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राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING

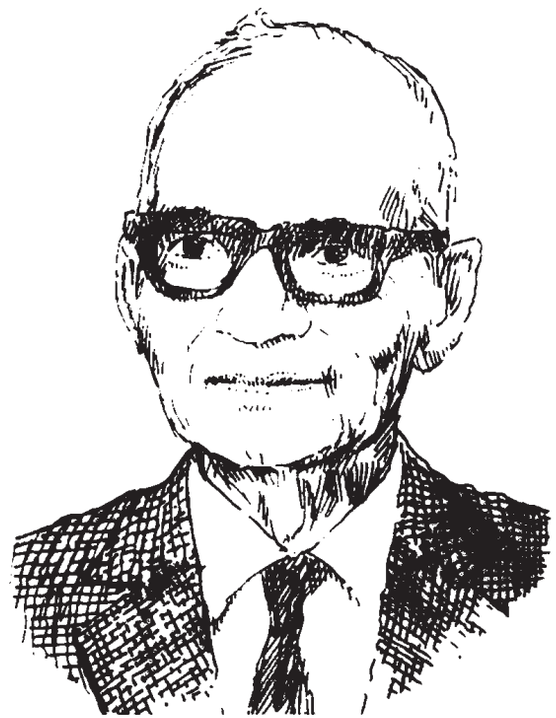
ISBN 978-93-5007-000-0

NCERT

B. M. PUGH
THIRD MEMORIAL LECTURE
2009

PROFESSOR NANDINI SUNDAR

Memorial Lecture Series



1897-1986

NCERT

MEMORIAL LECTURE SERIES

B. M. Pugh Third Memorial Lecture

at
The North Eastern Council Auditorium
Nongrim Hills
Shillong

9 October 2009

PROFESSOR NANDINI SUNDAR

राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
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First Edition **ISBN 978-93-5007-000-0**

October 2009 Asvina 1931

PD 5H RNB

Rs. ??.??

Published at the Publication Department by the Secretary, National Council of Educational Research and Training, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110 016 and printed at M/s Chaar Dishayein Printers, G-40, Sector 3, Noida 201 301.

Contents

OBJECTIVES

The National Council of Educational Research Training (NCERT) is an apex organisation, assisting and advising the Central and State Governments by undertaking research, survey, and development, training and extension activities for all stages of school and teacher education.

One of the objectives of the Council is to act as a clearing house and disseminator of ideas relating to school and teacher education. We have initiated the Memorial Lecture Series in order to fulfil this role and to commemorate the life and work of great educational thinkers. Our aim is to strive to raise the level of public awareness about the seminal contributions made in the field of education by eminent men and women of India. We expect that such awareness will set off a chain of discourse and discussion. This, we hope, will make education a lively subject of inquiry while simultaneously encouraging a sustained public engagement with this important domain of national life.

The memorial lecture series covers public lectures commemorating the life and work of nine eminent Indian educational thinkers and practitioners.

Title Series and Venue of Memorial Lecture Series

Title	*Venue*
Gijubhai Badheka Memorial Lecture	Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai
Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Lecture	Regional Institute of Education Bhubaneswar
Zakir Hussain Memorial Lecture	Regional Institute of Education Mysore

Mahadevi Verma Memorial Lecture	Regional Institute of Education Bhopal
B.M. Pugh Memorial Lecture	North East Regional Institute of Education, Shillong
Savitribai Phule Memorial Lecture	SNDT, Women's College, Mumbai
Marjorie Sykes Memorial Lecture	Regional Institute of Education Ajmer
Sri Aurobindo Memorial Lecture	Presidency College, Kolkata
Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Lecture	National Institute of Education New Delhi

We invite men and women of eminence from academia and public life to deliver these lectures in English or any other Indian language. Our intention is to reach a large audience consisting in particular of teachers, students, parents, writers, artists, NGOs, government servants and members of local communities.

The Annexure I (Memorial Lectures–2007-2008) and Annexure II (Memorial Lectures–2008-2009) provide a summary of the lectures organised in the years 2007-08 and 2008-09.

In due course the lectures will be made available on Compact Discs (CDs) and in the form of printed booklets in languages other than English or Hindi in which it is originally delivered for wider dissemination. Each booklet consists of II sections : Section I highlights the purpose of the memorial lectures and provides a brief sketch of life and work of the concerned educational thinker and Section II gives the lecture in full along with a brief background of the speaker.

I acknowledge the contribution of Ms Konsam Diana, *Junior Project Fellow* for helping me in finalisation of this manuscript.

We hope these lecture series will be of use to our audience as well as the public in and outside the country in general.

