Jaipur

Local Education Report

DISCRIMINATION AND DEPRIVATION

BASIC EDUCATION AMONG THE POOR

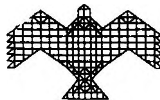
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES
BANGALORE

Discrimination and Deprivation

Basic Education among the Poor in Jaipur

Local Education Report

Jaipur, Rajasthan



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This brief report is part of a study on primary education conducted by the Sociology and Social Anthropology Unit at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore. Field research was conducted between the months of October 1999 and November 2000 in the following six areas: Jaunpur Block (Uttaranchal), Jaipur (Rajasthan), Khategaon Block (Madhya Pradesh), Bangalore (Karnataka), Tanjavur (Tamil Nadu), and Chirala (Andhra Pradesh). A composite report on all the areas will be available separately.

The objectives of this local education report (LER) are to share the findings of the study with members of the communities in which the research was conducted and also to disseminate them widely. Therefore, this report is primarily descriptive of the conditions and problems of schools and schooling. We hope that in each area members of the community, teachers, elected representatives, parents, education department personnel and others interested in promoting elementary education will find the report useful.

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A. R. Vasavi
NIAS, Bangalore

November 2001

DEPRIVATION AND DISCRIMINATION
BASIC EDUCATION AMONG THE POOR

Why are such large numbers of children out of school in a city which is the State capital and whose economy is vibrant with tourism, crafts and trade? Why is the number of schools inadequate for the growing urban population? And, why does schooling remain an unpleasant experience for many children of the labouring classes?

These questions are important for understanding the conditions in schools and the experience of schooling among the poor of Jaipur. Though a large number of parents and children from the labouring classes now seek to receive formal education, their experience is primarily one of deprivation and discrimination. Even as children voice their unpleasant experiences of schooling, parents themselves note the discriminatory treatment meted out to their children. As one parent observed, "Earlier, teachers used to teach children. There used to be a teacher-student relationship. Now, they (students) are treated like

donkeys and horses". Our study, conducted over a period of one year in three different localities and three different types of schools in the city, found education deprivation and discrimination of children to be rampant in the city's poverty zones.

Urban Growth and Opportunities for Education

There is an urgent need to understand the problems of education opportunities faced by the working class and the poor in urban areas since these are the high population growth centres. By the year 2001, thirty-one percent of the nation's population will be in the urban areas, of which 35-40 per cent will be in the urban slums[1]. Rajasthan's urban growth rate of 39 per cent, the highest in the country, exceeds the national growth rate of 22 percent[2]. Jaipur's population itself is now (2001) 52.52 lakhs[3]. Along with the non-availability of basic facilities such as housing, health and civic amenities, there is a substantial shortage of schools for children of the poor. Though typically it has been accepted that urban areas provide better educational opportunities[4], the unplanned and accelerated growth of the city and its population does not provide an education system that can cater to the needs of the poor.

Schools for the urban poor are fraught with many problems. For one, slums are considered to be "illegal" places of settlement and the

[1] Rangachar Govinda, *Status of Primary Education of the Urban Poor in India*. Research Report no.105. International Institute for Education Planning. Paris. 1995.

[2] Government of Rajasthan, *Rajasthan State Plan-Draft Document*, Jaipur. 1999.

[3] Census of India, 2001.

[4] J.B.G Tilak, *Rural-Urban Inequalities in Education*. CMDR Monograph Series. No 2. 1992.

government does not support or encourage the establishment of schools within these areas. Secondly, the management and organization of schools within these areas are also more problematic. Government services do not care to provide schooling for the growing number of children, nor individuals or institutions.

Jaipur's literacy level in 1991 was 50 percent (general) with male literacy at 65 percent and female literacy at 31 percent[5]. By 2001 the literacy levels registered an improvement, rising to 70 percent for the general population, with a high gender disparity ratio of 83 percent for men and 56 percent for women[6]. However, though Jaipur records the highest literacy rate for Rajasthan, it has a very skewed population to school ratio; which in 1997 stood at 2206 persons per primary school[7].

A Baseline Study[8] conducted in 1998 indicates that conditions in schools in Jaipur are dismal for the economically deprived sections of the population. While 30 percent of the city's population lives in about 279 slums or ***bastis***, 205 (73.48 %) of these slums do not have government schools and 105 (37.28 %) do not have any schools at all. More than 50 percent of children in about 86 percent of the ***bastis*** do not attend any school. Most (61 %) of the state-run primary and upper primary schools are single- teacher schools where, in addition to teaching, teachers are assigned both extra-curricular and administrative responsibilities. That the government schools are not

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[5] Census of India, Rajasthan. 2001.

[6] Ibid

[7] Social Assessment Study of DPEP (Rajasthan). Integrated Report. IDS. Jaipur. 2000.

[8] Jaipur City: Status of Primary Education with Regard to Urban Deprived Children. Preliminary Findings of a Baseline Study. Joint GOI-UN System Education Programme. Jaipur. Rajasthan. May 1998.

only inadequate in terms of numbers but also in terms of their functioning and performance is evident in the fact that currently only children of the very poor, the economically marginalised and those belonging to low-ranked caste groups attend these schools. The Baseline Study indicates that while Scheduled Caste persons constitute 4.7 percent of the total population of the city, they account for 52 percent of the children in the government schools. On the whole, the study indicates that 72 percent of children studying in government schools are from SC, ST, OBC, and Muslim communities and only 22 percent are from other caste groups. That there is a crisis in the basic education system in the city is evident from the fact that 51 percent of children drop out before they reach Std V and a large number of children remain out-of-school.

Compounding such administrative negligence in providing basic education are problems relating to the structure and functioning of families and communities in the urban poverty areas. Since most residents of such areas are engaged in menial and service labour, the income of the family is subject to periodic swings. As a result, children who are residents of such areas are doubly disadvantaged since the lack of schooling facilities is compounded by the lack of support from parents, many of whom do not have regular or adequate incomes. Further, the parents' economic instability also causes high levels of social distress within the family which is manifested in and compounded by alcoholism and abandonment of women and children.

