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EDITOR'S NOTE

Ever since India got Independence, the search for quality in school education has been on the agenda of policy-makers and authorities at all levels. Institutions like NCERT, SCERTs and DIETs have been continuously making efforts for that. The NCERT has been engaged for years in curriculum designing and development process for school education along with various stakeholders including policy-makers. The Journal of Indian Education in this issue highlights various aspects pertaining to the curriculum implementation and also different approaches of teaching and learning in rural and urban areas.

'Children are the pillars of the Nation' is a common phrase but in order to fulfil this slogan we need to build a constructive approach. Sharmila Rage in her article 'Education as Tritiya Ratna: Towards Phule-Ambedkarite Feminist Pedagogical Practice' emphasised for the needs of equality based education irrespective of which caste he/she belongs. Her article also profoundly provokes the readers regarding the prevalent issues of gender bias in education and the relationship between teachers and students. Next in this series, an article by P. Adinarayana Reddy and E. Mahadeva Reddy 'Participation and Consequences of Education of Scheduled Castes in Andhra Pradesh' brings out the progress in terms of enrolment in the school and their participation amongst scheduled caste. The study also finds out that parents do realise the usefulness of education.

Once students enrol and start their study in schools, the issue of learning and understanding stands before us. In this regard, Sandeep Kumar highlights how the knowledge and understanding of children develop. His article 'Teaching of Social Studies : A situated Cognition Perspective' demonstrates various methods of teaching and learning. Further, A.K. Paliwal in his article 'Translating Constructivism into English Language Teaching: Some Experience' discusses how constructivist approach leads children towards better learning of language.

Efforts to design new curriculum, syllabus and textbooks to improve teaching-learning process and address diverse groups of students are continued in many countries including India. An article by Santosh Sharma, 'Curriculum Implementation in Rural Schools : Issues and Challenges' authentically pointed out the loopholes in the implementation of curriculum in rural areas. For effective implementation, she emphasises the need for number of interacting factors which can influence each other. The study conducted by Reena Agarwal on 'Acquisition of Concept of Conservation of Length in Elementary School Children through Piagetian Teaching' reveals on the designing and development of appropriate teaching-learning strategy

for children. She uses Piaget's work where explanations are based on the process of assimilation and accommodation.

Each subject has its own pedagogy. Teachers need to realise this fact. In this regard A.B Saxena's article 'Helping Learn Science' briefly explains pedagogy of science for teachers and teacher-educators. 'Resilience in Promoting of Schools as Learning Organisations : Reflections on Karnataka Experience' by Rashmi Diwan is an article that provides an idea about the learning experiences and the activities that can be carried out within the curriculum. She also emphasised the need for the educational institutions to be free from the bureaucratic framework.

People who are concerned with the education of country's children feel that unless Assessment and Examination system will change education reform will not take place smoothly. Taking up this very aspect of school education Ravi P. Bhatia in his article 'Examination and Assessment Principles — Integrating Assessment with Teaching-Learning Processes' reminds us the need to go beyond the traditional examination system based on assessing the student's performances.

India is a country with an extraordinary complex cultural diversity which requires a curricular vision which promotes flexibility, contextual and plurality. The attempt to improve the quality of education will succeed only if it goes hand in hand with steps to promote equality and social justice. Amitav Mishra's and Girijesh Kumar's article takes an analytical look at the progress towards Indian education system. Their case study shows us how the school children got benefitted from the government-sponsored educational schemes like *Sarva Siksha Abhiyan*. Democratising education is fundamental to addressing the diversity in optimistic way. Wherever issue of diversity emerges, it joins with the issue of Human Rights. Shankar Sharan in his article 'Some Problems of Human Rights Education' explores some of the Human Rights issue in Indian educational system. Finally, the issue of Journal of Indian Education concludes with a review essay by Kirti Kapur entitled 'Women who Write' in which she has highlighted the potential of women in literatures which many of the developing countries including India normally ignore.

We believe that this issue will enlighten our readers to critically re-examine education system, and also motivate them to contribute their ideas in the endeavour of educational reform in India.

Academic Editor

Education as *Tritya Ratna*

Towards Phule-Ambedkarite Feminist Pedagogical Practice*

SHARMILA REGE**

Abstract

It is now well-accepted that colonial knowledges in India were structured on binaries that distinguished India from the West, Orient from the Occident, thus homogenising the Indian experience into a Hindu brahmanical one. The nationalists too, imagined alternate knowledges within these binaries, reversing them to claim over the West, a civilisational superiority located in the Vedas. This normalisation of knowledge as Hindu and brahmanical structured by both the colonial and nationalist binaries had/has implications for curricular and pedagogical practices in our classrooms.

*In this lecture, with an apology to the innumerable modern day Shambhukas and Eklavyas, and to students reduced to cases of suicides on campuses, I shall map some of the hidden injuries caused by the violence of these pedagogical practices. In the last decade and more, there has been a welcome change in the gender, caste and class composition of students. But this, as we know, is happening in a context constituted by the conflicting demands of discourses of democratic acceptance of social difference, conservative imposition of canonical common culture and of marketisation of higher education. Invoking Phule-Ambedkarite feminist perspectives which envision education as *Tritya Ratna* and are driven by the utopia of 'Educate, Organise, and Agitate', I seek to dialogue with fellow teachers on the different axes of power in our classrooms; more specifically to explore modes through which inequalities of caste are reproduced in metropolitan universities and classrooms. How may we as teachers and co-learners address questions of pedagogy and authority, pedagogy and transformation by throwing back the gaze of the 'invisible' and 'unteachable' students in our classrooms on our pedagogical practices?*

* This is the written text of a lecture delivered during Savitribai Phule Second Memorial Lecture Series at SNDT Women's University, Marine Lines, Mumbai on 29 January 2009, published by NCERT.

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**Education as *Tritya Ratna*
Towards Phule-Ambedkarite
Feminist Pedagogical Practice**

“O learned pandits wind up the selfish prattle of your hollow wisdom and listen to what I have to say”

(Mukta Salve, About the Grief of *Mahar* and *Mangs*, 1855)

Let me ask you something oh Gods!... You are said to be completely impartial. But wasn't it you who created both men and women?

(Tarabai Shinde, A Comparison of Men and Women, 1882)¹

I begin this lecture with words written by Mukta Salve, a fourteen year old girl student of the *mang* caste in Jotiba and Savitribai Phule's school and Tarabai Shinde a young maratha woman trained in the *Satyashodhak* (Society of Truth Seekers) tradition. For what better tribute can one pay to the greatest teachers of modern India than the words of fire with which their students talked back to the injustice of their times? I am deeply honoured to be delivering the Savitribai Phule Memorial Lecture organised by the NCERT in collaboration with SNDT, Mumbai. Savitribai in her writings and practices addressed the complex relations between culture, knowledge and power and sought not only to include girl students and students from the ex-untouchable castes but also to democratise the very processes of learning and teaching. This memorial lecture is particularly special because it is instituted in the memory of this great woman visionary and institution-builder. I am grateful to the NCERT for deeming me worthy of delivering this lecture instituted in her memory. I would also like to place on record my

sincere thanks to the faculty, staff members and students at Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule Women's Studies Centre and the Department of Sociology at the University of Pune, as also the Phule-Ambedkarite, Left and feminist community for providing meaningful contexts for the practice of critical pedagogies.

This lecture in many ways is a collection of 'stories' of our classrooms, relationships between students and teachers and the political frameworks which constitute these stories. Like all narrators, I have selected some and ignored or postponed other stories; interpreted them in one way rather than another. As narrators, we imagine that we shall achieve something by telling the stories the way we do to the people. These stories, I imagine, are a dialogue with fellow teachers on addressing caste and gender in the metropolitan classroom. The present set of stories are put together from diary notings made on teaching, discussions with colleagues and students, notes written by students of their experiences – often in moments of disruptions or departure, comments made on formal course evaluation sheets, the comments they half scratch out from these sheets, questions raised in class and those asked hesitantly outside the class, their silences that one rushes past in the business as usual mode during peak periods of the semester and gestures that defy narrative expression.

Many of these emerge as narratives of 'betrayal laced with temporality and place' – betrayal by the system (this is not what I expected of this place; it was not like this earlier), betrayal of students

by teachers (I did not think that someone who waxes eloquent on democracy would be so selective in practice, teachers of times bygone, or in other places were/are committed to practicing what they preach); betrayal of teachers by students (I thought at least students would stand with me against the injustice by authorities; it was not so in the magical 70s/is not so in other places). Often these narratives of betrayal and of decline in plurality and of standards of our university become cynical announcements of the 'impossibility' of practicing critical pedagogies in our times or place. The present state of universities then comes to be explained either in terms of incomplete modernisation or the modern university being an alien concept in 'our' culture. The explanations are thus framed within binaries that distinguish India from the West, Orient from the Occident, and thereby often equating Indian culture to the Hindu brahmanical practices. That is to say the liberal voices bemoan the loss of pluralism arguing that the din of 'parochial identities' of caste, community, gender on our campuses is the result of 'bad modernity'; the indigenists call for *gurukul* like alternatives that may better suit 'our' culture.

It is not a coincidence that these narratives of decline come in times or places where the entry of a new generation of scholars and students from vulnerable sections in Indian society is posing challenges to the social homogeneity of the classroom, boards of studies and other academic bodies leading to obvious frictions on issues related to decline of standards and merit.

A new generation of *dalit* scholarship for instance, drawing upon the modern *dalit* testimonial, has underlined the limits of pluralism of the Nehruvian era and bringing to centre the violence of the bleeding thumb of Eklavya and death of Shambhuka; rejected the regime of the *gurukul* as an alternative. This scholarship, following the Thorat Committee Report on AIIMS, suicide of Rajani (a *dalit* girl student who committed suicide because the banks did not find her credit worthy for a student loan) and Senthil Kumar (a *dalit* Ph.D. student whose fellowship was stopped) has raised questions both about the accessibility of higher education and the limitations in making it enabling for those who struggle to gain entry into it². The nexus of networks of exclusion that operate formally and informally on campuses in the absence of transparency to reproduce caste inequalities in the metropolitan university are being debated³.

While there are at present several efforts at 'talking/writing back'⁴, I would like to mention a few by way of examples—Insight: Young Voices, a journal published by students and researchers from Delhi, the work from Hyderabad of research scholar like Murali Krishna, who employs his autobiography to theorise educational practices, Indra Jalli, Swathy Margaret, Jenny Rowena who bring caste to centre to interrogate feminist practices in the academy, the film 'Nageshwar Rao Star' which starts with reflections on the star/asterix, the marker of caste identity in the admission list and moves to reflect on and recover new knowledge on the Tsundururu massacre, 'Out-caste' an informal, public

wall-journal which looks at caste as a category that structures both exclusion and privilege, discussions on caste on campuses on several list-serves like Zest-Caste, and on-going M.Phil. and Ph.D. thesis across campuses in India. Closer home, in Pune University, mention may be made of Dilip Chavan's caste-class critique of the debate on reforming the UGC-NET, the efforts of *Sajag* (conscious) students' research group to reinvent the relationship between social movements and the academia and the 'Research Room Diaries' put together by researchers in women's studies reflecting on their diverse histories of hidden injuries and privileges experienced as students on 'teacher's day'⁵.

These and several other efforts are seeking to challenge disciplinary regimes of caste, opening up new ways of looking at the present of our disciplines and pedagogical practices and suggest that critical teachers should be 'listening' rather than bemoaning the loss of better times. I wish to argue that these are 'new times' in the university, the suicides and other forms of 'routine' pedagogical violence notwithstanding. Men and women from vulnerable castes and classes are entering higher education for the first time and those for long considered 'unteachable' are talking/writing back. This makes it possible to throw back the gaze of the students who have long been 'invisible' and 'nameless' in the classrooms onto disciplinary and pedagogical practices. Is it that years of confidence and certainty of teaching in our areas of expertise makes us embedded in certain kinds of arguments so that we foreclose other possible ways

of looking and listening?⁶ Do we as teachers become used to ferreting out inconsistencies in stories offered to us by students and prematurely discard them as irrelevant? This lecture is an exercise that is both restitutive and exploratory; I seek to re-listen, reflect and assign new value to 'stories' and 'voices' ignored and discarded earlier as also to present recent experiences from the classroom for exploration.

Recently, a young *dalit* researcher and colleague narrated to me his experiences of the school and the university, the ways in which the curricular, extra-curricular and academic success (lesson on Dr Ambedkar in the textbook, elocution competition, becoming a UGC-JRF scholar) were all instances that reproduced caste by reducing him to a 'stigmatised particular'⁷. Pointing to a paradox, he asked 'why do even sociologists whose object of analysis is caste, believe that caste identities do not matter in academic practices'? I wish to take this question for consideration in the next section, reframing it a little provocatively to ask – Why are 'we' afraid of 'identity'? Why do we assume neutrality when it comes to identities of caste, ethnicity, and gender and presume that they do not affect the content and practice of our discipline? Do we disavow caste – say it does not exist in our context and talk of it in other terms and codes – like standards, language and so on? It is common for many of us teaching in state universities and colleges not only to categorise our students into neat categories of English and Marathi medium or English and Gujarati medium but also reduce these

students to this singular identity (for instance in a local college where I taught it was customary to ask students to add an EM or MM when they introduced their names in any gathering). However, we may not always be open to discussing the different and contradictory identities of teachers, students and other players in the social relations of teaching and learning. In the next section, I want to explore this issue of medium of instruction – the ‘language question’ so to say and fear of identity on a ground I am familiar with, namely the practice of sociology.

Hidden in the ‘Language Question’ — Tracing the Fear of Identity⁸

The hierarchy of standards between central and state universities, it might help to recall, draw not only on superior infrastructural facilities but also on English being the medium of teaching and research in the former as against the local/regional language in the latter. As teachers in state universities and local colleges, we may counter this logic through an opposition that assumes all social science practised in English to be elitist and that in the vernacular to be more down to earth. At other times, we may respond to the ‘language question’ through efforts to find quality reading material in Indian languages and develop English language proficiency through remedial classes. Interestingly, this ‘language question’ appears quite prominently in some of the discussions that sociologists have had on their discipline being in ‘crisis’.

Sociologists more than other social scientists in India, have from time to time described and reflected upon the crisis

in the discipline, with a more concentrated debate happening in the 1970s and 1990s. If we revisit some of the articulations of ‘crisis in the discipline’ in 1970s, it is apparent that the ‘language question’ is strongly implicated in the salient features, causes and solutions suggested to the crisis. The crisis is described in terms of unrestricted expansion of sociology at the undergraduate level and in Indian languages, market-driven textbooks and takeover of ‘pure’ pedagogies by politics. The script is one that narrates the story of expansion of sociology at the undergraduate level and in regional languages as ‘provincialisation’ of higher education, in general, and sociology, in particular. Re-reading this debate, one is struck by two rather paradoxical anxieties of the sociological community. On the one hand, is the angst with academic colonisation (why do not we have ‘our own’ theories and categories), while on the other is the apprehension about the new and diverse ‘expanding public’ (what will happen to ‘standards’, if teaching and learning is no longer to be done in English). The new publics of sociology are denigrated and assumed to be ‘residual’, those who are in sociology, not because they want to because of a politically imposed expansion of regional universities/colleges.

The calls of ‘crisis’ in the discipline surface again in the 1990s with comments on the increasing number of students registered in doctoral programmes and their ignorance of elementary facts and concepts. It comes to be argued that both teaching and research are in a deplorable condition because most of our universities and

other centres of higher learning have become cockpits for caste, regional and linguistic conflict and intrigue. As the enrolment rates of the 'upper caste'⁹, middle class metropolitan students mark a relative decline and the sociology classroom comes to be more diverse in terms of caste, region and linguistic identities, the anxiety about the expanding 'public' turns into a script of accusation. The accusation operates at two levels; the upsurge of identities in Indian society and politics is seen as causing the demise of merit and any appeal to questions of identity and language on the campus and in the classroom come to be viewed as always and already interest group politics. In times of *Mandal*, these narratives of decline of the discipline from its golden age have to be contextualised in the battle between the pan-Indian English educated elite and the new regional elites moving on the national scene.

Interestingly it is practitioners located on the institutional and organisational margins of 'national' sociology who shifted the axis of the debate from standards to questions of equality; inquiring into the legitimacy of sociological knowledge and the pronouncements of decline. Further, the 1990s were marked by prominent 'national' sociologists lending support to the anti-*Mandal* position which dominated the middle class urban perception of the issue. Additionally, the debate on *dalits* joining the Durban Conference against discrimination based on race and caste underlined the ways in which sociologists in the name of objectivity valued the opinion of experts while rejecting perspectives emerging

from the lived experience of caste and the horror of atrocities. If in the 1970s, as seen earlier, 'national sociology' described the expansion of sociology in regional languages as provincialisation of the discipline; in the 1990s the claims of 'National sociology' stood 'provincialised'. 'National' sociology was 'provincialised' as it failed to say anything beyond popular commonsense on the *Mandal* controversy though its identity hinged upon theorisation of caste; as also because several questions came to be raised about nation as the 'natural' unit for organising sociological knowledge and about selective processes that equated happenings in the elite set of institutions in Delhi to Indian Sociology.

So if we go back to my colleague's question with which we began – why do even sociologists assume that these identities have no consequences for the content and practice of their discipline? Why was there an expectation on his part that sociologists would be different from other social scientists? Probably because caste, gender, and ethnicity are their object of study and they have been the first to include courses and modules on women, *dalits* and tribals in the sociology curriculum? Yet as we just saw, it is sociologists more than others who seem to be afraid of any claims to caste or gender identities. They appear to assume that avowal of gender and caste identities will lead to feminification of theory or demise of merit – in other words to 'pollution' of academic purity. It might help here to focus on the ways in which sociological knowledge and practice are organised by the professional bodies and the curriculum. Women, *dalits*, *adivasis*, may be included as substantive research

areas of sociology and in optional courses but this inclusion keeps the cognitive structures of the discipline relatively intact from the challenges posed by *dalit* or feminist knowledges¹⁰. Thus 'good sociology' continues to be defined in terms of the binaries of objectivism/subjectivism, social/political, social world/knower, experience/knowledge, tradition/modernity and theoretical Brahman/empirical *Shudra*.

So every time, the problem of expansion of the discipline in Indian languages or the language question comes to be discussed, we gloss over the several layers of identities and assume simplistic binaries of sociology practised in English being national and rigorous, and those in Indian languages being provincial and simplistic. Alternatively, indigenists and nativists assume sociology practised in English to be elitist and incapable of grasping 'our culture' and that in regional languages down to earth and applicable to 'our culture'. While the former position seeks to resolve the tensions through remedial English courses, translation of textbooks or a simple commitment to bilingualism; the latter proposes teaching and writing in Indian languages as a 'cultural duty'. These positions though they seem different are similar in that they see language only in its communicative aspects as if separable from power relations and the cultural and symbolic effects of language. In contrast, *dalit* imaginations of language, wedge open the symbolic and material power of language. In the next section, I shall bring to centre some *dalit* imaginations of language to underline ways in which caste and gender identities remain

hidden in what we discuss as a 'language question'.

***Dalit* Imaginations — Wedging Open the 'Language Question'**

"Now if you want to know why I am praised – well it's for my knowledge of Sanskrit, my ability to learn it and to teach it. Doesn't anyone ever learn Sanskrit? ...That's not the point. The point is that Sanskrit and the social group I come from; don't go together in the Indian mind. Against the background of my caste, the Sanskrit I have learned appears shockingly strange. That a woman from a caste that is the lowest of the low should learn Sanskrit, and not only that, also teach it is a dreadful anomaly ..."

(Kumud Pawade, 1981 : 21)

"In a word, our alienation from the Telugu textbook was more or less the same as it was from the English textbook in terms of language and content. It is not merely a difference of dialect; there is difference in the very language itself. ...What difference did it make to us whether we had an English textbook which talked about Milton's 'Paradise Lost' or 'Paradise Regained', or Shakespeare's 'Othello' or 'Macbeth' or Wordsworth's poetry about nature in England, or a Telegu textbook which talked about Kalidasa's 'Meghasandesham', Bommera Potanna's 'Bhagvtam' We do not share the content of either; we do not find our lives reflected in their narratives"

(Kancha Ilaiah 1996 : 15)

"Through his initiatives, Lord Macaulay was to re-craft a new intellectual order for India which threatened the dominance of the Brahmins and questioned the relevance of the Varna/caste order. This was to give Dalits a large breathing space ... Should we know our past the way we like to, or we know the past as it existed? Or should there be any distinction between History Writing and Story Telling? Those who condemn Lord Macaulay for imposing a 'wrong' education on India do never tell us

what kind of education system which Macaulay fought and eventually destroyed".
(Chandra Bhan Prasad 2006 : 99 and 115)

"While giving calls of 'Save Marathi', the question I am faced with is 'which' 'Marathi' is to be 'saved'? The Marathi rendered lifeless by the imprisonment of the oral in the standardised written Word? The Marathi with its singular aim of 'fixing meaning' which loses rhythm, intonation, emotion, Rasa? The Marathi that generates inferiority complex in those speaking 'aani- paani'¹¹? The Marathi that forms centres of power through processes of standardisation of language? Or the Marathi sans the Word that keeps the bahujan knowledgeable?"

(Pragnya Daya Pawar 2004 : 45)

*.....I dream of an english
full of the words of my language
an english in small letters
an english that shall tire a white man's
tongue
an english where small children practice
with smooth round
pebbles in their mouth to the spell the right
zha
an english where a pregnant woman is
simply stomach-child-lady
an english where the magic of black eyes
and brown bodies
replaces the glamour of eyes in dishwater
blue shades and
the airbrush romance of pink white cherry
blossom skins
.....
an english that doesn't belittle brown or
black men and women
an english of tasting with five fingers.....*
(Meena Kandaswamy 2007 : 21)¹²

Kumud Pawade's story of her Sanskrit, Kancha Ilaiah's comment on the sameness of the English and Telegu textbook, Chandra Bhan Prasad's counter commemoration of Macaulay,

Pragnya Daya Pawar's interrogation of the power of the printed word over the spoken word and Meena Kandaswamy's dream of a global English in small letters offer immense possibilities for wedging open the 'language question'.

Kumud Pawade, a *dalit* feminist intellectual in her testimonio 'Thoughtful Outburst' (1981), reflects on her journey into Sanskrit, teasing out in the process the complex character of the 'language question' in our academia. Kumud Pawade foregrounds memories of her school teacher Gokhale *Guruji*, a prototypical Brahman dressed in a *dhoti*, full shirt, a black cap and the vermilion mark on his forehead; who she expected would refuse to teach her Sanskrit. However expected responses stand interrogated as he not only taught her but also became a major influence in her life. People in her own community often discouraged her from pursuing a Masters degree in Sanskrit arguing that success at matriculation need not embolden her to this extent. At college the peons as also the higher-up officials usually commented on how 'they' were taking strides because of government money and how this had made them too big for their boots. At the university, the head of the department, a scholar of fame took great pleasure in taunting her. She would find herself comparing this man apparently modern in his ways to Gokhale *Guruji*.

However, on successfully completing her Masters degree in Sanskrit achieving a place in the merit list, her dreams of teaching Sanskrit received a rude shock as she could overhear the laughter and ridicule in the interview room about people like her being

government-sponsored *Brahmans*. Those passing these comments, she recalls were not all *brahmans*, many of them were from the *bahujan* samaj who thought of themselves as *brahman*-haters and even traced their lineage to Mahatma Phule and yet the idea of a *Mahar* girl who was a part of this *bahujan samaj* teaching Sanskrit made them restless. After two years of meritorious performance at the Masters level, unemployment and her marriage to Motiram Pawade, a *Kunbi* Maratha, she finally got an appointment as an assistant lecturer in a government college and in later years went on to become a professor in her alma mater. However, a thought continues to trouble her – it was ‘Kumud Pawade’ and not ‘Kumud Somkuvar’ who got the job. Pawade’s critical work of memory unfolds the complex gender and caste parameters in the ‘language question’ and lays bear the dynamics of a *dalit* woman acquiring an authorised tongue. Importantly she underlines the operation of language as a marker of subordination and exclusion in our academia and thus the impossibility of viewing the ‘language question’ as a matter of communication separable from power relationships and cultural and symbolic effects of language.

Ilaiah comments on the sameness of Kalidasa and Shakespeare, despite the former appearing in the Telegu textbook and latter in English. He draws attention to the difference between brahmanical Telegu and the *bahujan* renderings locating the difference in the latter emerging from production based communication. He argues “the communists and nationalists spoke and

wrote in the language of the *purohit*. Their culture was basically sanskritised; we were not part of that culture. For good or ill, no one talked about us. They never realised that our language is also language, that is understood by on and all in our communities.....” (p. 14). Ilaiah further underlines the sameness of the English and Telegu books in being ‘alien’ to the *bahujan*; their only difference being that one was written with twenty-six letters the other with fifty-six. Ilaiah’s reflections problematise the secular vernacularist position, underlining the complete domination of Hindu scriptures and sanskritic cultures in vernacular education. Any easy equation between English as alien and Telegu as ‘our language’ – yielding ‘our categories’ of analysis stands interrogated. Further, Ilaiah suggests that the question of culture mediates between the axis of equality and the academia and the ‘language’ in which education takes place is an epistemological issue more than a matter of mere instruction.

Prasad’s celebration of Macaulay’s birthday on 25th October 2006 and installation of a ‘*Dalit* Goddess of English’ to underscore the turn away from tradition has been brushed aside often as an attention seeking gimmick. This counter commemoration of Macaulay has significance for destabilising the hegemonic memory of Macaulay as the ‘villain’ who declared that a single shelf of Shakespeare was worth more than all the Sanskrit and Arabic literature of the East. Prasad re-reads ‘Minutes on Education’ to underline Macaulay’s argument about the British having to give scholarships to children to study in Sanskrit and Arabic, even when they

were ready to pay for English education. This re-reading disrupts the ongoing processes of collective remembrance of language and education in colonial India. Prasad's act of counter commemoration renders Macaulay's argument as not directed against the vernaculars; but against the outmoded literature of the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, and thus an important moment in the history of *Dalit* access to education. It is important to note Prasad's comments on discovering the top secrets of the language politics of Macaulay in his explorations into the tensions between history writing and story telling; thereby suggesting that an engagement with the 'language question' is also essentially an engagement with 'reinventing the archive' – the very methods of knowledge.

Pragnya Daya Pawar (2004) talks back to those giving calls in Maharashtra to 'save Marathi'; asking them the pertinent question 'which Marathi?' and teases out the collusion of state and elites in framing the 'language question'. Interrogating the processes of standardisation of the language, she points out to the homogenisation of meaning constituted by the processes of standardisation. She draws attention to the efforts of the Maharashtra state to empower Marathi as a language for science and technology which freeze and de-root the diversity of words into the singular 'Word'. Standardisation on one hand brutalises/marginalises/fails the *dalit bahujan* who bring into the system the 'non-standardised' language practices. On the other hand, more violently, it wipes away the epistemic value of all oral forms of knowing of the

bahujan. She recalls that the dictum of the liberal humanists 'society will improve when its people gain wisdom from education' was first called into crisis in India by Jotiba Phule. That a *bahujan* struggling against all forms of cultural colonisation, should have been the first to call this liberal agenda into question – she observes 'is logical and not coincidental'. The 'language question' thus opened up, traces the politics of internal fragmentation and hierarchisation of the vernacular in post-colonial Indian states and sees these processes as inseparable from those that monitor the differential epistemic status of different knowledges – particularly of the printed and the oral.

Meena Kandaswamy in 'Mulligatawny Dreams' dreams of an 'english' full of words selected from her language, an 'english' that challenges both the purity of standardised vernaculars and the hegemony of English. It is an 'english' in small letters, a language that resists imperialist racism and casteism of both English and the vernacular. Such hybrid formations of language are seen as enriching English by opening it up to appreciate brown bodies, black eyes and eating with five fingers. English as the language of modernisation, is disrupted suggesting that in the present conjuncture spread of English has gone beyond the worldwide elite thus opening up possibilities of challenging the hegemony of imperialist English with many resisting 'englishes'. Further, 'the dreams of english' point to the limitations of framing the language question in terms of proficiency in English language, leaving little space for playful radical innovations in pedagogy.

It is not coincidental, that *dalit* imaginations engage with the power relations that are glossed over in debates on 'language question' discussed earlier and thus wedge open and interrogate not only the Right-Wing and state agendas of the 'language question' but also that of the liberal-humanists. We can see that the liberal humanist fear of identity, of decline in standards comes from a commitment to a particular idea of democracy. It is not as if those who complain of decline in standards are opposed to including 'all others' in their system of knowledges – be it the university or the cognitive structures of the discipline. Within this idea of a democratic university, the masses will have to wait until they receive a degree of formal training (learn to 'speak like us') to comprehend requirements of a plural and democratic university. However, since the 1990s, those considered incapable of comprehending democratic requirements have come to the fore to defend democracy, even as it pertains to the knowledge of democracy, while the imagined champions of democracy began moving away from processes that inform it¹³. 'All others' are entering the university with new vocabularies and moral economy, and as the *dalit* imaginations on language suggest – are interrogating the assumed hierarchy of different knowledges, archives and methods of knowledge. For critical researchers and teachers, fear of identity and masses can no longer be an option as the radical instability of the many languages of the subaltern citizens of mass democracy calls for careful 'listening'. If we as teachers are to participate in the 'new times', exercises

in re-imagining the content and methods of knowledge becomes inseparable from those in reinventing pedagogical practices. In the next section, I argue for reinventing pedagogies through Phule-Ambedkarite-Feminist (PAF) perspectives; asking why these perspectives came to be excluded in debates on education in post-colonial India.

Phule-Ambedkarite-Feminist Pedagogies — Location and Exclusion

Having neither the expertise nor the intention to draw a set of guidelines for PAF pedagogies, what I seek to do in this section is to historically map the 'difference' of Phule-Ambedkarite perspectives on the project of education and the probable reasons for the exclusion of these perspectives from imaginations of 'alternative' perspectives on learning and teaching. If following Paulo Freire¹⁴ we see critical pedagogy as contesting the logic and practices of the 'banking method' for a more dialogical and transformative project of education, then PAF pedagogies, simply put, may be seen historically as constituting one school of critical pedagogy. Historically, we can read in the colonialist and nationalist discourses on Indian society, a battle over the function and nature of knowledge. While the colonialist project represented India as the spirit of Hindu civilisation and therefore distinct and disjunct from the West; the regime of classification and categorisation of 'Indian tradition' created norms for colonial rule enhancing the status of *brahmins* as indigenous intellectuals. While, colonial

knowledges were structured on binaries that distinguished India from the West, Orient from the Occident; the nationalists imagined alternate knowledges by reversing the claims of superiority of the West, locating the superiority in the *Vedas*. Thus, though the colonialists and nationalists contested the function of knowledge in colonial India, for both, the nature of knowledge of India was essentially Hindu and brahmanical. After the Second World War, social science discourse refashioned the binaries of Orient/Occident through the tradition/modernity thesis or indigenous approaches; both of which glossing over the structural inequalities in Indian society normalised the idea of knowledge and the educational project of/in India as Hindu and brahmanical¹⁵.

Phule and Ambedkar in different ways, by weaving together the emancipatory non-*Vedic* materialist traditions (Lokayata, Buddha, Kabir) and new western ideas (Thomas Paine, John Dewey, Karl Marx for instance) had challenged the binaries of Western modernity/Indian tradition, private caste-gender/public nation and sought to refashion modernity¹⁶ and thereby its project of education. Phule and Ambedkar in several writings and speeches but more particularly the former in 'Gulamgiri' (1873), and the latter in 'Annihilation of Caste' (1936), 'The Riddles on Hinduism' (Compiled and published in 1987) and 'The Buddha and His Dhamma' (1957) undertake a rational engagement with core analytical categories emerging from Hindu metaphysics which had been normalised as 'Indian culture and science'¹⁷.

Throughout the text of 'Gulamgiri', Phule stresses that Hindu religion is indefensible mainly because it violates the rights and dignity of human beings. He turns the 'false books' of the *brahmins* on their head by reinterpreting the 'Dashavataara' of Vishnu to rewrite a history of the struggles of the *shudras* and anti-*shudras*. He moves swiftly between the power and knowledge nexus in everyday cultural practices, myths and history. In his 'Memorial Addressed to the Education Commission (1882)' for a more inclusive policy on education and in his popular compositions like the short ballad on 'Brahman Teachers in the Education Department (1869)', Phule demonstrates how state policy and dominant pedagogical practices are intrinsically interlinked. He comments at length on the differential treatment to children of different castes and the collusion of interests of the Bombay government school inspectors and teachers. He calls for more plurality in the appointment of teachers and the need to appoint those committed to teaching as a truth-seeking exercise. Ambedkar in 'Annihilation of Caste' (1936) argues against the absolute knowledge and holism idealised by brahmanical Hinduism and critiques the peculiar understanding of nature and its laws (*karma*) in the Shastric texts. Both Phule and Ambedkar underline the preference for truth enhancing values and methods through an integration of critical rationality of modern science and the skepticism and self reflection of ancient non-*Vedic* materialists and the Buddha. It is clear both in and through their works that they see organisation of

knowledge as complexly related to the interlocking connections of different identities. This leads them to value situated knowledge but such that they do not collapse all experience into knowledge but do highlight how certain experiences (oppression based on caste, gender) do lead people to certain kinds of knowledges.

Phule in the first modern Marathi Play *Tritya Ratna* draws complex linkages between religious-cultural and educational authority and re-imagines education therefore as the *Tritya Ratna* (third eye) that has the possibilities to enable the oppressed to understand and transforms the relation between power and knowledge. Ambedkar in a speech in Nagpur in 1942 at the All India Depressed Classes Conference, advises the gathering to 'Educate-Agitate-Organise' (a motto that became central to the Ambedkarite movement and community) arguing that this was central to the battle for freedom. Phule's conscious adoption of the dialogical form of communication and Ambedkar's insistence in the Bombay University Act Amendment Bill (1927) to move beyond the examination-oriented patterns of learning and teaching underline their conviction on the centrality of dialogue in the project of education. Ambedkar, debating the Bombay University Act Amendment Bill, highlights the linkages between issues otherwise thought to be disjoint – namely understaffing, dictation of notes and the lack of adequate representation of backward castes on administrative bodies such as the senate. Countering arguments regarding examination-centric education as a safeguard for promotion of standards; he

underscores how this exam-centric mode in fact reproduces caste inequalities in the university. He underlines the significance of combining efforts to increase access to education for vulnerable sections with those to reconceptualise administrative and curricular practices of higher education.

Both Phule and Ambedkar, as may be apparent from the discussion above, seek a rational engagement with the pedagogy of culture to see how power works through the production, distribution, and consumption of knowledge within particular contexts and re-imagine a culture of pedagogy based on truth-seeking. The 'difference' of Phule-Ambedkarite pedagogical perspectives lies in a double articulation that conceives education then not only in terms of cultures of learning and teaching but also dissenting against that which is learnt and taught by dominant cultural practices. This entails constituting teachers and students as modern truth-seekers and agents of social transformation who seek to become 'a light unto themselves'. The methods are those that seek to integrate the principles of *prajna* (critical understanding) with *karuna* (empathetic love) and *samata* (equality). This democratisation of method of knowledge marks the difference of Phule-Ambedkarite perspectives from methods based on binaries of reason/emotion, public/private, assumption of neutral objectivity/celebration of experience that inform much of our teaching and research. One sees significant intersections with Black feminist pedagogies that directly link pedagogy with political commitment in envisioning

education as the practice of freedom and thereby seek to challenge the assumed divide between mind/body, public/private and reason and emotion¹⁸. Why then have social scientists in search of alternative pedagogies rarely turned to Phule, Shahu or Ambedkar? Why did the search for alternatives usually end with Gandhi, Aurobindo and Nehru? How might this '*Dalit Phobia*'¹⁹ or exclusion in the academia and its cognitive structures be explained?

Baburao Bagul, the revolutionary *dalit* writer has explained the exclusion of this discourse in the formation of knowledges in post-colonial India in terms of the intelligentsia turning the national movement, into a form of historical, mythological movement and ancestor worship thus reducing the other movements to a secondary status²⁰. The nationalist labelling of the *dalit* discourse as anti-national, ideologically particularistic, specific to certain castes or as emergent from the British policy of divide and rule resonated in the practices of higher education in post-colonial India. In the 1970s the ideology and practices of the *Dalit Panthers* and *dalit* literature including the compositions of the mud-house cultural activists – the *shahirs* (composers of ballads) foregrounded the experience of caste to challenge the feudal backwardness of Hinduism normalised in educational practices²¹. This challenge was co-opted in the academia through frames that included *dalits* in disciplinary knowledges while keeping intact the core of disciplinary knowledges. Since the 1990s, as discussed earlier, tensions between different forms of modernities in Indian

society are being played out and a new scholarship is making convincing arguments about appeal to caste not being casteism and of claims unmarked by caste made by the dominant to represent and classify the modern as being situated, local and partial.