ANUPAM AHUJA
Convenor

SECTION I

B.M. PUGH
REV. BRANSLEY MARPNA PUGH: A PROFILE

PROFESSOR DEBASISH CHOWDHURY[1]

INTRODUCTION

'Laitkynsiew' is a tiny sleepy hamlet located at the edge of the Khasi Jaintia Hills at the far eastern part of India some 3,300 feet above sea level. Now, a part of Meghalaya, India's twenty-first state, this village a little more than a hundred years ago, like numerous such other villages, was under the ravines. Some of these waterfalls, though noticeably slimmer now than what they used to be in the distant past, are major tourist incentives of the place while some others, courtesy the ever growing human interventions on the surrounding nature, have now become a part of the history. Once in the past, this part of the land being an interface between a highly productive plains land and hills rich in mineral and forest resources used to be a rather active market like connect between the people living in the plains and the hills. Now since the plains belong to one sovereign nation while the hills belong to another, the intervening international border practically renders such commercial transactions at an individual or group level virtually non-existent. As such, the once busy river transport through Surma is dead. One would therefore fail to locate the searchlight like beams of the steamers ferrying people and goods at night on the river flowing through the two nations that a few decades earlier were integral partners in a common identity.

* Debasish Chowdhury is Principal, Women's College, Shillong

Early Life and Education

It was in this tiny hamlet placed amidst bountiful beauty of nature that Bransley Marpna Pugh was born on 24 September 1897. His father then stationed at the Laitkynsiew village was an employee of the Welsh Presbyterian Mission and was looking after the activities of the mission in four of the neighbouring churches. Originally belonging to a fairly well established landed family in Shella, a place located on a typical hill-plain interface now bordering Bangladesh, Pugh's father was constrained to take up an assignment with the Welsh mission to support his family consequent upon the devastating earthquake that rocked this part of the land on 12 June, 1897 causing large-scale destruction of life and property that along with a host of others robbed him too of his landed resources. Pugh's father had never ever been able to actually recuperate this loss at a later time. That devastating earthquake, in fact, in a matter of minutes, transformed many well-to-do families into paupers thereby compelling them to completely reset their agenda of life and livelihood to the bare needs of survival. Pugh's father too was no exception.

Laitkynsiew as a village, however, was privy to a have a Middle English school where Pugh received his primary education. Shri Eleazer Pugh, the headmaster of this school happened to be Pugh's eldest step brother who died while Pugh was in that school. It was his last name rather than their father's title Singh that eventually became the surname of the family with the surname of their mother 'Marpna' added to it as its middle name. In the early part of 1911, Rev. J. M. H. Rees and his wife came to Laitkynsiew as missionaries and took over the charge of the school that failed to manage a headmaster since the demise of Shri Eleazer Pugh. In that year Pugh along with one of his school mates made their maiden visit to Shillong to participate in the all district Middle English School Examination. Both Pugh and his schoolmate did well in the examination and won government scholarship of

Rs 5.00 a month. It indeed was a remarkable achievement for the boys from a remote village who literally walked their way to the town by covering 64 km on foot. It was even more important for Pugh for without this scholarship support it would have indeed been difficult for him to pursue his further studies later at Shillong.

His success at the middle school examination brought him to Shillong as a student of the Government Boys' School at Mawkhar. Pugh was fortunate to have U. Soso Tham amongst others as one of his teachers in the school. To young Pugh, U Soso Tham, then an emerging poet who eventually rose to become one of the greatest exponents of Khasi poetry, appeared to be the most inspiring of all those who taught him in that school. Pugh, however, was also candid in admitting that his inspiring presence notwithstanding, U. Tham often preferred dreaming over teaching while taking a class. During his initial days at Shillong he first stayed with his sister-in-law Ms Eleazer Pugh and later temporarily with his eldest sister Ms K. Hadem who used to reside then at the mission compound prior to finally moving in to the school hostel that remained his final abode at Shillong till he completed his schooling. It was during these hostel days that he along with his scholarship co-awardee from Laitkynsiew, made their maiden delegation to Mr Cunningham, the then Director of Education seeking a raise in their scholarship quantum and succeeded in convincing him to extract a hike in their monthly scholarship amount to Rs 7.00 from the Rs 5.00 that they used to get. In fact, the rate of the Middle School scholarship was revised to Rs 7.00 in place of the Rs 5.00 with effect from that year. In 1916, four years since joining the school at Shillong, Pugh appeared in the Matriculation Examination under the Calcutta University and came out in flying colours being placed once again amongst the first three tribal students who won the government scholarship. The call for higher education lured him to make Calcutta his next learning stop and he succeeded to somehow make it a reality overriding the

financial limitations of his family to support him in this venture with the help of a few friends and well-wishers.