To better understand the functioning of schools, the pattern of education deprivation, and the roles of the state, culture and community

in the city, we studied three different types of localities, and three different types of schools. These were: (1) a government primary school housed in a temple in the Gher Saiwad area of the old city; (2) a private school in the Manoharpura Kachi Basti area where many new migrants and the labouring poor classes work and live, and (3) a school run by an NGO in a semi-urban area, Kho-Nagoria, which consists of eighteen hamlets and which is being incorporated into Jaipur city as Ward number 28.

In terms of occupation and class backgrounds the people studied in these areas are mostly menial service workers, construction and casual labourers, petty shopkeepers, skilled and semi-skilled workers in the crafts industry, and some agriculturists and pastoralists living on the periphery of the city. In the Gher Saiwad area, the residents are primarily Meena, Raiger, Balai, Nai, Maali, Gurjar with some Brahmin, Jain and Sikh families. In the Manoharpura Kachi Basti, the residents are Bairwa, Raiger, Kalbelia, Banjara and Balai families. A few newly-immigrant families from Bengal and Madras also reside here. In the Kho-Nagoria area, a majority of the people are Nagoria Muslims while the others are Maali, Brahmin and Rajput families. The purpose of identifying and studying these areas and some schools located in them was to understand the links between the social and cultural practices of members of the community, the local economy and politics and on the one hand, and that of the functioning of schools on the other. The researcher, Sucheta Singh, studied the schools and the areas in which they are located and conducted interviews with the children, parents, teachers and community leaders. In addition, we selected 15 percent of children from each of the three schools and 15 percent of out of

school children in the three areas and studied in detail their living conditions, economic and social , their school and work experiences. Based on interviews, classroom observations and discussions with the children and with many other people, the following problems in the city's basic education sector were identified.

Cultural Propensity for Education

Historically, access to higher education was restricted to the only very high caste groups and to those within the circuit of the princely administration circle[9]. As Peace (1980) observed for Jaipur, mechantile and artisan caste groups suffered from a lack of access to education. As a result, there is little by way of a broad cultural inclination for education per se, though education is sought after as a means to higher occupations and social status. The result of this long-term and systemic deprivation of access to education is a lack of a cultural propensity for education among the elite itself. This has been responsible for not generating interest and demand for basic education in Jaipur as in Rajasthan as a whole. A "feudal-merchantile" outlook continues to pervade much of the popular and dominant culture. Sayings such as "He who writes will not ride" indicate the cultural promotion and celebration of martial traditions over traditions of formal learning. In such a culture, formal education, outside of learning crafts and mercantile skills, has had little value. In addition, upward mobility has also been possible without education. As a result, even

[9] For details on the caste bases of education exclusion in Jaipur see Adrian Peace, "Structured Inequalities in a North Indian City", *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, Vol 14 (2). 1980.

economically well-to-do persons and caste groups did not necessarily seek education as a significant marker of their personal and collective lives. That education has remained low in the order of individual and cultural preferences is manifest in the fact that there has, historically, been little investment in education by leading industrial houses, families and caste groups. That is, elite individuals and groups failed to invest in education as a common, public good that would cater to the larger section of society. Thus, there are no important educational institutions in Jaipur, in stark contrast to the grand palaces, temples and museums that dot the city.

The lack of a cultural inclination towards education has meant that educational institution building in the State and also in Jaipur is very limited. There are several dimensions to the dominant cultural practices of the region, which combine to account for disinterest in education. Of all the sites studied, it was here that the largest percentage (42) of out-of-school children interviewed, had never enrolled in any school. While most (62 percent) cited financial problems as the main reason for not enrolling, it must be recognised that parents' inability to send children to school is compounded not only by inadequate income but also by a disinclination towards education which manifests itself in many ways. Of those who cited financial problems as the reasons for non-enrollment, about 31 percent of the children cited parental disinterest in education as the main reason for not being enrolled in school.

Recent concerted efforts and mobilisation by NGOs and individuals has helped generate interest and enthusiasm for education and a sense of internalised exclusion is fast eroding among a wide section of people.

Yet, even in the context of the new impetus for education, many people continue to link formal education with formal employment, especially that of getting white-collar jobs. The lack of employment opportunities has, then, become a disincentive for accessing education. As many adults noted, "what use is education when there are no jobs?" Further, many respondents observed that education results in alienation as it made young people unfit to continue in their forefather's occupations and at the same time they were unable to access jobs. This was expressed particularly by members of 'Backward Castes' who considered that employment opportunities were available only to the SCs and STs and since they (Backward Castes) did not get jobs what was the use of educating their children. As a young man from the Kalbelia (snake-charmers) community in Manoharapura Kachi Basti put it, "We have no jack (political or caste influence) and no cheque (economic influence)...so we do not get jobs. Why should we then insist on our children going to school?" That most of the children among the Kalbelia remain out of school and also unemployed is an indicator of the failure to promote education as an intrinsic value. In contrast, assurance of employment opportunities has acted as an incentive for many members of Scheduled Caste and tribe groups, such as the Balayi and the Meena. They see education, with which they can access 'reserved jobs' as the single most important factor in enhancing their opportunities. School enrollment levels among the SCs are high, and they see assurance of "service jobs", made possible by reservations, as a reason for pursuing education.

In Kho-Nagoria, many parents from the Muslim families seemed to be wary of sending their children to government schools. They were

uncomfortable with the kind of education that their children may receive there and felt that only the education in the Madarsa where the children were taught the Koran to be appropriate. A Muslim teacher, who was active in mobilising the Muslim community for education, noted that for many members of his community, knowledge about the cultural norms of the community and about life after death were more important than formal "secular" education. Such an attitude partly accounts for the fact that in Kho-Nagoria a majority of children above the age of 14 are non-literate and a significant proportion between the ages of 6-13 continue to be out-of-school. However, many Muslim families were seeking to alter such perspectives and were actively encouraging their children to attend both the Madarsa and schools.