Since the 1990s, this 'secular upsurge of caste' at the national level interfaced with local *dalit* movements and international contexts like the U.N. Conference against Racism is shaping varied trajectories of *dalit* studies in different regions in India²². PAF pedagogies are enabled by this conjuncture and the assertion of *dalit* feminism which have opened up possibilities of new dialogue between Phule-Ambedkarite and feminist perspectives. PAF pedagogical perspectives are critically different from the two much discussed projects in higher education of the same decade, viz., value education and autonomy. They are different in that they contest the logic of projects based on essentialist apriori set of morals or on neo-liberal rhetoric of choice that comes without freedom. The practice of PAF pedagogies thus seek to develop cultures of dissent through analyses of the various categories of oppression underlying the structures and organisation of knowledge, but without reducing them to a mere additive *mantra* of caste, class and gender differences and inequalities. The practice of PAF obviously needs more than a simple transplantation of the guidelines through which PAF perspectives work to our situations. In the next section, I shall try to grapple with some of the issues that emerge in the practice of PAF pedagogies in our academia.

Phule-Ambedkarite Feminist Pedagogies — Issues in Practice

PAF pedagogies, as argued earlier view the pedagogical as a cultural practice that cannot be separated from the contexts of articulation. This requires then analyses of the ways in which caste and gender organise knowledge in our educational setting, not as some unchanging essence but rather as interlocking connections of different identities and the articulations between them. Therefore differences of caste, class and gender do not become readymade answers to which all pedagogic practices may be reduced but the history of their intersections, formation within particular historical events and spaces are the problems that propel the pedagogical practices. This would require us to be historically grounded in the contributions of the oppressed to creating a democratic world, in general, and the anti-caste feminist struggles, in particular, and to think through not just the classroom but also the academy. The academy as a part of the larger socio-political arena both domesticates and manages differences and inequalities and enables struggles against domination. If education, as discussed earlier is the space between the pedagogy of cultural practices and culture of pedagogy, our practices have to be located in specific historical conjuncture and institutional contexts which both enable and constraint the articulation²³. One may make a modest beginning by delineating crucial features of our present and developing methods to ground historically and theoretically the organisation of relations of power and

knowledge including the expectations and demands made on us as teachers and on relations with colleagues and students.

The present conjuncture is marked by intense scrutiny and attack on higher education constituted by conflicting and crisscrossing demands of several discourses – more specifically those of post-*Mandal* mass democracy, state with token acceptance of social differences, reactionary brahmanical elitism seeking to impose canonical notions of ‘common Hindu culture’ and privatisation, economic and technological rationalisation of higher education. On our campuses we see this unfold through the everyday events like changing social composition of students and faculty members, instrumental rationalisation and Hinduisation of curricula in the name of vocationalisation and indigenisation, opening up of centres/cells for study of socially excluded groups which remain at the margins of the institutions, shortage of hostel facilities for students, privatisation of mess facilities, greater pressures to combine work and studies, increased surveillance by authorities to regulate student politics and an increasingly intolerant meritocracy that expresses itself through a rhetoric of choice and freedom without any reference to power and inequality.

The struggles of the feminists, *dalit-bahujans*, tribals and religious minorities in the 1980s and 90s have enabled to some extent formerly silenced groups to reassert and reclaim experiences and knowledge in the educational setting. This identity politics has covered complex and diverse terrains of theoretical practices and not all positions move

unproblematically from resistance to broader politics of democratic struggles. Yet it would be simplistic, as discussed earlier to dismiss all claims to identities as separatist, reactionary and detrimental to academic standards. The campuses at present are a site of violent and hidden breakouts, skirmishes and injuries over forms and ownership of cultural capital. Many faculty members, administrators and students who see this as a decline of standards and spirit of 'real debate' are turning to private colleges and universities. Some others stay back but withdraw from the everyday of academic bodies and classrooms for the 'new cultures' they argue have scant regard for 'civility'²⁴. What does this conjuncture produce in terms of positions and practices for the pedagogical, in general, and for PAF pedagogical practices, in particular? Drawing upon Ambedkar's notion of history as being crucial to the recovery of hope in future; the present educational setting becomes an opportunity for drawing up a moral imagination beyond the existing configurations of power.

Many of us who see education, in general, and the classroom, in particular, as a site of struggle do often discuss several of the issues that have been raised in this lecture so far. Yet, in practice the challenge seems to be to move beyond personal blaming or/and feelings of guilt and to design and develop pedagogies as a political project. The challenge is to develop a method of reflexive analysis, employing self-questioning as an analytical and political process – to see how experiences are socially constructed. To review how

a 'normal/good' teacher, student and classroom are socially and politically constructed and thereby interrogate our different and contradictory locations within the social relations of teaching and learning. Thus understanding and transforming the social relations of learning is a struggle that is both personal and political. What we do not have as a resource for such an exercise and need to put together is a sustained project to collect, document and analyse the diverse life stories and everyday experiences of teachers in different contexts. This will allow 'biographising' of the social structures and processes of education and 'structuralising' of biography of those engaged in teaching²⁵.

The search for new subject positions as teachers and students is constrained by the given educational settings and therefore cannot be entirely straightforward. Even as we search for new subject positions, we may still desire approval within the given terms, estimate a cost-benefit analysis of taking pedagogical risks or sometimes realise that interests are served better by remaining within the dominant discourse. In the relative absence of critical pedagogies as an issue for departmental or college staff meetings, many of us turn to making notes from the lives of great teachers, scan the burgeoning literature on feminist pedagogies or make observations about the pedagogical atmosphere in renowned colleges and universities in order to understand the possibilities and limitations of our own teaching practices. Often, one is disappointed, for efforts and experiences of others seem so far removed from what is happening in our

classrooms. The first response to this gap in experiences often is to gloss over the unease with justifications related to material settings of the educational settings differently equipped facilities, difference in number of similarly interested colleagues, difference in the levels of intervention by academic bodies. While these material settings do matter, these are a part of the problem – of the political project of ‘unsettling the relations’²⁶ in the university and we cannot as if postpone question of pedagogies until the material setting is set right. The tensions between what one thinks is good teaching and what students expect from us; desire to be popular/is accepted/to be made permanent and to challenge dominant pedagogical practices is as much a part of the material setting.

Both as teachers and students we enter the institutional space of education as persons with a set of experiences related to social location and informed by set of discourses of education. Practices of academic training and knowledge production generally ignore these social relations of the teacher and students and create an illusion of a common academic ground. This has at least two immediate and serious implications for our educational setting – actual relations of power are glossed over and social differences get articulated in ways that reduce difference to a singular identity. Consider for instance the case of a *dalit* colleague, an engaged teacher of Political Science who despite his on-going research into Ambedkarite thought finds himself opting to teach courses other than Ambedkar thought. As he explains – he is uneasy

with the tensions between what he calls ‘reservation’ of certain courses for faculty from the reserved categories and the pressures to prove that these faculty members have the more ‘universal’ and ‘theoretical’ knowledge that teachers of that discipline are supposed to possess. The actual relations of power are glossed over as the difference; the social location of this teacher becomes not a lens through which the normative/assumed universal of the discipline has to be interrogated but rather a ground to make suspect his commitment to ‘universal’.

As feminists teaching courses on gender, participating in the organisation of academic life we have often contested similar assumptions about women teachers and criticised the ruling practices of our institutions which exclude women – from the theoretical and the universal. As ‘upper caste’, middle class, women teachers, while naming ruling practices which regulate our educational settings; we may often name gender but evade interrogating own power and privileges (caste, class, region) through practices of non-naming (‘we’ often claim that we do not even talk about caste, it is ‘they’ who talk about it all the time). The ways relations of power and knowledge are organised it’s quite possible to live these relations without reflecting on the power of non-naming and ways in which academic success and failure are produced. As feminist teachers we cannot rest with the multiplication of seminars, workshops, modules and courses on women/gender in our academia. We need to interrogate this ‘success of gender’ in the academy and to ask if these are driven merely by state policies and/or market imperatives.

Furthermore, we need to give up the comfort of working with the homogenous category 'woman'; for though the liberal humanist subject of feminism stands challenged the feminist imagination in the classroom continues to assume the model of unitary student and feminist teacher²⁷. Consider for instance the account by Jenny – writing as a research scholar from a Backward Caste, analysing her complicated relationship to women's studies – "Today I know that it is not enough to open up research to feminist frameworks. If feminist research cannot open itself up to the problems of caste and religion in a casteist-patriarchal society like India, it will forever close the doors of research to so many women who are molded by the experience of gender and caste religion."²⁸ This account disrupts any simplistic understanding of alternate spaces like women's studies; once again drawing attention to the ways in which power and knowledge come to be organised even within alternate spaces in the academy. From the significance of understanding contexts and differences in our relationship to the academy in general, in the next section, I move to the more specific but related questions about the relationship between teachers and students.

Interrogating Teacher as God or Saviour — Pedagogy, Authority and Cannon

In the present conjuncture how is the relationship between the teacher and the taught performed? How does the intersection of generational and 'other' differences between them disrupt this relationship? We may as practitioners of

PAF pedagogies reject the Hindu principle of teacher as 'god embodied' (*Guru sakshat par brahma*) but then do engaged pedagogies such as PAF instal teachers as the new 'saviours' of the students? Since the classroom seems to be the best place to start to discuss these issues, I would like to put for your consideration here two autobiographical notes on disruptions from the classroom²⁹ which I believe are situations commonly encountered by teachers. The first refers to the shock, anger, disgust and pain that one recognises in the body language of a student who has just been handed her test paper with the marks or grades. The student often lets some time elapse before contesting the evaluation, probably checking the marks, grades of others in the class comparing and contrasting, thereby estimating the level of injustice (imagined and real), done to her.

Two students and not by coincidence, one from a Nomadic community in Maharashtra and another a tribal student from Manipur, mustered enough courage to encounter me and asked in different ways if their lower grade had anything to do with the less space they had given in their answer to Phule-Ambedkarite critiques of 'mainstream' perspectives on caste. As a teacher, I had at that point at least three options – respond in terms of some absolutes (it's not really good, you have not covered it all, your expression could have been better) thereby exercising my authority as final judge of the standards. Legitimise my authority as an evaluator by making transparent the parameters of my evaluation. Most difficult of all options seems to be the third option that of calling into question my judicial

authority as a teacher-evaluator by translating the student's contestation of grade into an opportunity for dialogue. Dialogue here is not suggestive of a strategy of appeasement (of increasing the marks) – but of 'listening' to the contestation and reflecting upon and reviewing in this context the very parameters of evaluation and possibly transforming them. Obviously these students were raising questions that moved within and outside the classroom, for one they were raising questions about the possibilities of an evaluation remaining 'fair' in the context of the teachers avowed commitment to a Phule-Ambedkarite politics and about their own alienation from a curriculum that hardly engaged with 'their' histories and experiences.

The second autobiographical narrative relates to the comments of a tribal girl student from one of the most underdeveloped regions in Maharashtra who had opted for three of my courses in consecutive semesters and who I saw as bringing considerable enthusiasm and intensity into the classes. However, at the end of the Masters Programme, she told me, to my dismay, that the classroom experiences had been profound but troubling because of the immense loss of 'certitude of definitions' that she had experienced. That sometimes I seemed to her (and probably to many others) like a person who does not know the basics of the discipline (for instance when I reply to a query with another query rather than give a definition/definitive answer). For the student, the unlearning and problematising of much that she had grasped through undergraduate textbooks and excelled in, was rendered

into a state of confusion. As Phule-Ambedkarite feminist teachers contesting the canons, one has often come up against similar criticism from colleagues who argue that students get confused in 'our' classes because we introduce critical debates before students have mastered the canons of the discipline.

These cases of students contesting evaluation and efforts at building critical thinking in the classroom raise questions about the relations between pedagogy, authority, canons and transformation. The second narrative allows us to ask awkward questions – do we as teachers of particular disciplines have responsibility and accountability to the canon – so to say initiate the students into the discipline? When is the 'right time' at which the critique can be as if introduced? In other words are we saying that the initiates in sociology must know G.S. Ghurye, Louis Dumont, M.N. Srinivas on caste before engaging with the critical perspectives of Phule, Periyar and Ambedkar and Andre Beteille and Dipankar Gupta before reading more contemporary *dalit-bahujan*-feminist writers on caste? Does such a move not gloss over the ways in which through the design of courses, assignments, list of prescribed and 'supplementary' readings, selection and elimination of topics as legitimate for classroom discussion; knowledge comes to be categorised and organised into legitimate/canonical and illegitimate/non-canonical. At the level of practices of teaching it means attributing value to the canonical *per se* and not to the labour of interpretation. Am I then suggesting that the Phule-Ambedkarite feminist

teachers do away with the canon? Far from it, the canon to be deauthorised and demystified must be seen relationally; so that the canonical and the non-canonical emerge in oppositional confrontation at the historical level.

The first narrative pushes us to question the canon built on the conviction of the radical teacher – does she too build a cannon to render ‘her truth’ as natural and beyond the conflictual politics of interpretation? There is a desire for a stable ‘saviour’ ideology and easily identifiable home³⁰, or fixed truth; but as Jenny’s account discussed earlier more than bears out, a Phule-Ambedkarite feminist teacher must guard against the exclusions and oppressions which such a desire would entail. The problem, therefore, is not only about teaching the canon but canonicising whatever we teach and the challenge is to make the learning process always uncertain and contingent. Often the most difficult question for progressive pedagogies like PAF pedagogies is to retain passion and partnership of the oppressed and yet breakthrough the canonical compulsions that exist at the heart of all pedagogy.³¹

While the relations of power organised by the curriculum and the approaches to the curriculum have been discussed to some extent, those related to the organisation of college-university classroom as a physical and intellectual space have been relatively unaddressed. Discussing pedagogies requires that we discuss the ways in which power is enmeshed in the discourses and practices of the more *mundane* everyday of the classroom. The classroom is a

relatively autonomous space which can both empower the teacher and render her vulnerable. The everyday of this classroom is routinely managed through the regime of time-tables and rules published in the handbooks. But on the field so to say – the real questions are – How do we manage the conflictual imperatives of quiet and talk, responsibility and control, risk and safety? Often these conflicting imperatives mean that classroom learning comes to be achieved through issue of threat (threat to cut marks, freeze on classes) competition and point scoring (setting groups or individuals against each other to get them to be responsible) and status consciousness (sanctions for those who talk and interact within given parameters and achieve learning within approved terms). Intentionally or unintentionally our strategies of getting the immediate done may often conflict with strategies of PAF that seek to encourage collaboration and foster democratic and social justice values. Are there models of progressive pedagogy that may guide us to move beyond these brahmanical-patriarchal practices of discipline and control in the classroom? In the next section, I will address some of the issues emerging from this question.

Circuitous Relations between Educate-Organise-Agitate — The Risky Paths of *Tritya Ratna*

Generally speaking, teachers who believe that learning is linked to social change, struggle over identities and meanings, may practice variants and combinations of three possible models of progressive pedagogical practice³². The first model is

the one in which the PAF teacher believes that she understands the truth/ the real relations of power and imparts it to the students. The second model believes in a dialogical mode and making the silenced speak. While in the third the focus shifts on developing skills – so that students are enabled to understand and intervene in their own history. It is possible that different combinations emerge from these models, for common to all three are a set of similar assumptions. The first model believes that the teacher can and does know the truth – the real interests of different groups brought together in the classroom and has to just impart the truth to them, the second overlooks the real material and social conditions which may disenable some from speaking and others from ‘listening to silences’, and the third assumes that the teacher knows and can impart the ‘universal skills’. These assumptions become problematic, for as PAF pedagogues, we agree that students are neither cultural dopes that have to be brought to predetermined positions but this is not to say that the dominant institutions do not seek to dupe them. There is then a loss of certainty for the teacher, she does not have a readymade *mantra* to save the world nor can this be replaced with a set of relativist celebration of different voices and experiences

This kind of a rendering of the PAF pedagogical model which rejects convincing predefined subjects to adopt the teacher’s truth; draws upon not a unilateral but circuitous understanding of the Phule-Ambedkarite principle of ‘Educate, Organise and Agitate’. Education, organising struggles over

recognition and redistribution identities and social transformation related in a circuitous path; are constitutive of each other and as such the possibilities and constraints on agency as it intersects with social formation cannot be predefined. If we look again at Mukta Salve’s essay with which we began, it is clear that education becomes *Tritya Ratna* in Jotiba and Savitribai Phule’s school because what was demanded from students was not conformity to some image of political liberation but of gaining understanding of their own involvement in the world and its future. This makes the task of the PAF pedagogues slippery and hazardous – since the focus is on contextual practice, one of multiplying connections between what may seem apparently disjoint things.

This returns us once again to the question of authority in the pedagogical process – to ask if the critical pedagogue practicing such a model needs to make a difference between abandoning all claims to authority and offering new forms and positions. The teacher still remains responsible for production of knowledge in the classroom but is required to traverse risky grounds that interrogate the binaries of knowing teacher/ignorant students, public/private and rational/emotional. She recognises that often the students are uninterested in the classroom not because they do not want to work or because of the difficulties of jargon or theory but they do not see reason. Probably the questions being asked and answered are not ‘theirs’. This realisation cannot be followed up with a simple dictum that from now on students will define the questions. The challenge is to

discover the questions on the terrain of everyday lives and popular cultural practices.

Such a model throws open to question then a simple model of authority – one that poses an opposition between mind and body as also authority and affection. Black feminists³³ have underlined the ways in which the body is erased in the process of learning. Entering the classroom is as if about giving up to the mind and making the body absent. It is assumed that denial of passion and Eros as if is a precondition for learning to take place. They remind us that Eros is the moving force that propels life from a state of potentiality to actuality and therefore central to the energy of the classroom. It is often argued that there is no place for the affective in the classroom because this may affect effective control or neutral evaluation of students. And yet all of us know there have always been teacher's favourites – there have been and are affective ties that are exclusive and privatised. The Eklavya narrative is a reminder of the violent consequences of selective, exclusive affective ties between students and teachers.

The pedagogical power in critical practices cannot be wished away by giving up claims to authority and following Black feminists like Hooks³⁴ persuasion of students may be seen as an option. In a diverse classroom, Hooks argues there will always be students who are afraid to assert themselves as critical thinkers. Counter to several feminist claims that the silenced come to voice in atmosphere of safety and congeniality, she prescribes a 'confrontational' style of dealing with this. This can be very

demanding, painful, frightening and never makes the teacher 'instantly popular' or the classes 'fun' to be in. Hooks problematises the rather easy opposition between risk and safety, affect and authority by putting at centre processes of democratic persuasion as crucial to the goal of enabling all students and not just the assertive few in the classroom.

How do we understand the multiple and contradictory positions that we play out in the classroom? It has been pointed out³⁵ that there are tensions between the three competing selves of the teacher – the educative, the ideological/moral-ethical and personal. How may we 'discover' these tensions, the gaps between what we think we do and what we actually do? Student evaluations of teachers with all their limitations can be an eye-opener. Going over recordings of class discussions can sometimes be a veritable discovery! Recordings of classroom proceedings, ways in which we as teachers moderate a discussion, interrupt it or let certain questions pass can point to the tensions between the multiple and contradictory positions we occupy and our dilemmas. For instance, a PAF pedagogue introducing a powerful texts like Ilaiah's 'Why I am not a Hindu' has to address on one hand the uncomfortable silences or resistance of students (articulated through passing notes or nudging that seems to suggest here she goes again on her trip) who may feel interpellated in the identity of the oppressor. On the other hand, the persistence of silence of the subaltern students who, one imagines would experience instant identification with the text and find voice also needs attention.

The hesitance in naming and reclaiming identity in public; the tears shed in private conversations, the unease with emotionally charged classroom pose several dilemmas.

I am in no way arguing for reflexive explorations by teachers on either student evaluations or classroom recordings as ways to bring 'balance' in positions – for balance as we know has become a dirty word ever since *hindutva* sought to denigrate all engaged left and feminist thinking as imbalanced. Rather, the effort is to reflect on the many intended and unintended omissions between the conceptual and material terrain of PAF pedagogies as produced partly by attempts to create a democratic space within an undemocratic academy and society but also by our own investments in particular subject positions.

Critical pedagogies do not in themselves constitute a method, and micro level pedagogical implications of PAF which are crucial to the everyday work of the classroom need to be discussed and developed through dialogues in and across classrooms. We need to dialogue more on our efforts in the everyday of the classroom to develop different tools, methods, strategies to combine social critique with skills of doing critical work. In the concluding section, I would like to share some notes on implementing PAF and collective efforts to develop tools and methods.

Pappu can Dance '....' (?) Possibilities and Limitations of Pedagogical Experiments³⁶

In the present of our academia, any effort to develop new courses, pedagogical tools and methods have to

as if prove their 'applicability' and 'employability' value. Many of us seeking to develop new courses in interdisciplinary fields, such as women's studies, *dalit* studies and culture studies encounter these demands to prove 'entrepreneurial' value on one hand but on the other are faced with the serious ongoing intellectual debates on the relevance of practices of these fields in the academy. Courses in women's studies and *dalit* studies which are often seen as fields 'naturally' linking theory and practice, knowledge and power may in practice face the risk either of creating 'alternate canons' or emptying political content in 'applying' theory to the field. While those in cultural studies, more specifically the study popular culture, face another kind of risk, that of not been taken seriously for they are not easily recognised as a site of the political³⁷.

In this section, I shall limit the exchange of notes on experiments in developing pedagogical tools to a course on 'Popular Culture and Modernity in India'.

In the concluding section, I detail some of the experiences of teaching a course on 'Popular Culture and Modernity in India' least because I or anyone else involved imagine it to be a narrative of success. This detailing is by way of opening a dialogue with fellow critical pedagogues on the nuts and bolts of developing pedagogical methods and tools for our present. This course on 'Popular Culture and Modernity in India' was floated over two semesters in classrooms that were socially very diverse and where the co-learners sometimes shared very little in common by way of nationality, region, language and also in terms of their investment in,

desire and pleasures of what they saw as constituting and constituted by the popular (the range included motorcycle clubs, annual village fairs, Sharukh Khan films, old Hindi film songs, the 'new' Marathi cassette cultures, cultural practices of movements and collective actors, particular newspaper columns, blogs, 'days' celebrated on campuses and so on).

The course began with three readings - one by Bell Hooks interrogating the binaries that operate in the cultures of teaching and the other by Samata Biswas³⁸ on caste and culture as it unfolds on the seemingly *mundane* site of the notice board in the students' mess and selections from Phule's 'Gulamgiri'. These readings made way for several discussions on interrogating the binaries of history and memory and cultures of teaching and the teaching of culture in the academy and had implications for the conduct of the course. The course it was mutually agreed would be constituted through integrating dialogue, participation, experience³⁹ the important elements of PAF pedagogies. At the level of practice it meant being open to multiple viewpoints, learning to 'listen' so as to better understand what others are saying than just stick to words they say, to suspend judgement to create an environment where participants could reflect, communicate and interact.

More specifically the dynamics of learning and teaching was sought to be rethought and reinvented through a research-based approach to the course. This posed challenges for both the students and the teacher and in our case, the teaching assistants⁴⁰ (Research

students and students who had recently completed their Masters Programmes) became very important resources in enhancing dialogue and participation through a research-based approach. The teaching assistants in this course did much more than the 'prescribed' role of getting together course, readings, and correcting tutorials and in the process fractured the assumed divide between teacher and student. They 'translated' the teacher's classroom discussions to the students when required but in doing so pushed the teacher to become a student by seeing how and why the students found them more accessible. They became research and writing consultants for students who were framing 'researchable' themes for the paper and in the process could revisit and redraft their own on-going research and writing.

The course sought to build in experience, dialogue and participation through conscious selection of resources materials and therefore the questions brought to the classroom that came from the everyday/ordinary of students' lives (*tamasha*, local museums, Hindi films, newspapers, documentaries, music videos, magazines, commemoration of days on campus), continuous group work and intra-group evaluation, and developing writing and research as a method of classroom learning. Group work and evaluation met with considerable resistance as groups were drawn once by lots and another time through introducing a diversity quotient. There was pessimism and resistance to working with given groups, several students were very uneasy grading their own and group members work and there

was much frustration, tears and anger over group processes. But what was novel and was that they were often viewing their own culture (youth/village/city) critically and it was the teacher who was on their territory.

The group work sessions were conceptualised, designed and conducted by the group members in the classroom; sometimes in the process driving the content of the course. Group work on local museums for instance propelled the way in which the course interrogated the assumptions of the nation/national in our everyday life. Some groups for instance compared and contrasted the politics and aesthetics of the Gandhi and Ambedkar museums to interrogate received notions of history of the nation. Yet others drew attention to the tensions between nation and region, the public and private, tribal and Indian in the arrangement of artifacts at the Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum or to the interesting museumisation of modern city life in the most unexpected of places – the toy railway museum. Group work on the contemporary cultural practices of counter commemoration of the anti-caste movements propelled discussions on the significance of popular in the formation of counter publics. Several individual papers on the recasting of caste and gender relations in the local annual fairs propelled discussions on caste in the constitution of the popular.

In the process of this group work, there were disruptions in dialogue and participation – between students and between teachers and students. Often conversations came to be controlled by expectations of what each thinks the

other should say or in forcing students sometimes to talk against their will. The teacher, teaching assistants and students despite efforts were not always listening and pre-judgement of ‘others’ was continued through bodily gestures that discarded some issues while validating others. However, sometimes disruptions in dialogue were taken up as an opportunity to view the complex linkages between practice and content – for instance impatience and tensions between group members (emerging from differences of language, investment in different genres of popular, access and ease with using audio-visual equipment, ways of reading a text and discussing it) became a ground to reflect on the central theme of the course – namely ‘our modernity/ies’. Heated discussions sought to address how courses on ‘Modernity in India’ could not push the experience of the epistemic wound of colonialism, the messy patterns of Indian modernity, the exciting instability of forces of mass democracy in our classroom to the backyard.

The course sought to shift the focus from students as consumers of knowledge to producers of knowledge by developing writing and research as a method of learning. Reinventing the teaching-learning nexus through research was also envisioned as countering the logic of vulgar vocationalisation and applicability. Students were expected to submit regularly written responses to events and to develop independent and collaborative student research projects through the semester. Writing of responses to films watched or the celebrations in the city of the nation on

15th August or a music video of Kings XI Punjab among others became sites for developing critical thinking skills and social critique. Writing response pieces; the format for which was kept relatively open became a recursive process as students admitted that writing required them to reflect, assess value and appropriateness of argument, reconstruct and rewrite.

Individual and collective research projects not only reinvented the pedagogic space but helped establish mutually rewarding links with academics inside and outside the university and external community groups. One batch of students (2007-08) produced a film on 'Cell phone Cultures'; researched and produced collaboratively. The process involved developing new intellectual, practical and technical skills as students researched the biography of the product, its travels to different constituencies, SMS as cultural consumption, the perceived dangers and anxieties related to the product, celebrity scandals with camera phones and so on. The film focused on how cell phones were organising and conducting students' own lives. The second batch of students (2008-09) wrote and published a book; a collection of researched articles in English and Marathi on 'Exploring the Popular: texts, identities and politics'. The papers though individual were discussed right from their conception in the classroom and in group exercises designed both to think through the questions critically and to write academically. To use words from the foreword to this book by Uma Chakravarti, "these essays tell us something about why and how we make

meaning of life around us and they do so with zest and enthusiasm."⁴¹ The essays not only showcase student writings but also document the intellectual processes by which the students came to their 'theme of research'. The students had in the process of producing the book engaged with tasks of calling for submissions, reviewing, editing, designing and publishing and were pleasantly shocked by the quality of the product.

The 'social utility' of the several group projects, film or the collection of essays lies in their capacity for inducing conjectural questioning. Many of these are being integrated in a handbook for teachers in Marathi on popular culture and modernity in India. However, there was not much effort on our part to ask significant questions about how these skills of combining critical thinking with social critique, of writing academic papers, making films, scripting might transfer to other contexts of collaboration or employment. Further, not all participants were satisfied with the focus on writing and research as a method of learning as some student evaluations suggested this took away time from more interactive exercises in the classroom. Some participants argued that 'too much of democracy' and insistence on group work had resulted in loss of precious working time. There was a case of plagiarism, but the group concerned collectively agreed that the 'crime' be made an object of analysis and the concerned student wrote finally wrote a reflexive essay on his own journey from being an engaged student-activist with a celebrity status in a town college to a metropolitan university.

The pleasure and politics of the popular came to be debated as several students narrated 'problems' that family members and room-mates were having because of their becoming critically engaged with popular culture. The teacher, the teaching assistants and several students commented on how many, otherwise 'quiet types', those who rarely spoke in class (those considered *Pappus*) were talking so much in class when it came to films music videos or the pleasures of the 'Trax cultures' (local taxis that ply from the *taluka* place) of rural Maharashtra. At one level, it appeared as if contrary to the popular Hindi film song ('*Pappu Can't Dance ...*'), investigations into the world of the popular could make 'Pappus' dance. But, at another level – could they really? For as students worked in English, Hindi and Marathi, in different settings, the uneven flow of knowledge and methodologies was more than apparent. The student research projects made apparent how the study of culture has emerged differently in different regions and languages and a question worth asking but not risked in the classroom was – how might the course have looked if cultural studies did not speak only English but also spoke, for instance Tamil, Ahirani, Bundeli or Marathi⁴²? In a socially diverse classroom there are 'many languages of studying culture' and specific understandings of 'popular' are constituted differently and differentially through them. Our collective efforts at 'dialogue' through research and writing as methods of learning did, to some extent, disrupt traditional understanding of power and

knowledge but were constrained by the limits set on 'dialogue' by powerful languages.

Lest we celebrate prematurely the 'success' of dialogue of our PAF pedagogies; the words of Bhujang Meshram, an engaged tribal poet who passed away recently, are a reminder of the ways in which power is already enmeshed in dialogue.

*"The Teacher asked,
Name any three tribal villages',
So I told.
Slap me if I was wrong
But do tell me do closed doors open without
a push?
I only told – Shelti, Varud, and
Kondpakhandi'.
The teacher asked,
'For what are these villages famous?'
I only told,
Shelti for Holi,
Varud for the woman – Gowarin Bai,
And Kondpakhandi for the theft of cotton.
The teacher roared and slapped with his
hands
He broke a couple of staffs of the Mehendi
bushes.
Go get a reference from three people
Or else no entry for you in this school – he
said.
That's when I decided to get introduced
to Birsa kaka, Tantya nana and Ambar
Singh Maharaj!!"*

(Bhujang Meshram,
Mala Bhetlelya Kavita, 2007)

Meshram's words historically grounded in the struggles of tribals over resources, identities and meanings are a reminder that power is never really external to 'dialogue, participation and experience' and that the task of making education *Tritya Ratna* is indeed an arduous long march.

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formal wear by male teachers and bureaucrats from *dalit-bahujan* classes. The sartorial and other routine practices of our different and unequal modernities are begging for serious academic investigation.

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Participation and Consequences of Education of Scheduled Castes in Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

The NCERT has designed a multi-centric study covering a number of states to identify the participation and consequences of education of the Scheduled Castes by inviting selected experts in the field. The study was designed to cover selected states and one of the states selected for the study is Andhra Pradesh. The present paper is a part of the project deals mainly with the SC parents' perceptions towards education of their children, progress of the literacy among Scheduled Castes in the selected districts. The findings of the study includes progress of education of the Scheduled Castes and non-Scheduled Castes in the study area in terms of enrolment, retention, transition, parental perception towards experiences provided by the schools, its accessibility, teacher efficiency etc. Further, it also identifies the progress of literacy in the sample area, the literacy programmes that have been implemented, extent of registrations in the employment exchanges by the Scheduled Castes and non Scheduled Castes in the selected areas were also identified.

The Scheduled Castes are one of the marginalised groups in terms of social and economic status and constitute 16.19 per cent to the total population of Andhra Pradesh. This section of the population are considered as untouchables and located in the outskirts of the habitations. Most of them are illiterates or educated up to primary

level lack of various essential skills and depend mostly on manual labour for their livelihood. Of them, women were found to be most affected section. Recognising their plight, the Government has brought out a number of legislations to safeguard their rights. In addition, they have been provided a number of welfare measures to accelerate the pace of their socio-

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economic development. Education is considered as one of the means to promote the socio-economic development. Keeping this in view, education was given priority at all levels by providing reservation at the entry levels, supporting them financially to retain them in the system and also in the employment. Further, a number of welfare programmes have been initiated for the households so as to allow their children to pursue their education. Besides, priority was accorded for this section in the non-formal stream of education not only to promote their literacy levels but also to develop their competencies required for them to enter into the world of work through vocational training programmes.

All these measures significantly increased the enrolment of the SC children in the formal system of education, but for one reason or the other, more than half of them were withdrawn before reaching 5th standard and three-fourths of them were not able to move beyond the high school (Bhatt, 2005). In other words, it appears that the people enrolled in the formal system education from these sections were not able to cope up within the system of education due to the external environment or due to lack of adjustment and adaptability with the system leading to their dropout. Hence, there is a need to probe deeply into the experiences of these people and their parental opinions towards the educational system. In case of adult education too, the promotions of literacy among these groups have to be studied in terms of enrolment, success rate and transition from literacy to post

literacy and to continuing education programme. The knowledge generated out of these efforts will go a long way in helping these groups to use the existing systems by socialising themselves with the other groups, bringing social change in the society for accepting their presence and claim the ladder of social mobility. Hence, it is an imperative study the perceptions of the household heads, especially the parents who are responsible for the education of their children and the participation of the family members in the literacy programmes and the consequences of their participation.

Review of literature

Keeping the above in backdrop, an attempt has been made to review the studies already conducted in this sphere to identify the lacunae and to identify the priority area. The available studies conducted in these areas of education of scheduled castes were classified under 4 subheads - I. Psychological Problems, Educational Problems, and Education Development and Miscellaneous studies. The studies relating to the adoption, self-image, self-concept, interpersonal relationships, occupation aspirations, vocational needs of the scheduled castes have been conducted by Singh (1981), Naidu (1981), Desai (1981), Gupta (1979), Mishra (1978), Rangari (1984), Om Prakash (1986), NCERT (1987), Agarkar and others (1986), Gaur (1989), Yasoda Gaur (1989), Kakkar (1990), Rajani Gautham (1990), Archana Agarwal (1992), Lal (1995) etc. comes under psychological problems. The studies on Educational Problems of Scheduled

Castes conducted by Chandrasekhariah, K. (1969), Sharma (1974), Joshi (1976), Kripal (1978), D'Souza, Victors (1980), Goyal (1981), Pimpley (1981), Satyanarayana (1982), Singh (1982), Thyagarajan (1983), Seetharamu, (1986), Elangovan (1989) and Sachchidananda (1991) relating to the problems encountered by the students, while pursuing their education, institutional problems in delivering education are grouped under the broad theme viz., educational problems of the scheduled castes etc. A few studies of Lal, Sheo Kumar and Nahar, Umed Raj, (1978), Nautiyal (1979), Govt. of India (1981), Swaminathan, (1982), University Grants Commission (1985), Prameela Bai (1986), Showeb (1986), Ram (1987), Bhargava and Mittal (1988), Gupta (1988), etc. are grouped under Educational Development among Scheduled Castes. The studies conducted by Forester (1975), Sudame (1983), Yadav (1983), Mathur (1984), Yadav (1984) and Sabnis and Mahurkar (1985) are miscellaneous in nature but are connected to the SCs, hence they were grouped.

Statement of the problem

Participation and Consequences of Education of Scheduled Castes in Andhra Pradesh.

Operational Definitions

Education — For the purpose of the study, Education refers to the education provided in the schools, viz., primary, secondary and higher secondary in the formal stream of education and literacy

promotion activities undertaken under Total Literacy Campaign, Post Literacy Programme, Continuing Education, Akshara Sankranthi and Akshara Bharathi programmes.

Participation — Participation refers to the enrolment of the target at various levels of formal and non-formal stream of education

Consequences — It refers to net result of the participation of the target in formal and non-formal stream of education. To be specific, it refers to the experiences, participation, dropout and success rate in case of formal education and the extent of attainment of literacy, transition from literacy to post literacy and to continuing education in case of adult education.

Scheduled Castes — The Scheduled Castes are those castes which have been incorporated in the schedule as per the recommendations of the National Commission for SC & ST and ratified by the Parliament. In case of Andhra Pradesh, the SCs are broadly classified under four major groups viz., Adi Andhra, Madiga, Mala and Rally with a number of independent castes in each group.

Objectives of the study

Keeping in view of the above, the study formulated the following objectives:

1. To examine and analyse the current status of education in Andhra Pradesh with special reference to Scheduled Castes.
2. To identify the perceptions of the parents towards education of the children and the support extended by them.

