes to eat my lunch. I like Science and Maths, but find English and Hindi difficult. Yes, I would like to study if I can.

The boy who dropped out after his father died (after passing 8th class) is now working in a barber shop owned by his father's brother. He is working there to learn. There are no wages. He says he likes his work in the shop and refused to say anything about the school or his studies when he was in school. From our discussions the following emerged as reasons for children dropping out of schools in this area.

1. Family problems which free them to take up work in the farm or go to nearly cities in search of work.
2. The practice of child marriage
3. Strict gender based division of labour such that often the girls are taken out of schools so that they learn to do house work and look after younger siblings – things they have to any way do after marriage.
4. Lack of support in the home-work (MVF assistance in homework beyond school hours is limited to class VII and X only) because many of these children are first generation learners.
5. Negative attitude of the teachers towards the children.

In the afternoon session, we met the headmaster and about 10 teachers of the school. We explained to them the objectives of our project and talked about the teacher's workshop Anveshi was planning to organize. We distributed the questionnaires to be filled by the teachers and the head master. Two teachers volunteered to attend the workshop at Anveshi if they were granted duty leave. Most of them attributed the reasons for dropping out to uneducated parents and poverty at the houses of these children. We closed the workshop around 4 p.m. after thinking the in charge headmaster who took the initiative to bring the children and the parents to meet us.

III. Proceedings of the second workshop with school teachers

(*April 22, 2002)*

The purpose of this workshop was to seek options of project school teachers on pre-designed questionnaires covering the following themes.

1. Dropouts
2. Textbooks and Guides
3. Examinations and evaluation
4. Government policies
5. Professional issues

Although the researchers (along with one research assistant) visited each of the ten project schools, held discussions with the Principals, selected teachers for the workshop and gave them questionnaires to be filled up, only the below listed teachers participated in the workshop.

Name	School
1. G.lakshmaiah	Bahadurguda
2. J.Durgadas	Bahadurguda
3. K.Venkulu	Edulabad
4. A.Meena kumari	Edulabad
5. Pushpalatha	Edulabad
6. Lalitha Sri	ZPHS, Uppal
7. Swaroopa Rani	ZPHS, Uppal
8. Sandhya	ZPHS, Uppal
9. Kistaiah	ZPHS, Uppal
10. Laxmaiah	ZPHS, Uppal

After explaining (in Telugu) the objective of the project the work done thus far, the tentative observations made in the course of the project, the purpose of the present project, the participants were devided into two groups. The researchers, the research assistants, Rama Hansraj and some members of Anveshi devided themselves into the same two groups. In response to the questions pertaining to each of the five themes mentioned above each teacher in each group was encouraged to express his/her opinions. The observations listed below are based on the notes taken during these sessions which lasted below are based on the notes taken during these sessions which lasted from 11.00 a.m to 4.00 p.m

1. Reasons for children dropping out of school

While some teachers denied the existence of any caste discrimination, the others explained that the dominant caste people in a given village/town do have greater influence on school policies and administration. It is often the children of lower classes (labourers, migrant workers belonging to SC, ST communities such as Lambadas, stone cutters, road contractors) who drop out. Even in the slightly better off communities boys get a chance to go to English private schools whereas the girls are sent only to the Government (Telugu medium) schools where they get free books, scholarship in the case