Pugh left for Calcutta (Kolkata) to begin his collegiate education in Science at Scottish Church College which at that time used to be the most favoured institute for students hailing from this region. After appearing in his final year degree examination in 1920, Pugh returned to Shillong to see his ailing elder brother Shri Granville who was serving then as the first pastor of Mawkhar Church in Shillong. Granville succumbed to his illness at the age of 26. Meanwhile, Pugh learnt that his first attempt at graduation was an unsuccessful one. In Pugh's own candid admission, the result did not surprise him much since he was aware of the fact that during the fourth and final year in the college, he had hugely neglected his studies by wasting a lot of precious time with a girl studying nursing at Campbell with whom he fell deeply in love. Being persuaded by two close friends of Granville, his deceased elder brother, to complete his studies, Pugh returned to Calcutta to once again appear for his final examinations. After attempting to sit for the examinations that got cancelled twice due to leakage of question papers, Pugh shifted his examination centre to Cotton College at Gauhati (Guwahati) where he could rejoin his lady love for the evening strolls they had been missing since they left Calcutta. It was during this time that Pugh's family came to know of his relationship with the girl and being totally opposed to the prospect of that relationship made matters difficult for Pugh. At one stage, the matter in fact turned so sore that Pugh, being unable to handle the pressure, left for Cherrapunjee quitting his family home thinking that he would never ever return there. Caught between the personal dilemma of whether to marry first or to sit for the degree examination, Pugh was finding it a tough call to decide on his next move. Being persuaded by his lady love and a few well-wishers, Pugh, after some initial vacillations, left for Gauhati to sit for his degree examinations. This time, however, the interim personal problems

notwithstanding, he came out in flying colours obtaining his degree in science from Calcutta University securing distinction.

It was when all these things were happening that Professor K. J. Saunders, an Englishman teaching Buddhism in a school of religion at U.S.A. whom Pugh met at Calcutta some time ago, through a cable sent to his parent's address, informed that Pugh may be granted a scholarship to study Agriculture at the University of California provided, he agreed to take some theological courses at the Pacific School of Religion, a few furlongs away from the university of California. Pugh was drawn to the study of agriculture after listening to a talk at Y.M.C.A., Calcutta of the contribution one can make to the solution of the food problems faced by the country through use of scientific agricultural methods. Once this invite to study agriculture at U.S.A. reached Pugh at Gauhati, things started moving fast. After having some discussions with his friends and family, Pugh decided to accept the opportunity. He then got married first and after a brief honeymoon returned to Gauhati from where he left for U.S.A. via Calcutta. On being approached, the then Director of Public Instructions, Mr Cunningham agreed to sponsor Pugh's trip to USA in the lowest fare from any port in India and Pugh was so delighted at the prospect of his imminent voyage that he declined to defer his journey a little to avoid the sea at monsoon. On a late evening of July 1921, Pugh boarded a small boat at the Outram Ghat at Calcutta to set sail for his voyage to U.S.A. via Hongkong. Two American Missionary couples namely the Witters and the Fielders helped Pugh a great deal in the last minute preparation for this voyage.

Pugh's initial plan to support him in his studies at America by working part-time did not work out to expectations and after some initial attempts throught the help of Professor Saunders, he ultimately took an apartment at the Pacific School from where he thought he would be able to supplement his meager resources by

working on Saturdays or other holidays. By that time, Pugh had started taking his courses at both the university and the Pacific school with a fairly hectic schedule. He was required to take 12 lectures a week at both these institutes and was satisfied with the work load he was expected to handle. In view of his intention to specialise in agriculture, he was admitted to the College of Agriculture with Agronomy as major. Though, Pugh graduated from India with Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics as his subjects of study, he took up his studies in agronomy with great enthusiasm in spite of having no basic knowledge of the subject he choose to study. After two years of study at the college, Pugh, in order to gather first hand experience in his subject of study; a mandatory requirement of the university for award of the degree, moved to a farm house called the Davis farm some 120 km off Berkeley which was then developing fast as a sister institute of the University of California. At the end of the year of his practical training at Davis where he had to take practical courses on subjects like farm engineering, animal husbandry and cattle feeds, he took a trip to Yosemite Valley.

By the time he returned from his trip to the world famous park, Pugh's term tenure at California was drawing to a close. He was, however, aware that he would be entitled to get his degree in agriculture only after he gathers some practical experience in a recognised farm. Accordingly, after some efforts Pugh moved in to the Mills Orchard, a farm owned by a company of which Mr Mills, a regent of the University of California was a partner with a job there. After a two month long fairly rigorous training at this farm, Pugh returned to the university which, then being satisfied that Pugh had successfully completed all necessary formalities, awarded him the degree thus paving the way for his to return to India. Pugh, however, stayed back there for about two more months in an effort to raise some money to meet his expenses towards the return made his maiden landing at the passage. It was on an evening about four years after he reached the shores of U.S.A. Pugh boarded 'Tokyo Maru', the Japanese liner to begin his return voyage to India, his beloved homeland.