3. To examine the awareness and extent of utilisation of the welfare measures available for Scheduled Castes and to find out the reasons of the non-utilisation of such facilities.
4. To study the status of literacy promotion programmes implemented and literacy in the State of Andhra Pradesh and extent of progress attained in literacy with special reference to Scheduled Castes.
5. To compare the Scheduled Caste and Non Scheduled Caste in terms of their participation at various levels of education in Andhra Pradesh.
6. To study the trend of employment seekers among Scheduled and Non Scheduled Castes in the study area.
5. Whether the parents felt school environment and infrastructural facilities are conducive for education for their children?
6. What are the aspirations of the parents towards their children's education?
7. What is the opinion of the parents towards the value of education?
8. Are there any differences between the perceptions of the parents of Scheduled Castes and others across socio-economic groups about the relevance of education?
9. Do the parents aware of the facilities and incentives provided to Scheduled Castes at different levels of education?
10. What are various facilities availed by the Scheduled Castes and to what extent?
11. What are the reasons for non-utilisation of the available facilities?
12. What is the literacy status among the Scheduled Castes vis-à-vis others with reference to enrolment, success and transition from literacy to post literacy and continuing education?
13. What is the extent of employment seekers among the scheduled castes with different educational qualifications?

In the light of the above objectives, the investigator has formulated specific questions to be answered.

Research Questions

The research questions of the study are as follow —

1. What is the educational status of Scheduled Castes vis-à-vis others with reference to enrolment, dropout and transition from primary to secondary level?
2. What are the facilities available in the SC habitations for promotion of education?
3. Whether basic facilities are available in the schools?
4. What are the perceptions of the parents towards the relevance of education?

Scope of the study

The present study is designed to identify the status of the education in the Scheduled Castes in terms of primary education and literacy programmes in comparison with non-scheduled castes. Further, it is also intended to study the perceptions of the Scheduled Castes

towards utility of education, facilities made available and awareness of welfare programmes designed and implemented by the Government and extent of their utilisation. In addition, it also analyses various literacy programmes in the last decade and extent of the attainment of success with special focus on scheduled castes in the State of Andhra Pradesh.

Methodology

The paper is the part of the nationwide multi-centric study conducted on behalf of the NCERT by the investigators during 2006-07 in the state of Andhra Pradesh to study the participation and consequences of the education of the Scheduled Castes. The study has been conducted with the financial support of the NCERT. Further, the investigator has participated in the 5-day workshop organised by the NCERT at New Delhi to design the study and to develop the framework for developing the tools. The investigator has adopted the methodology as suggested in the workshop in executing the project. The methodology adopted is as follows—

1. Locale and Sample of the study

As the study was formulated to identify the participation and consequences of education in Scheduled Castes in Andhra Pradesh, the locale of the study is the State of Andhra Pradesh. For the purpose of collection of primary data, of three districts having highest Scheduled Caste Population, i.e., one district from each region was selected. In each district, 2 mandals having highest and lowest Scheduled Caste population was selected. In the third stage of sample

selection, from each mandal 3 villages having highest, moderate and lowest SC households were selected. In the fourth stage, all the households of SC habitations and equal households in mixed habitations covering not more than 100 households from each mandal were chosen. The sample unit of the present study is household. Among the households, the criteria of having school-going children or the adult member attending the adult education centre was adopted for choosing the household as sample unit of the study. By adopting the above criteria, the study has covered 600 SC households and 100 non-SC households. Out of them, 540 SC parents and 100 non-SC parents were selected as sample of the study. All the household heads constituted the sub-sample of the study. On the whole, 18 villages, 540 SC and 100 non-SC parents constitute the sample of the study.

2. Tools used for the study

As the study is intended to identify the participation and consequences of education in the Scheduled Castes, the information is required to be collected from the areas of primary education and literacy in the state of Andhra Pradesh — both from primary and secondary sources. The data on secondary information was collected from the records maintained at various levels of educational administration. The primary data has been collected from the household heads parents to study about their opinion towards the various aspects of education. In order to collect the same, a tool is required. Among all the possible

tools the schedule was found to be the best option as it not only helps to generate required information through personal interaction but can also elicit additional clarifications. Hence, for the purpose of the study, a schedule was designed keeping in view of the objectives of the study. The section I of the schedule was designed to elicit the information on personal background information. The second section is designed to elicit the information on the perceptions of the parents towards the education of their children, their participation, aspirations, attitude towards value of education, relevance of education to the present day context etc. Besides, a village schedule and school schedule was also devised to collect the relevant information.

3. Administration of the tools and collection of the data

For the purpose of the present study, the data is required both from secondary and primary sources. The information relating to the performance of the formal education in terms of enrolment, dropouts, success rate, transition, facilities in the school, incentives provided for SC children, literacy programmes implemented in the State and study area in terms of enrolment, target, achievement, expenditure incurred in different programmes were collected from the secondary sources. In addition to the above, the investigator has also collected the secondary data from the mandal, district and State level offices looking after the primary education and adult education programmes. Further, information was also collected about the registration of the Scheduled Castes with different

levels of education for employment from employment exchanges and State Directorate of Employment and Training.

The primary data was collected by administering the schedule to the parents of the children studying in formal education. The household head was treated as the representative of the household and for the purpose of the present study treated as sub sample to elicit the primary information on multifarious aspects of education. In addition, the investigator has also collected the information pertaining to the facilities available in the habitations and schools for the promotion of education.

4. Analysis of the data

The primary data thus collected was found to be more qualitative in nature and the data was not subjected to the rigorous statistical analysis. However, simple statistical techniques like percentages and means were used to interpret and to draw the conclusions.

Findings of the study

The findings of the study were presented in 9 sections, viz., the Population Profile of the Andhra Pradesh with special reference to Scheduled Castes forms the section I. Section II elucidates the Educational Scenario of the State and the study area in terms of number of schools functioning, number of teachers, enrolment, dropout rate and success rate at terminal points. The Section III appraises the Status of Literacy in Andhra Pradesh with special reference to Scheduled Castes. Further, Literacy Promotion Programmes implemented in the State and the study area in terms of

enrolment, success rate and expenditure incurred etc. were also encapsulated. The profile of the scheduled castes was presented in the section IV. Section V presents profile of the household heads. The characteristics of the sample were presented in section VI. The parents perception towards various aspects of education such as relevance of education, assistance rendered by them to their children, their participation in the school activities, their aspirations towards their wards education, regularity of their wards, functioning of the schools, their attitudes towards value of education, knowledge about the incentives provided and utilisation by the SC children etc. are the accentuated in section VII. Section VIII indicates the facilities available in the habitations and in the schools for promotion of education. The findings from all the sections are as follow:

Andhra Pradesh has a total population of 7, 62, 10,007 (2001 Census) with an area of 2.75,069 sq. kms which accounts for 7.37 per cent of the country's population and 8.4 per cent of the area of the country. As per the 2001 Census, there are 123.40 lakhs of Scheduled castes population in the state and accounts for 16.10 per cent of the total population of Andhra Pradesh.

The growth rate of population during the decade 1991-2001 is 12.86 per cent in the state as against 21.34 per cent in the country. The decadal growth rate shows a declining trend from 24.20 per cent between 1981 and 1991 to 13.88 per cent between 1991 and 2001. The density of the population has increased from 242 per sq km in 1991 to 275 per

sq km in 2001. The districts with high density of population are West Godavari (493), Krishna (485) and Rangareddy (468). The urban district of Hyderabad has the highest density (18432) of population while Adilabad district has the least density (154) of population.

The literacy rate of the state is 60.47 per cent as per 2001 Census and the gender-wise literacy rate is 70.32 per cent in males and in females, it is 50.43 per cent. The literacy percentage of rural is 50.50 per cent, which is 15.82 per cent lower than the urban literacy rate. In case of male, it is 83.19 per cent in urban areas and it is 65.35 per cent in rural men. In case of women, it is 43.50 per cent in rural which is 25.24 per cent lower than the urban women.

The population of the Chittoor District is 37,45,875. Out of it, 18.75 per cent belongs to scheduled castes. In the general population, 50.44 per cent are men and 49.56 per cent are women. In case of scheduled castes, 50.32 per cent are males and 49.68 per cent are females. The female population of scheduled castes is slightly more in comparison with the general population. Out of the total scheduled caste population, 78.35 per cent is living in rural areas. In the rural population, 50.32 per cent are women. In case of the urban population, again males (50.75%) have outnumbered the females (49.25%). In case of Karimnagar District, the total population constitutes 34,91,822. Out of it, 18.62 per cent belongs to scheduled castes. In the general population, 50.06 per cent of them are men and 49.56 per cent are women. In case of scheduled castes 50.10 per cent of them are men and

49.90 per cent are women. The rural population of the District constitutes 80.56 per cent to the total population. On the other hand, urban scheduled caste population of the District constitutes 19.44 per cent. In the rural scheduled caste population, the women outnumbered the men with 50.15 per cent, i.e., the women population of the rural scheduled castes is 14,10,731, whereas men population (14,02,279) of the District comprises 49.08 per cent. The trend of the gender differences of the district shows that it is women-prone district. The total population of the Prakasam district comprises 30,59,423. Out of them, 50.74 per cent are men and 49.26 per cent are women. Out of the general population, scheduled castes constitute 21.29 per cent and 50.73 per cent are men and women constitutes 49.27 per cent. The rural population of the district constitutes 84.72 per cent and the urban population is 15.28 per cent only. In the rural population, 50.78 per cent of them are men and 49.22 per cent of them are women. In case of urban area 50.46 per cent of them are men and 49.54 per cent are women. Among the scheduled castes, 91.77 per cent are based in rural areas and 8.23 per cent of them are located in urban areas. Out of the rural, 50.80 per cent of them are men and 49.20 per cent are women. In case of urban SC population, 49.95 per cent are men and 50.05 per cent are women.

At the state level, the scheduled castes population comprises 16.19 per cent. In case of districts selected for the study, Prakasam District has highest scheduled castes population to the total population, i.e., 21.29 per cent followed

by Chittoor (18.75%) and Karimnagar (12.44%). In terms of gender variations, Karimnagar has highest females within general and as well as scheduled castes population followed by Chittoor and Prakasam districts. In case of state as a whole, proportion of women from scheduled castes are more in number in comparison with the general females.

The sex ratio of the scheduled castes population in the study area shows that the Karimnagar District has highest sex ratio with 998 women for 1000 men which are higher than the state level of 978. The Chittoor occupies second position in sex ratio with 982 which is also higher than the state level. In case of Prakasam district, it is 971, which is lower than the state sex ratio. In case of rural areas, again the Karimnagar district has highest women population with 1006, which is higher than the state level sex ratio of the rural population, i.e., 983. The ratios for Chittoor and Prakasam districts is 986 and 969 respectively. The Chittoor has higher sex ratio than the state level whereas in case of Prakasam it is lower than the state level. In case of urban population at the state level, the sex ratio is 965. In case of study area, the Chittoor and Prakasam districts have the ratio 970 and 982, which is higher than the state average. However, in case of Karimnagar, it is 964 which is lower than the state level.

A comparative picture of the literacy rates among the general population and SC population shows that there is a variation, i.e., 60.47 per cent and 53.52 per cent respectively. However, among the general population, there is a wide variation between the men and women i.e., more than 20 per cent. Similar trend

resembles even in case of SC population. Among both the groups there are more literate persons in the men than the women. In case of study area i.e., in Chittoor District, literacy percentage among general population is 66.77 per cent, and it is 59.99 per cent among Scheduled castes. The gender difference is 21.84 per cent in case of general population and it is 21.87 per cent in SCs. The gender variation is almost similar in both the groups. The literacy percentage in Prakasam district is 54.9 per cent and it is 46.47 per cent among Scheduled Castes. The gender variation in literacy among general population is 24.34 per cent, and it is 22.42 per cent in the SCs. In case of Karimnagar, the difference in literacy rates between total population and SC population is 4.48 per cent only. The gender difference in general population is 24.27 per cent and it is 24.84 per cent in case of Scheduled Castes. On the whole, the literacy rate in men in comparison with women is higher in case of the state as well as districts of the study area. Further, the literacy rate in women was found to very low in Prakasam district.

The numbers of schools established during 2000-2001 is 76,091 and the number of schools has gone up to 96,277 by 2007, i.e., there was an increase of 26.53 per cent. During this period, the increase in primary schools, is found to be only 11.20 per cent the number of secondary schools has increased by 81.79 per cent. On the other hand, the increases in high schools are found to be 57.58 per cent.

The number of teachers working in the primary, upper primary, high school

and higher secondary schools has proportionately increased in the last seven years. In case of primary education, the strength of the teachers has increased from 1, 33,546 to 1,67,723. In other words, there is an increase of 25.59 per cent in the last 7 years. The number of teachers working at upper primary schools is also increased from 20.73 to 25.65 per cent. On the other hand, the teachers working at high school level has increased in absolute number but decreased in terms of percentage to the total population of the teachers.

The enrolment at pre-primary level education has increased from 2.44 per cent to 5.12 per cent in course of seven year i.e., from 2000-01 to 2006-07. However, the enrolment at Primary level (I – V) has gradually decreased between 2000-01 and 2006-07. The reason for the decrease in enrolment is due to the reduced population in the age group of 6–10 years. The enrolment in Upper Primary (VI–VII) and Secondary Stages (VIII–X) has increased steadily between 2000-01 and 2006-07 due to the expansion of the high school education and increase in retention of children in the high school education. The success rate was found to be ranged between 53.26 and 79.25 per cent in all the students. On the other hand, the success rate in the scheduled castes is found to be 57.73 to 75.93 per cent. In case of the success rate between 1st standard and 5th standard among all the students, it was found to be ranged between 76.54 per cent and 99.19 per cent and in scheduled castes, it is between 88.59 per cent and 102.38 per cent.

There are 1,75,15,658 students participating at various levels of education in Andhra Pradesh. Of them, 55.20 per cent are males and 44.80 per cent are females. The institution-wise participation shows that majority of the general population and Scheduled Caste students are at the school level, i.e., 89.91 and 91.38 per cent respectively. Out of the school-going population, again 54.48 and 45.52 per cent of them are boys and girls in the general population. In case of Scheduled Caste students, it is 53.39 and 44.61 per cent in boys and girls respectively. The participation at college level, between general populations is 7.44 per cent whereas in case of Scheduled Castes it is only 5.27 per cent. The participation of male students at college level, among general and Scheduled Castes is 9.21 and 6.82 per cent respectively. However, in case of females, their participation is 5.25 in general population and 3.34 per cent in Scheduled Castes. In case of the study area, the participation rates in the Scheduled Castes at the school level are more than 90 per cent. To be specific, the participation is more in case of Karimnagar (94.18%), followed by Prakasam (93.25%) and Chittoor (91.82%). Akin trend is being seen in case of general population. The participation at the college level in the study area in the general population shows that it is 6.99 per cent in Chittoor, followed by Prakasam (6.82%) and Karimnagar (6.44%). In case of Scheduled Castes, the participation rates at the college level are more in case of Prakasam (5.10%), followed by Chittoor (4.93%) and Karimnagar (4.63%).

The enrolment of all children and scheduled castes in different classes is starting from pre-primary to 7th class in the study area of Chittoor, Prakasam and Karimnagar shows that it gradually reduces from Class 1st to Class 7th indicating that there are dropouts at various stages and low re-enrolment of the discontinued children. The trend is resemired in all districts.

The trend of the dropout rate in the school aged children studying 1st standard to 7th standard in the study area, i.e., Chittoor, Prakasam and Karimnagar districts shows that 1st standard to 5th standard, the mean dropout rate of the three districts, i.e., Chittoor, Prakasam and Karimnagar is 14.20, 31.32, 27,19 per cent respectively. However, the dropout rate in case of scheduled caste, it is 16.21 per cent in Chittoor and in Prakasam and Karimnagar and it is 36.01 and 35.78 per cent respectively. The dropout-rate in both the groups was found to be low in Chittoor district and high in Prakasam district. Similar trend is also seen in case of Class I to Class VII. Among the sex groups, the dropout rates are found to be more in comparison with the boys in all the groups. The dropout-rate in Prakasam district is found to be more followed by Karimnagar and Chittoor.

The state has undertaken Total Literacy Campaigns in all the districts and enrolled 128.44 lakhs illiterates and out of them 80.45 lakhs have completed the primer III. The overall achievement against the target was found to be 55.76 per cent increased. In the Post-Literacy Programmes, 52.46 lakh neo-literates have completed PL1 primer. Out of 23 districts, 21 districts have entered into

the phase of Continuing Education Programme with a sanctioned strength of 2,227 Nodal Continuing Education Centres and 17797 Continuing Education Centres. Out of them, 2,105 Nodal Continuing Education Centres and 17,282 Continuing Education Centres are in operation. The Continuing Education Centres were able to cater to the needs of 82,58,940 beneficiaries. Out of them, 38,88,379 are men and 43,70,561 are women. In caste point of view, 12,43,464 belong to Scheduled Castes and 3,70,516 Scheduled Castes were using these centres. As a part of the mopping up of the Total Literacy Campaign for eradication of residual illiteracy, a special drive has been taken up by the State Government in the name of the Akshara-Sankranthi programme in four phases 2000-01 to 2003-04. Under this programme, 139.37 lakh illiterates were enrolled and 78.95 lakhs were made literate. Later, Akshara Bharathi programme was initiated and 11.05 lakhs persons were made literate against the enrolment of 16.58 lakhs in the first phase. The second phase of the programme was launched in March 2006 with an enrolment of 6.44 lakhs. In addition to the above two programmes, the Government of India has sanctioned a Project on Residual Illiteracy (PRI) for 10 low literacy districts, viz. Srikakulam, Vijayanagaram, Kurnool, Mahboobnagar, Medak, Nizamabad, Adilabad, Karimnagar, Khammam and Anantapur of the State to cover 21.81 lakh illiterates. The first phase of PRI programme has enrolled 16.83 lakhs illiterates and was able to literate 11.08 lakhs. The second phase was launched on 15th March 2006 with an enrolment

of 5.93 lakh illiterates. The overall achievement under different schemes shows that the state was able to cover 80.45 lakh under TLC/mopping programme, 90 lakhs under other schemes and 1.02 lakhs under residual CE phase. On the whole it has covered 191.44 lakh illiterates.

The Karimnagar district has implemented all the literacy programmes initiated by the State Government and enrolled 19.29 lakh and 14.57 lakhs of them were made literates. Of the total SCs, 4.52 lakhs of them were enrolled in literacy programmes and 3.38 lakhs were made literate. In order to implement the above programmes an amount of Rs. 6.5 crores has been spent.

The Prakasam district has enrolled 11.83 lakhs and out of them, 69 per cent have attained the literacy. In case of SCs, the attainment rate is 56.23 per cent only. On the whole, the district has spent Rs 5.67 crores for literating 8.17 lakhs.

In case of Chittoor district, it has actively participated in all the programmes and enrolled 17.32 lakhs illiterates and attained literacy in 14.42 lakhs. In case of Scheduled Castes it has enrolled 4.08 lakhs and literated 3.84 lakhs.

The profile of the Scheduled Castes of Andhra Pradesh shows that they constitute 16.19 per cent to the total population and 82.50 per cent of them are dwelling in rural areas. Nellore district has the highest SC population and Vishakhapatnam has lowest population. The sex ratio in SCs is 981 per 1000, which is higher than the general population i.e., 978. Nizamabad has highest sex ratio (1046) and Anantapur the least (956). The literacy

rate in the SC population is 53.50 per cent. Their work participation is 50.5 per cent which is higher than the state population (45.8%). Majority of them are main workers (79.2%), and among them 68.3 per cent involved in agriculture. Majority of them are Hindus. The work participation in the SC school-going children is 2 per cent. In case of out of school children, majority of them are main and marginal workers and work participation is more in case of 15-19 years.

Profile of the sample households shows that majority of them are headed by men with low income groups depending on labour for their livelihood. Majority of the families belong to nuclear families with 2-4 children. Living standards show that majority of them belong to medium standard of living without any land. The household income shows that they have income up to Rs 20,000/-. They were exposed to television and benefited from the developmental programmes. Majority of them were not aware of the adult education and non-formal education programmes. Their participation in social organisations is limited to self-help groups.

The characteristics of the sample of the parents selected show that majority of them are in the age group of 31-40 years' labourers and belong to nuclear families. Level of education shows that they belong to low educated group with 2-4 members in the family along with 2-3 children. Majority of them have given in the majority priority for the education of their children as it improves their status. Majority of children were found

to be regular to the schools, cover above half kilometre to attend the school and does not have any problems in attending the schools. Parents are assisting their children in their studies and teacher is the alternative support for those who couldn't support their children education. Half of the parents are using the services of their children in domestic work. They feel that the children are studying at home especially in evening about 1 to 2 hours. Children interact with the parents and inform about the school activities. The extra curricular activities were found to be useful to the children and felt that the teachers are extending their support to the education of their children. Majority of the teachers were found to be effective and inefficiency among the teachers is due to their irregularity. The students were able to complete the home work in time. Parents are found to be participating in the activities of the school and are aware of the parents-teachers meetings and suggested that teacher's regularity to the school improves the educative environment of the school. Parents are satisfied about the physical facilities available in the schools; aware and utilized the facilities provide to their children and have high aspirations about the education of their children, have positive attitude towards value of education and functioning of the school. Majority of them have been exposed to the urban areas and interacted with the developmental programme functionaries frequently. Similar trend is also seen in case of Non-SC parents.

Employment seekers with school education among SCs have steeply

increased from 37.44 per cent to 49.20 per cent over a period of five years and during the same period, the registration of non-SC has decreased from 62.56 to 50.80 per cent. In case of SCs with SSC and less qualification, there was a marginal increase and there was a decrease from 52.50 per cent to 48.90 per cent during the Non-SC registration. In case of intermediate qualifications, there was a decrease in case of SCs in Chittoor district and increase in case of Karimnagar and Prakasam districts. Similar trend being seen in case of Non-Scheduled Castes. In case of graduates and technical education graduates, the registrations have gone up significantly in case of SC graduation. In case of technical graduation, the registration have gone up in case of Chittoor and Prakasam districts and there is a decrease in Karimnagar district, contrary to the above in case of non-SCs the registrations have gone down in case of Chittoor and Prakasam districts and increased in Karimnagar district.

Conclusions

The participation of the scheduled castes, both in the formal and non-formal stream of education was found to be encouraging. The opinion of the parents towards the education system and their perception about the usefulness of education to their children are found to be the consequence of their participation in the education. The administrators and policy-makers should take the prevailing situation for their advantage and increase the participation of the Scheduled Castes in the educational system so as to mainstream them in the society enable them to claim the ladder of social mobility. The perception of the non-scheduled castes towards the participation of the scheduled castes in education is also found to be encouraging. This reflects the changed scenario of the society. Hence, effective administrative, academic and welfare measures will bring radical changes in socio-educational scenario of the country.

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Teaching of Social Science

A Situated Cognition Perspective

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Abstract

This paper aimed to provide an understanding about the teaching of social studies with reference of situated cognition. It starts with the understanding of meaning, nature and scope of social studies. Paper also talks about the basic objectives of teaching of social studies. It also include the understanding of situated cognition, its nature, scope and pedagogical implications. Following these there is an attempt to present the relationship between situated cognition and teaching of social studies or why we need situated cognition to teach social studies. The presenter of this paper has presented some educational implications with the examples from different classes.

Introduction

Long after history, geography, civics, economics and sociology were introduced as independent subjects, social studies was offered as a study including essential elements of all these social sciences. The social studies are understood to be those whose subject matter relates directly to the organisation and development of human society and to man as a member of social groups. (Commission of reorganisation of secondary education of associations, United State of America). What we study in social studies is the life of man in some particular place at some particular time.

Therefore, we use every possible 'subject' to help us understand his problems and how he dealt or deals with them.....Man's struggle with environment yesterday and today, man's use or misuse of his powers and resources, his development, the essential unity of civilisation these are the main themes of social studies. (Social studies committee of schools board, Victoria).

Social studies is a field of study which deals with man, his relations with other men and his environment. Its content is drawn from several social sciences but is not determined by the discipline of any one of these. Rather the content and organisation of social studies derive

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directly from the purposes for which it is taught. Those purposes include an understanding of human relationships, knowledge of the environment, dedication to the basic principles and values of the society in which it is taught, and a commitment to participate in the processes through which that society is maintained and improved. These are the most important characteristics of the social studies point of view.

As an inter-disciplinary course it draws its contents selectively from several other branches of knowledge and human experience. The scope of the social studies is continuously growing, as the social process and problems are changing from time to time. Its content must be revised periodically. The field of social studies covers the study of communities at all level — local, regional, national and international, focusing on man and his social environment.

Social studies provides situation in which school children may use related learning in a functional and natural setting for the application and use of knowledge and basic skill in solving human problem. Thus, it may be used as means of integrating various school activities and experiences.

The breadth, comprehensiveness, variety and extension of learning experiences, provided through the teaching of social studies, make its scope as wide as the world and as long as the history of man on this earth.

Social studies include the study of those social sciences and humanities, which can be applied for a practical understanding of human relationships. These are history, geography, economics, civics, sociology, literature, religion and

psychology, social studies view these social sciences as a compact whole in the process of synthesising these subjects into a new field, blending them together, making it a compact and coordinated whole. Social studies make a man human. It describes the entire range of human history from the earliest time down to the latest moment and the widest reaches of contemporary society.

Social sciences and natural sciences are inter-related. Recent advances in the fields of physical sciences, industry and technology have revolutionised social life in all parts of the world. These have extended man's vision from family to neighbourhood, from neighbourhood to town, from town to region, from region to nation and even beyond expanding the area of human relationship from local, regional and national level to international level. Therefore the functional study of natural and physical sciences like physics, chemistry, botany, zoology and physiology etc., is an important part of social studies programmed. For example, while chemistry helps to eradicate various diseases, history helps chemistry in providing past human experiences dealing with those diseases.

Thus, social studies provide a wide range of materials. In the words of Ohicholson and Wright, "its scope is really very wide and its theme is the present social life of man, the world over." But social studies is not a limitless and fathomless ocean. It provides only an overall integrated outline of essential common knowledge so as to draw only the functional knowledge from various subjects avoiding the material which has no bearing on social context. Its subject

matter consists only of very simple and reorganised items of information and experience from various fields having a practical value in the daily lives of children.

On the basis of the above understanding we can draw several objectives of teaching of social studies—

- Enabling children to understand the society in which they live.
- Introducing children to the values enshrined in the Constitution of India such as justice, liberty, equality and fraternity and the unity and integrity of the nation, and the building of a socialist, secular, and democratic society.
- Enabling children to grow up as active, responsible, and reflective members of society.
- Enabling children to learn how society is structured, managed, and governed and also about the forces seeking to transform and redirect society in various ways.
- Enabling children to learn to respect differences of opinion, lifestyle and cultural practices.
- Engaging children to undertake activities that will help them develop social and life skills and make them understand that these skills are important for social interaction.
- Encouraging children to question and examine received ideas, institution, and practices.
- Encouraging the reading habit by providing children with enjoyable and interesting reading material.

School is an important part of the process of socialising the child. At all stages of school education, the content,

language, and images should be comprehensible, gender sensitive and critical of social hierarchies and inequalities of all kinds.

Something about situated cognition

Before we start to discuss about situated cognition we must think that we can take learning as a dimension of teaching. To understand the various concepts we must have a look on different schools of thought about what they think about learning —

Behaviourism	“Learning is change in behaviour due to experiences.”
Cognitivism	“Learning is acquisition of knowledge, comprehension, skill, etc.....”
Constructivism	“Learning is a process of knowledge construction (Piaget)”
Social Constructivism	“Learning is a social process of knowledge construction (Vygotsky)”

Situated cognition is a new movement in cognitive psychology which derives from pragmatism, Gibson ecological psychology, ethno methodology, theories of Vygotsky (activity theory) and the writings of Heidegger. However, the key impetus of its development was work done in the last 1980s in educational psychology empirical work on how children and young people learned showed that traditional cognitive ‘rule bound’ approaches were inadequate to describe how learning actually take place in the real world. Instead, it was suggested that learning was ‘situated’, that is, it always took place in a specific

context. This is similar to the view of 'situated activity' proposed by Lucy Suchman social context proposed by Giuseppe Mantovani and 'situated learning' proposed by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger.

Situated cognition emphasises studies of human behaviour that have 'ecological validity' that is which take place in real situation. In more traditional laboratory studies of how people behave in the work place, real world complication such as personal interruptions, office politics, scheduling constraints, private agendas and so forth are generally ignored, even though they necessarily change the nature of the activity. Situated cognition attempts to integrate these complexities into its analytic framework. "The theory of situated cognition.....claims that very human thought is adapted to the environment, that is situated, because what people perceive, how they conceive of their activity, and what they physically do develop together"(Clancey, 1997, pp. 1-2). Furthermore, that people perceive, think and do develop in the fundamentally social contexts; the unit of analysis in situated cognition is socio-cultural setting and the activities of the people within it rather than individual mental functioning. Knowledge as lived practices must be understood in its relation to the social aspect as well as the individual aspect.

Situated cognition approach comes from studies in informal situation rather than formal situation. By studying cognition in real life it tries to come up with a theory for education where children acquire various skills naturally as a child grows in a community tacitly

acquiring the norms, beliefs and skills of the community. Situated cognition starts from everyday practices to come up with the theory. Thus situated cognition view is often defined as 'enculturation' or adoption of the norms, behaviour, skill, beliefs, language, and attitudes of a particular community. The community might be mathematicians or gang members or readers or teachers or students any group that has a particular ways of thinking and doing.

Situated cognition is placed under 'social constructivism', which assumes 'knowledge' to be social construction as opposed to 'knowledge' being seen as personal construction. The terms 'situated cognition', 'situated learning', 'situated action', or 'situativity' denote an array of related perspectives, falling under the broad umbrella of 'socio-cultural constructivism'.

Situated cognition approaches are essentially based on the assumption that knowledge is inherently bound to the context i.e., knowledge is situated. Knowledge cannot be separated from the context; in fact it is embedded in the context. By assuming 'knowledge' as situated and context bound, 'learning' according to this approach is also seen as inseparably situated and context bound as exemplified in the mentioned scenarios.

The cultural context, the co-constitutive nature of individual — action-environment and multiple knowledge communities have all become elements of situated cognition theory. Wenger (1998) succinctly summarised the basic premises of situated cognition theory as follow —

- 1) We are social beings. Far from being trivially true, this fact is a central aspect of learning.
- 2) Knowledge is a matter of competence with respect to valued enterprises, such as singing in tune, discovering scientific facts, fixing machines, writing poetry, being convivial, growing up as a boy or a girl and so forth.
- 3) Knowledge is a matter of participating in the pursuit of such enterprises, that is, of active engagement in the world.
- 4) Meaning—our ability to experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful—is ultimately what learning is to produce.

With respect to a specific knowledge community, or community of practice, Wenger defined three interacting dimensions — mutual engagement, a joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire. That is “people are engaged in actions whose meaning they negotiate with one another.” The actions are in service of a mutually negotiated goal which defines the enterprise in which they are engaged and which “creates among participants’ relations of mutual accountability”. Finally over time, the activity of the individuals engaged in the enterprise gives rise to specific practices, symbols, and artifacts that are shared by all members of the community.

To understand the situated cognition in better way, we can have a look on this table—

Framework	Principles
The role of context	Everyday cognition — people reason in actively based upon experience within specific contexts; use a variety of methods to solve problem Authenticity — coherent, meaningful and purposeful activity that represent the ordinary practices. Transfer — situated learning environment are more likely to transfer to real life problem solving.
The role of content	Knowledge as tool — students acquire knowledge as well as a sense of when and how to use it. Content diversity and transfer— concepts need to be represented via various content; necessity to apply knowledge in various setting discriminate similarities and differences among setting. Cognitive apprenticeship to provide the opportunities for the learners to internalise learning and develop self monitoring and self correcting skill
The role of facilitation	Facilitation methods — situated learning environments attempts to help students to improve their cognitive abilities, Self monitoring and self correcting skill, encourage active learning and provide opportunities to internalise information facilitation is less directive, more continuous and highly interactive— Modeling Scaffolding (coaching, guiding etc.) Collaborating Fading Using cognitive tools and resources

The role of assessment	Problems and issues— in order to be useful in prompting higher thinking skills testing needs to shift from domain referenced evaluation to assessment; Emphasis need to be on the abilities to diagnose cognitive growth rather than achievement.
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Many concepts have emerged in situation cognition research, which helps, in understanding knowledge, cognition and learning in natural settings. **Communities of practice, legitimate peripheral participation, authentic activities, and cognitive apprenticeship** are few of them. These are also some of the concepts representative of situated cognition approach.

Communities of practice is a unifying concept emerging from situated learning research—the idea that learning is constituted through the sharing of purposeful, patterned activity (Lave and Wenger, 1989). **In essence, communities of practice are groups of people who share similar goals and interests.** For example communities of scientists, community of workers, community of farmers, community of teachers, etc. In pursuit of their goals and interests, they employ common practices, work with the same tools and express themselves in a common language. When one starts participating in the activity of the community he/she starts learning about the cognitive apprenticeship methods try to acculturate students into authentic practices through activity and social interaction. Cognitive apprenticeship attempts to promote learning within the nexus of activity, tool and culture. Learning both outside and inside school,

advances through collaborative social interaction and the social construction of knowledge. Rsnick has pointed out that throughout most of their lives people learn and work collaboratively, not individually, as they are asked to do in many schools. Lampets's and Schoenfeld's work, Scardamalia. Bereiter, and Steinbach's teaching of writing, and Palincsar and Brown's work with reciprocal teaching of reading all employ some form of social interaction, social construction of knowledge, and collaboration. The notion of cognitive apprenticeship is elated to situated cognition theory and simulates or capitalises on real world activities (Berryman and Bailey, 1992; Brown, 1989). Practices of the community and following their norms, values and beliefs, we become member of that particular community. Legitimate peripheral participation is also related to the communities of practices. Legitimate **peripheral participation** should be understood as defining ways of belonging to a community of practice and someone who is not a legitimate participant would not be allowed access to the resources of the practice.

Authentic work practices or **authentic activities** are based on daily life practices or activities in which learners engage. Such activities have a greater resemblance to activities in which core members of a community

actually engage. For example, authentic social science teaching learning environments would allow students to practice social science as scientists work on research projects in real life. Working on projects with genuine purpose or cause will constitute social science learning according to situated cognition.

Now we are in a position to identify the principles of situated cognition. Principles of situated cognition are—

- Knowledge needs to be presented and learned in an authentic context, i.e., settings and applications that would normally involve that knowledge
- Learning requires social interaction and collaboration
- Knowledge is socially embedded.

The principles of situated learning can be applied to designing effective learning environments. The most appropriate instructional method will be one that incorporates both—

- (a) Realistic presentation of the knowledge, procedures and skills and
- (b) Opportunities for students to apply the knowledge and practice the procedures and skills in a realistic context.

Why situated cognition to teach social studies

Social studies need to be revitalised in order to help the learner acquire knowledge and skill in interactive environment. It has often been noticed that there is an increasing gap between the promises made in the curriculum and what is happening at the level of the

child's perception. It is important that the process of learning should promote the spirit of inquiry and creativity among children and teachers.

NCF-2005 says the teacher is an important medium of transacting the curriculum and simplifying as an opportunity for teachers and students to learn together, thus developing a democratic culture within institutions. In order to make the process of learning participatory, there is a need to shift from the mere imparting of information to involvement in debate and discussion. This approach to learning will keep both learners and teachers alive to social realities.

Concept should be clarified to the students through the lived experiences of individuals and communities. For example, the concept of social equality can be understood better through citing the lived experiences of communities that make up the social and cultural milieu of the child. It has also often been observed that cultural, social, and class differences generate their own biases, prejudices, and attitudes in classroom contexts. The approach to teaching, therefore need to be open-ended. Teachers should discuss different dimensions of social reality in the class, and work towards creating increasing self-awareness both amongst themselves as well as among the learners.

The focus group also discussed the adverse effects that the minimal provision of infrastructure and poorly qualified para teachers have on the learning on the discipline. The linkages between adequate infrastructure and the teaching of social studies is not often commented upon because instruction in

the subject requires no obvious space like the way in which a laboratory is required for the teaching of science. However, the effective teaching of social studies is crucially linked to the efficient functioning of the school library and of teachers who are trained to use the resources that the library provides towards the creation of challenging projects and activities. This shift away from rote learning to comprehension through the implementation of projects can only take place if the teacher is able to assess the child's understanding through other means rather than just the completion of the project. A more nuanced assessment of whether the child is learning through project work might help mitigate the present manufacturing of these projects in the market as ready-made objects that parents can buy. It will also help to modify the prevailing belief that increased marks on project work translates into 'easy marks' to be gained with the least effort.