of SC, ST and handicapped children. Besides, a girl having a 7th class pass certificate from a Government school is admitted into the social welfare programs like Mahila Pranganam. Many of the girl children droupout by 9th class because parents get them married off. One reason for girl children to dropout is they have to look after their younger siblings. The other reasons include poor health due to lack of adequate food. 60-70% of all school children come to school without having any food. The rice distribution scheme did not really work. They come to collect the rice and soon after stop attending classes. Majority of the parents don't take interest in their children's education. They come to school only when their children fail a class. The teachers stated that they are not able to give individual attention because the classes are overcrowded with as many as 125 children per class. Many of them receive little or no help in their homework. It must be noted that nearly 50% of the children work as cleaners in seven seater autos; work in flower shops fill fruits into bags, carry water etc. This work related experience of these children is not reflected in the text books, but that is not the reason why they drop out. It world be, nice of course if the text book writers are able understand the lives of these why they are unable to cope with the syllabus in the secondary schools. The other point is many of the teachers would have received training a long time ago. They are now required to update their knowledge on their own. Sexual harassment is not a major reason for dropout of girls. The dropout rate is slightly lower in rural areas where teachers live close to the school and the communities where the children come from. Government has initiated some steps to reduce dropout rates – there is a directive asking teachers to go to homes and motivate parents to send their children. MVF has done good work in this regard but many people do not know about MVF with regard to children and their awareness about class/caste discrimination – by about class VI they become aware of community; that there exist SC colonies; that SC, STs get scholarships (Rs.45/- per year in 4th class and Rs.80/- per year in higher classes)

2. *Text Books and Guides:*

We encourage use of text book language in the exams (marks will reduced if they don't use it). Some of us don't know what is in the guides. We don't think teachers should use guides. Many of these guides have mistakes in them. Lessons should not be made that easy. Some amount of difficulty should be there. Although in Government schools Science text book the standards are too high considering the fact that there are no laboratories or teaching aids and the headmasters get no remuneration. In DPEP districts even primary school headmasters get Rs.500/- each. Of course there is no relationship between the contents of most text books and the lives of many of our children. Part of the problem is they hire university teachers to write the text books; they are given one month to produce a text book. They don't do anything for 20 days and during the last 10 days they produce some trash. We think high school teachers with 20-25 years of teaching experience should be involved in preparing the text books. Adequate attention should be paid to the terminology both in language subjects as well as social sciences specific guidelines should be provided for each text book. The other problem is in most of the government schools, there are no subject teachers – no appointments. How can one teacher teach physical and biological sciences and Telugu. Yet there are cases of some DEO's recommending / supplying guides to schools because of the pressure about pass percentage. Then there are directives about portions that must be deleted. There can be question banks and teacher's hand books but there should not be any guides. The portion to be covered should also be reduced especially in subjects such as Maths (we are

required to teach them to solve every problem and not a sample problem). Frankly the training we received is not adequate to cope with the class room teaching.

3. Examinations and Evaluation:

The exams basically test children's memory and not their knowledge, skills, application and understanding. Except for Maths (in which we give marks for any method so long as they followed the steps), in the other subjects we strictly follow the answer key especially in higher grades. Government school teachers tend to be more liberal in evaluating students then private school teachers. Parents have little, if any role in assessment. Many of them don't even read the comments made by the teachers. Text books provide the blue print for how to answer the questions. Since marks are important children mug up answers to questions and pay little attention to the meaning and content on the whole. The revision takes almost a month for each class every year and that cuts into the actual teaching time. Some time ago we were asked to teach X class even during vacation. Some of us have designed our own schedules for unit tests and developed model papers. The Board sets the papers for the quarterly and last-yearly exams and different districts follow different models. In the language subjects they give questions carrying 3,5 and 7 marks but often they are all of the same difficulty. The selection of the question paper setters is biased. The key they provide depends on the guides. Non-detention policy is okay. But the children should get at least pass marks. There should not be automatic promotion.

4.Government Policies

Education is on the concurrent list and therefore comes under the purview of both the Centre and the State. The state keeps changing the syllabus to suit their agendas (e.g.reduce portions on freedom movement, include information about Janmabhumi programme). Every time there is a change in the Government at the State level, the content of text books change. Politics should be kept out of school education. The centre should increase the budget for Education. The Gos that get circulated among us concern cut in increments, suspension orders, results, syllabus circulars etc. Other kind of information we get to know from our Union meetings – STU, VTF, APTF, DTF, PRTO etc. Even the Union representatives cannot negotiate with the Government regarding non teaching responsibilities such as census duties.