As an Educationist

On his arrival at India, Pugh started to desperately look for a job with a view to get settled. Administration in India, still a British colony then, was under the Montague-Chelmsford reforms regime in which agriculture happened to be 'transferred subject' meaning thereby that the concerned ministry looking after agriculture was headed by an Indian. Pugh in his effort to get a job even approached the minister in charge without success though since he was told that the department had no position to accommodate him. Since he had studied theology at the Pacific School, he tried to obtain a teaching assignment in a local theological college but even that did not materialise for in Pugh's own assessment, *the foreign missionaries in Assam then didnot look with favour the appointment of any national who might sooner or later replace them.*

Dr Clausen was then engaged in some research studies in and around Shillong. During those trying days, when all efforts to manage a job for him was failing to materialise, Pugh met Dr Curtis P. Clausen, an American entomologist at Shillong working on certain parasites of a Japanese beetle that were causing heavy damages to the apples and other deciduous fruits in the United States. Dr Clausen incidentally was the elder brother of a renowned Geneticist and a Professor of Pugh who taught him while he was at California. Inviting a reference to that link, Dr Clausen asked Pugh to join him in his research studies. Pugh didnot have a job at hand till that time, and as such readily agreed to accept the offer. As a research associate, Pugh worked with Dr Clausen for about two years during 1926-28. With a laboratory set up at the apple orchard of one Mr Holder, both Dr Clausen and Pugh had been working hard in the project in which Pugh, barring short trips at the city outskirts to collect samples, remained mostly stationed at Shillong. The project, unfortunately though, ran into rough weather after some time as a section of the local populace became suspicious of their research activities thinking that they were collecting useful insects from the hills and

exporting them to U.S.A. All attempts to explain and make them understand that they were only involved in research studies seeking to destroy harmful insects using other insects yielded no result. The project that fortunately was nearing completion had to be wound up after a while with Dr Clausen leaving Shillong immediately after to take over as the Director of the Riverside Experiment Station at California, U.S.A. Pugh by the end of 1927 sensed that the project in which he was engaged would no more remain in operation and as such started looking for a job. He came to know that a teaching position was lying vacant at the Allahabad Agricultural Institute, Allahabad (A.A.I.A.). Pugh got in touch with the institute offering himself as a probable candidate for that position. The institute which was then looking for the position of a Professor of Agronomy found the credentials of Pugh fitting to their requirements and accordingly invited him to join the institute as Professor and Head of the Department of Agronomy from the beginning of the 1928-29 academic session. Accordingly, by the end of June 1928, Pugh left Shillong for Allahabad to take up his new assignment as Professor and Head of the Department of Agronomy at the Allahabad Institute of Agriculture. It obviously was an assignment that Pugh had been looking for ever since his return to India. Pugh's coming to Allahabad, a city then at the centre court of activities relating to India's struggle for independence being the head quarter of Indian National Congress, initiated a lasting relationship between Pugh and the AAIA during which both the institute as well as Pugh himself could mutually grow in stature. The city of Allahabad, barring some temporary and short time interruptions, remained Pugh's second permanent home for two decade or so.

On his arrival at Allahabad, Pugh was received by Mr W. B. Hayes, the Vice-Principal of the institute as Dr Sam Higginbottom, the Principal of the college was off to U.S.A. On his meeting the Principal, Pugh came to know that the institute was going through some financial crisis at that

point of time and the Principal's tour to America was to campaign for funds to run the institute which did not meet with much success. In fact, he was asked by his mission authorities in America to close down the institute. Somehow, an English friend of Dr Higginbottom provided him with some financial support to run the affairs of the institute for some time. Any way, the institute with difficulties on financial front continued on with its work. During October at commencement of the first vacation since his joining the institute, Pugh returned to Shillong to spend the holidays with his family. At the end of the holiday Pugh returned to Allahabad along with his six years old son since his wife could not accompany him at that time owing to some family engagement. At the end of the first academic year at the institute and after the examinations were all over, Pugh again returned to his native place and stayed there till the end of the holidays after which he returned to Allahabad along with his wife. By the end of the first academic year at the institute, Pugh's involvement with it grew significantly and he was asked to dispense with additional responsibilities of the librarian as also the hostel warden of the institute besides his regular teaching responsibilities. Since, Pugh studied Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics during graduation he was also assigned the responsibility to teach Physics in addition to his other teaching loads. Pugh was assigned to teach the subject 'Soil Science and Climatology' at the institute and it is at this time he approached Professor Meghnad Saha, then Professor of Physics at Allahabad University, seeking his guidance in teaching this subject. Armed with the guidance and advice he received from Professor Saha, Pugh started teaching this subject and had taught it for as long as he remained in the faculty of the institute.