So we have many reasons in support of situated cognition, which are given below—

- Because it starts with cognition in daily life of a layperson in natural settings and produce a theory of 'every day learning'. On the other hand many other theories starts with some preconceived assumption. For example Information processing theory that starts with this assumption – how experts solve the problems and how they study cognition in contrived situation.
- Situated cognition comes from informal situation rather than formal situation.
- It starts with everyday practices, which is called enculturation.
- Situated cognition not promotes the students to conceive only.
- According to situated cognition what we learn in a community that occurs in specific context and culture. This notion of situated cognition is against the traditional classroom learning activity that believes that nature of knowledge is abstract and it can be presented in de-contextualised form.
- In general school practices we see that they belief, that we can teach the subjects according to the textbooks. The basic assumption behind it is, knowledge is abstract and de-contextualised and knowledge can be transferred from teacher to students by textbooks and because of this assumption they use more abstract methodology to teach e.g. reading from textbook and lecture method. This approach is completely against the situated cognition.
- There is another notion that says social studies is not a useful subject. But according to situated cognition social studies develops the cultural and analytical ability.

Situated cognition and NCERT social science textbooks

NCERT new textbooks are based on NCF-2005. National Curriculum Framework emphasising learning in

authentic situations and have strong believe that learning can take place in context. We can easily find lots of examples from these textbooks those provide opportunities to students to learn and understand the concepts in authentic situation or in context. Chapter 'on equality' of class seventh provides opportunities to students to develop critical thinking and understanding by coating real life incidents and raising thought-provoking question about the equality and rationality of equality in existing society such as Omprakash situation in Joothan. These kinds of scenario help students to be more sensitive about certain sensitive issues such as caste, class, gender etc.

Same book in different lesson called 'growing up as boys and girls' talks about different activities which makes students aware and sensitive about current issues like gender inequality. Such as — make a drawing of street or a park in your neighbourhood show the different kind of activities young boys and girls may be engaged in. You could do this work individually or in groups. Working in groups is also being emphasised by these new textbooks and that is appreciable.

The chapter "Democracy in Contemporary World" consists very good learning activities based on situated cognition perspective. Such formation of different groups in the class to collect different type of information (news, clippings, articles, photographs etc.) about struggle for democracy in any country those currently are not democratic. Focusing of the following question — what makes the government

non-democratic. Another chapter "What is democracy? Why is democracy?" in same book has some more situated cognition-based activities. One of them is — follow editorial page of any newspaper for one month and collect editorial articles and letters on the page that have anything to do with democracy. These kinds of activities are based on application rather than retention and teachers role become as a guide, monitor or facilitator.

Some activities are purely based on students daily life such as — talk to some elderly person in your family or neighbourhood and collect information about — the trees in his/her neighbourhood when she/he was your age, how did they make their selves comfortable during hot summers and cold winters (Chapter — Our Environment, Class Seventh). How your neighbourhood land is being used. Collect information and discuss how your community being effected by it (Chapter — Natural Resources, Class VIII).

So, NCERT new textbooks primary goal is to develop the students' cognition and cultivate awareness. These books also focus to develop skills and abilities to promote problem-solving, higher order thinking skills and deep understanding of the concepts. Activities available in these books provide opportunities for apprenticeship, guided participation learning with increasing complexity of task, skills and knowledge construction. For deeper and better understanding of situated cognition in teaching of social science, in next segment of the paper we will try to understand implications of situated cognition in social science teaching.

Situated Cognition and teaching of social science — Implications

Situated learning environment attempts to help students to improve their cognitive abilities, encourages learning through active participation, facilitation is less directive, more continuous and highly interactive. Communities of practices, apprenticeship, authentic activities, real world environment etc., are some of them that are incorporated into situated cognition approach. The important aspects of situated cognition approach are presented below. This point will be helpful in designing a situated classroom.

- Application rather than retention becomes the mark of a successful instructional encounter in the situated cognition framework.

Example — Traffic light — If we want to make students capable to understand the traffic rules, we can held a visit to the traffic signal park, where they can understand the concept of traffic light by active participation.

Passing the bill in Assembly — if we want to aware the student to understand the procedure of passing the bill in assembly, we can create the same environment in classroom as we see in assembly or we can held a visit to assembly session

- The goal and objectives of the activity are resultant of the student and teacher negotiation.

Example — if we want to provide opportunities to the students of fifth class about the lesson “find the place on earth”, we can provide a globe to the students to read. Interestingly they will

ask about the various shapes (states) those are available on the globe and then teacher can help them to understand this concept.

- The teacher functions as guides, monitors, coaches, tutors and facilitators.

Example — teacher can organise a debate on some topic such as “why democracy, Indian Constitution” etc.

- Activities, opportunities, tools and environment are afforded to promote meta-cognition, self-analysis, reflection and awareness.

Example— if we want to teach about the rules, how to walk on the road, we can take them to the road, where they find everyone is walking on his/her left side of the road, they will do self analysis and understand that to avoid the accident we should walk on the left side of the road.

- The learning situation, environment, skills, tasks and content are lifelike, relevant realistic, authentic and correspond to the natural complexities of the real world.

Example — if we want to teach the social customs we can assign them to participate in the common customs of various communities living in their locality.

- Primary sources of information are used in order to ensure authenticity and real world complexity.

Example — we can make capable students to understand the working of the many social institutionns such as Bank, Hospitals etc. by visiting them.

- The knowledge is constructed through social negotiation, collaboration and experience.

Example — we can have discussion on any topic or we can take them to villages to show how *Gram Panchayat* works?

- The learner's previous knowledge construction, beliefs and attitudes are considered in the knowledge construction process.

Example — we can make student capable to understand the importance of the celebration of the various festivals or how money bill pass (but before this students must know how to pass the ordinary bill)

- Problem solving higher order thinking skills and deep understanding are emphasised.

Example — we can assign the work to prepare the scrap book on any topic such as pollution, unemployment etc.

- Learners are provided with the opportunity for apprenticeship, guided participation learning in which there is an increasing complexity of tasks, skills and knowledge acquisition.

Example — if we want to teach the process of election, we can create realistic environment in the classroom itself, so that student can learn how election take place and what is the procedure of election?

Other implications of situated cognition

There are many implications of situated cognition for teaching. These

can make teaching more and more effective, realistic and enhanced. These are given below—

- It supports learning from the demand side rather than the supply side.
- The designer moves from the organisation of content and sequences of the creation of environment to induce, and then facilitate understanding.
- Require different roles for teacher: from a knowledge transmitter to a coach or facilitator of student understanding.
- Requires a fundamental change in test traditions, focus on the individual's cognitive progress and transfer of knowledge (testing the cognitive progress)
- Emphasis high order thinking skill.
- Provides complex ill-defined and authentic tasks
- Attempts to cultivate awareness (needed skill in the meta-cognitive monitoring of process toward a solution and the reasoning experts experience in real world problem solving)
- Induces inferential reasoning, monitoring and regulation of problem solving and utilization of meta-cognition skills.
- Focus on growth primarily in student cognition.
- Has a primary goal to allow students and teachers to experience the effects of view knowledge on their perception and understanding and understanding of the environment.

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Translating Social Constructivism into English Language Teaching

*Some Experiences**

A.K. PALIWAL**

Abstract

This paper is based on the author's own experiences generated through the actual classroom situations involving constructivist approach to English Language Teaching (ELT). The author of the paper holds the view that language is both a cognitive constructivist and social constructivist process and product. It is cognitive constructivist in the sense that learners construct their own language and its grammar. It is social constructivist in that it is only in, for and through society that language is used. No human language may evolve, function, operate, develop and be dynamic without social interaction. Language encompasses all forms of constructivism. However, its framework is largely social which helps the learners in acquiring/learning the rudimentary language skills (LSRW), grammatical / linguistic and communicative competence. This paper discusses some social constructivist activities and tasks to make the main point clear.

Introduction

Let me make it clear at the very outset that this paper is based on my own experiences generated through the actual classroom situations involving constructivist approach to English Language Teaching (ELT).

Constructivism has recently emerged as a powerful force to be reckoned with

especially in the context of school education across the globe. Unlike the behavioural approach to education, constructivism believes in helping the child acquire new *knowledge*, information, skills, etc., and *construct* meaning through *exploration, experience, engaging, exploiting* varied contexts with the assistance of convergent, divergent, reflective, critical and creative thinking

*This paper was presented in a national seminar on 'Constructivism' in March 2008 held at RIE, Bhopal, NCERT.

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on the basis of *previous knowledge, experience and skills*.

'Social Constructivism'

Vygotsky's social constructivism stresses the value of culture and the social context for cognitive development. He discusses the 'zone of proximal development'. For Vygotsky, the culture provides the child with the cognitive tools required for development. The term 'social constructivism' is used in this paper in a purely linguistic sense and obviously it is slightly different from Vygotsky's 'social constructivism'. For the author of the paper, social constructivism is constructing knowledge, information, and relationship, a network of linguistic properties through conversation, dialogue, discourse, discussion and all those social inputs which believe in dualism and/or pluralism. Notwithstanding some differences of opinions, it is both a theory of learning and approach to teaching-learning.

The author of the paper holds the view that language is both a cognitive constructivist and social constructivist of process and product. It is cognitive constructivist in the sense that learners construct their own language and its grammar. It is social constructivist in that it is only in, for and through society that language is used. No human language may evolve, function, operate, develop and be dynamic without social interaction. It is also a radical constructivist in nature. Language encompasses all forms of constructivism. However, its framework is largely social.

The author's basic assumption in this regard is that social constructivism

helps the learners in acquiring/learning the rudimentary language skills (LSRW), grammatical/linguistic and communicative competence.

The above mentioned basic assumption is based on the following two accepted and other testable sub-assumptions:

Assumption one

Learners generally acquire/learn a language through social interactions in a meaningful social setting.

The vast and abundant literature on the mother tongue (MT) or home language (HL) acquisition researches has enlightened us on this issue. It informs us that children acquire their MT and HL in the company of their family and social relations.

This hypothesis has been accepted by way of a large number of fundamental researches with empirical evidence at various points of time in varied linguistic contexts. It has been proved umpteen times beyond doubt that it is not possible to acquire a human language without 'social interaction'. Language and society go together and they cannot be separated for individual existence with the mutual support for each other.

Assumption two

Learners generally construct words, phrases, clauses, sentences, dialogues, conversations and discourse in social settings.

This hypothesis too has been accepted by a large number of researches in linguistics and applied linguistics. As proved correct, children listen to the language spoken/used around them and

they learn it through observation, imitation, experiencing, doing, etc. In fact, they 'discover' the inherent grammar on the basis of which they start 'constructing' words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and discourse. (For the adult, these constructions may be the old ones but for the learners they are afresh and of course novel).

They generally learn to construct, deconstruct, reconstruct not only phonological, morphological, lexical, structural, syntactic and grammatical properties but also *semantic world* in a variety of enormously rich *social settings*, through meaningful social interactions. However, it may be quickly added here that mistakes, errors, and their natural, spontaneous rectification, eradication are part of the language learning which, is essentially a constructive process.

Assumption three

Learners generally acquire / learn communication skills through social interactions such as dialogues, conversations, role play, discussions, simulations, etc., in meaningful social settings.

Assumption four

Learners generally construct the fundamental linguistic properties such as vowel, diphthong and consonant sounds, accent, stress, juncture, pause, rhythm, lexis, structures, syntax, semantic values by way of the following:

- (a) Previous experience (through LSRW)
- (b) Role play
- (c) Simulation

- (d) Conversation
- (e) Dialogue
- (f) Brainstorm (involving reflective, critical, creative, divergent, convergent thinking)
- (g) 'Tasks', 'speech acts', etc.

Assumption five

Learners generally construct the fundamental linguistic properties and skills through the following:

- (a) Engaging
- (b) Experiencing
- (c) Enquiry
- (d) Knowledge discovery
- (e) Exploitation of the oral/written texts
- (f) Exploration
- (g) Elaboration

Assumption six

Learners generally construct their own 'grammar' for linguistic development and social communication.

They have an innate ability to construct their own grammar. Noam Chomsky's theory of 'language acquisition device' (LAD) is a strong argument in this context. Learners have a natural ability to communicate whatever they have decided to communicate with whatever linguistic properties and resources they have. They may not know 'metalanguage' but they do learn the language used by the 'society' they live in. They learn the grammar of listening by listening, the grammar of speaking by speaking, the grammar of reading by reading and the grammar of writing by writing (Jane Willis).

Assumption seven

Learners generally construct 'grammar' and 'sense' for appropriateness, fluency and genuine communication.

It is only through 'social interactions', 'speech acts' that children pick up the rules other than the rules of grammar and these rules are the rules of social behaviour, the rules of linguistic appropriateness, fluency and communication. They also learn what is appropriate and what is inappropriate to say in particular social settings at various points of time. They do learn to observe the rules of social relationships to be established and/or maintained and social themes to be discussed.

Assumption eight

Learners generally construct new knowledge and / or skills through the following sequence:

- (a) Exposure to the language
- (b) Elicitation of ideas
- (c) Restructuring of ideas
 - Clarification of ideas
 - Exposure of ideas
 - Construction of new ideas
 - Evaluation of ideas
- (d) Application of ideas
- (e) Review of change in ideas

Let it be mentioned here that the above mentioned constructivist pedagogic framework is based on John Sagy constructivist ideas.

A. Some Pedagogic Experiences

The above mentioned eight assumptions (hypotheses?) were informally tested the details of which are as follows:

Being a teacher educator, the author of this paper conducted a number of classes in the actual school situations at different points of time during the last five years. He himself conducted some classes with a view to finding out whether or not school students could 'construct' various linguistic properties in English as a second language. The B.Ed. students under his supervision during teaching practice phase were also oriented towards the 'new' pedagogic techniques devised by him and they were suitably motivated to try out the 'new' techniques in novel situations for greater reliability, acceptability and for more refinement, modification. The lessons were conducted in the 'constructivist framework' to the extent possible.

The author has been fully aware of the efficacy of the tools prepared, of the potentiality of the devices employed, the delimitations of the sample, conclusions drawn and generalisations reached. Therefore, he does not make any claim for sweeping generalisations. Nonetheless, he wishes to share his successful and encouraging experiences in the constructivist classrooms which are described and elaborated in the following section of the paper for greater discussions and if possible for dissemination of the 'idea of translating social constructivism into teaching English, as a second language in India.

B. The Observations and Feedback

The general framework of the lesson plan designed, adopted and adapted for teaching English as a second language is as follows:

- (a) Orientation and Exposure
 - (b) Elicitation
 - (c) Construction (language elements, skills and ideas)
- IV. Application

The specific details of the above-mentioned points are as follows;

1. Orientation and Exposure

As a first step the teacher decides to break the ice in the class by way of discussing something very general related to their life such as :

1. How did they spend the previous evening/ Sunday/holiday, etc?

2. Elicitation

● Brainstorm

- (i) What do they expect of the topic written on the blackboard?

(The teacher writes a theme word on the blackboard. For example, s/he, writes "FOREST" on the board. The students are asked to suggest some words related to the theme. They may suggest words like: jungle, woods, trees, plants, wild animals, birds, darkness, dense, hunting, deforestation, cut down, furniture, pollution, medicines, etc.)

- (ii) What words, structures, do they think, would occur in the text they are going to read on the theme/ topic/text chosen?
- (iii) What ideas would the author of the text present and how?
- (iv) What new things, do they think they would learn through the text/ lesson?

The tasks like the ones discussed above generally help the learners in:

- (a) Thinking
- (b) Recalling
- (c) Imagining
- (d) Producing ideas
- (e) Listening
- (f) Speaking
- (g) Reading
- (h) Writing
- (i) Communicating
- (j) Negotiating, etc.

The other' tasks 'which help in realising the above mentioned objectives are as follows:

- (1) Word games
- (2) Crossword puzzles
- (3) Riddles
- (4) Picture dictation
- (5) Picture composition
- (6) Role play
- (7) Simulation, etc.

● Role play

The teacher assigns some interesting and known roles to the class and asks some pairs of the students to act out the roles involved in the text or roles such as;

- (1) The shopkeeper and the customer
- (2) The doctor and the patient
- (3) The teacher and the student
- (4) The mother and the child
- (5) The bus conductor and the passenger, etc.

The tasks like the ones mentioned above generally help the learners in developing the skills of:

- (1) Thinking
- (2) Improvising
- (3) Creating new contexts
- (4) Meaning making

- (5) Negotiating
- (6) Starting and winding up a dialogue, etc.

The learners revise, consolidate, reinforce and cement the previously acquired/learnt linguistic, communicative 'experiences' but also creates, construct new lexical, structural, ideational and semantic sets and thus communicative competence.

● Text based Tasks

The teacher takes up an authentic text (say, from a newspaper, a magazine, a brochure, an advertisement, etc.) and sets some specific tasks like the following:

- (1) Read through the text.
- (2) Make a list of the new words occurring in it.
- (3) Make a list of the new structures occurring in it.
- (4) Make a list of the new grammatical items occurring in it.
- (5) Make a list of the articles/verbs/adverbs/adjectives/pronouns/connectives/prepositions occurring in it.
- (6) Find antonyms/synonyms/one words in the text.
- (7) Look up the words in the dictionary and find the meaning of the new words, their pronunciation and grammatical categories, etc.
- (8) Work in pairs and check each other's work.
- (9) Read the text and frame questions.
- (10) Use the new words/ structures in new sentences.
- (11) Write out/act out a dialogue/conversation between the two people discussing the theme of the text.

- (12) Write a summary of the text read, etc.

The tasks like these (which need not be in the above sequence all the time), not only help the learners construct ideas but also linguistic properties on their own or with the assistance of the peers, groups. Meaningful interactions take place between the learners, the text and the teacher.

These 'tasks' also help in 'organising' learning experiences for construction of knowledge and fostering creativity and connecting knowledge to life outside of school (NCF 2005, NCERT). Through these types of tasks (as mentioned earlier on) learners become more active, interactive, linguistically and communicatively empowered thanks to the inherent culture of the socially rich-linguistic and communicative inputs.

In the whole business of ELT, the teacher plays a role of a facilitator, manager of activities, supervisor of the 'tasks', participant, philosopher, guide and friend.

The texts are 'explored', 'discovered', 'exploited', 'enquired into', engaged with, elicited, emitted, created, constructed, destructed, reconstructed for the purpose of meaning-making by the learners. Learner's contribution helps in arriving at the composite culture of the text-construction involving lexis, structures and sense. Authentic materials are 'means' to the 'end' (that is, the construction of linguistic, communicative knowledge and skills for linguistic and communicative competence to be translated into what Noam Chomsky calls 'communicative performance'.

C. Challenges and Possibilities

The experiences described in this paper have been gathered in actual second language classroom situations in which students *encountered* cognitively challenged tasks, *explored* linguistic possibilities, *experienced* the language learning process and product by *engaging* themselves in meaningful

tasks. It is high time a full-fledged research project equipped with a formal design in the Indian context was conducted for more insights into the constructivist approach to ELT. This would help us spell out learners' needs and their roles, to study teachers' perceptions, their roles, the roles of the texts and the design of the constructivist testing, etc.

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Curriculum Implementation in Rural Schools — Issues and Challenges

SANTOSH SHARMA*

Abstract

Learning achievement of rural children is low compared to urban children at all stages of school education. The NCF-2005 observes that while urban middle class children are stressed from the need to perform extremely well, rural children are not sure about whether their preparation is adequate even to succeed in the examination. Learning achievement of learners indicates the extent to which curricular objectives have been achieved and is significant indicator of quality of education. Low learning achievement and failure to achieve curricular objectives indicates that curriculum has not been implemented effectively. Curriculum implementation is a complex process where a number of interacting factors influence each other. These factors include curriculum itself, teacher, pedagogy, resource learning material, instructional time, infrastructure and community support. Curriculum implementation requires proper planning monitoring and above all political will. Curriculum is a crucial factor in successful implementation of the curriculum. If curriculum is heavily loaded with bookish knowledge which is beyond the comprehension level of learners, even the best teachers will be compelled to complete the syllabus by reading the textbooks or by writing questions and answers on the blackboard. When curriculum does not provide space for students' thinking, activity and creativity, how can these objectives be achieved? Analysis of syllabi and textbooks of a number of states reveals that curriculum imparts bookish knowledge and textbooks are urban centric. These alienate rural children from their environment rather than attaching them to it. Language of the textbooks is not the language of the rural child's communication. School and community are two different worlds for children. For effective implementation, curriculum needs to be relevant, flexible and related to life of children which meets the requirement of diverse learners.

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Introduction

The NCF-2005 observes that while urban middle class children are stressed from the need to perform extremely well, rural children are not sure about whether their preparation is adequate even to succeed in the examination. Learning achievement of rural children is low compared to urban children at all stages of school education. The achievement surveys conducted by NCERT show that the pass percentage of rural children is low compared to urban children at both primary and upper primary stage. These achievement surveys do not include private schools and also Kendriya Vidyalayas which are located mainly in urban areas and are known for high achievement and good performance in examinations. If these high achieving schools are also included in achievement surveys, the gap between achievement levels of rural and urban students would be much wider. This difference is significantly high when pass percentage is taken as 60% and above marks. The pass percentage (60% and above) is 42 for rural children and 56 for urban children at primary level (IV/V). This percentage is 36 for rural children and 46 for urban children at upper primary stage. (An independent survey, EEI, 2006-07). A research study conducted by Sharma, S. (DPEP Calling March, 2000) on Achievement Levels of Urban and Rural Children reveals that achievement levels of rural primary school children, both boys and girls, are lower than urban children. The study compares the achievement levels of children studying in rural and urban schools of Ajmer (Rajasthan) and reports that the

achievement levels of the four groups, urban boys, urban girls, rural boys and rural girls are in the order:

Urban Girls > Urban Boys > Rural Boys > Rural Girls

That is, the achievement levels of both boys and girls of rural schools are lower than the achievement levels of both boys and girls of urban schools. In rural schools, nearly 50 per cent of students cannot read, write or do basic arithmetic in spite of spending four or five years in school (Chavan, 2006). Learning achievement of learners indicates the extent to which curricular objectives have been achieved and is significant indicator of quality of education. The low learning achievement and failure to achieve curricular objectives reflected poor curriculum implementation.

Curriculum implementation is a complex process where a number of interacting factors influence each other. These factors include curriculum, teacher, pedagogy, resource learning material, instructional time, infrastructure and community support. Curriculum implementation requires proper planning, monitoring and above all political will.

Curriculum is a crucial factor in successful implementation of the curriculum. If curriculum is heavily loaded with bookish knowledge which is beyond the comprehension level of learners, even the best teachers will be compelled to complete the syllabus by reading the textbooks or by writing questions and answers on the blackboard. When curriculum does not provide space for students' thinking,

activity and creativity, how can these objectives be achieved? Analysis of syllabi and textbooks of different states reveals that curriculum imparts bookish knowledge and textbooks are urban centric. These alienate rural children from their environment rather than

attaching them to it. Language of the textbooks is not the language of the rural child's communication. School and community are two different worlds for children. Following illustrations from textbooks of Gujarat explain this:

Social Science, Class VI, Gujarat

(6) Iron-Steel Industry

Besides small things like pin and needle, huge machines and their parts are made from iron and steel. Small and big things of daily life are supplied by this industry. This industry develops where there is a mine of raw iron and the facility of mineral coal and electricity to heat and melt the iron. In our country, iron and steel factories are situated at places like Bhilai, Janshedpur, Bokaro, Bhadravati, etc. The name of Jamshedji Tata is famous in India as the father of steel industry.

(7) Petrochemical Industry

Mineral oil is obtained from the interiors of the earth. Many substances are mixed in it. Mixed substances are purified and from that kerosene, diesel, petrol, etc. are separated. Only after that it can be used in various ways. As this industry is based on mineral oil, it has become one of the most important industry of today. Refineries of purifying mineral oil is situated in the cities like Vadodara, Jamnagar, Mumbai, Vishakhapatnam, Cochin, Chennai, etc.

- Refineries of Mumbai and Vishakhapatnam are in the possession of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL).

- In Vadodara, a huge campus namely Indian Petroleum Corporation Limited (IPCL) is situated.

Colour-chemical Industry can also be developed from that. Manufacturing of the Substances like various chemicals, Soda-ash, Costic soda, Petrochemical, etc. is done in colour-chemical and Medicine Industry. Chemical fertilizer industry is also considered as a part of this industry. Today, the use of chemical fertilizer is increasing. Factories of chemical fertilizers are situated at Kalol, Vadodara, Sindri, Mumbai, Gorakhpur, Durgapur, etc.

Class VI, Science, Gujarat

Activity : 4

What is required ?
Vaseline (oil), boards of paper

What will you do ?

- First of all take card boards of paper
- Apply vaseline or oil on these boards.
- Put one board in your house, second on the way (near the road) and the third at the open place of your choice.
- Observe all the three boards after about a day.
- Will see the small particles of dust stuck on the boards.
- You must have seen the sunlight that is coming from window, door or crack of the ceiling. The particles seen here and there are the dust particles. Thus dust particles are present in air.

Thus, it is apparent from the activities that oxygen, carbon dioxide, vapour of water and particles of dust are present in the air. In addition, nitrogen, helium, neon, argon, krypton, xenon, radon and ozone gases are present in air. Hence air is a mixture.

Experimentally, the components of the air and their proportion are proved to be as shown below :

No.	Name of component	Approximate percentage by volume
1.	Nitrogen	78.0
2.	Oxygen	21.0
3.	Helium, neon, argon, krypton, xenon, radon, ozone, water vapour and dust particles	00.96
4.	Carbon dioxide	00.04

What will you do ?

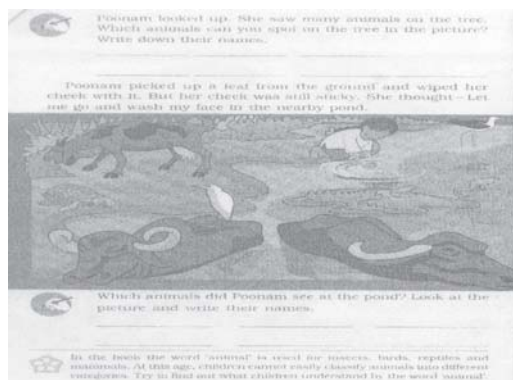
You must have experienced in your everyday life that you feel suffocation during the circumstances when air is not available in the form of wind when you travel in the bus and when it is over crowded. Sometimes when the nose

12.5 Different components of air

Illustrations from textbooks of different states (Gujarat, Nagaland, Mizoram, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, NCERT, etc.) may help in understanding how curricular content can facilitate or hamper the achievement of learning objectives. Here, I would like to present an analysis of 'Environmental Studies' textbooks of different states, where teachers have classified content into two categories: (A) which may help in achieving the learning objectives of EVS, and (B) which may not help in achieving the learning objectives of EVS. The curricular area of Environmental Studies at primary stage aims at developing ability of the students to make sense and draw meaning out of their experiences with social and natural environment.

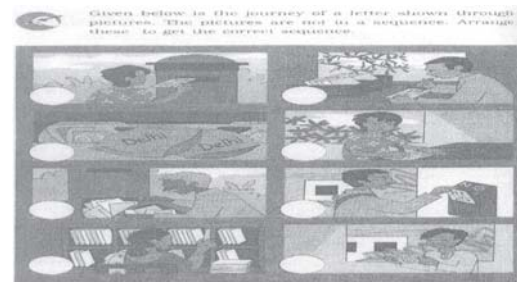
A. Content/lessons which may help in achieving the objectives of EVS

(i) EVS, Class III, NCERT



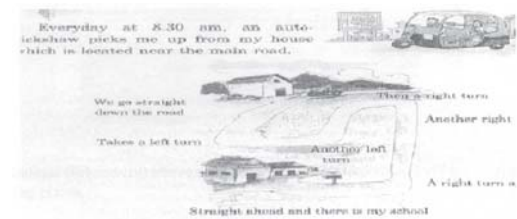
This illustration from Class III, EVS textbook of NCERT relates to experiences of rural children and develops awareness about animals living on trees and in water. Children explore how these animals meet their shelter, food and

water requirements. How plants and animals depend on each other.



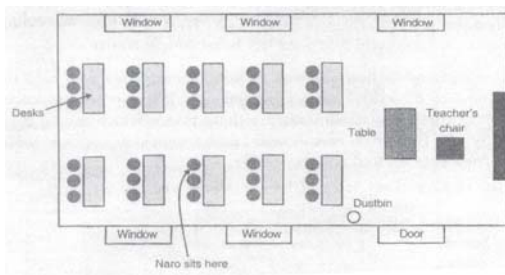
This illustration from Class III, EVS textbooks of NCERT helps children to understand how the letter that they drop in letter box reaches the addressee. The illustration is not providing direct information but asking children to think and get the correct sequence. This helps in achieving the objective of developing understanding of communication process through mail which most children in rural India must have experienced.

(ii) Finding My Way (Class III, EVS, Nagaland)

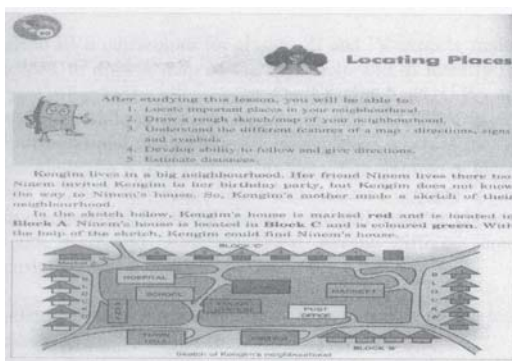


All children need to understand the way from home to school and back. They should be able to explain this way to others with the help of a map. This map drawing and reading becomes pre-requisite learning for further learning about maps.

(iii) Map of classroom (Class III, EVS, Nagaland)



(iv) Locating places (Class IV, EVS, Nagaland)



Illustrations (iii) and (iv) above represent maps of classroom and village which help children in locating places.

B. Content/lessons which may not help in achieving the objectives of EVS

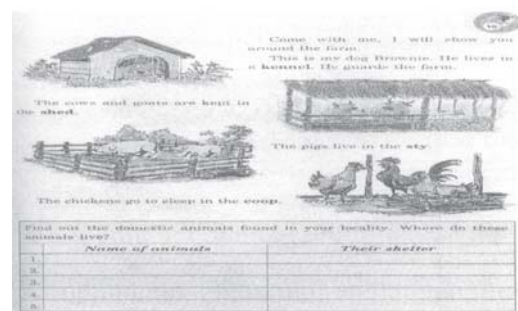
(i) (Class III, EVS, U.P.)



The Nagaland EVS curriculum for Classes III and IV expects students to find way from home to their school, to draw a map of the classroom and to identify their seats, to locate school, hospital, post office in the village map. On the other hand, U.P. curriculum of Class III expects students to locate India in Asia using a globe and map. Experiences of teachers show that the objectives of Nagaland curriculum can be achieved whereas the objective of U.P. curriculum cannot be achieved by 8 or 9 year old children. For children of Class III, the concept of earth as a round ball and how this round ball when flattened becomes a complex map of the world is difficult to comprehend. Even the scientists are still debating about the shape of earth. Locating North, South, East and West on globe; finding different countries on map is beyond comprehension of 8-9 year olds.

Content related to animal life which may help in achieving the learning objectives of EVS in primary classes are:

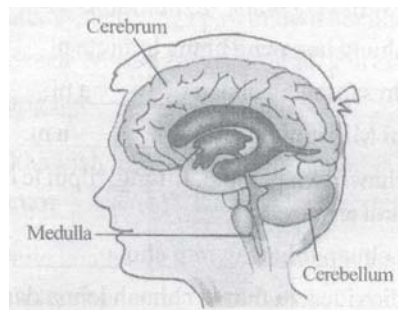
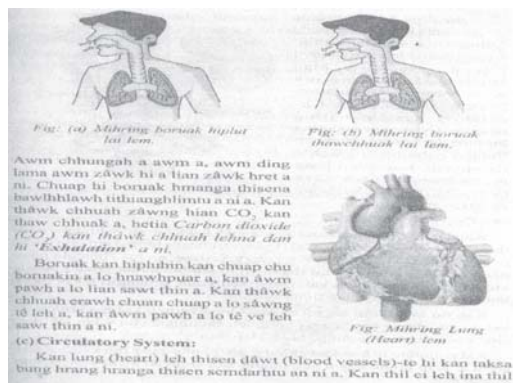
A) (v) Animals and their shelter - (Class III, Nagaland)



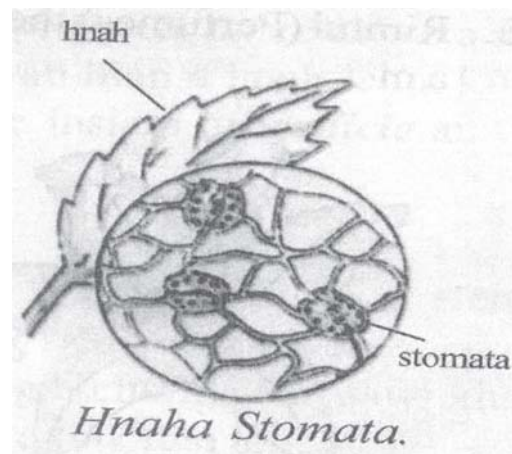
This illustration relates to experiences of rural children and asks children to explore more about animals and their shelters.

B. (ii) The content related to human systems which may not be understood by students and therefore does not help in achieving the objectives. Children of 9-10 years age learn through experiences and making meaning out of their experiences. At this age, they can be introduced to the method of Science - experimentation and providing plausible explanations. But understanding organic structure in human system such as structure of brain, heart, lungs requires pre-requisite understanding of cell, tissue, muscle, blood flow, etc. These complex structures are beyond the comprehension of students at primary stage.

(Mizoram, Science, Class IV)



(iii) About plant life Mizoram Class IV syllabus teaches process of photosynthesis which cannot be understood by 9 year olds. These are too abstract for children to understand.



(iv) About air Mizoram syllabus of Class IV describes air pollution in terms of pollutants such as CO₂, SO₂, CO



It is clear from the illustrations that the objectives of Mizoram syllabus cannot be achieved by 9 year old children. This has too many technical terms and abstract concepts which are beyond comprehension level of children.

Similarly, to develop the understanding of time in terms of historical event and culture, Nagaland Class IV curriculum includes content such as

A) (vii) How man learnt to grow food (Class IV) - Nagaland

We grow different varieties of food crops. But, it was the early humans who first discovered agriculture thousands of years ago. No one knows exactly when early humans began to grow food.

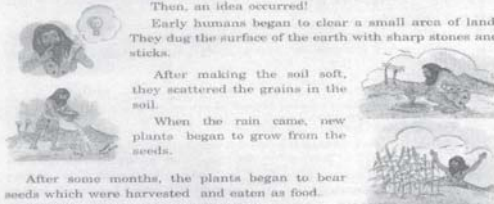
It is possible that one day, early humans wandered near the river valleys in search of food. They must have found wild grasses such as wheat, barley, corn and rice and liked its taste. They must have also observed that when the rain came, new plants grew out of the seeds that fell on the ground.

Then, an idea occurred!
Early humans began to clear a small area of land. They dug the surface of the earth with sharp stones and sticks.

After making the soil soft, they scattered the grains in the soil.

When the rain came, new plants began to grow from the seeds.


After some months, the plants began to bear seeds which were harvested and eaten as food.
This led to the beginning of farming.



With the help of your teacher, can you find out the agricultural months against the agricultural activities of your village?

Agricultural Activity	Agricultural Month
1. Tilling	
2. Sowing	
3. Weeding	
4. Harvest	

When early humans began farming, they felt the need for better tools. Tools were needed to dig the land and reap the crops. So, early humans made sharp and smooth tools out of stones and woods. Later, they fixed handles to these tools and made the hoe and sickle. Gradually, man found out ways of making better implements for farming. With the discovery of iron, tools also improved.



Can you make a list of the tools used in your village for farming? Also describe each tool and explain their purpose to your classmates.

(a) _____
(b) _____
(c) _____
(d) _____

After the discovery of farming, man found out the need for team work. So, man began to live in groups. By this time, man needed to live near his farmland. He had to protect his crops from birds and animals. This led man to build and live in houses near his farmland. Different families began to live near each other. In this way, man began to form small settlements known as villages. These early villages were mostly set up near river banks, where land was fertile and water was available.

(viii) Festivals we celebrate - Class IV - Nagaland

Maknyu Lam
The Chang Naga celebrate this festival in the month of July. During the festival, the Chang decorate their houses and footpaths with special kinds of leaves called Naganmas. Everyone is engaged in dancing and music-making. Both young and old play traditional games. The people also clean their houses and village surroundings.

Ngnada
The Beangma celebrate Ngnada festival towards the end of November just after harvest. It is the festival of thanksgiving and merrymaking. During this festival, the departed souls are remembered and on the final day of the festival, a great feast is arranged where the whole village eat together. After this festival, it is believed that those who died that year will go to the land of the dead.