Educations / voters list
House hold census including loans
Janmabhumi
Cattle survery
Akshara Sankraanthi

We get some (not much) remuneration for these duties and about one month leave. During the TDP regime we have had more non teaching jobs. There should be a separate Department in the Government to look into these jobs. Teachers unions have asked about relieving teachers from doing these duties, no use. The NGOs don't help us fight this battle. They say that school students can't manage; they will make mistakes and therefore we have to do. A large part of the student failure is due to absence of teachers. Instead of closing down schools with poor performance, the Government should reduce syllabus in X class Maths and Science; make sure the teacher – pupil ratio is 1:50; often some financial benefits to teachers; implement recommendation of the Pay Revision

Commission. The Vidya volunteers and the MVF volunteers are also not getting paid regularly.

5. Professional issues:

The Education Committee consists of a Chairman and 3 members. Parents of children with regular attendence get a chance to serve on the committee of course they are elected. This committee has some role in school administration. The Vidya volunteers are suppose to get Rs.1500/- per month of this the Government pays only Rs.750/-. The education committee had to come up with the rest (Rs.750/-). How can they raise 750 Rs from poor children? So these vidya volunteers are appointed in the last 2-3 months of the academic year around December latest – this is hardly useful. The education committee is also responsible for raising money for the infra structure. They are not able to collect enough money especially in the rural and semi urban locations. The primary school teachers are over worked and underpaid leading to poor foundation in children. Teachers should not be used as propaganda machines for the Government.
Most of us learnt to teach on the job. We should have refresher courses during vacations.
Our Unions help us update our knowledge by holding subject specific orientation courses and Education seminars.
We need more teaching aids and materials for teaching science subjects.
There should be more exercises for each lesson.
Despite all these problems, we are proud of our profession.

Workshop to discuss the major findings of the study "Curricular Transactions in Selected Government Schools in A.P"

(December 26, 2002)

This workshop was held at Anveshi on 26-12-02 from 10.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. The main purpose of the workshop was to discuss the findings of the study with individuals who were not directly involved with this project but who have had experience in teaching children or conducting research on school education. The following people participated in the workshop:

Research Team	**Anveshi Members**	**Special Invitees**
Aditi Mukherjee	Susie Tharu	Sadhana Saxena (Delhi)
D.Vasanta	K.Lalita	Padma Sarangapani (Bangalore)
Rekha Pappu	Veenashatrugna	Aruna Ratnam (Chennai)
Vijaya Vanamala	Jayasree Kalathil	Gurvin Kaur (Hyderabad)
Jacob Tharu	Madhumitha Sinha	Seetha Lakshmi (Hyderabad)
V.Sailaja		Sudhakar (Hyderabad)
Anuradha		
R.Srivatsan		

Rekha introduced the local participants to the invitees. Vasanta made a 30-minute presentation on the background and context in which the project was undertaken and how it was carried out. She also summarized the major findings based on the 300 school children in this study and some of the implications of these findings for rethinking received notions such as 'childhood' and 'dropouts'. She said that the qualitative observations based on interviews revealed that the notion of childhood that informs text book writers and policy makers at home and the representations of childhood portrayed by International child welfare agencies abroad do not match the everyday lives of a majority of the children studying in Government schools.

The theories and models of teaching and learning derived from and based on the lives of middle class children from relatively privileged backgrounds do not enable the teachers to grasp the conditions in which children from marginalized sections of society (75% of the sample includes children from BC, SC, ST communities) are trying to negotiate the curriculum. Since the State regulates the market in which childhood is produced and consumed (aided by the thinking of the international welfare agencies), it is important that alternative representations of childhood as experienced and reported by children are made available.

Susie commented that there appears to be a mismatch between the competencies demanded by the curriculum and the competencies these children actually possess; that even the teachers are often ignorant of these children's competence in managing their lives. Gurvin reacted to this statement saying that there are incompetent teachers as well as pupils and that we should not romanticize the issue.