Allahabad in 1920-30, being headquarter of the Indian National Congress then spearheading India's struggle for independence, used to be the hub of activities relating to the struggle. It was only, therefore natural that it invited a host of leaders to visit the city and some of them also made

some time to visit the institute on various occasions. On one such occasion when Mahatma Gandhi visited the institute and noted with keen concern the activities of the institute, Pugh made his first encounter with Gandhi. Jawaharlal Nehru, Sorojini Naidu also visited the institute at certain time and their encouraging comments and visions of a free India moved Pugh so much that at later points of time, he broached the issue of India's independence at great length to the leaders of the hill region inviting them for a pro active role in the struggle for independence. Meanwhile in 1934, the A.A.I.A., which at the time of Pugh's joining it, was teaching Intermediate Science in Agriculture and a two year Diploma course on Indian Dairy got upgraded to a degree college. Two years since introduction of the B.Sc. Agriculture course at the institute, it upgraded its teaching contents further by introducing specialisations in Agronomy, Horticulture and Dairying. It was at this time that Pugh in order to prepare himself appropriately for teaching the specialised course on Agronomy took leave for a year from the institute and went to the Institute of Plant Industry at Indore. Sir Joseph Hutchinson, one of the most distinguished British agricultural scientists to have worked in India, was then working at that institute spending his last year in India prior to taking up his new assignment as the Chief Geneticist of the British Empire Cotton Growing Corporation. Pugh considered himself fortunate for having had the opportunity to work with a person of the repute of Sir Hutchinson who still later became the Professor of Agronomy at Cambridge University, England.

Pugh's work at the institute of Plant Industry involved studying the variability of Juar of the Malwa plateau and to learn use of Statistical techniques in agricultural research. It was while working on that project under Hutchinson, Pugh persuaded his coresearcher at that institute, Shri C. P. Dutt to take up writing a textbook on agriculture. 'Principles and Practices of Crop Production in India', a textbook jointly authored by Shri C. P. Dutt

and Pugh that was first published in 1940 by the Mission press was an outcome of that effort. This book incidentally remained a textbook on agricultural studies at many colleges and universities offering courses on agriculture in India for many years. The book was later revised and published entitled *Farm Science and Crop Production in India* by Kitabistan in 1947. By the time Pugh returned to the A.A.I.A. from the Institute of Plant Industry, he had gained enough experiences and was regularly called upon by the various agricultural colleges and universities to be in the list of its examiners on Agronomy. As examiner of Agronomy, Pugh visited Dacca University on several occasions and used to be in its list of examiners even after Dacca became a part of the then east Pakistan following the partition of India. It was during this time only that the A.A.I.A. planned to publish a monthly magazine i.e., *The Allahabad Farmer*. Mr Hansen, a colleague of Pugh at the institute became its first editor while Pugh became his assistant only to eventually take over as its editor after Mr Hansen had to leave for Canada a year or two later. Pugh discharged his editorial responsibilities with devotion till his last day in the institute.

In 1939-40 while Pugh was officiating as Principal of the college, the Director of the United provinces Department of Agriculture invited him to be a member of the U.P. Government Commission for the Re-organisation of Agriculture in that province. The commission headed by Chowdhury Mukhtar Singh also brought Pugh in contact with Shri Vishnu Sahay, the then Agricultural Secretary of the U.P. government. In 1944, when Allahabad University commenced with the M.Sc. course in Governor Agricultural Botany, Pugh, besides being asked to frame of a portion of its syllabi, was also invited to teach the subject 'Genetics and Plant breeding' in the university, an assignment that he delightedly carried out for about two years during 1944-46 prior to his availing a study leave from his institute to work at the Indian Institute of Genetics and Plant breeding, New Delhi with a view to write a book

on genetics and plant breeding, some portions of which were already written while lecturing on the subject at the Allahabad University though somehow the book didnot materialise the way it was planned. Prior to leaving for Delhi, Pugh, however, planned a short trip to his native hills. During this visit, Pugh took time off to discuss political matters concerning India with some of the prominent citizens such as Rai Bahadur D. Ropmay, *a former magistrate*, Dr H. Lyngdoh, *a retired Civil Surgeon*, Mr Wilson Reade, *Headmaster* of a School to name a few and was himself also getting involved in local political developments.

During this holiday trip at Shillong when getting slowly associated with the political developments unfolding in the then Khasi Jaintia Hills, Pugh was offered the post of an Agriculture officer at North East Frontier Agency(N.E.F.A.) by Mr J. P. Mills, the then Advisor to the Governor. Pugh, initially reluctant to accept the offer, later decided to accept it after some rethinking. On his joining the post, Pugh was categorically informed that since he joined government services, he must no more take part in political activities. Pugh, on his part, was convinced that his appointment was one with a political undertone either at the instance of some of the local leaders who presumed him a potential threat to them or Mr Mill himself took the initiative to consolidate his scheme of things for the region. After taking over his new responsibilities as an Agricultural Officer that involved extensive touring, Pugh failed to remain any more linked to the local political developments that were then unfolding in the Khasi-Jaintia hills. It may not, however, be out of place to mention here that during that period at least two political outfits; one by the name the Federation of Khasi States and the other known as the Federated state of Khasi and Jaintia Hills comprising mainly of the local chiefs; came into being with Rev Nichols Roy leading the former while his illustrious brother Professor Rowland Roy Thomas joining the latter camp. It may not be far off the point if one seeks to trace the root of the tussle that even

now keeps surfacing time and again between the district council and the traditional chiefs on the slightest of pretexts.