Sakrewyl
It is the biggest festival of the Angami. It normally falls on the 25th day of the August month of February (Koon). This festival is also known as *Thremsawyl*.
During the festival, young men of the village rise up early in the morning and wash themselves at the village well, which signifies that they are purified from all sickness and



B) (v) Whereas textbooks of Uttrakhand (2004-05) teach about our rulers such as

- Chandragupt Vikramaditya
- Harshvardhan
- Rajendra Chola
- Krishndev Rai
- Prithviraj Chouhan
- Allauddin Khilji
- Sher Shah Suri
- Akbar, Rani Durgavati
- Rana Pratap, Chtrapati Shivaji
- Guru Govind Singh

(vi) Sant and Poets

- Tukaram, Sant Kabir, Sant Ravidas,
- Guru Nanak, Malik Mohammad Jayesi, Tulsidas, Surdas, Meerabai,
- Khwaja Muiuddin Chishtee.

The State of Uttrakhand has now changed their textbooks of elementary classes considering the fact that the objectives of the earlier curriculum and the content of the textbooks cannot be understood by 9 year old students and leads to rote learning.

Implementation of this kind of curriculum at B is difficult for both rural and urban children. More rural children will fail and dropout because many of them are first generation learners. Rural parents and students start believing that this education is not for them or they do not 'fit' into this system of education. Urban parents on the other hand may raise the issues related to 'difficult' curriculum and 'poor' teaching and ask for improvement rather than withdrawing children from schools.

Also curriculum is limited and labels only some forms of knowledge as 'curricular' and others as 'co-curricular'.

The curricular subjects include Mathematics, Science, Social Science and Language. Other forms of knowledge such as Health and Physical Education, Arts and Aesthetics are considered as 'co-curricular' subjects. These 'co-curricular' subjects do not receive attention in terms of school time and teachers. This way many areas of knowledge which have potential for development of skill, aesthetics, creativity and team work get sidelined. The National Curriculum Framework, 2005 recommends that Health and Physical Education and Arts and Aesthetics should be treated as curricular subjects and should be given same importance as Science or Social Science. These should be given due importance in terms of 'teacher preparation' and allocation of time in the school time table. Interaction with teachers during SOPT training at SCERT, Gurgaon, Haryana, teachers from rural schools of Haryana, 'drawing' teachers reported that they had not received any in-service training during past 25-26 years, whereas teachers teaching scholastic subjects receive training at frequent intervals. Drawing and Physical Education teachers are assigned most of the 'non teaching' work given to school by administration. A success story from Bhesana village of Gujarat may help in understanding the importance of Physical Education in school curriculum. In Bhesana village, the traditional sport of Kabaddi has helped to bring all girls to school. The sport is now the reason for record change

in Bhesana, which has recorded the 100% enrolment of girls. All 200 girls in the age group 6-14 now go to school. Besides, bringing children to school and motivating children for learning, Physical and Health Education is important for allround development and growth of children. Art education helps children to express themselves and to develop aesthetic sensibilities.



SPORTING SUCCESS: Thanks to kabaddi, every girl in Gujarat's Bhesana village now goes to school

Curricular options are limited at secondary and senior secondary stage which impedes universalisation of secondary education in rural India. Of the total 5437 schools offering vocational education at Higher Secondary stage, 60% are in urban areas and only about 40% are in rural areas. Of 241,917 students enrolled in vocational stream, only 88,953 are in rural schools. Statewise data shows that in major states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand and Karnataka, rural students are practically deprived by vocational stream.

Statewise number of Higher Secondary schools with vocational stream and students' enrolment in them (7th AISES)

<i>State</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>No. of schools with vocational stream</i>	<i>Enrolment in vocational schools</i>
Andhra Pradesh	Rural	212	8,870
	Urban	195	13,418
	Total	407	22,288
Chattisgarh	Rural	31	916
	Urban	62	1710
	Total	93	2626
Haryana	Rural	15	874
	Urban	24	2572
	Total	39	3446
Jharkhand	Rural	6	580
	Urban	29	2407
	Total	35	2987
Karnataka	Rural	167	4273
	Urban	267	10,530
	Total	434	14,803
Madhya Pradesh	Rural	41	771
	Urban	183	5075
	Total	224	5846
Maharashtra	Rural	353	19,591
	Urban	361	22,591
	Total	714	42,182
Rajasthan	Rural	2	65
	Urban	11	374
	Total	13	439
Tamil Nadu	Rural	461	14,776
	Urban	1099	50,339
	Total	1560	65,115
Uttar Pradesh	Rural	185	5984
	Urban	347	11,209
	Total	532	17,193
Delhi	Rural	10	187
	Urban	226	6916
	Total	236	7103

For students living in cities, plenty of vocational options are available after completing schooling, apart from continuing to do University degree programmes. In urban areas, there are courses in Information Technology enabling services such as BPOs, maintenance and repair of computer hardware, computer networking, fashion designing, training secretarial jobs etc.

Due to lack of vocational training and employability, people migrating from villages to cities end up doing unskilled laborers' job and living in slums. There is need to create more job opportunities in rural areas by offering vocational courses. The vocational courses should not be limited to agrobased courses. In addition to setting up agrobased industries in rural areas, there is need to provide courses enabling repair of boat engines, diesel mechanics, motor winding and welding, auto parts, computers, forestry, etc. Diversity in vocational courses is required to prepare learners for the world of work. Mahatma Gandhi's visualised workoriented education would enable rural youths to earn their livelihood and empower them to decide their destiny. The curricular objective of preparing the child for the world of work can be realised by institutionalising work in school curriculum. NCF-2005 suggests that the school curriculum from pre-primary to senior secondary stage should be reconstructed for realising the pedagogical potential of work as a pedagogic medium in knowledge acquisition, developing values and multiple skill formation. For successful implementation of curriculum, the first task therefore is to develop relevant and

flexible curriculum which can be implemented.

Another important factor in curriculum implementation is the *curriculum transaction* where **teacher** is most important and central. Even the best curriculum would fail if teachers are not competent to transit the curriculum effectively. 7th AISES shows that 86,694 fulltime teachers teaching in primary rural schools have qualification below secondary whereas this number is 30,320 for urban schools. The numbers of fulltime teachers with secondary qualifications are 550,200 in rural schools whereas this number is 151,461 for urban schools. Of the total number, 513,638 of para teachers, 475,859 (93%) are in rural schools. To design and select appropriate learning experiences for children, teachers' own knowledge of content and pedagogy is essential. Teacher competence is an important factor, which determines the success or failure of the curriculum. Teachers in rural areas have limited general and professional knowledge. The best teachers make for cities, where they have better opportunities in terms of promotion, education of their children and housing, medical and other facilities. The urban oriented teachers scarcely understand rural children and their context. During pre-service teacher education also, school experiences are provided mainly in urban schools. Teachers are ill-equipped to teach rural children. They fail to use resources from local rural context. Teachers do not relate themselves to rural community and therefore do not interact with community. In rural education, teachers are the real bottleneck of the system.

The inefficient teaching methods are responsible for failure to achieve the objectives of curriculum. The most common method used by teachers for curriculum transaction is reading of textbooks and writing the difficult words on the blackboard. Teachers write questions and readymade answers on the blackboard which students copy and memorise to pass the examination. Experiential learning methods are generally not used and child's innate abilities to learn through experience, to observe, to question and to find solutions to the problems are not developed. Classroom teaching is a monologue where teacher speaks and students listen; many a time students do not understand teacher's urban and standardised language. Lessons are a mechanical repetition of text. Teachers try to complete syllabus by reading the textbooks. The only equipment is blackboard and chalk. Students get no opportunity to express themselves, to give their opinions or of reflecting on what they have learnt. Rural children are ridiculed by their teachers for using their rural language/accents, their manners and culture. Sometimes 'urban middle-class' teachers are totally unfit for rural schools. The teacher's first task is to familiarise himself/herself with his/her school; but she/he must also know and understand the world outside the school. Teacher's first concern should be to understand rural learner, his/her environment and rural life. Teacher has to become a part of village community and then only renewal will be possible. Teacher should be able to draw on the community using the facts of its existence as material for his teaching. There is need to remould

teachers and to accommodate rural learner and rural context. Providing rural schools with professionally qualified teachers is an essential pre-requisite for implementation of curriculum.

Pedagogy based on sound theoretical principles is required for successful implementation of the curriculum. Pre-service training of teachers also needs to be remoulded and in-service teacher training programmes must also relate to the school experiences of the rural teachers. Opportunities must be provided to teachers to continue to learn and to improve their teaching skills. Teachers and students together should explore the local area and regime to discover the teaching-learning elements geography, economics, industry and agriculture. Collaborating learning, team projects and preparing resource material for teaching-learning need to be encouraged in schools for meaningful learning. Rote learning methods need to be discouraged. School must contribute to development of village life and must participate in developmental plans of villages. The environment itself (climate, geology, nature of soil, vegetation), crafts, traditional and modern patterns of agriculture, customs, languages, traditions etc., must form part of school life.

Rigid evaluation system imposed on teachers by educational administrators hampers implementation of curriculum. In most of the states a large number of tests are conducted to evaluate students' learning achievement. The schedule of testing and syllabus to be covered is generally decided at the 'state' level. Rural teachers from U.P. reported (Rural Teachers' Meet held at RIE, Ajmer in November 2007) that schools open in

July and by August/September they have taught only one/two chapters but because of examination pressures they cover the syllabus (prescribed for test) without properly teaching. The question of giving autonomy to schools and teachers in matters of pupil assessment needs to be addressed.

Lack of academic support to teachers also contributes to poor performance of teachers. Linkages between schools and universities or other institutions of higher learning are weak or absent. Opportunities and means to discuss their difficulties related to curricular areas with experts are not available to teachers. BRCs and CRCs neither have adequate academic staff nor any learning resource material. The monthly meetings held at BRC and CRC level discuss only the administrative matters. Teachers work in isolation and they do not have anybody with whom they can share their academic experiences and difficulties.

Resource learning materials are also not available in rural schools. Schools lack basic facilities of library, labs, computers and other teaching aids required for effective learning. Rural teachers from Uttarakhand informed that even the book shop is available at a distance of 20 to 25 kilometers from the school. 7th AISES shows that only about 7000 schools in rural areas have

adequate Physics, Chemistry and Biology labs whereas this number is about 12000 for the urban areas. At secondary stage 5717 in rural schools have adequate Science laboratories whereas this number is 10770 for urban schools.

Instructional time is very important for effective implementation of the curriculum. Rural teachers spend considerable instructional time in works other than teaching. These include preparing list for electoral purposes, administering polio drugs and other services. In schools where there is one teacher, if this teacher is deputed for such works, the school does not function at all.

Lack of basic infrastructural facilities is another factor which impedes the successful implementation of curriculum. Each rural school needs to be provided basic infrastructural facilities, teachers, learning resource materials and learning conditions equivalent to those available in Kendriya Vidyalayas. Piecemeal reforms may not help in achieving the objectives of curriculum. There is need to overhaul the rural education system considering the present and future needs.

Effective curriculum implementation requires systemic changes including reforms in curriculum, teacher preparation, examinations and infrastructure.

Acquisition of Concept of Conservation of Length in Elementary School Children through Piagetian Teaching Model

REENA AGARWAL*

Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to examine the effect of training programme based on Piaget's theory on the elementary school children's acquisition of the concept of conservation of length. The experiment involved the use of pre-post-delayed post test design. 40 children were selected for the study out of which 24 constituted the experimental group and 7 children were assigned to the control group on the basis of their pre-test performance. Nine children were not included in the experiment because they have successfully completed the length conservation tasks during the pre-test. Results indicated more than 40 per cent progress immediately after the training but got raised to more than 50 per cent progress at the second post-test. The major implication of the study is on the designing and development of appropriate teaching learning strategy for primary school children.

Introduction

In India, there has been a sizable quantitative improvement in education since independence. However, as far as qualitative improvement is concerned the situation is a dismal one. The learning programmes and the teaching strategies adopted by our school fail to bring out all round development of children. Concepts are taught to students in theoretical way and not by experimentation.

Various efforts have been initiated to improve the quality of education system in India. The Education Commission (1964-66) stressed the need to pay a greater attention in bringing about qualitative change in the method of teaching. The report recommended that in the lower primary classes teaching should be related to child's environment and at the higher primary stage emphasis should be laid on the acquisition of knowledge, the ability to think logically, and draw conclusions

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and to arrive at scientifically tenable decisions. The method should be modernised stressing on the investigatory approach and the understanding of basic principles.

The National Policy on Education (1986), which is an action-oriented document, laid special stress on the development of proper education programmes for young children. The report made it clear that the new thrust in the elementary education should emphasise a substantial improvement in the quality of education so as to enable children to develop themselves by exercising their own initiative, their own personality, learning abilities and communicating capabilities. Various educational systems and programmes suggested over the years have focussed on active participation of children in the construction of knowledge but they were not based on any sound empirical foundation. However, current view on cognitive development has been greatly influenced by the pioneering work of the Swiss Psychologist Jean Piaget. Piaget is of the opinion that knowledge is constructed by the child through its active transaction with the environment. Certainly the scientific knowledge about the development of children's cognitive abilities—how children think and how that thinking systematically matures over time could be useful in making decisions about teaching strategy and designing of the curricula.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of training programme labelled

“From Elementary Number Conservation to the Conservation of Length” based on Piagetian approach on the primary school children's acquisition of the concept of conservation of length. More specifically, the investigator attempted to find answer to the following questions:

1. To what extent do selected training programme affect the primary school children's concept of conservation of length?
2. Does any difference exist in concept of conservation of length between children who have had participated in training programme and the children who have not had participated in such training programme.
3. What are the mechanisms of transition involved in progress from one stage to the next stage marking the development of concept of conservation of length.

Methodology

Design of the study: The experimental programme involved the use of pre-post-delayed post-test design.

Sample: The subjects were 40 children (20 girls and 20 boys) randomly selected from second grade of Rani Laxmibai Memorial School, Indira Nagar, Lucknow. Their age ranged from 5:0 years to 7:4* years.

General Design: The experiment consisted of three phases: pretesting, training and two-stage posttesting. In the pretesting subjects were given the Conservation of Number and Conservation of Length. 31 subjects who

* the child is 7 years 4 months old

have successfully completed the elementary number conservation problems and unsuccessful in conservation of length task were selected for the experiment. 9 children of ages 5:0 yrs. to 7:3 yrs. were not included in the experiment because they successfully completed the conservation of length tasks during the pre-test. Out of 31 subjects, 24 ranging in age from 5:5 yrs. to 7:4 yrs. constituted the experimental group while 7 subjects of ages 5:1 yrs. to 7:1 yrs. were assigned to control group.

Training programme: 24 subjects of the experimental group took part in three training sessions administered twice a week, each lasting 15 to 20 minutes.

The child was always asked to build a road "of the same length as" or "just as long as" the model, or to build his road "so that there is no further to walk on it than on the other".

In all the situations of Session 1, matchsticks were used, those given to the child being shorter than those used in the model (exact proportion 5:7).

In the situation of complex close layout (see Figure-1) the child had to build a straight road of the same length as the zigzag model road. The general layout of this model was such that the most obvious solution was to make the end points coincide.

Furthermore, as the child's matchsticks were shorter than those in the model (four short matchsticks placed in his straight road "go just as far" as the five long ones of the zigzag model), counting alone could not result in the correct answer although it could help the child overcome the tendency to

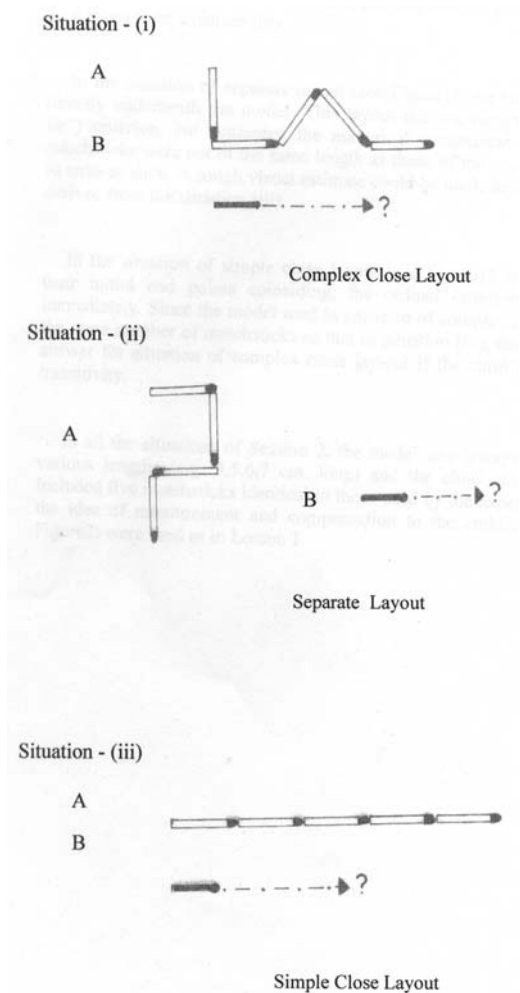


Fig. 1: Lesson 1/Session 1

concentrate on the end points. The correct answer could be derived from situation (iii).

In the situation of separate layout (see Figure1), the road to be constructed was not directly underneath the model. This layout did not suggest the ordinal ("going just as far") criterion, but suggested the numerical comparison.

However, since the child's matchsticks were not of the same length as those of the model road, they could not serve as units as such. A rough visual estimate could be made and the correct solution could be derived from the situation (iii).

In the situation of simple close layout (see Figure 1), both roads were straight with their initial end points coinciding, the ordinal criterion gave the correct solution immediately. Since the model road in situation of complex close lay-out was made up of the same number of matchsticks as that in situation (iii), the latter situation provided the answer for situation of complex close lay-out if the child had grasped the principle of transitivity.

In all the situations of Session 2, the model was always made up of matchsticks of various lengths (e.g. 3,5,6,7 cm. long) and the child was given a collection which included five matchsticks identical to those used by the experimenter. This problem gave the idea of measurement and compensation to the child. All the three lay-outs (see Figure 2) were used as in Lesson 1.

In the third session (see Figure 3), the model road consisted of a straight length of wire, while the child has matchsticks of various lengths and had to start his road further to the right than the model. To find the correct solution, some idea of measurement was necessary—one could either start at the indicated point which made the end of one's road coincide with the model and then add a matchstick of the same length as the difference between the starting points of the two lines, or one could first construct a road directly underneath the wire and then displace the whole

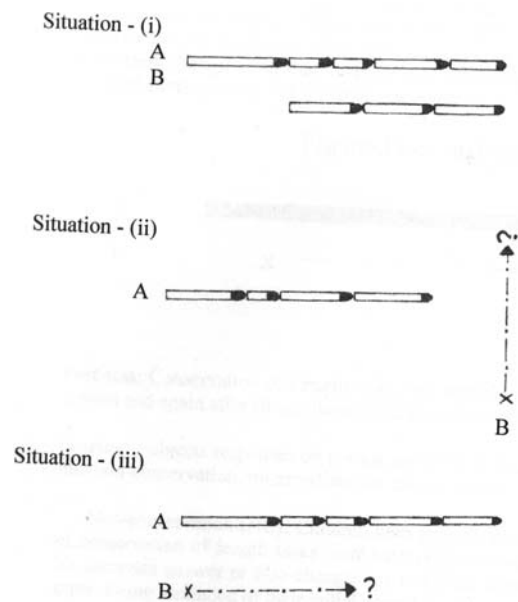


Fig. 2: Lesson 2/Session 2



Fig. 3 Lesson 3/Session 3

construction so as to comply with the imposed starting point. For this problem only one layout was used.

Post-test: Conservation of Length tasks was administered immediately after the training session and again after fifteen days of the first administration.

Scoring: Subjects responses on pre-test and post-test (conservation of length) were scored into non-conservation, intermediate and conservation.

Non-conservation (NC): Children who give all incorrect answers to all the situations of conservation of length tasks

were categorised as non-conservers. The child sticks to his incorrect answer or else changes his mind and says that one road is longer than the other. Being reminded of their initial equal length has no effect on this child.

Intermediate (Int): Children who give either type of responses:

- Faced with the same situation, the children changed their minds as to whether the two lengths are equal or not.
- Some children gave correct answer in only one of the situations.
- Some children influenced by what the experimenter says, for instance, answer correctly when the latter reminded them of the equality of the initial length, or else change their minds after giving a correct answer.
- Some children who gave correct answer were unable to give clear and complete reasons for them.
- In this category a distinction was made between Int-responses (i.e. those responses in which the child gives partially correct answers in both the situations) and Int+ responses (i.e. those responses in which the answer is completely correct for one of the situation and for the other the answer is partially correct).

Conservation (C): Children who gave correct answers i.e., judge equal quantities in each situation. The child is capable of giving compensation and reversibility arguments. Furthermore these children stick to their correct answers even when the experimenter tries to make them change their minds.

Results: Data was analysed qualitatively as well as quantitatively:

Qualitative analysis: Out of the eight children of Int stage, seven (two of Int+ and five of Int-) reached the C stage immediately after the training and sustained it till the second post-test. However one child (14F, 7:3 yrs.) named Roshni, remained at its initial level at the first post-test. This can be clearly understood by her responses during the training sessions as follows:

During the training sessions in the first situation of lesson I, Roshani puts five red matchsticks (each 5 cm. long) for five green one (each 7cm. long) and judges correctly “अब सड़क हरी बड़ी हो गई है” further puts two more red matches and answer “अब लाल सड़क बड़ी हो गई” क्योंकि इसमें अधिक तीलियां लगी हैं।” If countersuggestion is applied “हमको हरी सड़क बड़ी लग रही है” क्योंकि हरी तीलियां बड़ी हैं... She answers “हरी तीलियां बड़ी हैं... तो क्या... यह (हरी) तीलियां कम भी हैं।” She shows her inability to make an equal road.

In the second situation she puts six red matchsticks and says “लाल सड़क बड़ी है क्योंकि ज्यादा तीलियां लगा दी हैं... सीधी सड़क इस (सड़क अ) के बराबर नहीं बन सकती. .. वैसे ही चित्र बनाना पड़ेगा” A She then makes Road B same way as the model and for one green match she puts the two red matchsticks and says “अब लाल सड़क बड़ी है... इन तीलियों से बराबर-बराबर सड़क नहीं बन सकती।”

In the third situation, Roshani puts five red matchsticks for five green, then added two more matchsticks

making the end point coincided and replies “दोनों सड़क बराबर-बराबर लम्बाई की हैं” and on counter suggestion she replies “लाल तीलियां छोटी हैं... हरी तीलियां बड़ी हैं।” When again come to first and second situation she shows inability and unable to draw conclusion from the third situation to correct her first and second situation.

In the first situation of Lesson 2, she puts three yellow matchsticks (each 6 cm. long) from the imposed point for $7+3+3+6+6$ cm. long road and replies “सड़के बराबर-बराबर लम्बी हैं।” On countersuggestion she puts one more yellow matchstick and replies “अब यह सड़क (ब) लम्बी हो गई।” In the second and third situation of Lesson 2, she uses the same matchsticks as in the model but the situation (iii) does not make her to correct her first situation because her going beyond scheme is strong.

In the third lesson, Roshani tries to make the road equal to 15 cm. long wire haphazardly, without following any strategy and unable to make equal road to wire even after three mistakes.

Three children of non-conservation stage also reached to the final stage at the first post-test and maintained their performance level till the second post-test, four children progressed partially reached Int-level, while nine children remained at non-conservation stage.

The four children who progressed to Int- level from non-conservation stage made further progress between the two post-tests. Two of them (15M and 13M) reached the final stage, and two Int- level

at the second post-test. Out of nine non-conservation children at the first posttest two children reached Int + level, one at Int- level and six children showed no progress at all. The responses of a child named Naushad Ali (13M, 7:4 yrs.) who reached the final stage are given below:

In the situation (i) of Lesson 1, Nausad puts five red matchsticks in a straight line (according to the number of matchstick) and says “दोनों बराबर-बराबर लम्बाई की सड़क हैं - ऊपर वाली सड़क मुड़ी हुई है जबकि मेरी सड़क सीधी है” and on counter suggestion, he whisper “और तीलियां लगाने से सड़क (ब) बहुत बड़ी हो जायेगी” and suggests to make the Road A straight, then adds one red matchstick to road B accepting the compromise solution, since the difference in length is now less and the difference in number not too great. In the second situation Nausad puts four red matchsticks for four green “दोनों बराबर-बराबर सड़के हैं... क्योंकि दोनों में चार-चार (तीलियां) हैं” and on countersuggestion he puts one more red matchstick accepting the compensation between the two matchsticks “हरी तीलियां बड़ी हैं... इसलिये अधिक लाल तीलियां लगानी होंगी” He responds to the third situation as to the second situation. When again come to the first situation he does not accept seven red matchstick for the five green by saying “सड़क बहुत बड़ी हो जायेगी”

In Lesson 2, Nausad is influenced by the level of coincidence “सड़क बहुत छोटी है लेकिन आगे तीलियां लगाने पर यह बड़ी हो जायेगी।”

On counter suggestion he spontaneously finds the solution of making the road start from the same point as the model and then shifting the whole construction to the right. Nausad immediately solve the problem of lesson 3, in a similar way as in Lesson 2. He puts three red matchsticks for the 15 cm. long wire.

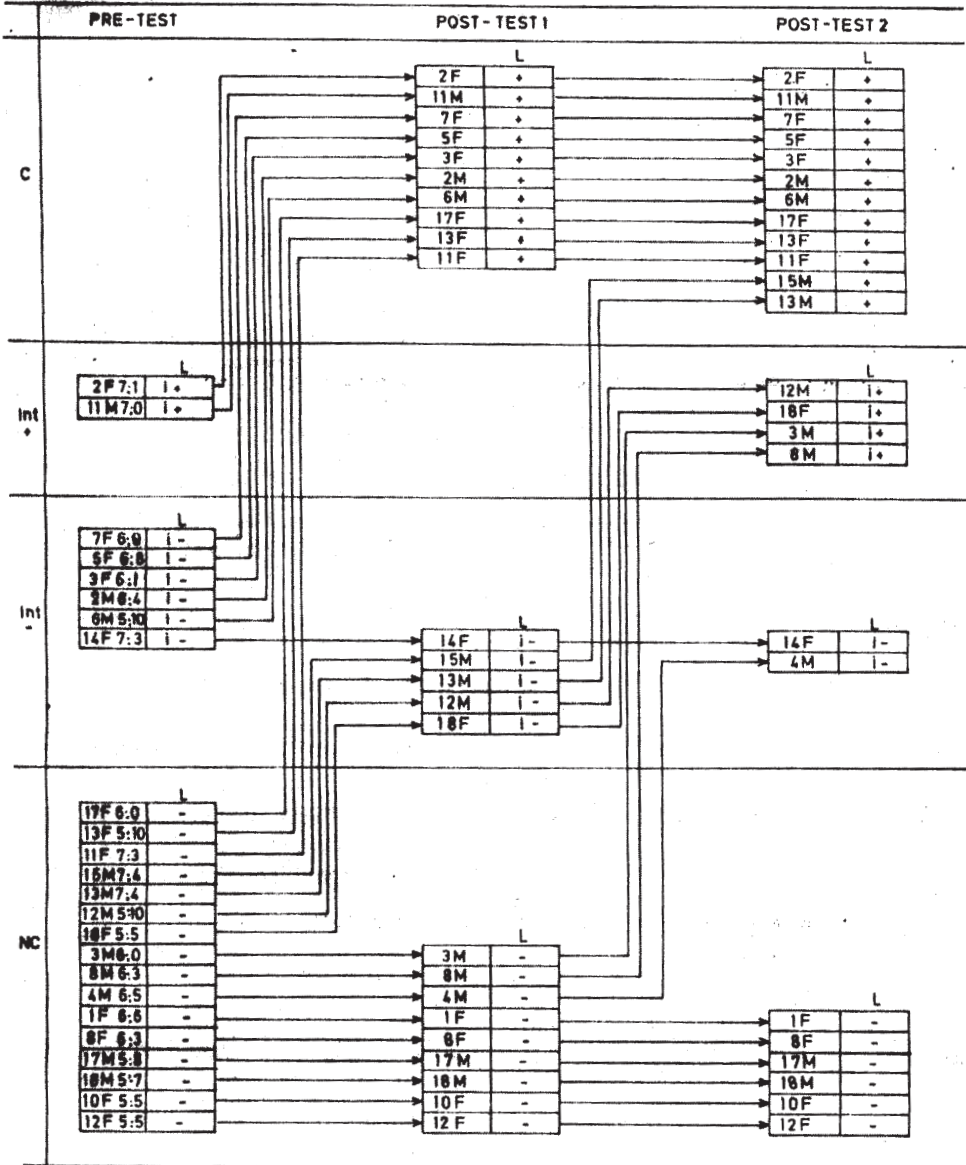
Finally, a child (14F, 7:3 yrs.) who gave initially Int-response did not progress even between the two post-tests.

The results of a control group (see Figure 5) who were not administered the training but were given the same pre-test and post-test were different from those of the experimental group. One child (16F, 6:1yrs.) regressed to non-conservation stage from Int-. at the pretest, this child gave partially correct responses in both the situations e.g. in the Situation (i) , she answered “both the roads are of equal length.... Because both ends here (by pointing the end point from finger). When asked whether both will walk equal or one has to farther walk, she said, “You have to walk farther because you have to walk zigzag”. On countersuggestion, she maintained her answer “Both the roads are of equal length because this road (Road A) has become small/little....”.

Analysis of responses during the training: Lesson 1 elicited a variety of responses which indicated clearly the nature of the difficulties encountered by children and the conflicts arising in the children’s mind when they had to compare their different solutions. The different types of solutions shown seemed to follow a developmental order;

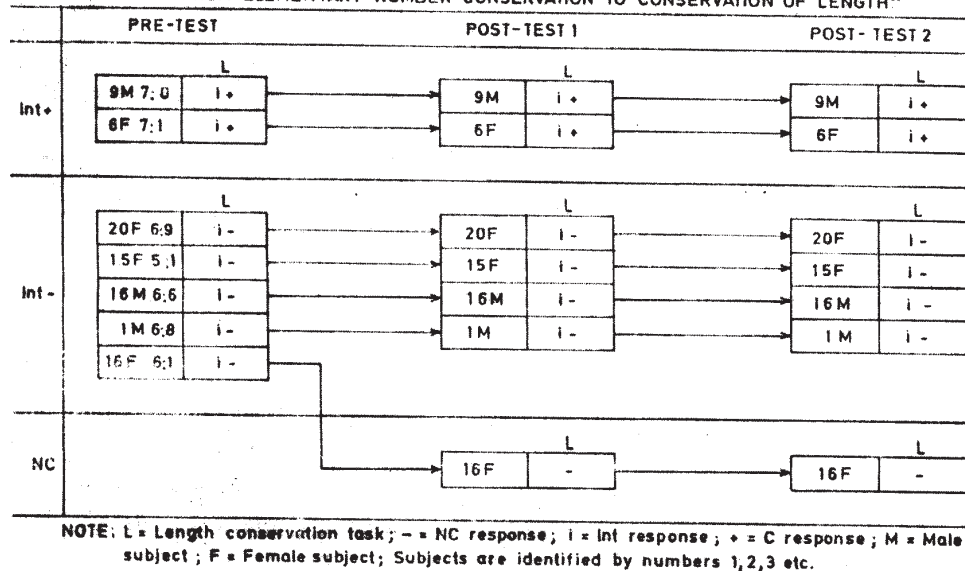
- Most of the children started giving with five red matches (each 5 cm. long) (because the model road is made up of five green matches, each 7 cm. long) but they differ in their reasoning. In the first category, there were children who put five matches in a straight line but explained that B road (made up of red matches) was longer than A (made up of green matches) because former went beyond latter. But the same time they did not remove the match from road B, because there were five matches used in the road A. They felt a conflict between the number of matches and the level of coincidence.
- In the second category, there were children who gave responses like the first category, but they did not came to right conclusion after the third situation was presented to them (e.g. 10F, 11F).
- Thirdly, there were children who made up a compromise solution. For Situation 1, they put five red matches in a straight line and declared that both the roads were of equal length because road A was curved, e.g. 15 M, 13 M. This solution may be considered a step forward since the difficulty of the overpowering “going beyond” principle is overcome. However, it is far from perfect, since the total length is simply judged by the number of matches.
- Fourthly, some children put five red matches and declared that even now Road A is bigger. Most of these children corrected their mistakes

FIGURE -4
 SHOWING PROGRESS/LACK OF PROGRESS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP SUBJECT' FROM ONE STAGE /SUBSTAGE TO SUBSEQUENT STAGES/SUBSTAGES AFTER THE TRAINING PROGRAMME LABELLED "FROM ELEMENTARY NUMBER CONSERVATION TO THE CONSERVATION OF LENGTH:"



NOTE: L = Length conservation task; - = NC response; i = Int response; + = C response; M = Male subject; F = Female subject; Subjects are identified by numbers 1, 2, 3 etc.

FIGURE - 5
SHOWING PROGRESS /LACK OF PROGRESS OF THE CONTROL GROUP SUBJECTS' FROM ONE
STAGE /SUBSTAGE TO SUBSEQUENT STAGES /SUBSTAGES FOR THE TRAINING PROGRAMME
LABELLED " FROM ELEMENTARY NUMBER CONSERVATION TO CONSERVATION OF LENGTH"



- after third situation was presented, e.g. 4M, 2F.
- Fifthly, some children realised the independent length of green and red matches from the very beginning and showed their inability to make a road equal to Road A because their matches were shorter than the green matches, but after the third situation they came to the right conclusion, e.g. 12F.
- Sixthly, children who put seven red matches in a straight line at once but declared that green road (model road) is shorter than red one (subjects' road) but if experimenter made that (green road) straight both would be of equal length e.g. 6M, 14F.
- Lastly, the children who put seven red matches in a straight line immediately and reasoned that for

five green, one should put seven red because green were longer and red were shorter.

In lesson 2, a variety of responses were given:

- The most primitive type of response was to make road B start at the imposed point, but stop in coincidence with the end point of A, e.g. 5F, 8F.
- At a slightly more advanced level, the children first produced the primitive solution, but then judged B too short and added another match. Having done this, they incorrectly judged that B was longer than A. They continued to waver between the two solutions, e.g. 4M, 14F.
- At the next level, the children immediately made their road go beyond Road A. But since they had

Table: Showing Z values of the proportion of progressed children of the experimental and control groups and their comparison for the training programme labelled 'From Elementary Number Conservation to the Conservation of Length'

	State I: Pre-test- Post-test 1	State II: Pre-test- Post-test 2	State III: Post-test 1- Post-test 2
TTo =.75 Experimental Group	- 1.89*	- 0.47	-2.17*
Control Group	- 4.60**	- 4.60**	-4.60**
TTo =.50 Experimental Group	0.81 (.40 = 1.80*)	-2.03*	-0.00**
Control Group	-2.65**	-2.65**	-2.65**
Difference between experimental and control group	2.47**	2.47**	2.18**

to work with matches of various lengths, they could not simply pick any match and place that at the end of their road B to make correct compensation. They had to find one of exactly the right length. Several children chose their final match at random, arriving at an approximate solution, e.g. 3M, 6M, 11M, 3F, 1F.

- At the most advanced level, various methods were used to produce a correct solution, e.g. 15M (Vasu Kumar) put 6+6+6+7 cm. long matchsticks from the imposed point for 7+3+3+6+6 cm. long road.

In lesson 3, a variety of responses were furnished.

- Firstly, children who showed inability to make an equal road from the imposed point, and if experimenter suggested to overcome the coincidence level, they rejected the suggestion by saying that Road B would be longer e.g. 10F (Shalu Tewari) put one more match below.

- Secondly, children who overcome the 'going beyond' situation haphazardly to complete the road, e.g. 1F, 4M, 18M.
- Thirdly, children measured length between the left ends of the sticks e.g. 5M (Dilshad) put three red matchsticks.
- Lastly, children immediately put three red matchsticks from the imposed point without measuring.

Quantitative Analysis: Results of qualitative analysis show that intervention programme lead to progress in the acquisition of conservation of length but it does not reveal whether the progress made is significant. Thus, in order to make a firm decision, it is necessary to subject the results to statistical analysis. Z values were computed for the experimental and control groups separately on more stringent criteria of TTo = .75 and subsequently slightly less but theoretically justifiable criteria of

TTo = .50. Z values for making a comparative assessment of the progress made by the experimental and control groups were also computed.

When TTo = .75 was used as a cut off point for the experimental group the results (see table) revealed negative and significant value ($Z = -1.89, -2.17; p < .05$) at the first and third state, and negative and insignificant value ($Z = -0.47, p > .05$) at the second state. For the control group values turned out negative and insignificant ($Z = -4.60$ at all the three states; $p < .01$). All in all no significant progress for the experimental as well as control group was indicated when more stringent cut off point TTo = .75 was used.