The Presence and Absence of the State in Basic Education

Despite widespread discussion and attention to education deprivation in the State, financial allocation by the State for elementary education has been limited. As analysed in a recent study, actual allocation of funds to the elementary education sector has increased only marginally (by one percent between 1980-2000)[10]. In addition, 90 percent of the budget goes towards salaries alone, leaving "an insignificant amount of money … in different educational tools and accessories which are required to supplement productive educational processes to emerge"[11]. Given the population growth and the fact that actual enrollment at the

[10] Ray Sunil, *Universalisation of Elementary Education in Rajasthan (with special reference to cost and financing)*. IDS. Jaipur. Rajasthan. 2001.

[11] Ibid

elementary school level have increased, it is little wonder that financial support for educating the urban poor is insignificant.

In addition to the highly skewed children to school ratio in the city and the failure to maintain the existing government schools, the State is largely absent in many matters related to primary education. By not providing adequate numbers of schools, especially in the urban poverty areas, the State directly encourages the growth of a private school market in the city. Not only does the State provide easy permits to start private schools but has also made registration an option for the owners and managers of private schools. As a result, there were by the end of 2000 approximately 4000 small, private schools catering to the lower middle classes in the city[12]. The management and functioning of such schools are, however, not supervised or evaluated. As the owner and headmaster of the private school in Manoharpura Kachi Basti observed, the education department had not inspected the school or made regular visits since the inception of the school in 1996.

The absence of the State in education is also visible in areas such as Kho-Nagoria where the community has built the school, while the State has contributed little beyond assigning teachers to it. This school is also not supervised and is considered to be a dysfunctional school by many members of the community. This dysfunctionality is reflected not only in the low enrollment levels (193 students in 1999) but also

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[12] Jyotsna Lall, *Schools for Thought: A Study of Small Private Schools in Jaipur.* Bodh Shiksha Samiti. Jaipur. 2000.

in the high absenteeism of teachers and the general state of dilapidation and disuse. The fact that there were about 180 children in the area who were out of school but were on the NGO school's waiting list further testifies to the dysfunctionality of the government school.

The state's lack of commitment to enhancing opportunities for education among all children is also observable in the fact that the prohibition of child labour is not enforced in the city. Though child labour is rampant (see section on child labour), there are no agencies that check the violation of child labour laws and monitor the rights of children. Similarly, child marriage continues to be practiced and permitted in the area, though its role in preventing girl children from accessing education is well known.

Thus the State fails to provide a conducive context for primary education. In fact state policies thwart some innovative practices and measures initiated in schools. For example, the government school in Gher Saiwad had introduced the new teaching and learning methods in two classes and just as they were getting to be popular the teachers who had been trained in the new methods were transferred. As a result, even functioning and well-performing classes were disrupted.

While the government provides free text-books for all children from classes I to V in the government schools, there is no grain scheme in the urban areas, nor is there a midday meal programme. Many children come from households that are not able to assure them regular meals on all days and such children remain hungry during the school day.

Organisations and Opportunities for Education

Lack of formal organisation is one of the reasons for the inability of low income and socially marginalised groups to access education. In contrast to other urban sites in our research, Jaipur records negligible organisational membership and activities in the settlements studied. In both the inner city (Gher Saiwad) area and in Manoharpura Basti there were no organisations that focussed on issues related to education. In both these areas, the only organisation that people are familiar with is the local *jati panchayat* . The *jati panchayats* focus on issues concerning retention of caste or *jati* rules and practices. There are no discussions related to accessing education. This is in contrast to our findings in the other poverty areas, such as that in Bangalore, where organisational membership especially in Sanghs, such as the Ambedkar Sangh, Mahila Sangh, or even in religious organisations such as those run by Churches, had provided support and encouragement for sending children to school. Even in the Kho-Nagoria area, though an NGO has established a school, there is little community-based mobilisation. The *jati panchayat* in this area also focusses on personal and social issues, including the charging of fines for divorce but has not discussed issues related to education. The leading Madarsa in Kho-Nagoria conducts classes for Quran Ibz for the neighbourhood children. However, recognising the need for enhancing educational opportunitities for children of the Muslim community, the current head of the Masjid spoke about the need to modernise the Madarssa and to start a regular school as one of the Madarssa's activities.

The panchayat that had until recently functioned in the Kho-Nagoria area did not see education as a central issue. As the area is now incorporated as a ward (number 28) into Jaipur city's corporation, the chances of addressing local problems of primary education have become even more remote. Several members of the community noted that the local corporator had not visited the ward after elections and they were not aware of any plans or programmes for primary education. Though many complained about the dysfunctional local primary school they were not able to access a local organisation or administrative unit that could address their grievances. Other supportive organisational structures and mechanisms such as the Village Education Committee or the School Betterment Committee which are supposed to function in the village and urban areas respectively, were absent in the areas studied. The state's indifference to such institution-building indicates its neglect of an important sector such as education.

School-Community Relations

The idea that schools must relate to the community, especially to the socio-cultural life of its children, is not well understood by the key functionaries of all the three types (government, private and NGO) of schools. Yet, the social background of the children who attended these schools required the management and teachers to have close contacts with them. A majority of the labouring poor are from low-ranked caste and tribal backgrounds. Not only are the children first generation learners, they also come from families in which the parents are in menial service occupations. Most of these families, 71 percent, also belonged to Scheduled Caste groups and among them 31 percent of

the children who were out of school had parents who were primarily in menial service[13]. However, schools did not have specific policies or teacher orientation to enable administrators and teachers to understand and reach out to children from these backgrounds. Complaints by teachers about the failure of parents to supervise their children or to be attentive to matters relating to school indicate the middle-class bias of the teachers and the system.

While the principals of both the government and private school seemed committed to getting many children from the area into the school, there were no specific instructions to the teachers on how to relate to the children and to their parents. Most teachers seemed to know little about the family conditions of the children and even when they did know, they did not seem to be empathetic.

Similarly, the management of both the private school and the NGO schools note the importance of enhancing school accessibility. Yet, none of them had conducted community mobilisation programmes and did not directly or indirectly address issues of child labour and child marriage – two factors that kept children out of school.

The success of the NGO school shows that being sensitive to the culture of the community and adapting to some of its elements makes for better functioning of schools. Some teachers attempted to address the problem of low attendance at parent-teacher meetings by organising

[13] The types of menial jobs and services performed were: garbage collection, road cleaning and sweeping, coolie work, domestic work, etc.,.

a mothers' meeting and were successful in getting mothers to attend. This indicates the need to be more sensitive to the cultural patterns and preferences of the community.