Travelling in N.E.F.A. in those days used to be extremely difficult in view of its poor and often non-existent communication network and as such jobs requiring an extensive tour assignments in that part of the country generally used to be a formidable one involving long trekking, walking for miles through dense forest infested by leeches and other dangerous animals. Yet, after assuming charge of an Agricultural Officer, Pugh, defying advice from his friends and other fellow colleagues set out on an extensive tour with a view to have an overview of the region he was assigned to look after and prepared the detailed necessary report of the areas covered by him. In view of the fact the job assignment did not clearly demarcate the region Pugh was supposed to look after, he, in addition to N.E.F.A., had also undertaken tours in other hills districts of the north eastern region. It was during one such tour programme while camping at Dibrugarh on his way to the land of the Khamtis; Pugh received a telegram asking him to immediately return to Shillong to initiate measures towards establishment of an Agricultural College at Jorhat. Pugh returned to Shillong abandoning his proposed trip midway though his final transfer to the Assam government to enable him to actually commence with his new assignment could not begin until another three months or so. Since the government of Assam had decided that the Assam Agricultural College be made functional from the 1948-49 academic session, Pugh along with Shri M. N. Bora and D.K. Goswami joined the project at the beginning of 1948. After completing the initial paper formalities at the government headquarter, Pugh, along with his colleagues, moved to Jorhat to take possession of the building in which the proposed college was to be housed which incidentally was a Second World War American Army camp.

By July 1948, with basic works completed for a start, the college was ready to admit students. In its first batch, the college was allowed to admit only thirty students. Pugh, however, was of the opinion that a few more students could be accommodated, and pleaded for this to Shri Gopinath Bordoloi, the then Chief Minister of Assam when he visited the college later in the year. During that visit Pugh also requested Shri Bordoloi to help the college to acquire more land in addition to the 300 acres that it was holding then. Pugh's taking up these matters directly with the Chief Minister obviously was not taken very kindly by the officers handling the department as they felt it to be an act of overstepping the brief. Pugh was accordingly let known about their displeasure on this count. Pugh, who by then was already contemplating to return to A.A.I.A. as it could not arrange a substitute professor of Agronomy in his place for three years since he left it, was peeved at the reaction of these officials and being personally convinced that the newly founded college would face no difficulty in managing its affairs under the competent leadership of Dr M. C. Das, a Mycologist, scheduled to take charge of the college should Pugh leave it, decided to return to A.A.I.A. By early 1949, Pugh returned to Allahabad to resume his work at the institute. Affiliated to the Gauhati University at the beginning, the college later switched over to Dibrugarh University as its affiliate after the University was set up only to subsequently evolve as a full fledged university by the name the Assam Agricultural University. Pugh's connection with this institute was renewed again when a few years later he permanently returned to Assam and during a more than two decade long association with it continued to visit the institute whenever called for. As an educationist, Pugh considered it a matter of immense pride that Dr S. R. Barooah, the first *Vice-Chancellor* of the Assam Agricultural University, was once his student.

During his stay at the Assam Agricultural College, Jorhat, Pugh bought a small residential property at Shillong and built a house there for it was his long standing

plan that after retiring from the service he would be living in Shillong. The developing trends at Allahabad post independence left Pugh somewhat disillusioned and after some initial hesitation he finally decided to return to Shillong quitting the A.A.I.A. permanently when in early 1952, the Assam Christian Council resolved to start a college on a rural setting with a request to Pugh to take up the responsibility of building the college up as its founder Principal. The newly founded Union Christian College at Barapani in the outskirt of Shillong with Pugh as its founder principal formally commenced with its academic activities from 16 August 1952. With eleven boys and one girl in its first batch and faculties drawn from various part of the country as also from abroad, the college even in its first year was privy to have as many as 14 different language groups present in its campus that at that point had only three thatched huts located amidst thick lantana bushes in a hilly terrain overseeing the Umkhrah river. With a mission to use this college as an effective tool towards uplift of the rural people through the use of scientific methods in agriculture that was the mainstay of the people residing nearby, Pugh volunteered to associate people like Rev. Milton E. Windham, an American Missionary in his project. Looking at the fully residential college today that stands on a sprawling 900 acres of land with buildings aesthetically placed amidst lakes and hills in a well guarded campus, it would be difficult for one to imagine that at start in 1952, the college had only three thatched huts of which two were blown off by storm to manage its academic and other activities. While in this college, Pugh was once invited to preside over the science section of the *Asom Sahitya Sabha* and to deliver the presidential address. His returning to Shillong, however, revived his interest in politics as well as some of his old political linkages. Opting therefore to retire from the college a year before the due date, Pugh chose to contest in the autonomous district council election scheduled in 1957 as nominee of the Eastern India tribal Union.