Using the TTo = .05 as cut off point the results (see table) revealed positive and insignificant value ($Z = 0.81; p > .05$) at state I, positive and significant value ($Z = 2.03; p < .05$) at state II, and nil i.e., $Z = 0.00$ at state III for the experimental group while for the control group, value turned out negative and significant ($Z = -2.65; p < .01$) at all the three states. The result on the whole indicated significant impact on the experimental group, while control group showed no progress.

When progress for experimental and control group compared and examined, the results turned out positive and significant ($Z = 2.47, 2.47; p < .01, Z = 2.18, p < .05$) in favour of the experimental group at all the three states respectively indicating thereby significant training impact on the experimental group.

Discussion: The aim of the training programme labelled "From Elementary Number Conservation to the Conservation of Length" was to facilitate the acquisition of conservation of length.

The programmes were designed to see that when elementary number conservation had been acquired, whether the system of operations bearing on a number of elements could be extended directly to the conservation of length (because the number of elements when put together form a certain 'length') or conservation of length does also show complex relationship. Results indicated that only more than 40 per cent progress was observed immediately after the training but got raised to more than 50 per cent progress at the second post-test. Approximately, similar amount of progress was found by Inhelder et.al. (1974).

In the present study, children selected for training were those who had qualified the number conservation problem and were transitional or preconservers for the length conversation problem. Thus these children were at the state of structural mixture and therefore, would likely be able to construct the concrete operational structure for length conservation than those children who were strictly at intuitive operational level i.e., displayed no measured structural mixture (Strauss and Langer, 1970; Langer and Strauss, 1972). Studies by Beilin (1965), Turiel (1969) and Inhelder and Sinclair (1969) also indicated that children who displayed structural mixture were more likely than those who displayed no measured structural mixture to progressively transform their cognitive structures and thereby higher level of equilibrium.

Inhelder and Sinclair (1969) attempted to determine whether the acquisition of length (for which subject

was intuitive) could be facilitated by applying numerical operation (for which subject was operational) to the evaluation of length. The post-test results showed that 35 per cent of the subjects made no progress at all. Of the remaining 65 per cent, slightly more than one-fourth was assessed to have applied the concrete operational structures to both number and length conservation problems.

Number and measurement are based on isomorphic operatory structures: measurement is constructed from a synthesis of displacement and additive partitioning and inclusion. However, the first measurement concept (length) is achieved later than that of number (Inhelder et. al. 1974).

The results of children who had made most the progress during the training sessions and at the post-tests provide further evidence that these new acquisitions are not the result of a simple generalisation of previously acquired knowledge to a new context, but of a true reconstruction on a new level. This reconstruction is analogous to that resulting in a child's grasp of conservation of numerical equivalences,

In the acquisition process of the notion of length the children become aware of conflicts. The reasoning based on one-to-one correspondence schemes clashes with inferences drawn from frontier effects. When the children understand that correspondence judgement need not contradict configural features, they start to attempt to solve other problems in similar way. Indeed, when subjects at this stage were asked to place matches end to end to form a road of the same length as a model, a

whole range of attempts to coordinate the two different methods of length evaluation was observed. In fact, before they discovered that they needed more matchsticks in their road because theirs were smaller than those in the model and that "going beyond" did not necessarily mean "being longer", the children often tried out a number of compromise solutions, which were very instructive as regards the regulatory mechanism involve. Thus the training situations are designed to present the child simultaneously with several possible approaches to a particular problem, which, at his cognitive level, are incompatible. The material itself is only of secondary importance, as is shown by the fact that those children who were not intrigued by the contradictory results of the two methods of length evaluation made little or no progress.

The major implications of this study are on the designing and development of appropriate teaching-learning strategy for children. The findings suggest that the acquisition of concept of conservation of length can be facilitated by inducing cognitive conflict in children. It, therefore, appears that appropriate teaching-learning strategies can accelerate the acquisition of various conservation concepts. Proper designed method based on Piaget's theory of cognitive development should find an important place in the teaching programme of elementary schools. First of all, the teacher should bear in mind the central role that children play in their own learning and try to make learning experiences as active as possible. Second, the teacher should adopt pedagogical strategies designed to make

children aware of conflicts and inconsistencies in their beliefs. Third, rather than suppressing the wrong notions, the teacher must bring them out to forth restructure them and then integrate them with other notions. Because any attempt to skip an intermediate stage or to cue out the wrong notions is likely to result in hindering later learning. When earlier concepts are shaky, they will not serve as foundation that generates high order concepts.

Since teaching strategy and curriculum are dependent on the educator's awareness of the child's capacity to deal with material, it is necessary for the teacher to identify the child's level of cognitive structures. The

matching of curriculum and teaching strategy to the intellectual level of child is a tricky issue. It is easy to confuse the child's manifest level of cognitive competence with his "true" understanding. For example, just because the child uses the word "animal" correctly in everyday context does not mean he knows or can define concept.

In Piagetian curriculum teaching is a two-step process of diagnosis followed by instruction in the concepts for which the child is ready. The long-term implication of diagnostic prescription is that teacher training programmes must be oriented to train teachers acquire diagnostic skills as well as pedagogical skills.

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Helping to Learn Science

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Abstract

The paper discusses in brief the characteristics of children's ideas and how these could be dealt within the classroom, to make learning less stressful and more meaningful. Implications for teacher education are also discussed. This article also tries to explain how teachers should present themselves while dealing with the problems of students.

Introduction

The existence of alternative frameworks or conceptions has been well documented (e.g. Driver et. al. 1985, Halloun, and Hestenes, 1985, Osborne and Freyberg, 1985, Saxena, 1997). It has also been reported that the existence of alternative frameworks creates considerable hindrance in understanding the concepts in depth and to apply them in a novel situation. Sometimes it is found that the children persist with two sets of conceptions, one for academic purpose and the other that children consider their own and use it in personal encounter (Solomon, 1983). Obviously such a situation creates frustration among learners and also among teachers.

Characteristics of children's ideas

The following are the main characteristics of children's conceptions (Driver and Oldham, 1986, Driver, 1987).

- Students do not come to classroom with a blank-mind-slate but with ideas about natural phenomena. These ideas influence perception, observations and inferences.
- The explanation of a phenomena offered by children may not be same as scientific explanation.
- The language used by children is imprecise, have been found to be similar across countries and cultures, but are not consistent across different situations that are similar scientifically.
- Children's ideas are stable and do not change despite 'education'.
- Sometimes children make inappropriate links with the previous ideas and therefore construct meanings that are different from what is intended by the teacher.
- Children's ideas lack generality and are context-specific.

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The traditional classroom teaching is based upon 'blank-mind-slate' or transmission model and positivist view of learning. It assumes that —

- students come to the class with blank-mind-slate and anything can be inscribed on it;
- the knowledge is with the teacher, is propagated by him/her and is received, interpreted and assimilated by the student in the same form without any distortions;
- a good lecture, therefore, coupled with some demonstrations, etc., is a sure method to improve the efficacy of teaching.

However, we know from experience that this model does not work and a large number of students persist with alternative frameworks despite schooling over number of years (Osborne and Freyberg, 1985, McDermott, 1984, Gilbert and Fensham, 1982). In fact teachers have also been found to contain alternative frameworks (Saxena 1990).

Common misconceptions found among students

- A body needs push continuously in order to move with constant velocity.
- Current in a circuit gets consumed.
- When a body is at rest, its acceleration is also zero.
- A part of lens would form incomplete image.
- River and Sun are considered as living bodies.

Learning as conceptual change

It may be mentioned that there is a parallel between historical development

of scientific concepts and children's ideas. This similarity cannot be by chance and needs to be taken care while developing the teaching strategy. It requires strategy that lays emphasis on learning as conceptual change. It has its own requirements of epistemology and methodology because science teaching is generally centred on declarative knowledge and ignores procedural knowledge. This needs to be corrected (Gil-Perez and Carrascosa-Alis, 1994). Much work has been done to identify conditions that induce conceptual change. In this context, it is relevant to state model suggested by Posner et al. (1982).

It states that necessary conditions for conceptual change are following:

1. It is necessary to have dissatisfaction with the existing conceptions. One is not likely to change the presently held conceptions until he believes that less radical will not work.
2. The new conception should be minimally understood. The individual must be able to grasp how experience can be restructured by a new conception sufficiently to explore the possibilities inherent in it.
3. The new conception must appear initially plausible. Any new conception adopted must at least appear to have the capacity to solve the problems generated by its predecessor conceptions, and to fit with other knowledge, experience and help. Otherwise it will not appear plausible choice.
4. A new conception should suggest the possibility of a fruitful research

programme. It should have the potential to be extended, to open up to new areas of inquiry, and to have technological and/or explanatory power.

During the last couple of decades many attempts have been made to remove alternative frameworks with varied degree of success (e.g. McDermott, 1991, Rief, 1994, Saxena, 1992, Brown, 1992). Slowly, constructivism has emerged as a powerful approach to help meaningful learning. Dewey is often cited as philosophical founder of this approach. Piaget, Bruner and Anselm have much contributed to its development. Bruner (1990) provides the following principles of constructivist learning:

1. Instructions must be concerned with the experiences and contexts that make the student willing and able to learn.
2. Instruction must be structured so that it can be easily grasped by the student (spiral organisation).
3. Instruction should be designed to facilitate extrapolation and/or fill the gaps (going beyond the information given).

The important features of constructivist model of learning could be stated as:

- Knowledge acquisition is a constructive or generative process and each person's knowledge is personal or idiosyncratic (Fisher and Lipson, 1986);
- Misconceptions may originate as a result of students' interactions/experiences with the real world and/or because of his/her mis-

interpretations of the world of ideas presented to him/her (Driver and Easley, 1978);

- Development of alternative frameworks is from the same mechanism that leads to the development of scientific conception (Bet-sheva and Linn 1988);
- Due to their different conceptual ecologies, different students can 'incorporate' the same new experiences/ideas differently in their conceptual structures/frameworks (Jordaan, 1987);
- The process of concept formation is a continuous process of successive approximation and refinement (Fisher and Lipson, 1986);
- Students hold intuitive ideas that are both identifiable and stable, and have enough commonality to make it worth in planning and instructional strategies (Clough and Driver, 1986).

Constructivism assumes that knowledge is constructed by the individual; he does not mirror what is told or read but the meaning of the information made by an individual depends upon intents, beliefs, emotions and previously held ideas. Effort is required on the part of individual to construct meaning and therefore, learner is responsible for his/her learning. Learning implies reorganisation of prior conceptual scheme or cognitive map.

Development of curriculum

Constructivist approach for the development of curriculum lays emphasis on the questions which are of

interest to the students and the domain of experience that enable the learner to construct knowledge and develop understanding. Curriculum is therefore, not a body of knowledge and skills but a programme of activities. It gives importance to the students' prior ideas and on learning process. One such model has been suggested by Driver and Oldham. It includes five steps in constructivist teaching. The steps are 1. Orientation, 2. Elicitation of ideas, 3. Restructuring of ideas consisting of clarification and exchange, exposure to conflict situations, construction of new ideas and evaluation, 4. Application of ideas, and 5. Review and change in ideas (Driver and Oldham, 1986).

Many teaching strategies have been used to promote conceptual change. It is suggested that teaching for this purpose must include (Hewson and Hewson, 1983):

1. **Integration** of new conception with the already existing conception;
2. **Differentiation** between the existing and the new conception particularly in terms of implications in different situations;
3. **Exchange** between the old and the new conception because they have a different implication that is contradictory;
4. **Conceptual bridging** between the old and new conceptions through a variety of examples, experiences etc.

For effective conceptual change, various strategies have been used. These include use of alternative curriculum (e.g. Saxena, 1992 1993, Lee et al., 1993), use of analogy (Brown, 1992, Clement,

1987), providing laboratory experience, use of concept map (Moreira and Dominguez, 1987). However, sometimes these approaches are not considered sufficient as they do not take into account motivational and contextual factors that may play an important role in actual situation. These cognition-only models may not be effective unless individual's goals, intentions, purposes, expectations and needs are also taken into account. Therefore, there is the need to go beyond cold conceptual change (Cynthia, 1994).

The above mentioned ideas are largely influenced by the theories proposed by Piaget. Vygotsky proposed alternative perspective which is known as socio-cultural perspective. It is believed that human activities take place in cultural settings and cannot be understood ignoring it. The social interactions play an important role in influencing cognitive development. However, according to Vygotsky, the purpose of social interaction is different than as envisaged by Piaget. For Piaget, it creates disequilibrium leading to cognitive development, whereas for Vygotsky cognitive development is facilitated by interaction with a person who is more advanced, be it teacher, peers and others.

Teaching Methodologies that help the learners

The following could help the learners, if included in class-room teaching:

- Encouraging the students to take responsibility for their learning by providing space for autonomy, initiative and leadership.

- Encouraging students to elicit their ideas, elaborate them and test them in different situations.
- Designing situations that confront the students with their alternative frameworks and provide opportunity for new thinking.
- Allowing wait time after posing questions, challenging students' hypothesis without discouraging their response, providing opportunity to reflect upon their experiences and to make testable predictions.
- Using interactive physical material to allow students to collect data, make observations and draw conclusions.
- Using specific strategies to remove misconceptions such as use of concept map, anchoring and bridging analogy, context specific instructional material, computer assisted learning.
- Drawing from Vygotsky using the strategies such as peer tutoring, peer collaboration, cooperative learning (Damon and Erinphelps 1989, Tao et al., 1999, Tao, 1999) and scaffolding to help the learners with difficulties.
- Use of activity method should not be limited to physical manipulation of objects but should include mental manipulation of ideas.
- Students are permitted to discuss and argue with teachers and peers to test their thinking and get feedback. Communication with others sometimes helps to change the thinking.
- Training in use of assisted learning in the zone of proximal development, collaborative learning and scaffolding as per requirement. Once learning is complete the assistance could be removed.
- Ability to tailor teaching strategy according to students' response.
- Providing opportunity to the learners to find and frame problems, pursue solution by means of their ability and thinking style which encourages the construction of knowledge and negotiation of meanings.
- Training in different methods of identification of alternative frameworks such as paper and pencil test, semi-structured interview, clinical interview, use of concept map and analysis of students' response.
- Exposure to the teachers to the children's ideas so as to appreciate its importance and commonality.

Implications for teacher education

The teacher education programmes require inclusion of the following to prepare more effective and sympathetic to the learners:

- Including conceptual, procedural and attitudinal aspects to increase efficiency to use constructivist approach.

The teacher training could include the following activities:

- Preparation and use of paper pencil test to identify misconceptions and learning difficulties;

- Making of concept map and its use for 1. providing the outline of lesson/unit/chapter, 2. judging the richness of understanding and 3. identification of misconception.
- Organising learner friendly teaching environment which provides flexibility and openness without leading to anarchy;
- Hands-on experience in planning and conducting activities for classroom situations;
- Practice in pursuing procedural knowledge in different situations.

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Resilience in Promotion of Schools as Learning Organisations

Reflections on Karnataka Experience

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Abstract

Present scenarios of school education in India portrays school as a rigid system of teaching-learning where teaching processes dominate over learning. Children voices do not have any place in the classroom. Teachers do not reflect themselves as life-long learner. Deliberating on this crucial aspect of Indian Education system this article makes a plea before all the stakeholders to transform the schools from teaching organisation to learning organisation. The paper strongly recommends that in today's world, each school must become a learning organisation. The paper strongly recommends that in today's world, each school must become a learning organisation. Looking at the possibility of transforming schools into learning organisations, the two practices namely, the H.D Kote and Kalikayatna in Karnataka reflects on the success with which schools have been providing rich learning experiences in all its activities right from curriculum transaction to teacher training. Highlighting the quintessential characteristic of schools as organisations that learn, the paper suggests some workable propositions by which schools inspite of functioning in bureaucratic framework can become learning organisations.

Introduction

School as a learning organisation is the center where students and teachers both have enormous opportunities to learn everyday. While teachers interact with each other and with children, they continually are learning different aspects of teaching skills, taming the problematic

children and managing difficult situations in the classrooms. Here children also right from the beginning are sensitised to new concepts and practice and drilling in counting, alphabets, social environment and moral education and beyond curricular and co-curricular boundaries. And at the same time not only do children learn from books and

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teachers and other exercises improvised by the teachers as facilitators, they also get ample opportunity to learn from each other. In many of the instances, children studying in schools provide opportunity to teachers to learn from them.

Understanding Learning Organisations : Implications for Education Sector

The concept can be traced back with the works of Argyris and Schon (1981), Revans (1982), Pedler (1987) and Senge (1990) on learning organisations in business organisations. There is no uniform definition of learning organisation. In the Indian context, Malhotra in 1996 defined a learning organisation as an 'organisation with an ingrained philosophy for anticipating reacting and responding to change, complexity and uncertainty'. Most definitions are valid to some degree but possibly the closest to the essence is from Joop Swieringa and Andre' Wierdsma who explain learning organisations are not only capable of learning, but also of learning to learn. In other words, they are not only able to become competent but also to remain competent (Swieringa and Wierdsma, 1992). The basic premise on which institutions were recognised as learning organisations accrued from the statement by Peter Lassey (1998), "If organisations are to gain a competitive advantage in a changing world they need to have the ability to adapt constantly to new circumstances and challenges" and that the "Organisations can and have capacity to develop a culture where learning is encouraged". The research till then emphasised on the need to develop the capacity of whole organisation to

learn, rather than focusing on the learning of isolated individuals. It soon came to be realised that the concept could also be skillfully applied in education enterprise as well. The works of Everard and Morris, 1990; West-Burnham, 1992; Yinger and Hendricks-Lee, 1993; Southworth, 1994; Sammons et al, 1995; Leithwood and Sharratt, 1998; Clark, 1996; and Lumby, 1997 further expanded the idea of learning organisation to education and introduced the concept as a 'Learning School' or a developing school. It was repeatedly advocated that the concept of learning organisation is relevant to educational institutions because changing times demand new means to manage change on an unprecedented scale. It infact, promotes the idea of context-specific research into school and college effectiveness, need based teacher development, organisation of prompt learning among individuals for the benefit of educational institutions etc. The notion of schools as learning communities can be understood as a means of enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.

Learning organisation in the most simplistic terminology in the education sector can be one with the features as follows:

- a flexible organisation that learns and encourages learning
- promotes exchange of information
- creates well-informed personnel who are willing to learn further
- accept and adapt to new ideas
- changes through a shared vision
- contributes whole-heartedly in the entire transforming effort

This entails rejuvenation of traditional culture of schools that are based on positional hierarchy. In this milieu, conventional style of functioning will be replaced by a welcoming culture on learning and skills of individuals. This will apply specially on our grassroots practitioners who actually have to be empowered to take up challenges emerging from field realities to which our policy and decision makers are ignorant.

The Indian government schools are deeply fastened by centralised control system. As a researcher, experience over the years has made us realise that although our schools function within bureaucratic rules and regulations, can enjoy the freedom to take decisions at their own levels about how and what changes need to be introduced. Ofcourse it requires commitment and initiative at the part of teachers and the School heads. Richard Elmore and colleagues discovered that even when teachers are willing to learn new methods, they often applied them in a superficial or inconsistent way, offering the appearance but not the substance of real change (Larry Lashway, 1997). Although this is an inspiring vision, schools may be far from achieving it. Teacher isolation, lack of time, and the complexity of teaching present significant barriers to sustained organisational learning.

This does not mean that all schools till now were not learning. All organisations train their staff, develop new concepts and methods of working to cope with changing situations but many of them move towards new situations slowly and painfully. "In reality all organisations do learn". But with a difference — and this difference is the

SUCCESS factor. Peter Lassey (1998) while stating the capacity of organisations to develop culture where learning is encouraged explains that "Learning Organisations have the capacity to reconstruct themselves rather than be dependent upon external pressures; learning organisations are able to exert a level of control on their environment rather than be slaves to it". The successful organisations have been seen as forward looking institutions showing progressive trends faster in terms of preparedness for managing change than many of the conventional institutions. In fact, institutions that have embraced change and development as the most important factor have assured better success as they have expanded their capacity to allow learning to take place, to reconstruct them rather than be dependent upon external pressures, and have been successful in exerting a level of control on their environment rather than be slaves to it. Simple changes to the way the organisation operates can make a huge difference to the culture and environment of the organisation.

Key Characteristics

The process of transformation of an organisation into a learning organisation calls for commitment to lifelong learning for all those within the school. Argyris (1977) explains: 'organisational learning system' which encourages and supports a learning organisation, should form the foundation of this transformation. The individuals' learning activities are facilitated or inhibited by an ecological system of factors that may be critical in determining whether or not its

'organisational learning system' is one which encourages and supports a learning organisation. Here there is an emphasis on collaborative learning and the creative and positive use of difference and conflict. Unfortunately, many of our schools prefer to be on the safer side by not introducing something new in the system for which they may even have to be answerable to the higher authorities.

This organisation is highly characterised with commitment of the entire school team to change the structure, system and practices to sustain learning. It is the structural changes which encourages and support cultural change, and therefore a more fundamental change process may be needed. "To become a learning organisation involves both attitudinal and process changes" comments Middlewood, Coleman and Lumby.

Another salient characteristic usually found in such organisations requires a holistic understanding of the school as an organisation. Aspinwall and Pedlar (1997) illustrates totality of learning in an organisation that visualise learning about things, learning to do things, learning to become ourselves, to achieve full potential and learning to *achieve things together*—completely embedded in learning culture.

The Commitment

The determination to become a learning organisation, important as it is, cannot transform a traditional organisation unless a school head along with his

group members takes initiative to chalk out a programme for themselves about how to cope with the changing expectations of the local people and community to which it caters. Barring very few, majority of our school heads follow their own trail but within the norms specified by the respective State governments. The journey is long and tiring but with confident specific steps if followed seriously can make it possible to transform schools into institutions that can learn and provide opportunities for the personal development of its people by recognising that people learn in different ways depending upon their abilities and capabilities, providing them instructions depending upon their maturity levels on how to go about in certain directions for their self and institutional improvement, finally encouraging all its people to learn, innovate, and contribute for the progress of its institution to which they belong. The importance of developing a clear vision of a school head to create an effective management system wherein ample learning opportunities are provided to teachers cannot be denied. Helping teachers understand the new content, developing new teaching skills, enhancing practical pedagogical skills, understanding the psychology of learning, giving them the opportunities for attending training programmes with other subject specialists, developing essential team skills in them, involving them in the macro and micro school-based decision making can be considered as safe beginning strides for a School Head. Unquestionably, one can apprehend that a learning organisation

allows freedom and autonomy to our School Heads and other practitioners to be able to decide for themselves that works in the system. This will in itself make an enormous leap towards the organisation becoming a learning organisation. How a school can be promoted as learning organisation is a

major breakthrough in State of Karnataka. The two major initiatives, *H.D Kote* has been in practice for more than one decade and *Kalikayatna*, a recent initiative have shown high level of commitment and zeal as learning organisations, well reflected in the forthcoming paragraphs.

An Innovative Learning Approach: The H.D. Kote Experience

The remote tribal Heggadadevankote block of Mysore district in the State of Karnataka initiated certain innovative learning exercises on Micro planning on 257 government schools out of 279 schools in the block in 1995. This collective purely teachers' movement began its journey with the help of UNICEF involving District Institute of Education and Training and teachers of Rishi Valley in making initial efforts to transform the entire schooling practices which brought into action a number of changes in all domains of school activities. Curriculum was designed on the basis of competencies identified under MLL; learning materials were developed; teaching methodology and evaluation procedures were redesigned, learning kits which replaces textbooks, workbooks and teachers guide were devised (these include learning ladders which encourage individual pace of learning, learning cards easily identifiable to the children by the logos used, instructional cards for teachers, games and reinforcement cards) appropriate classroom management techniques were adopted, a sense of ownership was built among children by helping them to prepare learning materials through art and craft and suitable indoor and outdoor activities were chalked out for joyful learning among them. A drastic change was seen in the learning and recapitulation exercises of the subjects like language, mathematics and Environmental Sciences. Classroom management and transactions have been entirely different from the traditional practices. Similarly progress chart specially designed for children to mark their progress themselves, the weather chart where children can freely record information about weather conditions daily are significant additional features in this learning experience. Interactions among teachers at cluster level to exchange notes, ideas, songs, activities, puzzles etc., form an integral part of learning exercises.

The Learning Initiative: The Kalikayatna Experiment

Kalikayatna (KY), is a reflection of recent shift in paradigms in education as a response to the National Curriculum Framework-2005, formulated by NCERT, which largely envisages a total shift in the classroom environs. Children are seen

as constructors of knowledge and teachers as facilitators of learning. Developing critical thinking among children is held to be an important value. Learner autonomy is stressed. It is initiated by an NGO called *Prajayatna* in collaboration with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Karnataka. Kalikayatna Kalikayatna is under implementation in Bilikere Cluster of Hunsur Block in Mysore District of Karnataka. The class room management forms a major part in organising learning environment in the schools. Children from classes 1-3 form one group and children in classes 4-5 form another group. There is no concept of introduction of a textbook for curriculum transaction. They are allowed to refer to books, textbooks meant for those classes and any other material available to them, develop reading habits in them and they learn more effectively at their individual pace. The syllabus prescribed by the state for classes 1-5 is redefined here in terms of concepts/themes. The subjects are seen as a holistic programme, conceptualised in the form of learning points. With every learning, the learner keeps reconceptualising his/her own understanding of these subjects in relation to other subjects. There are series of interactive discussions in smaller and larger groups in different phases through several reiteration by composing different ability groups. All the activities center on several discussions. The teacher also pays personalised attention to each child depending on the situation. The observations made by the teacher are recorded in the observation book. The teacher maintains separate observation schedules for each child. A portfolio of each child is maintained by children themselves, based on which evaluation exercises are done by the teacher. There is also a provision of well designed professional training of teachers once a month at cluster headquarters, which keeps them constantly reminding and discussing about gaps, lacunae and progress of each child. The training sessions also gives them a platform to chalk out plan of action at every step.

Transformation of Schools into Learning Organisations

Creating enabling conditions is becoming a necessary condition for bringing changes within the schools. Barth (1991), suggests that strengthening interpersonal relations and collegial conversations focus more upon what is occurring in the school and, in particular, upon what needs to be done to improve the quality of education for students. Barth recognises that such conversations may, at times

result into conflict but it is equally important that educators move beyond the conventional boundaries they had set for themselves. The transformation of traditional institutions to learning organisations does not suggest a diminished role for school administrators. It does suggest that what it means to be a leader needs to be fundamentally altered. This shift require a supportive climate from decision making authorities where the school practitioners are encouraged to do experimentation, learn from mistakes,

take risks, while working across departments while following multidisciplinary approach. Understanding the school is vital, which comprises of the following information about the school:

- Levels of student achievement in internal and external examinations;
- Academic and infrastructure facilities in the school;
- Student discipline and health status;
- The special needs of disadvantaged, marginal, and hard to reach segments of student population such as girls and children with physical and mental disabilities;
- Health of children;
- Family background and socio-economic and poverty status, etc. etc.

This baseline exercise is expected to help them to determine the priority areas for their respective schools. Based on such an assessment, each school can have its own school development plan.

Some simple changes to the way a school operates can make a huge difference to the culture and environment of the organisation (Lassey, 1998). The H.D experience shows that a school has enough capacity to develop as a learning organisation as it should be able to provide enough space for freedom to children to explore their world themselves to follow their own pace of learning in order to steer a sense of individuality among them. Group work and co-operative learning seems to be a workable proposition in Kalikayatna practices. The children need to be encouraged an active rather than a

passive role in learning. Robert Melamede (1997) suggests dialogue rather than debates-listening, suspending judgement, common understanding in this situation. Faculty and other staff can act as facilitators in learning organisation. Healthy two-way debate, positive conflict and disagreement are part of the culture of a learning organisation.

As recommended by Joyce and Calhoun (1996) that schedules and assignments should allow time for **collective enquiry**, otherwise, significant reform is nearly impossible in a typical school situation. In this setting, learning needs to be generated in small groups to provide motivation, support, learning etc. Honey (1991), supports “a mini learning organisation in the parts you can influence. Small incremental changes, if sustained, have a habit of gaining momentum to the point where they become transformational”. Therefore, the learning experiences that a school is expected to provide is activity based and joyful. Morgan (1986) — ‘Organisational learning’ requires openness and self criticism that is challenging to conventional management.

As well echoed in Kalikayatna practice, **training and professional development activities** for school faculty will have to include a component that helps teachers to understand and redefine their roles for creating an environment which is conducive for development of child’s personality, encourage such activities which locks them in the cycle of learning and improvement throughout without disturbing the broader framework of

rules and regulations. Sharon Kruse and Karen Louis (1993) contends that preparatory exercises can help in the formation of “Responsible Parties”, which act as champions for extended inquiry and points out that email and regular faculty meetings becomes an important aspect in this arrangement.

Practitioner research is another element that supports the process of learning as it is more sustained and systematic in bringing “conceptual and instrumental change” (Lumby, 1999). Morgan (1986) asserts that fruitful research needs to be linked to the idea of the school as learning organisations, where learning occurs at many levels and leads to organisational learning and change. The actors who participate in the process give them the chance of reflecting on their own practices and consider themselves as part of the organisation. The participation they find it quite ‘challenging’, ‘refreshing’ and ‘enlightening’ since learning can be driven by data. Practitioners’ research in fact gives an opportunity to teachers and institutional heads to lock into the system of reflection and feedback that helps them to adapt educational ideas to one’s own context and professional needs. Schools where the culture of collaborative research is promoted, becomes a learning centre for both, the teachers as well as its students.

No improvement can take place until teachers are emotionally involved with their jobs. **Teacher selection** holds very important place in the process of lighting that spark. School environment needs to be made more child “friendly” and welcoming to their parents, so that there

are no drop-outs, push-outs and *pull-outs*. This is high time when recruitment procedures are changed, even though this requires an extensive exercise. Based on different empirical findings supported by our own perceptions/ observations, the teachers in each school can be divided into three categories:

First category comprise of teachers who have attained total liberation from the jobs expected of them.

Second category comprise of teachers who are committed, sincere despite whatever may come.

Third category comprises of teachers in between these two categories. Sometimes they are with Group 1 and sometimes with Group 2.

Now the success of an educational leader in building a learning organisation depends upon bringing Group 3 with Group 1. Group 3 is the most important human resource who through proper care and nurturing can become the most important instrument for restructuring the school to which they belong. Important is to identify this category of teachers and for locking the school system in the continued cycle of learning. bringing basic commitment for school improvement planning .

If **passion for teaching is to be rekindled**, the selection procedures will have to recast if institutes of teaching have to be transformed into institutes of learning. Selection procedure of teachers based on I.Q. (Intelligence Quotient) degrees, divisions and other formalities need to be revisited. May be teachers with high E.Q. can be one of the possible answers but how to select teachers who

are emotionally involved with the profession is the question to be addressed seriously.

Concluding Statement

What are the ways by which an institution can lock itself into the cycle of learning? In order to bring positive results, there is a need for every school personnel to reflect on the most to the most vital issues honestly:

- Are we ourselves pace setters? Which category do we actually belong to – Ist, IInd or IIIrd?
- When policy in school is framed, do

we actually consult teachers? Are we doing it in the real sense or our consultation is confined to a small group? Is our behaviour demotivating the IInd Category?

- Appreciation, recognition is a natural urge. Do we actually mean what we say and convey right messages with right tone? We talk of Generosity. Are we really doing it?
- Schools until this time have been a teaching institutions. Can we make it a teaching-cum-learning institution — Learning Centre for Heads as well as for Teachers?

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Examination and Assessment Principles

Integrating Assessment with Teaching-Learning Processes

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Abstract

An analysis is made about the well-known drawbacks and inadequacies of the present examination system in India in terms of the poor quality of questions, lack of transparency and its inability to cater to the needs of the modern society that requires skilled manpower. There are also administrative difficulties although some of them like cheating in examinations and late declaration of results have to a considerable extent being successfully addressed. We underline the limitation of the present examination system which is mainly used for certifying purposes and which is integrated only to a limited extent with the larger teaching-learning system. We point out that a proper assessment system similar to the one that prevails in U.K. and elsewhere, not only fulfils this basic need but also helps the teaching-learning aspects both of students and faculty. This is done by a proper understanding of the objectives and principles of assessment, by aligning the assessment with the curriculum and by giving periodic feedback to students. A brief discussion about the various types of assessments and their objectives, and how they are able to improve the educational system and generate requisite skills is made. The need for proper infrastructure and qualified teachers who enjoy trust and support systems is also stressed.

Introduction

Some faculty members and Directors of IIT are informally admitting that IIT is unable to get the best students through its competitive examinations. This may appear puzzling, considering that out of more than 3 lakh students who take the

test only about 4,500 students are finally selected and those who are successful are highly motivated and serious.

And yet this is one more admission of the fact that there is something drastically wrong with the examination system in India. It is not being able to produce persons with relevant skills and

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knowledge required in today's world. There are several common problems in the examination system both at the school and college levels:

- Poor quality question papers with vague and often repetitive questions
- Subjectivity and lack of consistency in marking of scripts by examiners
- Problems in administration of examinations and in declaration of results
- Cheating in examinations
- Lack of transparency in the system
- Large scale stress among students both before the start of the examination and after the examination results is declared.

But in addition there are serious substantive issues involved as to the different purposes of assessment of the students and how these are to be addressed. While the education sector both at the school level and Higher Education (HE) levels has undergone drastic, almost unimaginable changes both in terms of content, approach and pedagogy, the examination system is an obsolete system that we are unable or do not wish to substantially change.

Most of our universities had adopted the British system of education including the examination system that basically consisted of year end final examination in different papers of any particular course – U.G. or P.G. For science or statistics subjects there were in addition, the practical examination, usually held before the theory papers, which carried about 20 to 30 % weightage. For medical or engineering courses there were certain additional tests like clinical examination or workshop practices etc.

The format of the education system has not undergone many changes except that the annual academic programme at the tertiary level has been modified to a semester programme in several courses. On the examination front also certain modifications have been introduced in the system – a mid-term exam or test has been introduced carrying about 5 to 10% weightage and a few written assignments or projects have also been introduced in certain subjects like commerce or management studies etc.

The entire issue of curriculum and examination reforms at the school level has been considered by NCERT in 2004-05 in the National Curriculum Framework. The *Position Paper of the National Focus Group on Examination Reforms* (2005) has cited several problems being faced by Examination Boards, and has come out with certain suggestions for improvement or good practices. The paper lists various deficiencies in the present examination system – lack of quality of question papers, stress on rote memorisation, lack of transparency in grading and marking, lack of flexibility in the system to cater to the needs of 'slow learners' or students belonging to schools with inadequate infrastructure, etc.

The paper also underlines the inability of the system to serve 'the needs of a social justice' and to cater to the demands of the modern society. It writes: "Indian school board exams are largely inappropriate for the 'knowledge society' of the 21st century and its need for innovative problem solvers"

On the administrative front several improvements have been carried out in our examination system. Cheating in

examinations has been reduced by the introduction of *flying squads* and other measures; declaration of results and issuance of mark sheets have generally been expedited and in many cases like the CBSE, the results can be obtained on line. The quality of papers and their evaluation has also improved although there is scope for taking further steps.

In India the pattern of examinations has remained almost unchanged for the last sixty years although in U.K. and elsewhere, assessment and evaluation procedures have undergone major changes. Not only are there changes in procedure to make assessment more systematic, transparent and fair both to the students and the teachers, a considerable amount of research has also been undertaken to evolve effective and innovative procedures. This has been done in view of the evolving societal needs, which lays emphasis on relevant skill generation and not just obtaining a degree of science or commerce for example.

As a result of this evolution in the education sector, significant changes have taken place in (what we call *examination system*) the assessment system and practices in U.K., Australia and other countries. Assessment is now used as an integral part of the total teaching-learning process (TLP). There is also a great deal of dependence on IT not only in the teaching but also in the assessment sector. Computers have become indispensable in the educational and assessment sectors both as tools and in the form of e-learning and e-assessment.

The administrative improvements in the conduct of examinations and

declaration of results in India, although welcome, have not fully addressed the substantive problems of teaching-learning that have been outlined above. The examination system has basically performed a certificative role – i.e., remained a means of giving marks or grades to students and has not been fully integrated in the teaching-learning regime. What is required is a thorough understanding of the issues of assessment and evaluation – their basic purpose in the teaching-learning processes and advantages or disadvantages of different types of assessment procedures.

Considering the principal limitations of the present examination system, we offer some suggestions for going beyond the certificative role of the examination system and to evolve a system for improving teaching-learning environment in India. The new system that we propose is **not** being called *examination system*, which has a specific connotation but rather the *assessment system*. The latter has much broader significance than the former with examinations forming one of the components of the assessment system. This is not just a semantic difference but rather a substantive one where the role of teaching-learning and assessment are organically linked. In fact the total teaching-learning assessment combine is also called TLA in modern terminology (Biggs, 2003).