Migration is high in the Manoharpura Kachi Basti area and is cited as one of the most significant reasons for the large number of "never enrolled" students. Many residents return periodically to their villages and when children accompany them they often miss out on school. Yet, none of the schools had curricula or teaching-learning patterns which catered to the returning students.

Cultural Bias against Girl Children

Recent enrollment data indicates an overall improvement in the educational opportunity for girls in the area. This is largely the result of a number of developments. For one, many women, as mothers deliberately seek to enroll their daughters, citing their own state of non-literacy as a handicap in life. Several mothers, whom we interviewed, narrated how they had overcome the objections of male members of the family and had ensured that their daughters attended school. The recruitment of female teachers and the recent public awareness programmes have also contributed to enabling many girls to attend school.

But, despite improvement in conditions, educational opportunity is not equal or easy for many girls. Our data on enrollment over five years for the three schools indicate that girls have a higher drop-out or elimination rate than boys. In the NGO school, data indicates that

in 1998 girls constitute only 35 per cent of the total number of children enrolled in the school. In Manoharpura Katchi basti, where the government schools are dysfunctional, and a private, fee-charging school is popular, many parents send mostly their sons to the private school. As a result, a significant proportion of the student body (67 %) in the school consists of boys. In 1998, in the government school, 45 per cent of those enrolled were girls, but there were fewer girls beyond standard four[14]. On the whole girls tended to have a higher drop-out or elimination rate; between 1995-2000 data for all the three schools show that there was a 58 per cent decrease in enrollment of girls at standard three.

Further, girls from the scheduled caste families and from larger families had lesser opportunities than girls from the high-ranked caste families. Low-ranked caste families were typically engaged in menial labour, such as daily wage workers in construction sites, as coolies in stations and markets or as garbage collectors. Such working conditions not only did not assure the families of a steady source of income but also made girls and women vulnerable to being exploited for domestic and non-domestic work.

Girls are also directly affected by the family size. Our study indicates that the average size of the family is 8.2 in the area (the highest in our study sample) and is one of the main reasons for older children being retained at home. Many girls are retained to look after younger siblings and to take care of domestic chores.

[14] Data from 1998 from all three schools. NGO school; 103 boys and 57 girls; private school; 78 boys and 39 girls; government school; 45 boys and 123 girls.

While it is well-known that girls in Rajasthan suffer from a range of cultural inhibitions which deprive them of education, it is important to identify the specific norms and processes by which such deprivation takes place[15]. Some of the key factors observed in the study are highlighted in the box below.

CULTURAL FACTORS THAT EXCLUDE GIRLS

- Education is considered to corrupt girls, making them disobedient.
- The average size of families in the areas studied is 8.2. Since both parents in the labouring classes work, the girls are entrusted with the responsibility of looking after younger siblings and fulfilling domestic responsibilities.
- Where schools are at a distance from the houses, parents are not willing to let their daughters travel alone to school.
- Many parents do not send their girls to school once they have attained puberty.
- Parents fear that they will not be able to find a groom for their daughter if she is educated.
- Child marriages continue to be very popular and lead to withdrawal of girls from schools.
- In-laws often refuse to allow their young daughters-in-law to study even if they are residing with their parents.
- Early marriages lead to early parenthood and to increased domestic responsibility.

[15] Shobhita Rajagopal identitifies as key factors some of the other cultural variables that affect girls access to education such as village exogamy, patrilocal post-marital residence and general subordination of girls. See Shobhita Rajagopal, ***Gender and Education in Rajasthan***: Reassessing Critical Issues. IDS. Jaipur. 2001.

THE GROWTH AND IMPLICATIONS OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Insufficient numbers of schools for the growing urban population and discrimination within those that exist has led to the growth of a number of private schools which while claiming to cater to the educational requirements of children also pose several problems. This is clearly seen in Manoharpura Katchi Basti, an urban poverty area, in which a private school caters to the schooling requirements of many families. That the school filled a vacuum was the reason why many parents chose a private school for their children. A Harijan woman observed that, "if not for the private school, where could we have sent our children. Government school teachers hate our children" ***("Agar yeh school nahin hota to hum bacchon ko kahan bhejte? Government school ke teacher hamare bachon se gruna karte hain)."*** Similarly, Razia, who sends her daughter to the private school complained that the teacher in the Government school ill-treated children from low ranked castes, often not permitting them to drink water and forcing them to remain thirsty ("***Paani peene nahin dethi. Bacchen pyaase rehte hai***").

Private schools that cater to the poor and lower-middle classes are often housed in inadequate buildings and structures, have poorly or insufficiently trained teachers, and follow poor teaching-learning methods. One such school in the Manoharpura Kachi Basti has classes from LKG to the VIII standard with a total enrollment of 120 children and functions out of two small buildings. There are four rooms attached to the office, a six feet by six feet space with a table, two chairs, a rack for books and a fan. Two other rooms are about a hundred

yards away and are of make-shift construction with bricks and thatched rooms. Standard I consists of thirty students who sit under a thatched canopy with a blackboard attached to the outer wall where Standard III functions. Class I and LKG share a single room, so do classes II and IV and classes V and VI share a tin shed. These classes even share a blackboard. Teachers take class for two different standards, one after the other, in the same class. Since most of the rooms have only one window, the classrooms are suffocating. Only some rooms have fans. While teaching one class, the other class is given written work to do.

Many parents noted that they paid Rs. 65 per month as school fee contrary to the school management's claim that they charge Rs 50. Further, non-payment of fees leads to the withholding of final results or to the deletion of the child's name from the school's rolls. In addition to the fee, parents pay for the uniform, books, bag and other requirements. As a result, parents incur an average expenditure of about Rs. 1600 per student per year – a sum they can barely afford. One result of having to expend so much on basic education is that parents send boys to private schools but often retain girls at home, thereby denying girls their rights to education.