Aditi summarized the observations she made from the database of 120 parents who responded to the questionnaire – C. These observations pertained to (1) Choice of school for boys and girls (Government vs. private); (2) Aspirations about education with respect to sons and daughters; (3) Teacher preference (who makes a good teacher -- males or females); (4) Need for and access to tuition and (5) Utility of education.

There was considerable discussion on the notion of 'discipline' in schools vs. 'discipline' at home; the perceived link between certificates and jobs vs. discipline and jobs. It was pointed out that further analysis needs to be made of who these 120 parents are (caste, class, urban, rural) and whether parents of children belonging to different classes (VI,VII, VIII) gave different responses to some of the key questions.

Jim made a brief presentation on the findings based on form –D, which collected information from teachers. It was clarified that a majority of the teachers selected from the project schools did not return the filled up questionnaires and that the observations being made came from the forms filled up by 12 teachers and the data collected earlier from another 10 teachers. Jim noted the very disturbing fact that a majority of the teachers feel that the children's learning problems stem from uneducated parents and that there is very little that they themselves can do. The teachers felt that their training is adequate; that they are better qualified than teachers in the private schools; that the curriculum is too heavy in certain subjects (e.g.Maths, Hindi) although the contents are acceptable, that there are no caste, class, or gender biases in the lessons.

On the question of teachers lacking motivation to reach out and understand the communities where the children come from, Lalita wondered whether the teachers feel totally helpless – that they have no power to be able to do anything significant. Susie said that we perhaps need to understand the reasons behind this 'indifference' and take it beyond the moral realm. We need to understand the popular culture of pedagogy – how teachers are portrayed in cinema for instance.

Aruna Ratnam mentioned that she has collected short stories in Tamil in which the central characters are teachers. The preliminary analysis revealed that the portrayal depends upon the period under analysis. She illustrated this point by saying that in the 90's Government teachers in Tamil Nadu were getting a monthly salary of Rs.7000/- and that in the rural areas especially since this was large sum, teachers were in a position to function as money lenders. There were occasions when some of them mortgaged the land of petty framers who could not pay back the loans and for these reasons the Marxist – Leninist groups criticized the teachers. She also pointed out that during the past decade, the enrolment of children from SC communities in the primary schools has increased enormously and yet insignificant number of teachers belong to SC communities. In addition to the tensions created in the context of pedagogy, there exist considerable problems with midday meals connected to the question of caste.

In response to a query from Padma, Vasanta and Jim clarified that the data from teachers is not limited to the questionnaires. The inputs received during the two workshops will be examined and discussed in the final report. Vijaya Vanamala and R.Srivastsan analysed the date based on 45 hours of classroom observations (information from form – F plus the notes written by the research assistants). Vijaya gave a report on the spatial and structural organization of the classrooms across the 10 project schools and Srivatsan described the procedure evolved to understand temporal progression of the lessons using separate

codes to classify teacher and pupil activities / interactions. Vijaya gave a detailed description of the classrooms (black board visibility, ventilation, seating arrangements, visuals on the walls etc). She pointed out that aside from over crowded classrooms, high noise levels from outside the school also affect the transaction of the lessons taught in the classroom. She discussed the duties and responsibilities of the class leaders (checking home work, taking attendance, disciplining pupils). She pointed out that the study had revealed that considerable number of children with sensory disabilities (visual and hearing problems) physical disabilities and were present in the classrooms. However, they were not receiving additional attention in of their special needs.

Srivats made certain broad comments on the temporal aspects of the classroom interaction, viz., much of the teacher activity was a combination of discipline and teaching with little or no evidence of encouragement requiring students to respond; that there was greater emphasis on discipline around classes conducted before lunch hour (12.45p.m – 1.30p.m). Teachers' activity varied depending on the class and subject being taught.