Following his decision to contest election, Pugh, for sometime, opted to move out of the academic arena only to be called again into it after a little more than a decade when inspired by the success of the Union Christian College, the Synod or the Church Council of the Presbyterian Church of Khasi Jaintia districts mooted the idea of having a college under its own auspices. A five member Church Committee with Mr Wilson Reade, a veteran educationist as its Chairman was appointed to prepare and publicise the plan for starting another college at Shillong. Pugh also was a member of that committee and when the college, now known as the Synod College, actually began functioning from 1965-66 academic year, Pugh was called upon to be the Principal of the college. At 68 years of age, Pugh once again embarked upon the task of building another institute that to begin with started to function from Shillong Government School since it then did not have any accommodation of its own to run its affairs. It was while in this college Pugh lost his wife and he himself also fell sick and had had to be hospitalised more than once. Failing health and growing disillusionment with the pattern and quality of education on offer gradually prevailed over Pugh to compel him to finally come out of the institutional bindings and obligations. By the end of May, 1970, Pugh relinquished his responsibilities as Principal of the Synod College.

In Active Politics

In 1957, the Eastern India Tribal Union of which Pugh was the President then won the election with big majority and Pugh was elected the Chief Executive Member(C.E.M.) of the District Council of the then United Khasi Jaintia Hills District with Shri T. Cajee and Shri Henry Cotton as his colleagues in that executive committee. People in the hills by then were getting increasingly disillusioned at what they felt was uncalled for dominance by the Assamese people from the plains. A perceived sense of growing discriminations against the tribals residing in the hills

region of the state contributed to a shimmering tension that slowly started to emerge as a shrill voice demanding a separate hill state for the tribals living in the region. The State Reorganisation Commission that visited the region at that time, however, did not appreciate the idea of creating a separate hill state which according to Pugh was the result of a prejudiced view of the commission that should such a state be created it would primarily become a Christian state. In 1958 when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India visited the region Pugh led a delegation to him to present their grievances. The delegation returned from Pandit Nehru with the impression that he was sympathetic to their cause and would try to do whatever possible to ensure a greater degree of autonomy to the tribal people living in the hills. During his tenure as the C.E.M. of the District Council, Pugh also had the opportunity to interact with the Prime Minister again when on a Government of India invitation he went to attend the Republic Day function in Delhi wherein he could present his views for the development of the tribal areas he was representing in a more forthright manner and succeeded to elicit favourable responses from him. Pugh's term as the CEM, however, came to an abrupt end when following a division in the Eastern India Tribal Union, the vote of no-confidence motion brought by the opposition during a requisitioned session of the district council was carried.

Though relieved from the responsibility of the C.E.M., District Council of the United Khasi Jaintia Hills consequent to losing the confidence of the house, Pugh, did not exactly retire from public life. The time when Pugh initially dabbled with in active politics was somewhat turbulent with chauvinism running high on the agenda. Introduction of the Office Language Bill in Assam seeking to introduce Assamese as the official state language was one such act that triggered large scale protest throughout the hills region including the plains in southern Assam. Once again the demand for statehood gained a fillip and

to give a voice to the protest movement against introduction of the Assam Language Bill, An All Party Hill Leaders Conference was convened. Pugh was elected the first President of the A.P.H.L.C. and held that position for about a year. Pugh right from the days of his association the Eastern India Tribal Union was vocal in spearheading the cause of a separate and composite tribal state for the people residing in the hills of the then Assam thought of A.P.H.L.C. as another opportunity to have a go at it. The idea flopped again when one by one people started dropping out from the Conference. The first to go out of it was Congress. The Mizos from Lusai Hills followed suite. The signal that the hill state of Pugh's desire shall not materialise was loud enough and Pugh consoling himself that only Congress as National Party would be able to address the language dilemma decided to join the party.

Pugh did not identify himself with the idea of many hill states and expressed his disillusionment with the idea by publishing an article entitled *Hill States Galore* in a local Khasi daily. During a visit to Shillong by Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, the then Prime Minister of India, Pugh, on behalf of the A.P.H.L.C. met him in a delegation at the Raj Bhavan and submitted a Memorandum demanding establishment of a hill university at Shillong. In Pugh's understanding the hill university, besides being of particular help in spreading education to the hill tribes was expected to get the different language speaking tribes into a common bond through universal spread of English education and was likely to eventually consolidate his vision of a separate hill state for all in the days to follow. The university of Pugh's idea of course was realised when North Eastern Hill University(N.E.H.U.), the first ever central university of the region came into being in 1973 but by then the history of the land through a lot of turns and twists got segregated into what we now euphemistically call the land of seven sisters with the idea of composite hill state in the region disappearing permanently into the thin horizon.