Private schools are seen by some parents as schools in which they can assign their children to a class, unmindful of the child's capability. In one school, for instance, a II standard textbook was given to a first standard boy because his parents wanted him to be in the second standard, even though the boy had been unable to cope with the first standard syllabus. Though typically, parents as fee-paying clients should be treated well or should be able to command a certain amount of

services, their poverty and social marginality continues to place them in a non-stakeholder's position. They receive little respect or consideration from the teachers and the administrators of schools. From this position of disadvantage, parents are unable to challenge practices, such as corporal punishment.

Classroom Transactions

Based on observations in different classes we documented the following conditions and practices in the different schools. The focus of classroom observations was not primarily on pedagogical practices but on understanding the conditions and interactions in the class and on teacher-student relations, relations among students, and the general dynamics of treatment of children in class.

Classroom Organisation and Teaching-Learning Methods

Some general observations from the private school in Manoharpura Kachi Basti and the Government school in Gher Saiwad.

Classroom observations indicate that classes (actual teaching-learning transactions) are conducted in a regimented manner. Inadequate space for each class and the inability of teachers to engage the students in creative ways are key issues. Teachers rely largely on text-books for all subjects and focus primarily on transacting and reiterating what is in the texts. The blackboard is the dominant mode of communication. Most teachers write on the board, with their backs to the students for prolonged periods of time, instead of engaging with the children either

collectively or individually. Children, in turn, focus predominantly on copying from the board. In the private school, even a drawing class consists of children being told to copy what is drawn on the board. For example, one day in Class III, the teacher drew a peacock on the board and the children were told to copy it; which they did quietly. Since students are not expected to contribute to the class discussions, there are no open questions, answers and discussions. Only direct questions and answers are encouraged and teachers themselves commit several mistakes while writing on the board. The private school is more regimented and parents see this as a positive aspect of schooling; especially in comparison to government schools which they consider completely chaotic.

Despite actual teaching being regimented, a significant proportion of time is not spent on teaching-learning transactions. In the government school, teachers spent considerable time chatting among themselves, while students were asked to copy from the board or from the text-books or to repeat after the monitors. Subsequently, students often while away their time talking, playing or doing nothing. No period is allotted for games or sports and this is probably one reason why children are restless and periodically lapse into mischief in class.

The seating arrangement in both the schools also reinforces the idea of the teacher occupying a superior position. While children sit on the floor, on mats, the teacher has a chair placed close to the board and sometimes between the board and the desk. Teachers rarely sit down with the students and even correction of individual notebooks is done while sitting or standing at the desk.

The exception to this seating arrangement is in classes IV and V in the government school where the introduction of new teaching methods has compelled teachers to organise students into small groups and to participate in group activities while sitting down on the floor with them. That changes in the pedagogical style, including a significant change in teacher-student interaction, can be the key to improving teaching-learning methods shows the success of the BODH methodology of teaching[16]. Classes IV and V are run on this scheme and children are involved in activities – craft, games, and mathematics where they are encouraged to express their creativity. Homework is checked regularly by the teacher the next day and students who have not done their homework have to skip their lunch and finish it. The increase in enrollment of children in the government school, especially for standards IV and V, is evidence of the positive impact of this programme.

Modes of Control

In both the government and the private schools, teachers resorted to a range of methods to control students. The most frequent methods used to control a class, that is, to maintain silence, order and obedience were threats, corporal punishment and the use of class monitors.

Threatening children is a common mode of controlling them. Commonly used threats are: "I will fail you if you make a noise", "What use is it teaching you, you are all dullards". Some teachers

[16] BODH, an NGO based in Jaipur, has developed and promoted new teaching-learning methods which have been introduced in some of the government schools in the city.

frequently label students weak and insult them. Teachers frequently resort to corporal punishment in all classes. Failure to maintain silence in class, inability to answer questions, failure to complete homework, and even coming late to class were factors that prompted beatings. Many parents cited ill-treatment of their children in school as the reason for withdrawing them.

A feature common to both the government and private schools was the role that a monitor played in the class. The class monitor is reportedly chosen on "the basis of intelligence", but is often the favourite of the teacher. Teachers nominate monitors and call upon them to perform a range of tasks. Typically, the monitor "controls" the class, especially when the teacher steps out or is engrossed in some written work. When called to duty, a monitor stands up to watch over a class, often with a stick in hand, and attempts to keep his or her classmates quiet. Sometimes, when a student is unable to answer a question, the teacher instructs the monitor to beat the child. The monitor assumes the role of the teacher and is often harsh and violent towards his fellow students.

Teacher-Student Relationships

That the teacher-student relationship is nunsatisfactory in both these schools is indicated by the fact that a significant number (23 percent) of children cited ill-treatment at school as the prime reason for dropping out of school. Teachers were not only feared but were often seen as being responsible for the child's poor performance and dislike of school. The idea that corporal punishment was the only way to

"control children" meant that teachers not only violated the right of children to be treated with consideration and care, but also lost the respect that should be due to them.

The NGO School

In marked contrast to these two schools, classes in the NGO school are focussed around the concept of the teacher being accessible to children and with teaching-learning methods centred around them. Children are organised into groups of 5-6 based on age and learning levels, and not into conventional standards or classes. Discussions and teaching-learning sessions are organised with each group sitting in a semi-circle instead of the conventional rows, with the teacher also sitting on the same level with them. Children's inputs are encouraged and teaching is centred around making the children enjoy the subject being taught. The researcher, Sucheta Singh, observed that the children are not only kept actively engaged but are also able to grasp what is taught. Classes are lively but without the distracting noise or chatter observed in the classes of the government or private school.

A striking difference in the NGO school is that students here call their teachers by their names. There is a sense of informality and relations between the teachers and students are friendly. Teachers also play with the students during the off-school hours. Each period is for a duration of 40 minutes during which teachers not only teach but also permit children to speak and discuss issues. A number of activities involving both the teacher and the student are also part of the teaching process. Unlike the government and private school, this school has

no system of class monitors and teachers do not resort to corporal punishment.

Caste and Communal Factors in the Class

A serious issue observed by our researcher was the extent to which caste and communal orientations are manifested in classrooms and in the interactions between teachers and students and among students.