Padma Sarangapani wondered if we could have tape recorded the classroom interaction between teachers and pupils and analysed it later for information such as how children's language use is shaped by the teachers, as an instance of how knowledge is controlled in the classroom. She also commented that there is little information on the actual pedagogic practices in the schools. Whether for instance the teachers manage the class with 5 or 6 good attentive students sitting in the front row with whom they make eye contact most of the time. Anuradha said that sometimes they did record the lessons being taught. The quality of recordings is not all tha tgood. However, attempts can be made to transcribe the taped material.

In the post lunch session, Rekha made a presentation on the policy documents she has been studying. The discussion was centred around the Vision 2020 document of the Andhra Pradesh Government put out in the year 1999, the Ambani Birla Report, the National Curriculum Document of 2000 and the Supreme Court judgement on the admission policies of the minority aided institutions. Rekha felt that the subject of education policy has shifted from what it was in the 60s. At the time of the Kothari Commission report, the policy makers were addressing children from upper middle class sections of the society whereas now the agenda of school education is targeted towards children from lower (working) class, many of whom are first generation learners.

Both Padma and Aruna felt that the language of the policy documents is very slippery and that in order to grasp the hidden meanings one has to read the documents very closely. Usha felt that the education policy documents must be read together with those pertaining to agriculture and Industry. In the context of the discussion of the vocationalisation of education, Aruna pointed out that Ashok Leyland is running driving schools for 10^{th} class passed students and that TVS is offering a technical training course of two year duration for those who have completed 10+2 examinations.

Considerable discussion took place on the question of decentralization with respect to DPEP, village education committees and Navodaya schools. It become apparent that across the four southern states (A.P, T.N, Kerala and Karnataka), there are differences in the way village education committees and parent - teacher committees function. Teachers

unions and their role in tackling problems related to the teachers too varied from region to region.

The participants felt that with the involvement in recent years of DFID and World Bank in the decision making process at the ground level, the involvement of teachers is becoming weak and that there is a erosion of the role of panchayats. With increased participation of NGOs and gradual withdrawal of state support, it appears that the Government school will become an endangered species.

Aruna described the work she is doing as a member of the Tamil Nadu Science Forum. She circulated copies of the draft syllabus she developed for social studies for classes VI, VII and VIII as well as high school (9 and 10^{th} classes). She requested the Anveshi education committee members to provide feed back on this material.

The other points that emerged out of this workshop were:

Definition of the term curriculum transaction: Padma and Aruna felt that this term was used in a very general sense in this project and not in the usually accepted sense. Jim said that it was a deliberate attempt to extend the meaning and that necessary explanations will be provided in the final report.

Working school children: Sadhana Saxena suggested that we consult Vimala Ramachandran's study on "hierarchies of access"; Kiran Batti's article on child labour in EPW; Prof.Krishna Kumar's article on child labour published in Hindi by Digantar.

All the special invitees emphasized that work from the project must be published in different journals.

Appendix –C

Questionnaires

Form A: Background Information about the Family

Code:

	Name	Age	Educational Background	Occupation	Income	School Fees per Month
I. Student						
II. Father						
III.Mother						
IV.Brothers 1. 2. 3. 4.						
V.Sisters 1. 2. 3. 4.						

Caste

S C	ST	BC	OC

Home : Own/Rented Rent per month :

Property Owned by the Family:

Land	Occupation Related Equipment/Machine	T.V	Vehicle	Phone	Fridge	Others

Mother Tongue:

Other Languages spoken at home:

Schools Attended till now By the Student	Distance from School	Reasons for Shifting
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

Daily Routine

Time	Student	Mother	Father
5.a.m			
6.a.m			
7.a.m 8.a.m 9.a.m 10.a.m 3.p.m 4.p.m 5.p.m 6.p.m 7.p.m 8.p.m 9.p.m 10.p.m			

Are there educated families in your neighbourhood ?

Do the children from these families go to the same school / other school?

Primary reference group

Library / resource in the neighbourhood

Form B: For the Student

I.

Do you like going to School?	Why?
A. Positive B. Neutral C. Negative	

II. Have you ever been out of School? If yes, Why? For how long and When?

III. Subjects liked / disliked - reasons

Which Subject Do you like the Most?	Why?
Which teacher Do like the most?	
Which school activity do you like the most?	