In the following sections of the article, we discuss several key issues:

- Objectives and Purposes of Assessment
- Principles of Assessment
- Teaching Learning Process (TLP)

- Skills required in Contemporary Society
- Role of Teachers, etc.

Objectives, Purposes and Principles of Assessment

It is instructive to outline the various objectives/purposes of assessment. There are also various broad principles of assessment that we must adhere to make the assessment fair, transparent and dependable.

Objectives

There are basically two important objectives why we need to assess students – (i) for certification, and (ii) for giving feedback to students in the process of teaching and learning.

(i) Certification

As mentioned earlier, the main objective of assessment in India has been to **certify** students' achievement at the end of a course or programme.

This means that when a student has passed his/her plus-2 examination in Science and Mathematics stream, we know what the student has studied in Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, English and possibly Computer Science or Life Sciences or perhaps Economics. His marks or percentage scored by him gives an idea about the level of achievement in the various subjects and the complete result provides information whether the student has passed, or obtained second, first division or distinction marks.

The same is true for College or University level examinations also.

(ii) Feedback for teaching-learning

In our system feedback about students' learning is generally ignored. Feedback needs to be given to students periodically for improving both learning and teaching. If there is a deficiency in learning, suitable inputs need to be provided to students to improve learning or alternatively, if most of the students are not learning properly, teachers need to change their methodology or strategy of teaching. This is being increasingly done to improve teaching-learning environment in UK, Australia and USA.

Feedback is an important aspect of teaching-learning process. If it is specific and worded clearly, it can enhance students' motivation, encourage reflection and in general, promote learning.

Another purpose of feedback as discussed by Boud and Falchikov (2006) is to promote long-term learning after formal teaching has come to an end. We will discuss the impact of feedback in *teaching-learning* process in greater detail later.

Keeping in view these objectives we have two different types of assessment:

- *Summative*: a final mark or grade or division at the end of a unit/module/course or at any specified period of the academic year.
- *Formative*: used for facilitating learning. Both students and teachers need to know how learning is proceeding.

We should indicate that *summative assessment* itself is of two kinds

- *Normative*—Norm Referenced Assessment NRA (for ranking students)
- *Criterion Referenced Assessment. CRA* (for informing what and how well a student has learnt).

In India the NRA is used both for grading students' performance in an examination as well as to rank them. However, it is important to differentiate between the two purposes. The former purpose is meant for giving marks or grades (50 % or B grade or II division). The latter is to choose the top 10 or 15 or 20 % students irrespective of the marks obtained by them. This is needed in entrance examinations for admission to a course or even for selecting candidates for a job e.g. in the Indian Civil Services or in the Defense Services, etc.

In CRA the objective is to assess students' understanding of and performance on what they have learnt on the basis of certain pedagogic criteria or competencies. Courses or modules are written in terms of competencies, criteria and skills that are tested by this method. The emphasis is not on rote memory as used to be earlier or confined to a given textbook alone, but on a proper understanding and application of competencies and the ability to acquire the necessary skills.

Specific purposes of assessment

We have already listed two important objectives of assessment. There are some other specific purposes of assessment that are dependent on the point of view that is in our mind — the students' or teachers' or policymakers' points of view. We list below these purposes:

A. Students

- Obtain a certificate of passing and marks/division obtained
- Grade or ranks students
- Diagnose students strengths/weaknesses
- Assist weaker students by giving them special inputs or support
- Motivate students to learn better
- Provide feedback for students learning.

B. Teachers

- Evaluate course strengths/weaknesses
- Identify weak students who may need special support systems
- Suggest alternate methods/strategies of teaching.

C. Organisers/Policy Makers

- Provide inputs for curricular changes/development
- Provide feedback about features (strengths/weaknesses) of courses or Modules
- Gauge employment possibilities of passouts
- Provide relevant feedback and information to prospective employers, etc.

Principles of Assessment

There are some broad principles of any assessment process that should be followed for fairness, transparency and consistency. Some of these are listed below:

- Assessment to be integral part of the Course/Curriculum
- Assessment should provide feedback to support learning process

- Assessment to include several different competencies or learning criteria.
- Assessment should be
 - Consistent and Reliable
 - Valid
 - Transparent
 - Bias Free
 - Practicable and do-able within available time.

By reliable and consistent we mean that if the same answer is being marked by different persons or the same person marks it at different times, the marks obtained should be either same or very close to each other. Validity means that the questions should test what is desired to be tested. For example if we want to test students' understanding and applications of quantitative techniques, then the question should do precisely that and not ask question about the definition or meaning of terms like mean or standard deviation etc.

Transparency signifies that students are aware of the nature of the assessment, how their performance is being assessed and how to improve it. They should have access to their answer books after marking a practice that is an absolute taboo in our present system.

Bias free assessment means that there should be no bias – for or against any student while assessing his performance – a written or oral test or a project report or an assignment etc.

There are various Methods of Assessment like Quiz, Weekly/monthly exams, Open book exams, Objective (Multiple Type) Tests, Take-home tests, assignments, E-Assessment, etc. These

have their advantages or disadvantages with some being more appropriate in certain situations and others in different situations. However we do not discuss them here since they are beyond the scope of this article.

Teaching Learning Process

This is a very important objective of assessment, which has traditionally been largely ignored in the Indian system. A proper and regular process of assessment allows the teachers as well as the administration to know how the teaching and learning process by students is going on and if remedial steps need to be taken to improve it.

According to Biggs (p. 141):

To the teacher, assessment is at the end of the teaching-learning sequence, but to the student it is at the beginning. If the curriculum is reflected in the assessment, the teaching activities of the teacher and the learner activities of the learner are both directed towards the same goal.

Learning-oriented assessment has been considered to be very important in the British and Australian Universities today. A special issue of the *Journal of Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* (Vol. 31, No. 4 August 2006) has been devoted entirely to this objective so that assessment could be so tailored to maximise meaningful student learning. Boud and Falchikov (op. cit.) have considered the issue of assessment from the point of long-term learning.

According to them:

“The *raison d’être* of higher education is that it provides a foundation on which lifelong learning in work and other social settings can be built. Thus apart from short term focus of assessment, it must also foster learning after graduation...”

We have already underlined the advantages of proper feedback for promoting teaching-learning. However, Beth R. Crisp (2007) in her paper argues that teachers’ feedback alone is inadequate to promote deeper learning. At best it has limited impact. There could be several reasons but one reason is that the feedback is of general and imprecise nature which leaves students puzzled. This may be due to large number of students to deal with and with limited time available to teachers, it is often difficult for teachers to give proper feedback. Another reason could be that students themselves are often not very keen to act upon the teachers’ feedback.

Role of teachers in Examination system

The low status of school teachers, their poor emoluments and the minimum qualifications prescribed for becoming a school teacher have been graphically described by Kumar (pp. 81-82). He writes that as late as 1950, only 13% of elementary teachers in India were matriculates. This percentage rose to 34 towards the end of 1950s. Even today only about 70% of the primary teachers in India have passed the Higher Secondary or Senior Secondary

examinations and about 25 % have passed only the eighth class examination or lower.

It is not surprising therefore that in most Examination Boards and Universities, a veil of secrecy covers the whole gamut of the examination system. Right from the time of paper setting to evaluation of scripts to moderation and finally to declaration of results, the system works on the principle of secrecy and opaqueness and the belief that teachers who do all the components of the examination system, cannot be trusted. They are supposed to work in utmost secrecy and confidentiality without their names being identified or publicised. This practice has been continuing right from the British times.

Not only in the School examination Boards, but also at the University level, examinations are externally organised which means that paper setting, moderation and evaluation of answer scripts is done by outside teachers. The teacher usually is **not** allowed to evaluate the scripts of his own students.

A recent study of the U.P. Board examination results for Classes X and XII indicates that of about 34 lakh students who appeared in these examinations, an abnormally large number of about 15 lakh students failed. This is a shocking state of affairs which should cause soul searching and a deep analysis of the factors responsible. There are many causes responsible for this tragic situation but one of the principal ones is the fact that since there is one paper for all the students, economically or academically weaker students are put to a great disadvantage. Similarly rural

students also face difficulties since the orientation of the question paper usually has an urban bias. Another factor is the absence of qualified and trained teachers and lack of proper infrastructure.

This situation needs to be altered. In addition to removing or at least reducing the above bias, a system where teachers are given proper recognition, support systems and necessary responsibility should be adopted for a better teaching-learning environment.

Krishna Kumar has written extensively on the practice that prevailed from the time there were public examinations at the school levels. He writes (p 68):

“The teacher however could not be trusted and hence was not permitted to examine his own students. All he could do was to prepare them (students) to the hilt which meant giving them the opportunity to rehearse endlessly the skills of reproducing the text from memory ... on any question based on the textbook...”

Here the question of using the examination system as a feedback to improve teaching and learning processes did not arise. To a large extent the practice still prevails today.

Knowledge Society and Skills

In the time of British rule, knowledge remained scarce since it was confined to a select few. Here the primary goal of education was to produce clerks and a few other professional people like doctors or engineers for the country and the

process consisted of disseminating it through prescribed textbooks. The prime purpose of examinations appeared to consist of testing the success of such transmission. The process of nation building and the creation of an industrialised society however required diverse skills and competencies.

A modern society requires various types of professionals with diversified skills – not just doctors, scientists, engineers, chartered accountants or economists, but also nurses, paramedics, travel agents, advocates, TV and newspaper reporters and anchors, salespersons, computer personnel etc. The type of skills required are usually not addressed in the examination system that prevails in India today.

This results in what has been termed as unemployable graduates or post graduates. The NCF has quoted a head hunter who has said that “nineteen out of twenty graduate applicants and 6 out of 7 post graduate applicants are unemployable. They lack the requisite problem solving skills or often do not know what problem solving means”.

Ganesh Natarajan writing on *Transforming the skills environment in India* has also underlined this problem. He writes:

“There is a constant refrain in the Indian IT and BPO sectors that less than 20 per cent of the 300,000 and more engineers who graduate each year are employable in the software industry without huge investment in learning and training inputs”.

He further writes that ‘many other sectors like retail, hospitality and

healthcare have joined the clamour for a better skilled workforce. Our educational apparatus has failed to deliver what the industry needs and no number of finishing schools which are now mushrooming all over the country will compensate for a structural malaise in the learning content and processes'.

The monthly journal *Seminar* in its July 2008 issue writes (p. 12):

“It is difficult to deny that no Indian university or institute, the IIMs and IITs included, ever makes it to the top ranks in any list Little surprise that exceptions apart, all employers – public or private – continue to carp about the unsatisfactory skill and knowledge base of our graduates, and at all levels.”

Types of Skills

There are various types of skills that need to be taught and acquired by students. These will naturally depend on the stage of education as well as the subject/stream that a student is following. But some broad skills that are necessary at different levels, are outlined below:

- **Development of Knowledge and Understanding.**
These are subject specific. For example in the subject of Political science at the UG level the knowledge of the Indian constitution and its framers, its development in the last sixty years, its main features will be required to be understood and learnt by students.
- **Cognitive and Intellectual skills**
These are generic skills that include the concepts of analysis,

synthesis, collation, extension, generalisation, evaluation, application, etc. The levels of analysis or synthesis will depend on the stage or level that a student is studying. For example, analysis at the lowest level would mean the ability or skill to analyse with guidance of teachers using given classification principles or criteria. For the higher levels it may mean analysis without or with minimum guidance.

- **Transferable skills**
These include communication, management of information, problem solving, quantitative skills or abilities, graphical or drawing skills. There are also skills involved in working in groups or as a team.
- **Practical skills**
These include the skills to work on computers, handle scientific equipment or machinery, working in a lab or studio etc. Again these skills will be developed from a very rudimentary level to advanced level as the student progresses from a lower level to higher levels of study.

A good education and assessment system should be able to test different types of skills in addition to the subject specific understanding and concepts. Today, the focus of the education system is to transmit knowledge and concepts to students, without ascertaining to what extent various skills are being acquired by learners. Even in the science courses, there is only a limited emphasis on making students adept at practical skills. Whatever skills a student is able to imbibe is incidental and fortuitous and

in spite of the prevailing system. This is particularly true of non-elite institutions of higher learning which lack adequate resources and qualified faculty.

The system that has been suggested above integrates the teaching-learning and assessment practices organically. With proper infrastructure and qualified faculty enjoying good support systems and trust, there will be a noticeable improvement in skill generation.

Conclusions

We have tried to analyse the present examination system at the school and University levels and underlined the various deficiencies and limitations it suffers from. We have attempted to go beyond the traditional examination system to an assessment system which is aimed at integrating the teaching-learning process with the assessing of students' performance. This system is prevalent and successful in U.K., Australia and other countries. Broad principles and purposes of assessment have been outlined above. In this system, the importance of proper feedback by teachers to encourage and motivate students is stressed.

The article also lists various types of skills required in a modern society which unfortunately are not being acquired by students in the traditional education and examination system thereby making a large number of graduates

unemployable. If assessment is properly aligned to the curriculum and appropriate teaching-learning strategies are observed, students are likely to acquire these skills and acquire better skills and become employable.

The article points out at the low status of teachers in India especially at the school level. Moreover, a cloak of secrecy surrounds the examination system that works on the principle that teachers cannot be trusted despite the fact that they are involved in all stages of the examination system. Teachers must be given proper recognition and responsibilities.

It is critical that proper working conditions, trust, recognition and support system are available to the teachers. Otherwise, they will obviously not be able to play the increasingly responsible part in the teaching-learning process that has been suggested above. They also need to be periodically given orientation and training in pedagogy and use of newer technologies and practices. We understand the constraints on teachers even at the higher education level — not to speak of the school level. However, if a beginning is made at least in some well endowed and forward looking institutions like the IITs and the IIMs, the results are bound to be encouraging for all the stakeholders — students, teachers and education providers.

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Evaluation of Inclusive Education Practices in Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) Primary Schools

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Abstract

The study aimed to evaluate the influence of inclusive education practices on learning and teacher attitude towards children with special needs as well as to evaluate how children with special needs placed in regular schools have benefited. Twenty children with disabilities of two from each 10-randomly selected schools were chosen for case study. A critical evaluation was done on all possible related variables responsible for meeting unique needs of child with disabilities such as: dropout/retention; provision of incentives including aids and appliances; individualised programme; curricular adaptation; academic achievement; attitude of teachers and peers; and resource support to school. It was observed that not only mild and moderate, but children with disabilities having any severity level were part of the primary schools. Significant gap between school age and chronological age; lower grade level inappropriate examination practices were observed. Retention of children with disabilities was found good with appropriate attendance. Half of the teacher's attitude towards these children were not favourable; however, positive peer acceptance was observed. The present article also mentions all possible practical suggestions and recommendations.

Introduction

The inclusive education (IE) has been well accepted and practiced throughout the globe because the learning needs of the disabled children demand special

attention. Inclusive Education is not just about including people with disabilities; it is about including everyone, and making particular efforts to identify who is excluded or marginalised. The basic strategies of inclusive education are:

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(i) curriculum and teaching approaches are flexible and child-focused; (ii) learning for all children is more effective and relevant; (iii) buildings and environments are accessible; (iv) teachers work together and are well supported and adequately trained; (v) examination and assessment systems are flexible and accessible; (vi) there are adequate and accessible water, sanitation, nutrition and health and safety standards and provision; and (vii) drop-out and repeater rates are reduced, and completion rates improved. Several steps need to be taken to provide equal access to education to every category of disabled individuals as an integral part of the education system (WDEFA-1990). We are always in search of appropriate and effective strategy to bring all children with disabilities under the umbrella of primary education (Mishra, 2003). It has been rightly said that the issue is not whether disabled children can be included in general classrooms, but the issue is how to include them (Jangira, 1987).

The inclusive education in developing countries like India is still in infancy. However, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) had visualised of providing quality primary education to all children by 2007. The emerging 'school for all' globally is a pointer to this trend. During 1994-95, District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) was launched in 42 districts of seven states namely Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Haryana, Tamilnadu, Madhya Pradesh and Assam and later it was expanded. The guidelines on Integrated Education for Disabled (IED) in DPEP were developed in 1997. IED became operational in DPEP

in 1998. After action plans on IED were developed by different states, and then state specific strategies were evolved differently on every state depending on state specific vision and needs. In each state interventions were broadly made in the areas of teacher training, material development and provision of resource support that child with special needs often need for teaching and learning. Teachers were adequately oriented to the needs, problems and implications of every kind of disabilities (Mishra, 2002a). As a result, there has been a substantial expansion of IED in terms of number of disabled children identified and enrolled in DPEP schools. Department of EEL (2006) reported that through DPEP/SSA about 21,00,000 children with special needs (CWSN) identified and about 16,00,000 of them are already in the regular school system in a span of 8 years. About 20,00,000 teachers have received in-service training, about 80,000 have undergone 45/90 day RCI recognised course and about 30,000 VEC members are being oriented about IE in 17 states (MHRD, 2007).

An important issue associated with any large-scale scheme/intervention is that how an effect is expected. The impact of DPEP on IED appeared to be an important issue when planners were about to frame strategies for *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA). Without evaluation, there has no means of assessing how effectively IE has been imparting quality education to disabled children. Case study method was adopted to carry out the study. Case studies were undertaken both at individual and school levels.

The specific objectives of the study were: (i) to evaluate the influence of IE on learning and teacher attitude towards children with special needs; (ii) to evaluate how children with special needs placed in regular schools have benefited from this programme. The variables considered for the present study were: (i) level of learning achievement; (ii) teacher attitude; (iii) teacher training and its impact on students, (iv) peer acceptance; and (v) retention of disabled children.

Methodology

According to the design of the study, 10 primary schools were randomly selected as samples. Besides the detailed study of each school and were also undertaken two children with disabilities randomly selected from each school.

Procedure

The procedures adopted for the study were: (i) for recording the case history of every CWSN, appropriate formats were developed. Also for studying the role of school in IE, a different format was made. Focus was given on benefits accruing to the child on account of his/her placement in regular schools. The school in which the child studying was evaluated on the basis of information and observation compiled through a detailed checklist and data sheet; (ii) Peer attitude was studied through direct observation of interaction between disabled and non disabled peers that: (a) whether or not the non-disabled peers accepted the disabled peer(s); (b) whether the attitudes of the non-disabled peers were condescending; and (c) whether the

attitudes of the non-disabled peers were rejecting; (3) the achievements of children with disabilities were evaluated through Grade Level Assessment Tool. Vineland Social Maturity Scale was also administered on disabled children to evaluate their social maturity/adjustment due to IE; (4) Teacher training programmes conducted as part of DPEP was evaluated on the basis of whether or not teaching strategies/methods used are effective in helping children with special needs to learn better; (5) Teacher attitudes were judged by observing the teacher who is teaching the children with disabilities.

Results

The study covered 10 primary schools those were randomly selected from Hardoi district of Uttar Pradesh. Reportedly efforts have been made in Hardoi district to promote 'Inclusive Education' as part of DPEP and SSA intervention. Although the IE programme is spread throughout all nineteen blocks of Hardoi, but the target blocks were: Sandila, Kachauna, Sursa and Bawan. Out of 7648 identified children with special needs (CWSNs) in the whole district, the four project blocks have integrated 621 CWSNs out of their 861 identified cases. The interventions towards promotion of IE programme were: (i) teacher training/sensitisation in IED (5 days/10 days/45 days); (ii) community sensitisation and training to Village Education Committee (VEC); (iii) parent counselling and guidance services; (iv) collaboration/hiring of NGO; (v) free distribution of aids and appliances and free health checkup; (vi) construction of ramps; (vii) distribution of scholarships;

(viii) resource support to project schools by District Coordinator-IED, three special educators and one resource teacher in every block.

According to the design of the study two students with disabilities from each 10 selected schools (20) were chosen for case study through case history method and field observation. The details of schools covered under study have been given in Table 1.

A broad difference in ratio of children with disabilities and without was found over sample schools. However, on average, one child with disability was found in every 28 children and hence a prevalence rate of 3.57% was recorded. In the sample schools 69 children with disabilities were enrolled out of 82 such children. This implies an enrolment rate of 84%. The things those observed to be more alarming was: (a) poor teacher-student ratio; (b) physical incapability of school building to accommodate all students. A school was also observed that did not have a building to shelter its student and teachers. When the primary schools did not have basic infrastructure and required number of teachers then what we could debate about the success of inclusive education by ensuring appropriate and quality education to children with disabilities? Due to DPEP/SSA intervention, most of the teachers were found to be oriented about education of children in the disabilities either through 5-day training workshop or of 10-day duration. Further, some variables related to children with disabilities were studied in detail those were covered by 10-sample schools. Table-2 given below represents the detailed scenario of CWSNs

representation in sample SSA schools.

Out of 69 enrolled students (with disabilities), the number of students with locomotion impairment (LI) was the maximum (35) followed by students with hearing impairment (15), then visual impairment (12) and the number of students with mental retardation was minimum (07). The number of male students with disabilities (45) was almost two times higher than their female counterparts (24). Even children aged fifteen years were also observed studying in the sample primary schools. Although most of the children with disabilities were provided with free textbooks, but many of them did not receive scholarship. Only half of the total students were given aids and appliances.

The attendances of such children recorded at schools were impressive. It was also given to understand the positive relationship between *wazifa* (free distribution of 4-Kilograms wheat grains per month to each child) and his/her attendance. Many a times the exaggeration of figures in school record might result in impressive figures. Despite poor infrastructure, inadequate number of teachers, the enrolment and retention of children with disabilities are very encouraging. However the quality of classroom transactions and academic performance of such children are yet a matter of concerns.

As mentioned earlier that two students with disabilities from each 10 selected schools (20) were chosen for case study. The summary of children (disability wise) are given in Tables 3-6.

Students with mild to severe mental retardation were observed in primary schools. All students were found with low

Table 1: Details of Schools Covered Under Study

Schools	Total Students	CWSN		No. of Teachers	Teacher-Student Ratio	Available Space to Accommodate	Training of Teachers in IE
		Enrolled	Not Enrolled				
1	394	14	01	02	1: 197	150	5 day Trg. to 2/2
2	126	05	02	02	1:63	00	5 day Trg. to 2/2
3	310	05	02	06	1:52	250	5 day Trg. to 5/6
4	272	13	00	03	1:91	200	5 day Trg. to 3/3
5	375	07	02	03	1: 125	250	5 day Trg. to 2/3
6	284	06	08	04	1: 71	150	5 day Trg. to 4/4
7	182	04	02	04	1:46	150	5 day Trg. to 4/4
8	148	07	01	03	1:49	150	5 day Trg. to 3/3
9	243	04	02	03	1: 81	150	5/10 day Trg. 1/3 & 1/3
10	112	04	02	02	1:56	150	5 day Trg. to 1/2

Table 2: Details of CWSNs Covered by Schools under the Study

Schools	Types of Disabilities				Sex		Age Range	Class				Incentives		Aids/ Appl.			Attendance	
	MR	HI	VI	LI	Total	M		F	I	II	III	IV	V	FTB	S	R	NR	DO
							R											
1	1	5	2	6	14	9	5	6-11	1	2	8	2	1	14	02	11	03	0
2	2	-	2	1	05	2	3	7-10	0	1	2	2	0	05	01	04	01	0
3	-	2	-	3	05	3	2	7-15	1	3	0	0	1	03	03	04	01	0
4	3	3	2	5	13	9	4	7-14	9	0	3	1	0	13	02	09	01	3
5	-	1	1	5	07	6	1	6-11	2	2	3	0	0	06	01	06	00	1
6	-	1	2	3	06	3	3	7-11	0	1	1	4	0	06	04	05	01	0
7	-	-	1	3	04	3	1	7-11	0	2	1	0	1	04	00	2/3	04	0
8	-	-	2	5	07	4	3	7-12	3	1	3	0	0	07	02	2/2	07	0
9	-	2	-	2	04	3	1	7-9	1	3	0	0	0	04	02	3/3	04	0
10	1	1	-	2	04	3	1	7-9	3	1	0	0	0	04	02	1/1	04	0
Total	07	15	12	35	69	45	24	6-15	20	16	21	9	3	66	19	58	07	4

MR: Mental Retardation, HI: Hearing Impairment; VI: Visual Impairment; LI: Locomotion Impairment, FTB: Free Text Book; S: Scholarship; Aid/Appl: Aids and Appliances; R: Regular, NR: Not Regular; DO: Drop-out

profile in their social maturity and grade level. However, the students were given opportunity to appear for the last school examination to the class they were enrolled. Achievement in the examination did not logically correlate with their actual level of performance on grade level assessment tool. Their attendance in the school was encouraging and except a few students. Many teachers' attitudes towards them were observed to be favourable. The most exciting fact is that there was complete acceptance by their peers.

Hearing-impaired students of varied severity were observed studying in primary schools. Their academic achievement was evaluated to be one grade below the actual grade in which they were studying. Achievement in last examination also did not correlate with their actual level of performance. The social maturity and group adjustment of hearing impaired children were found to be age appropriate and almost at par with their normal counterparts. The attitude of teachers was also favourable including the acceptance by peer groups.

Both students with total blindness and partially sighted were found studying in primary schools. Academic achievement was also found to be low but the evaluation done by school through last examination was different in many cases. Age appropriate social maturity was observed in most of the children. Although 60% of teachers had unfavourable attitude towards them, but peer acceptance was good at every situation. The attendance of such children was good.

Like other disabilities, students with locomotors impairment were found with

varied severity. Academic achievement was also found to be low — though they did not have any sensory or mental disability. Most of the children were reported of attending school regularly. About half of the teachers had favourable attitude. Peers exhibited positive acceptance towards them.

Examples of one case study each on a child and schools are given at the end of due paper for readers.

The following conclusions may be drawn from the above observations:

- (a) Not only mild and moderate, but children with varied severity were found studying in schools;
- (b) The significant gap between school age (grade age) and actual age was found with half of the children — not only with mental retardation but with all types of disabilities. In some cases it was due to late enrolment in the schools;
- (c) Except few cases (including all students with mental retardation) social maturity exhibited by the students with disabilities was age appropriate and at par with non-disabled peers;
- (d) On grade level assessment, all children were found to be functioning at several grade levels below the actual grade on which they were studying;
- (e) Results obtained from school examination concerning performance of children with disabilities were not reliable. Teachers had difficulty in examining these children with various categories of disabilities;
- (f) As per available records, retention

Table 3: Mental Retardation

Severity (Name)	Age/ Sex/ Class	Grade Level Evaluation		Social Maturity	Achievement in last examination		Attendance	Teacher's Attitude	Peers' Acceptance
		Hindi	Math		Hindi	Math			
Mild (Brijesh)	7/M/1 Grade 1	15% of Grade 1	5% of Grade 1	5 yrs 3 m	-	-	78%	Unfavourable	Good
Moderate (Sufiya)	11/F/4 Grade 1	45% of Grade 1	32% of Grade 1	5 yrs	13%	9%	84%	Favorable	Good
Mild (Vandana)	11/F/4 Grade 1	48% of Grade 1	33% of Grade 1	7 yrs	14%	9%	80%	Favorable	Good
Severe +CP (Sangeeta)	7/F/2 Grade 1	08% of Grade 1	13% of Grade 1	5 yrs 8 m	5%	9%	68%	Neutral	Good
Mild (Suaram)	9/M/2 Grade 1	20% of Grade 1	25% of Grade 1	6 yrs	13%	17%	80%	Favorable	Good

Table 4: Hearing Impairment

Severity (Name)	Age/ Sex/ Class	Grade Level Evaluation		Social Maturity	Achievement in last examination		Attendance	Teacher's Attitude	Peers' Acceptance
		Hindi	Math		Hindi	Math			
Severe (Prema Devi)	8/F/2	22% of Grade 1	24% of Grade 1	7 yrs 2 m	15%	16%	81%	Favourable	Good
Profound (Shivakant)	8/M/3	30% of Grade 1	25% of Grade 1	Age appropriate	12%	10%	78%	Favourable	Good
Moderate (Atul Kumar)	8/M/2	50% of Grade 1	55% of Grade 1	Age appropriate	33%	37%	82%	Favourable	Good
Severe (Kusuma)	12/F/2	23% of Grade 1	20% of Grade 1	10 yrs 3m Moderate	46%	40%	83%	Favourable	Good
Moderate (Vinod)	6/M/1	9% of Grade 1	16% of Grade 1	Age appropriate	-	-	55%	Neutral	Good

Table 5: Visual Impairment

Severity (Name)	Age/ Sex/ Class	Grade Level Evaluation		Social Maturity	Achievement in last examination		Attendant	Teacher's Attitude	Peers' Acceptance
		Hindi	Math		Hindi	Math			
Totally blind (Chhoteylal)	14/M/3	25% of Grade 1	65% of Grade 1	Age appropriate	50%	40%	73%	Unfavourable	Good
Totally blind (Saroj)	9/F/3	22% of Grade 1	30% of Grade 1	Age appropriate	9%	12%	77%	Unfavourable	Good
Partially Sighted (Vimla)	8/F/3	15% of Grade 1	22% of Grade 1	7 yrs	6%	8%	81%	Favourable	Good
Partially Sighted (Kamini)	8/F/2	19% of Grade 1	25% of Grade 1	7 yrs 5 m	13%	17%	78%	Unfavourable	Good
Partially Sighted (Rakshapal)	8/M/2 Grade 2	18% of Grade 1	22% of Grade 2	Age appropriate	79%	81%	86%	Favourable	Good

Table 6: Locomotors Impairment

Severity (Name)	Age/ Sex/ Class	Grade Level Evaluation		Social Maturity	Achievement in last examination		Attendant	Teacher's Attitude	Peers' Acceptance
		Hindi	Math		Hindi	Math			
40% (Madhura)	6/M/1	15% of Grade 1	14% of Grade 1	Age appropriate	-	-	86%	Unfavourable	Good
60% (Ranjeet)	7/M/3	36% of Grade 2	43% of Grade 2	Age appropriate	54%	57%	83%	Favourable	Good
40% (Nasim)	11/M/5	52% of Grade 2	62% of Grade 2	Age appropriate	34%	36%	81%	Neutral	Good
75% (Nisha Devi)	12/F/3	28% of Grade 1	41% of Grade 1	9 Yrs 8 m	11%	16%	42%	Unfavourable	Good
50% (Ritu Dixit)	6/F/1	20% of Grade 1	15% of Grade 1	Age appropriate	-	-	72%	Favourable	Good

- in the school was found good with appropriate attendance;
- (g) Half of the teachers' attitude towards these children was not favourable. However peer acceptance was positive at every instance.

Based on the detailed study on individual cases and schools on different variables, some specific suggestions are drawn from the above results which are outlined below.

Level of learning achievement

The level of learning achievement was found to be significantly low. It is oblivious that disabling condition affects learning. However, the learning achievement of these children would improve by:

- (a) Appropriate resource support to school and teachers;
- (b) More input to teachers through in-service training;
- (c) Exploring the possibility to frame and implement individualised education programme (IEP); and
- (d) Giving importance to appropriate teaching-learning material.

Teachers' attitude

For successful IE programme, teachers must be purposeful, enthusiastic and clear in their directions and instructions to promote greater participation of students with disabilities. Attitudinal barrier concerns general educators' lack of feeling responsible for educating students with disabilities (Mishra,2004). During evaluation, about 50% of teachers were found to have positive attitude towards the special needs of such children. At the same time 15% teachers were indifferent and rest 35% teachers

had unfavourable attitude towards IE. This implies that 50% students' population having disability is deprived of a caring and sincere teacher. The attitude of teachers may improve by administrators.

- (a) Tagging high priority by administrators to the education of children with disabilities with continues observation and monitoring of their classroom transactions;
- (b) Arranging more resource support to teachers;
- (c) Recognising dedicated and skilled teachers;
- (d) Planning collaborative group works.

Teacher training and its impact

Training of teachers receives top priority. Teacher training was conducted at three different levels. At the first level, all general primary school teachers were provided intensive five-day training on special education inputs, so that they develop skills for identifying children with disabilities and recognising their special needs. At the second level, six-week (45 days) training was imparted to selected teachers, in which they become aware of practical issues concerning handling of various disabilities in the classrooms. At the third level, a small number of highly motivated and interested teachers are selected for intensive training of one-year duration or above.

In the present study, about 75% of teachers were oriented by 5 days training. The number of second and third level teachers was very meager. Therefore, the general teachers did not get opportunity to be supervised or

helped by a resource teacher. The issue of teacher training may be examined with the following suggestions:

- (a) Each NPRC, should get at least one of these teachers trained at six week level courses.
- (b) The quality and methods of training also be standardised even for 5 day training;
- (c) A team of special educators must be available at block level to monitor training and resource support to general/resource teachers;
- (d) Teacher training needs to be redefined and planned.

Peer Acceptance

Peer acceptance was very positive and encouraging at every school, wherever the study was carried out. Peers were supportive and different forms of peer tutoring were observed. Every child irrespective of potential was found to be part of the group. Even few students with severe form of disabilities were found to be very comfortable with the group. Better peer support could be encouraged through integration camps and integrated/unified sports (Special Olympics) and ability competition (like Abilympics).

EXEMPLAR CASE STUDIES

APPENDIX-I

Case Study: Primary School Attamau

In Primary School Attamau, out of 394 students, 14 children with disabilities have been enrolled in different classes, which constitutes as 3.6% of the total school children. Among the nine boys

and five girls, the numbers of orthopaedic disabled (OD) children is the maximum i.e., 06, then hearing impaired children (HI), 05; visually impaired (VI):02 and; one child with mental retardation (MR).

The basic facts related to primary school Attamau is given below:

1. Address: Village Attamau, Block Sandila, District Hardoi, U.P.
2. Building capacity to accommodate (No. of Students): 150
3. Total strength of students: 394
4. Total strength of disabled students: 14
5. Number of teachers: 02
6. Teacher-student ratio: 1:197
7. Number of classrooms: 04 (including Varandah)
8. Training of teachers in IED 5 days Training received by all teachers
9. Resource support for IED: NGO (National Association for Blind, Lucknow).
10. Aids and Appliances: three children provided out of 8 required cases.

Different variables related to school as well as individuals towards meeting the specific need are briefly described here:

(a) Drop-out

During the last three years, seven children with disabilities have left the school — four children by promotion and three were dropped out. Amongst the dropout students, an orthopaedic disabled child namely Shaharuddin and a multiple disabled child Satyendra Kumar had been shifted to elsewhere leaving their place of residence. The parents of hearing impaired child namely Sarvesh were not interested to send him

to the school. Reportedly the parents of Sarvesh were not satisfied with the academic achievement of their child (whereas the normal siblings of Sarvesh are attending the same school).

(b) Attendance

Out of the currently enrolled 14 students, a hearing-impaired boy Vijay Pal was not coming to the school since the last six months. Not less than five students like Vijay Pal were very irregular to the school. During the visit to the school, nine students were present in their respective classes. A specific observation was made that the students with visual impairment and orthopaedic disability found to be regular.

(c) Transportation

These children attend the school from a radius of 0.51 km, ranging from 100 meters to 1 kilometer only. All children come by themselves except Sarvesh (visually impairment). He takes the help from the peers.

(d) Incentives/Aids and Appliances

All students with disabilities had been provided free textbooks. Two students, only, those with visual impairment, has been given scholarship under IED scheme of MHRD through a NGO namely National Association for the Blind (NAB), Lucknow. Out of 14 students, eight of them were in need of aids and appliances. However only three students viz. Sarvesh Kumar was provided with Braille kit, Prema Devi with hearing aid and Jalaluddin with caliper (Ankle Foot Orthosis-AFO) through different agencies including Deptt. of Handicapped Welfare,

Govt. of Uttar Pradesh. The hearing aid possessed by Prema Devi was not working and Jalaluddin was reluctant to come to school with caliper since it is not well fitted. Four students were yet in need of hearing aids and Sangita would require a caliper for her better mobility.

(e) Individualised Programme

Plans of Individualised Educational Programme (IEP) of Sarvesh Kumar (Visually Impaired), Pushpa Devi (Visually Impaired), Sofia (Mental Retardation) and Prema Devi (Hearing Impaired) were found with the teachers, but many hearing impaired children did not have their IEPs. The special educators of the consulting NGO (National Association for Blind, Lucknow), which was looking after the implementation of IED programme in Hardoi, had developed these IEPs. The IEPs usually carry annualised goals for every student with disability, but all IEPs found in the school were maintained as part of the record work but were not adequately implemented. Many technical jargons incomprehensible to the teachers were observed in those IEPs.