CASTEISM IN CLASSROOMS

- A significant number of parents had withdrawn their children from school as they were ill-treated by teachers. Parents cite caste discrimination as the bases for such ill-treatment.
- Some teachers do not drink water brought by low-ranked caste students. When Harish, a low-ranked caste boy in the Government school's fifth standard was sent by the teacher to fill water, the other teachers refused to touch the jug unless it was cleansed seven times in mud.
- Ganesh, a III standard Brahmin student in the government school, was teased by his classmates for his long hair. Unable to bear the teasing, Ganesh dropped out of school. He does not want to enter school again.

That even children in the region are conscious about religious and caste differences is evident in their discussions themselves. When students of the NGO school were asked to write essays on a festival, Raees, aged about 10 years, wrote that on Id they hug friends and

relatives. Another boy in the class asked Raees if they hug Bhangis also and the other children laughed. In the government school, Rasheed invited Kuldeep, his classmate in standard I to his house for a function at home. Kuldeep declined the invitation citing religious differences. Though such instances indicate the prevalence of religious and caste biases, no efforts were made by the school to address these issues. Teachers were not conscious of the biases and prejudices that children brought with them from their home and community environments. No conscious and deliberate attempt was made to address these prejudices and by ignoring these biases the schooling process further consolidated these opinions and differences.

In contrast to teachers from other schools, the teachers of the NGO school did not make hostile or negative comments about the children, and there were no complaints of ill-treatment from parents. This shows that teacher orientation and training in a range of pedagogical and social issues can help overcome some of the biases that teachers have against children and their social backgrounds.

TEACHERS

Inadequacy in Teacher Training

Teacher training and orientation are reflected not only in the pedagogies used but also in teacher-student relations and teacher input into the functioning of the school as an institution. Many of the teachers from the government and private schools who were interviewed expressed both directly and indirectly their assessment and evaluation

of many students as "incapable of being educated." Many consider children from poor families and low-castes as "uneducatable". Most teachers consider the students' ability to learn and perform in class to be independent of the teachers' endeavours. "Some do well, some are not keen", "If they want, they can learn", "They are not interested which is why they do not learn", "I teach but it is for them to learn". Statements such as these indicate a lax attitude where teachers do not believe it is their responsibility to ensure that children learn. By associating capability and orientation of students to their background, many teachers shirk their responsibility of ensuring that children gain from being in the class. In their assessment of students, many teachers mark some students as being educatable and many as not educatable. Such an orientation largely accounts for why many teachers do not seek to expend much time or energy on teaching.

That a comprehensive teacher training programme can help correct such attitudes is evident among the teachers of the NGO school who, through training, are made to realise that it is their inputs that determines the performance of their students. That teachers in the NGO school expend more energy, more interest and are generally more open to seeing all children as capable of learning is largely linked to their teacher training programme.

Resentment against the Children

Perhaps what is most striking about the teacher-student relationship in the government and private schools is the lack of empathy on the part of the teachers for the children and their living conditions. The

attitude and actions of many teachers towards children from low-caste are sometimes overtly hostile and often covertly disdainful. The cases cited by parents indicate the extent to which caste discrimination within and outside class marks the schooling experience of many children and is the reason why many children drop-out of school. Teachers themselves do not openly admit such discrimination and dismiss cases as having happened only in the past. However, one teacher noted wryly, "Since most children in government schools are now from low-caste groups, we have become untouchables ourselves". Such an attitude indicates a sense of resentment towards these children and in many ways accounts for the lack of engagement and commitment towards teaching children from these backgrounds.

Teachers' Social Background and Orientation

While it is distressing to note that such attitudes continue to prevail in the field of education, the lack of teachers from the low-caste groups compounds the discriminatory attitudes and behaviour towards students. Most teachers in the schools studied were men and most were also from upper-caste backgrounds. Only the government school in Gher Saiwad had a majority of female teachers and they too were primarily from upper caste families. The private school in Manoharpura had six teachers, of whom two were women and four were men, two of them were upper caste and two scheduled caste. The NGO school also had a skewed gender ratio among teachers: there were 15 male teachers and only three women teachers. Since the student body in all the schools, especially the government school and the private one in the slum, belonged predominantly to the low-castes, there was a difference in

the caste background of the teachers and the students. This difference was the basis for the teachers' lack of empathy for the students.

Ambivalent Attitudes Towards Children, their Family Environment and Culture

Teachers also have an ambivalent attitude towards the culture and social practices of the communities and families that students come from. On the one hand, they are tolerant of such cultural practices as child marriage, withdrawal of girl children at puberty and do not think it appropriate for them to intervene in such matters. On the other hand, they are less understanding and tolerant of the culture and conditions which prevent parents from being what, in middle class terms, are considered to be good and supportive parents of students. The inability of parents, most of who are non-literate, to supervise their children's homework, to send them neatly dressed to school, to attend parent-teacher meetings are instances cited by teachers as indicating parents' neglect of children and their inability to be supportive. Many teachers do not empathise with parents' working and living conditions and do not understand the limitations faced by children who are first generation school-goers.

The Life of out of school Children

Dysfunctional schools, an indifferent education administration and disempowered parents all combine to keep many children out of school. Our sample survey of 15 percent of out of school children in the three areas identified a range of conditions in which out-of-school children live, and a range of factors that account for their being out of school.

Never Enrolled

Forty two per cent of the interviewed children had never enrolled in any school. Of these, 62 per cent of the parents cited financial problems as reasons for not enrolling the children. However, citing financial problems was the most frequent response to queries on non-enrollment. A closer scrutiny revealed that only the most severely economically disadvantaged, that is those households and families that were dependent on fluctuating and very unreliable incomes from menial labour and tasks, were not able to afford schooling. Some others cited financial problems but on further questioning indicated other factors such as distress related to the death of a parent, migration, lack of information about schooling, lack of confidence, etc. as reasons for the failure to enroll children in school.