IV. Do you have all the text books and guides?

V. Do you take them to school everyday?

VI. Homework

Subjects	How much	Where homework is completed? Home/School/ Both	Why?	Who helps? Self/Others	Tuition	Guides
Telugu						
English						
Hindi						
Science						
Social						
Maths						
Computer						

VI. Where do you learn most? At home/tuition/Friend/Other places (Specify)

VII. Reading Habits. What do you read other than your school books?

	Title	Rating
1. News papers 2. Magazines 3. Story books 4. Comics 5. Others		

VIII. Uses of Literacy

	Self	Others
Reading Letters		
Writing Letters		
Pamphlets		
Accounts		
Lists		
Filling Forms E.g. Post office, bank		

VIII. How do you feel about exams?

Subject	Rating
Telugu	
English	
Hindi	
Science	
Social	
Maths	
Computer	

X. Can you suggest any other way in which you would like to be assessed?

XI. Punishment:

By whom?

How often?

How much?

What kind?

How do you avoid punishment?

XII. Do you discuss studies/homework/punishment with your parents / others

XIII. Extracurricular Activities

In School

Outside School

XIV. Is the language used in the textbook similar to what you use at home?

XV. Do you eat before coming to school? Specify

XVI. What do you eat in school?

XVII. What do you eat at night?

XVIII. Have any of your friends dropped out of school ? Why?

XIX. Often children are pressurized to drop out . What do you think about it ? Is it a good thing or not?

Form C: For Parents

Code:

I. Are you happy with your child's education? Y / N

II. What do you expect from school education?

III. Does school education contribute to your livelihood practice / vocation? Y / N

IV. Do you think school education should contribute to livelihood? Y / N

V. Preference

	Government Schools	Private Schools
Quality of School		
Quality of Teaching		
Facilities		
Affordable Fees		
Other Expenses		
Assurance of getting certificates		
Language		
Distance		
Status		
Need for Tuition		

VI. Which school is more suitable for your children?

	Why ?
Daughters	
Sons	

VII. Who do you think makes for a better teacher? Men or Women? Why?

VIII. Do you think tuitions are essential?

IX. How much do you spend on tuitions?

X Till what class do you want to educate your children.

	Why?
Daughters	
Sons	

XI After receiving school education what would you like your children to do?

Daughters:

Sons:

XII Do you think education will help them achieve this goal?

XIII Are your children punished in school?

XIV Why do you think they are punished?

XV Is there any major health problem in your family?

Mother

Father

Child

Siblings

XVI What is your monthly expense (including food, clothes, medicines, school..)

XVII Are you a member of the parent teacher association?

XVIII What kinds of changes would you suggest for having better schools?

XIX Do you think your life would have been different if you were further educated? How?

Form D: For the teachers

Code:

1. Name 2. Age: 3. D.O.B:

4.Sex 5. Caste 6. Mother tongue

1. Other Languages known 8. Education:

9. Members at home:

S.No	Name	Relation	Employment	Education	Any Special Training / Awards received
1. .	Self				
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

10. Work Experience

Schools	Year	Position Held	Classes Taught	Subject(s) Taught	Teaching load (hour per week)
1					
2					
3.					
4					
5					

11.Non teaching duties done in the present and previous schools

	Nature of duty	Year	How long?		Nature of duty	Year	How long?
1				4			
2				5			
3				6			

12. Do you think teacher training has helped you in classroom teaching? Yes/No
If yes, in what ways? If no, why has it failed? Please elaborate.