(f) Adaptation in Curriculum

Adaptation in the curriculum and evaluation process was found not being practiced. This might be due to the lack of orientation to the teachers. Oral tests were taken for Sarvesh Kumar (Visually Impaired) and Pushpa Kumari (Visually Impaired) due to difficulties to evaluate their performance through Braille. Since hearing impaired children viz. Md. Wakeel (Hearing Impaired), Neeraj (Hearing Impaired) and Prema Devi

(Hearing Impaired) did not follow instructions, then neither appropriate written test nor oral tests were conducted. However they were asked to write whatever they knew irrespective of the requirement of the test. Sufiya (Mental Retardation) was reported to be academically unfit by her teacher and hence no test was taken for her. There was no difficulty for the students with orthopaedic disability for appearing the tests. All students were promoted.

(g) Academic Achievement

The academic achievement of the students with disabilities was reported to be nearly at par with the non-disabled peers. For example, Sarvesh Kumar (Visually Impaired) achieved 55% in Hindi, 59% in Mathematics and 55% in Social Studies in the last examination. Pushpa Devi (Visually Impaired) even did better than Sarvesh Kumar (Visually Impaired). Incidentally a mentally retarded girl, Sufiya had 40% in Hindi, 45% in Mathematics and 36% in Social Studies in her last examination of Class III; although she did not appear for the examination. The level of performance of the students observed during evaluation by the investigator did not match with the past examination records.

(h) Attitudes of Teacher and Peers

Amar Singh, Class teacher of Sarvesh Kumar (Visually Impaired) has started learning Braille and for him the classroom transaction for the visually impaired students is no more a challenge. However Shri Singh and his fellow teacher found difficulty to handle the hearing impaired children in their classrooms. Sometimes they used

gestures and due to overcrowding classroom they mostly ignored the special needs of such children. According to the teachers, no specific attention was given to Sufiya (Mental Retardation) — other than correcting her classroom behaviour through peers. The children with orthopaedic disability do not require any specific attention, since their peers manage their special needs. Since no student is using wheelchair hence no significant physical barrier is reported in the school. The attitude of the peers was found to be positive to the children with disabilities.

(i) Resource Support

As far as resource support to the school concerned, the services of a NGO (National Association for Blind, Lucknow) had been hired for their services under DPEP-IED Scheme. Their special educators covering all disabilities used to visit the school at least 2-3 times in a month. The quality of resource support for the visually impaired children was observed to be good. Overall, the role of school was found to be positive towards education of CWSNs. Despite large number of students in the classrooms, teachers were observed to have genuine interest towards the betterment of such children.

APPENDIX-II

Case Study: Child with Hearing Impairment in Primary School, Sathri

Atul Kumar with moderate hearing loss was enrolled two years back to Primary School at Sathri. Now he is studying in Class II under the class teacher Ms. Nidhi Srivastava. According to

Ms. Srivastava, he could write complete Hindi alphabets, identify simple words and count meaningfully up to 10.

Before admitted to school, Atul had difficulty in hearing as well as in speaking. He did not prefer to play and many a time he used to hit young children. Over the years, Atul has learnt how to play. But today, the problem of hearing and speaking still is unsolved.

At the age of one year, when Atul did not speak and hear like normal children, then parents recognised that he has some problem. When Atul was conceived, his mother was only 16. At the age of 2-3 months, Atul fell down and had head injury and at the 7th month he had high fever and was hospitalised. The parents consulted several doctors at HarDOI and Lucknow. Hearing aid was recommended for the child, but the parents did not provide to him. Except, speech and language area, all milestones of development were within the normal range. Currently Atul has begun to imitate few sounds like etc and able to comprehend name of the objects if spoken to him by gestures. Atul is independent in his activities of daily living. He has adequate age-appropriate social skills except a few problem behaviours. On Vineland Social Maturity Scale, an above average profile was obtained in self-help dressing and occupation dimensions. Atul has significant difficulties in communication skill such as understanding at gesture level only; speech is limited to imitation of few sounds. Speech regarding (lips reading) skill is not developed yet. In academics, on grade level assessment 50% achievement was obtained in Hindi and 55% in Mathematics of grade one.

This suggests that Atul is performing about one grade level below than his actual grade.

Atul hails from a higher middle socio-economic status family with well-built house and handsome monthly income. The parents perceive no problem regarding management of his condition. Now Atul has been provided with a hearing aid by the school and since then the parents have come forward with their interest towards speech training for Atul. Parents acknowledge the role of school as well teacher in bringing up the child.

Parents perceive that Atul would be self-dependent in his life and the family would support him to open a shop (or similar jobs) as soon as he is grown up and learnt something. However, parents feel that Atul could learn better if he shall be admitted to a deaf school.

The class teacher of Atul, Ms. Nidhi has undergone ten days training of 'Master Trainers' at M.J.P. Rohilkhand University during May, 1999. Ms Nidhi feels competent in classroom management, use of TLM; but finds difficulty in undertaking speech and language training of Atul. Many a times she fails to explain some abstract concepts due to communication barriers with Atul. According to the teacher, her training has helped her to strengthen the enrolment status of disabled students in her school. But when the training aspect is considered, she explains her incompetence in preparing Individualised Educational Programmes (IEPs) and implementing them if specific and special techniques to be used. To help Atul, the teacher wishes to have further training such as undergoing a 'Foundation Course' etc.

The class teacher is not satisfied with the current achievement of Atul. She says that the performance of the child could be improved if barriers in communication are managed effectively. According to her, parents are supportive, but they need counselling from an expert in the management of hearing impairment. Teacher perceived the society as changing very fast with supportive attitude towards children with special needs including Atul.

The peers of Atul, namely Jyoti, Mahendra, Rajesh, Arti and Shiv Devi do not find any significant difference between Atul and them. According to them Atul plays well and is very friendly

too, can draw and paint nicely; the teacher is good to them and loves Atul and such children. When Atul was asked about him, he said that he would love playing cricket. However, Atul was not happy about his hearing aid because of its poor control on noise.

It was observed that the teacher is personally and professionally devoted to the cause. Her level of motivation seems to be high in terms of receiving resource consultation and pursuing further training. Although, not of good quality and wide range, but teaching learning materials (TLM) were found in the school at used condition. Peer acceptance and support was observed to be exceptionally good.

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Some Problems of Human Rights Education

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It has been said that the democracy is based on the rights of man; it has been replied that it should rather take its stand on the duties of man; but both rights and duties are European ideas. *Dharma* is the Indian conception in which rights and duties lose the artificial antagonism created by a view of the world which makes selfishness the root of action, and regain their deep and eternal unity. *Dharma* is the basis of democracy which Asia must recognise, for in this lies the distinction between the soul of Asia and the soul of Europe.

—Sri Aurobindo

It is time in the West to defend not so much human rights as human obligations.

—Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Abstract

Human Rights is becoming a very significant concept in the contemporary world. At the same time its use and misuse is also a much contested area. Theoretical, political and juridical pronouncements on the subject are as diverse as are the countries in the world. In the event, the Human Rights education becomes a tricky subject. Various agencies, organizations and individuals interpret the very concept of Human Rights in hugely different ways, frequently contradicting each other. On the other hand their uses for covert and overt purposes in the international arena generate heated polemics. Therefore, we in India have to be careful while imparting Human Rights education through various channels and to a range of target groups. This essay tries to underline some of the essential issues in this regard. If the conceptual differences, political overtones and activist agenda are not carefully taken into account, the Human Rights education cannot serve a positive purpose in this country. Our teachers and educationists must care for all the nuances and should not be carried away by any one or other declaration on the subject.

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Human right is an oft repeated phrase these days. However, its intent and objectives are widely different for different people. Words and deeds of many activists here and abroad, demands of various NGOs, their political orientations, a systematic selection or exclusion of issues, their sources of financial support and inspirations – all these present a complex gamut of problems. Validating all kind of demands and posturing under an umbrella concept of human rights sometimes become a contradictory exercise. It would be in order, therefore, to first consider some pertinent points related to the concept of human rights.

(a) Every introductory discourse on human rights invariably mentions that the concept has been largely derived from the 'The Declaration of Independence' (USA, 1776) and the 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen' (France, 1789). After these customarily comes the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Thus, almost all academic presentations on human rights underline the experiences, expositions and even the verbiage of the Euro-American history and agencies.

(b) The slogan of human rights came to acquire more prominence much after the Second World War, i.e. in the post-colonial era. It is surprising, therefore, that when dozens of Asian, African and Arab countries were under the colonial yoke – the same Western scholarship did never call human rights as a universal noble right. This was despite the fact that the aforementioned celebrated documents were already there for a long time. Hence pointing to those documents

as the *source* of human rights concept is a post-colonial wisdom, and not quite innocent. After all, one may ask: why so much concern for the human rights of those very human beings *after* they became free from the colonial rule of the Western masters? Is the concern genuine, or is it a new variant of the proverbial 'white man's burden'? The great historian Arnold Toynbee had rightly underlined the point by asking the West: "What entitles its culture, its science, its social organisation, finally its rationality itself, to be able to claim universal reality? Was this not a mirage associated with economic domination and political hegemony?"

(c) The concept of 'human' as well as 'rights' do not have any universal meaning. At least three major and fundamentally different formulations exist in the world. They are: the Western-Christian, the Arab-Islamic and the Indian-Hindu. Any standard discourse in these three thought currents proves it beyond doubt that each of them has fundamentally different notions of human beings, human society, etc. Therefore, it is not correct to pronounce some 'universal' human rights without first arriving at a genuine consensus with clear-cut meaning of the term.

(d) Though there are some valuable ideas generated in the historical development of the Euro-American democracies, it is still imperative to note that the experience of a Western observer may not tally with that of countries that are culturally and philosophically very different such as India or Japan. One has only to consult the classic writings of Lenin, Sri Aurobindo, Winston Churchill

and Ayatollah Khomeini, and it will be apparent at once that the very understanding of what a human constitutes and concepts like liberty, equality, democracy, progress, happiness, rights, duties, etc. has never been one and the same for different people. For instance, Sri Aurobindo says:

This was the weakness of European democracy and the source of its failure. It took its motive the rights of man and not the *dharma* of humanity; it appealed to the selfishness of the lower classes against the pride of the upper; it made hatred and internecine war the permanent allies of Christian ideals and wrought an inexplicable confusion which is the modern malady of Europe.¹

With this profound view a comparison of those Western documents would reveal the fundamental difference on the whole issue. Then, one may ask, why force a *particular*, uniform meaning, citing the US, UN or other Western documents, on all people of the world? Especially on the young and innocent students of Asian nations who habitually trust their elders on points of knowledge?

(e) In a sense, the insistence to project something as 'universal' human rights is an extension of the Western dogmas. The well known British political scientist Ernest Barker has noted that the genesis of the humanitarian movement in the West was a fervent conviction "that the benefits of the Gospel belonged to all and must be extended to all ...whoever needed the comfort of recognition of his

common humanity and his common human rights."² It must not be glossed over that a similar evangelical sense pervades in those human rights organisations guided by Church missionary establishments. And they are numerous and well-connected in our country. So it should be recognised that by human rights they don't always mean what common educated Indian might assume. For a large section of international human rights organisations the universalism is the Church concept of universalism which has one closed concept of God, one dogmatic designation of the deity, one fixed form of faith, one regimented mode of worship, one rigid moral conduct, and one straight-jacket of culture. Accordingly the universalism of the prevalent view of human rights, too, is a dogma insisting on a Western-Christian notion of man and, therefore, equally counterfeit.

(f) Not only the dogmatic insistence is a forged universalism, but also this persistence on forcible uniformity, whether in religion ('Only True God') or in human rights, reflects an imperialist mindset that has been the root cause of civilizational violence for centuries. Even Western scholars are now coming to realise that the monotheistic creeds are the source of intolerance and violence. In a very perceptive article Jean-Pierre Lehmann has clearly held monotheism responsible for intolerance, violence, hostility and wars³. Professor Lehmann is a Professor of Political Economy at the International Institute of Management Development in Switzerland and the head of Evans Group, a global think tank

composed of government, industry and opinion leaders from Asia, Europe and the US. His is not an isolated perception. Andrew Sullivan, the former editor of *The New Republic* and currently a regular contributor to the *New York Times*, has also underlined it. He says, "It seems as if there is something inherent in religious monotheism that lends itself to terrorist temptation."⁴ Taking yet another example, the widely respected *Time* magazine published a readers discussion on 'Christianity, Islam and the Pope'. In this discussion the *Time* gave the most prominent place to this view: "Monotheistic religions that lay claim to the one and the only possible truth are doomed by their very nature to end up in conflict"⁵. The very selection and the distinction given to it shows that the view is gaining ground in the Western discourse as well. With such perceptions it is inescapable to conclude that an insistence on a particular, Western-Christian understanding of human rights is another variation of the same monotheism. Thus, the Western notion of human rights, in as much as it is bandied as a universal remedy for many ills, is itself a source of intolerance for a large section of humanity. This must be taken into account if one is sincere about the rights of the human.

(g) To better appreciate the issue it would help to compare the Western-Christian concept with the Indian-Hindu concept of a human being. As Sri Aurobindo rightly observed:

There are very different conceptions possible of man and his life, of the nation and its life and of humanity and the life of

the human race.... Man has not been seen by the thought of India as a living body developed by physical Nature which has evolved certain vital propensities, an ego, a mind and a reason, an animal of the genus *homo* and in our case of the species *homo indicus*, whose whole life and education must be turned towards a satisfaction of these propensities under the government of a trained mind and reason and for the best advantage of the personal and the national ego. ... India has seen always in man the individual a soul, a portion of the Divinity enwrapped in mind and body, a conscious manifestation in Nature of the universal self and spirit.⁶

In fact, Sri Aurobindo was only reiterating the classical Hindu thought. The earliest definition of human being in Hindu tradition is to be found in *Upanishads*. The rishis who by employing yogic methods reached the farthest frontiers of the inner in human being arrived at the conclusion that human being have five faculties or sheaths (कोष), one within the other. These they enumerated as follows: (i) human body or the physical sheath (अन्नमय कोष), (ii) human desires and drives, or the vital sheath (प्राणमय कोष), (iii) human sense perceptions or the mental (मनोमय कोष), (iv) human intellection and intuition at their highest and most universal or the spiritual sheath (विज्ञानमय कोष), and, (v) human self-delight or the blissful sheath (आनंदमय कोष).

Thus, a wise reflection on the Indian *dharmic* concept of human beings is of immense worth to evaluate the universalistic claims of the Western human rights discourse. The sense of human there does not go much beyond the first three sheaths and, consequently, limits a human being little more than an eating and procreating animal, even if a rational one. In common parlance, too, a human being in the current Western outlook is basically a free consumer and a taxpayer⁷. How can, then, it be accepted as *the* 'universal' viewpoint except by using propaganda and force?

(h) Apart from the fundamental philosophical difference on the concept of a human being, one should not underestimate the fact that the concept of human rights has been greatly different for the erstwhile USSR, South Africa during its apartheid, Saudi Arab and Algeria etc.⁸ China today insists that the human rights issue is nothing but a stick in the hands of powerful Western agencies to threaten certain countries and make them subservient. Therefore, enforcing in our country a Western pro forma human rights discourse in education is both arbitrary and harmful. One must include the non-Western views on the issue to make the discourse meaningful. Refusing to do so will only prove the charge that the 'universalism' is forced and phony.

(i) For a balanced, comprehensive and meaningful understanding of what is 'human' and all concepts related to human society it is essential to study the views of at least the contemporary great Indians such as Swami Vivekananda,

Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr Ambedkar, if not the classic philosophies available in the *Upanishads* and *Mahabharata*, for instance. In the Indian context there is no escaping from such a most valuable corpus of knowledge and understanding. If human rights organisations and activists in India are reluctant to study Sri Aurobindo or Gandhi as essential texts in order to understand human issues, they must answer: what they fear?

(j) In hectoring discourses on human rights in India a particular community is targeted for abuse or insensitivity to human rights. For instance, some 'untouchability' is always bandied, in almost every paper or seminar or educational programme, as an, nay the example of human rights issue. Untouchability is also directly or indirectly mentioned as a part of standard Hindu religious practice which is, of course, a concoction. But that is beside the point. The point is that nowhere in the human rights discussion the practice of 'triple *talak*' as a sanctioned and vigourously defended Islamic practice is mentioned as against human rights. Even while flaunting 'women rights' no human rights activist or institution ever bring up the recurring plight of Muslim women by all kind of mediaeval, barbaric practices not limited to triple *talaq*⁹ but including many others like *Muta'h*¹⁰ (temporary marriage), infibulations (aka FGC, FGM)¹¹, forcible veil-wearing etc. Various *fatwas*¹² of Ulema and its actual implementation on several hapless Indian Muslim women have made tragic stories in media. But no human rights activist seemed even

to take note of it. Similarly, the treatment of *kafirs* (non-Muslims) in standard Islamic theory and practices are nowhere criticised as an abuse. In stark contrast to all this, despite being stray incidents of *dalit* maltreatment — that too not at all sanctioned or approved by the Hindu society — a war cry is being tried by some missionary organisations 'to liberate 160 million *dalits*' as a part of human rights movement. This selective badgering of the Hindu community and forcing it into a guilt sense is not fair. Why this discriminatory targeting and selective silence? Are some communities, to recall George Orwell, more humans than humans? Or is it something entirely else being tried under the garb of human rights education in India?

(k) There have been well-recorded reports, complaints and repercussions of missionary activities in India. The Niyogi Committees' detailed report (1956), the Wadhwa Commission report after the killing of the Australian missionary Graham Stains (1999) and various news appearing every year in India about fraudulent activities in mass conversions in tribal and distant, hidden areas are for everyone to see. Still the notorious practices by whom Mao called 'spiritual aggressors', of buying some poor or innocent man's faith by muscular and unethical 'rice bowl' methods is never taken up as a gross human right abuse. Why? Please note: no one has ever challenged the facts and findings of the Commissions about the fraud being committed by missionary organisations¹³. After every natural calamity like earthquake, tsunami and war-devastation news appears of

international missionary organisations eager to help the victims with the clear intent of 'harvesting souls'. The concerned organisations, too, never deny it, they only try to bury it under silence. So, why the fraudulent, unethical practices upon simple human beings are not taken up as human rights abuse in any human rights discourse?

(l) In all human rights documents, papers, memoranda, seminar only the state is presented as violators of human rights. Consequently all remedies, safeguards, solutions are addressed to it. In India, most human rights violations, tortures, killings and other atrocities on human beings are done by criminals, fundamentalists and terrorists. Therefore, no rationale can be found for the silence of the human rights activists over such huge number of violations as if the victims of non-state aggressors are less worthy humans! Besides, a democratic state such as India is subject to every type of control by people and institutions. To present a democratic state as the 'other' and an adversary does not indicate a healthy attitude on the part of human rights activists.

(m) The issues of rights and duties, particularly in the global context, do have political connotations often representing some selfish interest. Russian and Chinese scholars and governments have resented on occasions that the human rights issue has been used by some Western forces as a whip to control and punish some unfriendly regimes the world over. Other scholars such as Homi Bhaba, Gayatri Spivak or Edward Said have also underlined that many theorisations about the coloured (Negro,

black) people in the West is but one way of dominating its stranglehold on them. Our own observers have also noted the same:

There was a time when every "local tyrant" was in fact a client or a protégé of the West. What the white powers find most troublesome today is having to keep track of the fast-changing identities of friends and foes in a turbulent region like the Middle East. After all every outstanding nationalist leader in the area – Nasser, Ben Bella, Gaddafi, Assad, Khomeini – has taken on the appearance of a monster in the white man's eyes at one time or another. If none of them invited the kind of vengeance being wreaked on Saddam Hussein it is because, unlike the rest, the Iraqi leader has hit the white world where it hurts most.¹⁴

Therefore, behind the concerns for Chechens, Palestinians, Tibetans or Bosnian Muslims and a willful indifference to the plight of Kashmiri Hindus, for instance, there have been covert and overt interests of some Western powers, both governmental and non-governmental. So we must learn to check the credentials of human rights enthusiasts and educators before giving them respectability and responsibility.

(n) After the 9/11 terrorist attack the Western governments have been scrutinising the sources for terror funding. In the process if a source is found funding a terror network as well as some

university programmes, the later also comes under close watch and necessary measures is taken. In the same way, in India, if a same source funds the spiritual aggression programme to 'Convert Asia' and the NGOs engaged in human rights activism, one must treat the latter in a similar way. The vigour to spread 'human rights literacy' may be a subterfuge to prepare ground for 'planting the Cross'. Or, alternatively, to work as public relation propaganda outfits for religious terrorism¹⁵.

One may recall that Shri K P S Gill, the former chief of the Punjab police, has time and again stressed that several human rights organisations active here are but the front for terrorist organisations. According to his long, first hand experience, "Such organisations are not at all interested in genuine investigations in human rights violations, they repeatedly reject offers to cooperate in sincere inquiry. Their sole purpose is to malign the security forces, and how to tarnish the image of the country."¹⁶ Such warnings should not be brushed aside if we are sincere in our educational undertakings.

(o) Therefore, before accepting *any* thing as a human right, especially for the purpose of educational, training, 'sensitising' programmes, an open consensus must be made with the participation of hundreds and thousands of educational, social, cultural, political worthies of every stream as to what should and what should not include into the concept of human rights in India. A cogent, precise definition of human rights must come first before disseminating it.

(p) Basic texts for such educational and training programmes should include at least the contemporary Indian classics such as the *Chicago Speech* (Swami Vivekananda), *Ideals of Human Unity*, *Foundations of Indian Culture* and *Uttarpada Speech* (Sri Aurobindo), *Hind Swaraj* (Mahatma Gandhi), *On the Untouchables and Untouchability* and *The Great Conversion* (B.R. Ambedkar). It is hugely profitable to compare the ideas and ideals presented in the *Chicago Speech* and the *Ideals of Human Unity* with the celebrated Western documents like 'The Declaration of Independence' (USA) and the 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen' (France).

It is worth recalling in the context of the Western documents that the maltreatment of black population in Europe and the USA continued under the reign of the very celebrated documents! Evidently there was no contradiction for the West treating its own black people and the subject peoples of the erstwhile Asian, African colonies heartlessly while at the same time claiming such declarations as the main, practically the *only* source of ideas related to human progress and liberation. Also, it is no coincidence that every totalitarian ideology of the twentieth century was manufactured in the West and bears the marks of its provenance. In any case, "The scientific, rationalistic, industrial, pseudo-democratic civilization of the West is now in process of dissolution and it would be a lunatic absurdity for us at this moment to build blindly on that sinking foundation"¹⁷.

All this boils down to the fact that the ideas and ideals presented by Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Gandhi

and Dr Ambedkar are more humane, faultless or pertinent for the purpose of understanding and training around the subject human rights. Therefore, in any educational course, syllabi and essential reading materials as well as for training, sensitising programmes precedence should be given to the thoughts of these Indian great thinkers. Only then our students and officials can fully appreciate the Western documents in perspective. Then they will be more realistic, wise and confident in the matters related with human rights.

In any case, a vague, sectarian and selfish concept of human beings and human rights cannot serve as a good foundation. It is essential that the concept be suitably understood for the purpose of education and training of officials, administrators and educators. Without having a comparative understanding of the nature of human beings and the consequent scope of what is being perceived as human rights, especially for our country, various institutions and agencies might be working to dissimilar purposes and to their own narrow, sectarian and concealed intentions. Without this understanding our policy makers, administrators, officers, students, teachers and educational institutions might feel bewildered very soon as to what is behind the idea of human rights sensitisation. Is it to make people more humane or bitterer? Is it to make them more lenient to all kind of imperialist ideologies and terrorism? Is it to make people kind or more selfish, more dutiful or more right oriented, more social or more indifferent? We all must find out,

with an open mind, free from pre-fabricated constructs and given dogmas, and free from the 'moral' pressure generated by vested interests. We must continue our search and discourse keeping in mind what Sri Aurobindo had called the difference between the spiritual and mental view of existence: "The spiritual view holds that the mind, life, body are man's means and not his aims and even that they are not his last and highest means; it sees them as his

outer instrumental self and not his whole being." Always keeping this difference in mind can we make any social science discourse more relevant and thought-provoking? Losing it will make our entire academic exercise, as it has largely been, just a pathetic repetition of frequently changing (and often serving a particular 'national' interest) Western doctrines and theories. It has not made our social science academics respectable on the world arena.

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- 7 GANDHI'S *Hind Swaraj* has a small chapter on the 'philosophy of civilization' where Gandhi very perceptively analysed the lopsided view of the human being in the Western discourse.
- 8 See, for example, SAMUIL ZIVS, *Human Rights: Continuing the Discussion* (Moscow: Progress Publishers), 1980. Representing the erstwhile Soviet ideology Zivs has presented an understanding of human rights which is very from the Western notion or that represented by Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch etc.
- 9 Citing instances of women being summarily divorced, over phone and through telegrams, noted lyricist Hasan Kamal calls it "a heinously irresponsible act which cannot be challenged in court because our personal law says it is fine. Would you believe, some men have actually divorced their wives because they were displeased with the meal prepared by them?!" (*Indian Express*, online edition, 13 Sept 2004). However, in general Muslim representatives do not speak about it. They also want others to keep mum since they regard it as an internal affair of Islam. Therefore, not open under human rights or any other consideration. According to Tahseen Usmani, for instance, "Whether triple talaq in one sitting is valid or not cannot be decided by discussions, arguments and counter-arguments in newspapers and TV channels. This sensitive issue could only be solved by ulema, muftis and religious scholars belonging to different schools of thought within the limits of Shariat." ("Why media is worried about triple talaq" by in *The Milli Gazette*, New Delhi, October 16-31, 2004).

- 10 *Muta'h* is a fixed-term marriage contract according to *Shariat* (Islamic law). The duration of this type of marriage is fixed at its inception and is then automatically dissolved upon completion of its term. The duration can be of any length, even few minutes or hours. By its very nature its intent is questionable.

To exemplify, an incident in Hyderabad: "In ten minutes of one another, Afreen (17), Farheen (20) and Sultana (19) were married. To a stinking rich 60-year-old sheikh from the Emirates named Mohammed Baquer Khan. He paid the parents of the Rs 10,000 each and promised another Rs 10,000 each plus visas for their families to move to the UAE." (*The Telegraph*, Calcutta, 15 August 2005). The girls filed a complaint with police that the sheikh had disappeared after spending several days with them at a city lodge. This is not an isolated incident. For its frequent occurrence it has got a particular name in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala: 'Arab marriage'.

To take another example, in Kashmir numerous foreign jihadis used it at will to satisfy their lust. Noted columnist Varsha Bhosle wrote, "Under Mutah, a militant could enter into a contract marriage for, say, a period of two years with a girl of his choice, and on completion of that period, the marriage stood automatically annulled. Thereafter, the girl is left to her own fate, with the burden of social stigma and the responsibility of single-handedly rearing the progeny of the union for the rest of her life." ('Human Rights Violations in Kashmir', *rediff.com*, 25 January 2000).

- 11 Infibulation is also known as female genital mutilation (FGM), female genital cutting (FGC) etc. The UN documents use the terminology of FGM. For a brief description, see the "Female genital mutilation", Fact sheet N°241, May 2008, by World Health Organisation.

In Islamic texts it is referred to as *khafd* or *khifad*. FGC is practiced in mostly Islamic countries. Especially in Middle East and Africa. As a result, according to World Health Organisation, every year two million young girls die of sepsis or loss of blood. (Oriana Fallaci, *The Force of Reason*, (New York: Rizzoli International, 2006), p. 220).

For a detailed exposition of the problem and horror see Marianne Sarkis, "Female Genital Cutting (FGC): An Introduction" (<http://www.fgmnetwork.org/intro/fgmintro.php>). To raise awareness about this barbaric practice the United Nations has declared February 6 as "International Day Against Female Genital Mutilation".

Also see, "Female Genital Mutilation: Report of a WHO Technical Working Group, Geneva, 17-19 July, 1995." World Health Organisation: Geneva. 1996.

The renowned author Ayaan Hirsi Ali has described it in her famous book, "Infidel" (New York: Free Press, 2007), pps 112-113,143. This is useful to understand the feelings of a hapless victim of FGC.

Still, Islamic scholars defend the practice. In 1994, Egyptian *Mufti* Sheikh Jad Al-Hâqq argued that the procedure may not be banned simply on grounds of improper use. Al-Azhar University in Cairo had issued several *fatwas* endorsing FGC, in 1949, 1951 and 1981. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Female_genital_cutting). Similarly, Sheikh Musa Mohammed Omer, a member of the Executive Committee of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Ethiopia explained and defended the practice. During the sub-regional conference on female genital mutilation in February 2005 in Djibouti he explained (in an interview, given to IRIN, an UN information network) the position of Islam in relation to FGM and why he continues to supports certain forms of the practice

Q: Why is the practice of female circumcision important in the Muslim religion?

A: Our Islamic scholars believe that female circumcision is different from male circumcision. They have a strong view that female circumcision is allowed, and that there is no evidence from Islamic sources prohibiting female circumcision, unless it is pharaonic

(for full text of the interview see <http://www.irinnews.org/InDepthMain.aspx?InDepthId=15&ReportId=62475>).

- 12 See, "Text of the Question and fatwa on Imrana" in *The Milli Gazette*, New Delhi, 6 July 2005.
Imrana Case: The woman was raped by her father-in-law. However instead of proceeding under the criminal courts for action as a first recourse, a Fatwa was issued by Dar – Ul – Uloom [Deoband] stating her marriage with her husband to stand nullified and directing her to marry her father-in-law.
Gudia's case: Her husband went missing for 7 years which entitled her to consider the marriage dissolved according to Islamic laws. She contracted a second marriage. During her pregnancy from the second marriage her first husband returned. The religious leaders [of Deoband] pronounced a fatwa declaring her second marriage as void and directed her to return to her first husband without any consideration of the woman's choice. (Indira Jaisingh, "Working with the legislative, judicial and legal system to end institutional gender bias in the administration of justice and promote gender justice in the informal and parallel justice institutions", 18th-20th July 2007, Expert Group Meeting on CEDAW UNESCAP).
- 13 The Wadhwa Commission found that Graham Stains was not only a social worker but also a jealous missionary committed to spread of his faith and converting the tribals into Christianity. This resulted in group conversions of poor tribals, which is illegal in law. This was the root cause of anger among a section of the local Hindu population. About the Wadhwa Commission's findings the *Times of India* in its editorial (9 August 1999) commented, "This, however, is not to suggest that the [Wadhwa] report must be unreservedly welcomed. Some Christian organisations, for instance, have pointed to what certainly seem like discrepancies." Use of the word 'discrepancies' is a reluctant way to admit the truth of the report.
- 14 SHAM LAL, "The White Man's Burden" in *A Hundred Encounters* (New Delhi: Rupa, 2003), p. 206.
- 15 Some people object to the term. They should note that our National Security Adviser, one of the highest responsible official in our country, Shri M.K. Narayanan not only uses the term 'religious terrorism' but also consider it 'the greatest challenge' to the country. See *Dainik Tribune*, Chandigarh, 30 Nov. 2006.
- 16 From the speech delivered at a book release function held in New Delhi, Sept. 9, 2006.
- 17 SRI AUROBINDO, "A Preface on National Education" in the reference no. 6 above, p. 11.

Book Review

Growing Up As a Woman Writer

AUTHOR: JASBIR JAIN

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Growing up as a Woman Writer is a compilation of proceedings of two seminars organised by the Sahitya Akademi in 2001 at New Delhi and in 2005 at Hyderabad. Edited by Jasbir Jain, the book is broadly divided into five sections.

The first section presents two reflective essays by Nabaneeta Dev Sen and Krishna Sobti on the status of Women's Writing in India. In her essay Nabaneeta Dev Sen stresses upon gender equality. She urges one to rise above gender-bound writing as it often becomes a self-defeating act. As a woman writer one needs to widen one's horizon and talk about every issue that is relevant to society. There is nothing that is the sole prerogative of male writers. Instead, women need to take every one along and while doing so they will also be able to free men from the 'chains of masculinity'. In a nutshell, women writers need to rise above limiting labels and narrow definitions and aspire for a humanistic focus in their work.

Krishna Sobti speaks in a similar vein and emphasises that creative writing is and should be above gender, caste, colour and creed. To quote her, "a woman is handling her text and her life with new energies, self confidence and vibrancy and wants to be the equal of her male

counterpart in every way." She expresses confidence in education and a career-orientation as a means of achieving this. Sobti also asserts, 'Why should we be anxious to invent a new moral value for woman writers? Let us not create two separate categories of writing.' The central thesis/argument being that categorising literature on the basis of gender can lead to an unequal footing for women. After all, women writers are increasingly no longer at the margin but very much a part of main stream literature.

It was the second section of the book, 'Growing up as a Woman Writer' that I personally found most appealing. This section has the potential and material to motivate any aspiring creative writer. The representation of writers in this section is from different walks of life, regions, languages, religions and socio-economic strata which, serves as an excellent illustration of the fact that creative writing is neither the prerogative of a select few nor an inborn talent. Comprising experiences of eleven contemporary women writers, this autobiographical section narrates how their journeys led them to becoming writers in a male dominated society. Here we get to share the journey of women writers such as Mridula Garg, Padma Sachdev, Jeelani Bano, Rajee Seth and Indira Goswami to name a few.

The stories these writers had heard during their childhood, their keen observation of life, the insatiable desire to read more books along with a mature

sensitivity towards their immediate environment (physical and social) and the much needed encouragement from family are listed as having helped them become creative writers in their own respect. Often, it was the will to triumph against all odds. To quote Mridula Garg, "challenge in any form is the propelling force of all creativity and I have no dearth of it. Each bout of criticism and excommunication by male writers and critics, or male dominated female critics and writers gave me fresh reasons to continue and write, the only way I knew how." These reflective journeys also underline the need for encouragement of women writers. As Meena Kakodkar says, "being a writing woman, to manage the house, office and continue writing would not have been very easy without the encouragement, and support of my parents and family."

The third section titled 'Different Frames' is a collection of sixteen evocative stories by representative Indian women writers such as Bama's 'Annach,' Volga's 'Confluence', Shashi Deshpande's, 'Hear me, Sanjay ...', Neelum Saran Gour's 'The Birth' ... These stories remind one of an orchestra, each playing a different tune, representing a different reality and yet maintaining a harmonious core. Thus, the issues dealt with in this section range from the problems of the aged, gender exploitation, the struggle for acceptance in the society, partition, oppression etc.

The fourth section 'Songs of the Birds of Fire' is an overwhelming array of emotions. Written in free verse, it depicts the different facets of life as seen by various women-poets. As K. Saraswathamma writes, 'Asking me

why I write is like asking me why I live. I live thinking of the works yet to be written. If I cannot write, I cannot derive any pleasure from life.' The act of writing here expresses a sense of discovery, freedom and connecting with other people as well as a sense of achievement. Particularly striking is J. Bhagyalakshmi's 'The Giver' wherein she writes, "I give you full freedom," he said. I smiled and asked, "Where was my freedom till now?"

The fifth and final section titled, 'Histories, Positions and Redefinitions' are critical essays that question the existing literary canons. The representation of thought herein extends from the personal to the political, from creative to critical opinions and indeed, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari! Lipipuspa Nayak in her essay, 'The Feminist Interrogation' raises some very valid questions — '...This leaves me with the problematic: feminist concerns remaining the common denominator in the writings of writers across times and gender, what is the true feminist canon? And has the canon been interrogated only by women writers? Can a text that meets the parameters of feminist literature be accepted by a large section of society?' Another notable discussion is on how the mainstream feminist movement did not address the concerns of Dalit women during the struggle for independence. Victims of centuries of social, political, economic, cultural and religious pressures, Dalit women deserve representation in the struggle for dignity. The book duly acknowledges Mahasweta Devi's contribution towards in taking up the cause of Dalit women. 'Rudali', Draupadi and 'The Hunt' are a few

examples of her work. However, Dalit women writers have been emerging as articulate authors and activists like Bama. In her individual essay, Jasbir Jain talks of how feminist writing has to come to terms with the notion of femininity, negotiate the cultural difference and work with the idea of centrality, all at the same time.

The collection has quite a few translated pieces as well and the translations are of high quality. To me, this serves as a silent ode to translation being a creative act in itself. The book clearly has a lot to offer its readers. The biographical notes at the end are excellent references that supplement the main writings and the theme of the text. They have been written well and make for an engaging read. This also lends the book certain completeness.

Balancing the diverse array of topics and issues, the language is simple and avoids jargon. Though the presentation is praiseworthy, there is only one noticeable absence — humour. Women

writers have produced excellent creative work in this area as well and it would have been interesting to read how humour is used as a tool by women writers to negotiate with the world around them. Nonetheless, one cannot help but agree with the editor that we need to re-frame 'feminist' writing in a wider perspective: 'shift the lens' as it were, to capture the varied dimensions of women's writing.

The appeal of this edited volume extends to the field of education as well. Deliberations on what it means to be creative and how creativity is not determined by gender, caste or class is an appreciable concept. The curricular debates have also recognised the fact that 'The voices of women in all their glory need to find a prominent place in our textbooks and teaching strategies.' And the book presents an excellent argument for the same.

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