Twelve per cent noted migration to be the reason for non-enrollment. But 31 per cent of the children interviewed indicated parents' lack of interest. While some of these parents were in extreme economic hardship or were new migrants to the city, many of them had adequate financial support but being non-literate themselves they did not consider it important to enroll their children in school. Interestingly, children of petty shopkeepers seem to have less opportunities to attend school. They not only had higher non-enrollment rates but also had high rates of withdrawal. The failure of the educational system to reach out to these children is best illustrated in these cases where children are willing to and want to be in school and yet the system overlooks their specific conditions of deprivation.

Withdrawals and Dropouts

Fifty two per cent of children had enrolled but had been withdrawn or had dropped out of school. Of these, 22 per cent of the parents cited financial difficulties as the reason for withdrawing their children. The economic background of most of these families was similar to those who had not enrolled; they were mostly from the menial labouring classes whose daily or monthly income was irregular. In most cases, these families relied on construction work, daily wage work, and fruit or vegetable vending as their main source of livelihood. More significantly, social factors such as marriage, migration, sibling care, etc. were cited by 33 percent of the families as reasons for withdrawing children from school. What emerges is the extent to which non-economic and therefore social factors play .. role in eroding children's access to education. Though such factors play a key role in depriving children of education, they are often understated by teachers and others involved in basic education.

Moreover, the effect of the distant and indifferent attitude and approach that most teachers have towards the families of their students is evident here. Only 28 percent of the interviewed families said that a teacher had ever visited their homes. In most cases, no teacher, or member of the education administration or any organisation had visited the homes of these children. In many of the cases of "withdrawn" children, a little persuasion or persistence by teachers would have ensured that the child was retained in school.

Government schools accounted for 54 per cent of dropouts: a factor that further indicates the poor functioning of government schools. Thirty-one per cent of the dropouts were from private schools. The NGO school, on the other hand, accounted for only nine per cent of the children who had dropped out. Parents and children considered dysfunctional schools to be a major issue and described such schools as those that do not function regularly (when the school itself is closed), where teaching is inadequate (teacher is often absent or does not teach at all) and where the children are not treated well. The other reasons cited for withdrawing children from school were (in the order of frequency) the following: for domestic work, inability to cope with studies, ill-treatment by teachers, and sudden crisis in the family.

Children and Labour

Contrary to popular understanding, many children who are not attending school are also not fully engaged either at home or in formal employment or labour. Our study of out of school children indicates that as many as 74 percent of the study's sample children between the ages of 6-13 are not engaged in household chores or home-based production. These children were also not employed in wage labour or in any other work. Details from interviews with the children indicate that they spend a substantial part of their day (more than six hours per day) playing with their siblings and friends. Many boys pointed out that they played cards, bought, exchanged or sold photocards, played ***kabaddi***, cricket, *lakdi dang* at different seasons, watched television or just roamed around during the day.

Many out of school children who had been withdrawn from school or had dropped out regretted not having continued in school and expressed the desire to return to school. Yet, none knew of the possibility of returning to school or the procedure for re-enrolling.

But for a sizeable number of children, being engaged in labour was the direct factor that prevented them from attending school. Child labour is visible and rampant in the city and its environs and as other studies have indicated, there is little or no State implementation of the anti-child labour laws[17]. Our study identified a range of work and labour performed by children in the poverty-striken areas. Twenty-six per cent of the children in the study were engaged in wage labour or were engaged in work considered to be 'apprenticeship'. In the Manoharpura Kachi Basti, children from the migrant Bengali families were rag pickers. They worked upto six hours a day, picking rags and recyclable materials from garbage heaps and waste dumps. They received Rs.10-15 per day from the collecting depot or sold the collected material at the end of the week for Rs 300-400. Children of the Scheduled Caste families worked as sweepers, cleaners and handiboys. Some children were also employed as shop assistants and handicraft assistants. Many young girls accompanied their mothers to the homes of the middle and upper classes.

The gemstones industry has gained added momentum since 1991 and has become an attractive industry for many children[18]. It has absorbed

[17] Kanchan Mathur, et al. *Child Workers in the Gem Polishing Industry of Jaipur.* IDS. Jaipur. 2001 ; Lakshmidhar Mishra, " The Gem Polishing Export Industry in Jaipur (Rajasthan) " in *Child Labour in India.* Delhi: Oxford University Press. 2000.
[18] Ibid.

a number of children but many indicated, when interviewed, that they were still apprentices and were not paid. Generally children mostly from Muslim and middle-caste families worked in the gem stone polishing units and only a handful of them combined schooling with gem-stone work. Many houses in the Kho-Nagoria area had gemstone machines installed in them and were recruiting child labourers. Most of the children were boys between the ages of 10-16 and were polishers. They worked for an average of 6-8 hours per day and were paid Rs 15-20 per day.

Caught in the vicious cycle of poverty, many parents think it sensible to have their children learn a craft or a trade rather than be educated. Such an assessment or understanding forms the basis for legitimising children's labour. Many children themselves seem to have internalised such ideas. They note the importance of learning a skill or having job experience as a way to being able to earn their living later on. Even children as young as 11 and 12 saw such training or apprenticeship as important for them to become earning members of the family. Yet, older children, those between 13-16 years, regret the fact that they are no longer considered employable by the industries for which they sacrificed their childhood and educational opportunity.

Education Deprivation and Citizenship Differentiation

In their own comments and assessment, children reveal that attending or not attending school has become a significant marker. School-going children see and assess non-school going children as "dirty",

"disobedient", "wanderers", "dark children", "quarrelsome" and as children who "use bad language". Out-of-school children, on the other hand, see school-going children as "looking clean", "dressed well", "able to speak well".

Such labelling and the attitudes that underlie them and the actions that emanate from them reinforce and reproduce the social world of difference and discrimination that already exists. If the goal of education is to provide children with equal opportunities in life and enable them to treat each other equally, then ***equitable access to quality education*** must be the foundation of State policies. Yet, policies have not emphasised the centrality of making schooling an experience and a process in which discriminatory practices can be challenged. The parent who noted that schools now treat children as horses and donkeys astutely observed the entrenched discriminatory nature of schooling where the children of the poor and the low-castes are treated as donkeys.