13.How do you think children 'learn'? Grade the following.

a. imitation
b. memorization
c. analysis
d. reasoning
e. observation
f. any other

14. Which of the following factors significantly contribute to improving 'learning?

a. Positive reinforcement from

i. teachers
ii. parents
iii. community
iv. all three

b. Strict discipline and punishment

i. at school
ii. at home
iii. both i and ii

c. ability to question and go beyond prescribed text books.

d. anxiety-free atmosphere in the classroom

e. educated parents

f. any other factors

15. Generally, students perform better in

Subjects	Boys	Girls	Reasons
1. Telugu			
2. English			
3. Hindi			
4. Science			
5. Social			
6. Maths			
7. Computers			

16. Text books

i. Whether the text book language is familiar to the students? Or is it too difficult. If so why?

ii. Is the text book content

a. relevant
b. adequate
c. in excess
d. encourages exploration
e. distanced from the lives of the students
f. related to the lives of the students.

iii. Do the exercises at the end of the lesson encourage

a. memorization
b. analysis
c. exploration

iv. Do you think the text books communicate a value system? Elaborate.

v. Do you have supplementary material for teaching in your classrooms?

vi. In what ways do you think the existing text books need to be improved? For instance in terms of languages, content, lay-out etc..

vii. Do you think the participation of teachers in the preparation of text books is important? Why?

viii Do you think the text books are biased in terms of class, caste, region, religion, gender etc.?

17. Comment on the coverage and quality of the existing syllabus?

18. Teaching Methods

i. Describe your usual method of teaching in the classroom

ii. In your class, are you able to follow the structure given by you in the lesson plan? If not, why?

19. Does the existing systems of evaluation correctly assess the child's knowledge and ability? Would you like to suggest any improvements or an alternative system of evaluation?

20. How useful are guide books for teaching or learning?

21. What are some of their positive features and some negative features ? Specify

22. Do many children in your school go for tuitions?

23. Do you take tuitions?

24. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of tuitions ? Specify

25. Do you have the following facilities?

a. Teaching Aids
b. Library
c. Scope for improving your knowledge and qualification
d. Scope for generating your own material
e. Staff room

26. What do you think are some of the disadvantages faced by the girl students in general?

27. What do you think are some of the disadvantages faced by girl students coming to your school ?

28. Are inspections functional or disruptive? Elaborate

29. Do you think periodic in-service training programmes are useful ?

30. Working relationship with the Principal :

31. Advantages and disadvantages of being a Government teacher :

Form E: For Principal/Headmaster

Code:

Background information

Name

Age

Caste

Educational Background

Mother Tongue

Regional identity

I. Type of school

II. Student strength

III. Strength of teachers

Subjects	Posts sanctioned Open Reserved	Posts filled Open Reserved	Posts Vacant Open Reserved
Telugu			
English			
Hindi			
Science			
Social studies			
Maths			

IV. Nature of duties of the Principal (Specify in detail)

Teaching

Administration

Examination

Other Government duties

Records Maintained (e.g. attendance; lesson plans; inspections; extra curricular events)

V. Are there other category of teachers such as Vidya Volunteers, MVF Volunteers, Part – Time, Temporary?

VI. Details about teachers in the school

Category of teachers	Salary / Scale	Paid by	Regularity
1.Regular (trained) 2.Regular (untrained) 2. Language Pandits 3. Volunteer			

VII. Infrastructure

1. Sufficient classrooms
2. Black boards
3. Chalk and Duster
4. Furniture
5. Drinking Water
6. Toilets(boys)
7. Toilets(Girls)
8. Play ground
9. Play equipment
10. Laboratories
11. Computers
12. Staff Room
13. Library (number of books; Magazines subscribed)

VIII. Contingency funds

received from utilised for

IX. Frequency of inspection

X. Pass percentage of the school (past five years) for VII and X classes

XI. Measures taken to improve pass percentage and to meet the targets set by the Government.

XII. Nature of Govt. Orders received regarding pass-percentage:

XIII. What is the nature of the working relationship of the principal with his/her Colleagues?

XIV. Problems Encountered

Students

Teachers

Administration (Government)