Action to address such in-built biases must start from an orientation that goes beyond seeing mass schooling as only a numbers game. As anthropologist Ann Gold notes in her study of literacy in Rajasthan[19] in general and of the education of girls in particular, the forms of denial of the right to education will persist until providing education becomes part of the culture of "honour" (*izzat)* of the dominant culture. To this must be added the need for all, especially the key actors in the educational setup, the teachers, administrators and leaders, to recognise that all children have the right to an education

[19] Ann Gold, "New Light in New Times? Women's Songs on Schooling Girls in Rural Rajasthan." *Manushi*, Vol 123, 2001.

system that is judicious and which can assure them a quality, enjoyable and enabling education. More specially there must be an education system that treats all children with dignity and which will enable them to question the entire range of inherited inequalities.

SUGGESTIONS

I. Enhancing the State's Role Towards Primary Education

To establish schools as central institutions in a community or society and to ensure their functioning in a stable and effective manner it is important to integrate the contributions of the State, society and teachers. No longer can schools and schooling be considered the responsibility of either only the State or the society. A negotiated approach towards mass primary education must include both the State and the society. Not only must the State allocate more funds for schools but it must also pay more attention towards the administration of schools. It is imperative for the State to see education, especially elementary education, as the foundational sector that will enable a more broad-based and durable development to take place. In this, it is important for the State to continue to be a key player in the primary education sector and not consider the market as a viable alternative to providing mass elementary education.

II. Strengthening the Decentralised School Administrative Structures

There is an urgent need for decentralised structures, such as the School Committees or the School Betterment Committees that can link the functioning of the school to decentralised administrative structures, to be set-up in Jaipur. Their absence is glaring and, within the context of an expanding school system, such a structure is indispensable. Members of the School Committee can be not only elected representatives (from the Ward or zones) but also parents of children

who are attending schools within the wards. The Education Committee of the Corporation must be an active unit with specific policies and programmes to enhance the elementary education system in the city.

Training for such structures should include all members and must include the dissemination of information regarding their right to call for meetings (and not wait for the HM to do so), to look into records, to hold the teachers accountable, etc. Members should be trained to play their roles effectively and not be restricted to only organising school programmes on Independence Day and Republic Day. The rights of members to inspect and maintain the infrastructure of the school such as the classrooms, compound wall, toilets, drinking water etc should be highlighted. In addition, members need to be re-oriented more strongly about child rights and the socio-economic and cultural practices such as child labour and child marriage within the community that are keeping children out of school. Their training should also provide them with examples of successful models adopted by other schools or areas in stemming the problem of dropouts and in devising practical and feasible solutions for them.

III. Prohibiting Child Labour

Child labour continues to be a major problem in the area and it is important to stem its easy acceptance and legitimisation. The government must act stringently to prevent child labour and awareness should be built against it. Rehabilitation of child labourers costs the government four times the amount that it would cost to provide primary

education to the child[20]. Instead of bearing the double burden of providing an inadequate and ineffective system for primary education which is wasted and then paying again for creating infrastructure to rehabilitate the child, the State needs to establish a system that is inclusive of all children.

IV. Enhancing Girls' Rights to Education

The State needs to implement several programmes in order to bridge the gender gap in elementary education. The State needs to direct several departments to work against the practice of child marriage. Information about its prevention should be made using media and during training of key personnel such as teachers, education administrators and members of decentralised local bodies. Such personnel can also be empowered to initiate action and levy fines for conducting child marriages.

V. Re-orienting Teacher Training

Measures and Programmes for making the school an attractive place need to focus on enabling teachers to be proactive agents in the education system. Teachers must be made conscious of the need to have a better understanding of the social and cultural backgrounds of parents and children. While teachers are not sensitive to the culture and problems of non-literate parents, they seek to be tolerant and understanding of practices such as child marriage, bonded labour

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[20] UNICEF, *State of the World's Children*. 1999.

etc. which effect the educational opportunities of children. Both, training and policies need to revise this contradictory orientation of teachers. The importance of being sensitive and tolerant of the culture and personalities of parents must be integrated into the teacher training programmes. Yet, at the same time, training must note the importance of teachers not accepting as legitimate and as excusable the cultural factors of early marriage, gender biases and parental neglect in sending children to school as personal and cultural factors which they cannot address.

A range of new pedagogies and orientation about teacher-student dynamics must be initiated. Ideas such as the superiority of the teacher and the lower rank of students, the need to curb and control children and the resorting to corporal punishment are many of the issues which need to be addressed.

VI. Improving Supervision and Review of Schools

The education department needs to play a more proactive and vigilant role. The private and NGO schools were not inspected regularly. In terms of the functions of the education department there is a need for it to regularly inspect the infrastructural conditions of schools, the qualifications and recruitment of teachers, the maintenance of registers and records. In addition, the department must assess and guide all schools, government and private, on teaching – learning methods, use of new syllabi and in the treatment of children.

VII. Children's Crisis Fund

Many children are withdrawn from school when a parent, especially the father, dies or when there are crises in the family. Assistance,

especially monetary and in kind, should be given to such children to ensure their continual attendance in school. A child-in-distress fund should be available to which all Ward Corporators, BEO's offices, teachers and the Education Committee Members can apply for.

VIII. Block Awards for schools

One way to sustain standards and quality of schools is to initiate awards for schools at the ward/zonal levels. Schools can be evaluated for their functioning, attendance levels, maintenance of infrastructure, teachers' performance and children's achievement levels. These awards can be publicised and they can act as mechanisms for establishing quality and standards in schools.

IX. Decentralised Data Collection

Data collected through micro-planning, information regarding accessibility of schools, infrastructure needs of every school and about drop-out children needs to be stored and held at decentralised levels, such as the ward block. Allocation of resources, supervision and other support services to the neediest and most deprived areas can be prioritised through these measures. Data on low enrolment and attendance should include details about the socio-economic background of the schools, reasons for low performance, etc. The data can be updated through six-monthly reviews and inputs from headmasters/headmistresses and from the decentralised administrative structures. Such data should also be available at the school and local levels.

This report is based on field research conducted in Jaipur, Rajasthan and is part of a study conducted by NIAS in six different states in India. The conditions of school and experiences of elementary education deprivation among the urban poor are highlighted in this report.

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