Parents

Any other

XV. How much autonomy does the principal have in the running of the school?

XVI. How have the government policies effected the running of your school ?

Form F: Classroom Observation Data

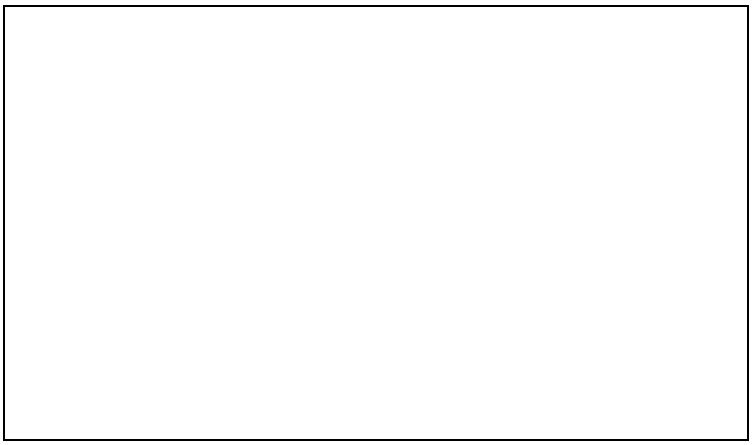
Code:

Sch	Cl	Sub	T

RA	Dt	Time	V#

GENERAL CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS:

Seating arrangements



Classroom

Show positions of teacher (T), boys (B), girls (G), blackboard (BB). Draw one line for each row of desks, benches and mention how many students sit in each row.

How many doors and windows are there? (Indicate positions on drawing above if possible)

Are any children sitting on the floor (Y/N):

Is there a class leader (Y/N):

Where is he or she sitting?

What are here responsibilities (your observations)?

Are there any slogans/pictures on the wall? (Please describe)

Is there drinking water available nearby or in the classroom?

Is there sufficient light in the room for studies?

Is the blackboard clearly visible to all students (observe from different positions)?

Is the seating arrangement constant, or does it change every day?

If seating arrangement is constant, describe who gets to occupy:

a) Front seats: (observe why and note)
b) Back seats: (observe why and note)

OBSERVATIONS OF TEACHING SESSION:

Lesson details:

Subject:

Name of Lesson:

Textbook used:

Is a guide used?

Any teaching aids?

Teaching and learning:
(I*nstructions to research assistant:*
Permit 5 minutes for the class to settle down.
Make observations of teacher and students behaviour four times in the period. Timings are approximate. Use the code table below to enter codes of teacher and student activity. More than one item can be ticked for each observation regarding teacher and student: E.g., the teacher can be scolding, collecting homework and punishing students at once in one observations: F, I, H will be the codes).

Teacher Activity Code:

Class control	A
General lecture	B
Subject lecture	C
Working on board	D
Question students	E
Scolding students	F
Encouraging students to speak	G
Punishing	H
Give/take HW	I

Students Activity Code:

Keeping Quiet	P
Listening	Q
Writing in book	R
Answer teacher	S
Asking Questions	T
Making comment	U
Talking to others	V
Disturbing class	W

Class period observations:

Time	Teacher activity code	Student activity code	Comments
5 Min	**Settling Down**	**Settling down**	
5-15 Min			
15-25 Min			
25-35 Min			
35-45 Min			

Children's opinion of lesson:
(Instructions to research assistant get two students to tell you what they thought about the lesson, and if they learnt anything)

1st Child's rating: Good/Satisfactory/Bad
Opinion:

2nd Child's: Good/Satisfactory/Bad
Opinion:

Children with special needs:
Are there any children in the class who have a speech, vision or hearing problem? If so, how many? Does the teacher or other students help these children with special needs in any way? How are the children managing?

Research Assistant's opinions and evaluations of class:

Are students enthusiastic about class?

Does the teacher use the blackboard effectively?

Does the teacher make good eye contact with all students or with only a few? If only a few, which students?

Are some or all of the children scolded or insulted more often than others? Is it uniform for all? Is the teacher sensitive and caring?

What is the tone the teacher uses to students? Is it harsh? Or gentle? Does the teacher use different tones with different students? which students get gentler tone and which harsher?