As a Public Person

In his chequered career, B. M. Pugh has occupied many responsible positions but has never lost his humility primarily identifying himself always as an educationist and agriculturalist who struggled to see his people a little better off while he himself preferred to live the life of a normal ordinary human being. A refreshing frankness and natural leadership abilities with a vision to follow transformed a once shy and sloppy boy belonging to a little known village into a persona of the stature of Bransley Marpna Pugh, who for the people of this far eastern hills of India shall always be fondly remembered as Rev. Pugh, a pioneering educationist, a visionary and also perhaps the first ever formally trained agriculturist belonging to these hills. Amongst a few of the many distinguished positions held by Rev. Pugh remains the Membership in the Board of Governors of the Regional Engineering College, Durgapur, Membership of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Membership and later Vice-Presidency of the All India Lac Cess Committee, a Trustee of the *Gandhi Smarak Samiti* in which Dr Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India were also trustees, Member of the Gauhati University Enquiry Commission, Membership in the various academic bodies of the Gauhati University and a host of other educational institutes in the country in addition to being members in other scores of committees at the state down unto the village level.

Conclusion

Born in a colonised land, Rev. Pugh lived through a time that was witness to the struggle for independence of a subjugated people and their subsequent liberation from the clutches of the colonial rulers. Himself not a very pro-active participant in India's struggle for independence, Pugh did get involved in matters concerning uplift and well being of the people he felt dear to his heart in his own way as a thinker educationist. Pugh's father was amongst

the early converts to Christianity and Pugh, in his autobiography, explained this as the reason why he was a Christian too. A devoutly religious person, Pugh, however, was candid in his understanding that *the religions we profess, like the languages we speak, are accidents of birth.* A student of theology, a church leader in his own right and an accomplished person with gifted family members down the line, Pugh in his dying days, however, was a fairly disillusioned man as far as the state of affairs involving the country as a whole was concerned.

The inability of free India to aptly negotiate with the aspirations it generated for its suffering millions, in particular for the tribal people living in the eastern Himalayas in a reasonable way, during its struggle for independence saddened him to a great extent. The economy as also the pattern and quality of education on offer no doubt are sad commentaries on the state of our societies. The ever widening divide amongst people on grounds of ethnicity, religion, language and what have you certainly was a concern that sunk his heart a great deal. "I never knew that I was a tribal", Pugh commented in the preface of his autobiography, "perhaps until the constitution of this country was being hammered out." It indeed is an irony that while professing support to the cause of the underprivileged, our constitution unwittingly perhaps steered us in making the perceived 'other' so vivid in our vicinity. The countless disturbing ordeals that beset our society these days notwithstanding, personalities of the like of Rev. B. M. Pugh would, however, remain relevant and contemporary to us for the inspiring roles they had played in the society at least till such time we succeed in fully negotiating the troubles that beset us at the level of our basic societal existence.

SECTION II

B.M.PUGH MEMORIAL LECTURE 2009-10

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL EXCLUSION, RELIGIOUS INCLUSION : THE *ADIVASI* QUESTION IN EDUCATION

PROFESSOR NANDINI SUNDAR

ABSTRACT

The talk focuses on adivasi *children in central India, their transformation through formal schooling and the way in which new kinds of knowledge comes to replace or co-exist with older forms. On the one hand, there are occasional acknowledgements that* adivasis *or indigenous people have great knowledge of biodiversity which can be of use in the emerging biotech industry, on the other hand, there is very little done to tap into this in a holistic or sustainable model. Indeed, the formal schooling system often destroys the knowledge that children already possess. Schooling is an important avenue for not just career mobility but identity formation and the creation of personal and professional networks. However, the focus of studies in India has been on issues of educational deprivation or at best on social exclusion and discrimination regarding access within the existing system. It has not looked at the content and effect of formal schooling with regard to indigenous knowledge,*

or the way in which adivasi *identity is transformed through the kind of competitive proselytising that is undertaken through schools, by both the R.S.S. and other organisations. At the same time, a discussion of schooling implies some idea of 'normalcy'. In fact, in large parts of* adivasi *India, people live in a state of absolute abnormality, where the state has undertaken both large scale displacement and relentless repression. The paper asks if and what kind of schooling is possible in these circumstances, and what kind of citizen is ought to be produced?*

I am grateful and honoured to be invited to give – 2009 B.M. Pugh Memorial lecture. Prof Pugh is a model for us all not just in terms of his scholarship and dedication to institution building, but also a model of the best we can hope for in terms of tribal, indigenous or *adivasi* education. In particular, I want to quote from a few lines about him: "During 1926-28, he worked with the famous entomologist Professor D. P. Clausen on *tiphia*, an insect also known as the Japanese beetle. B.M. Pugh incidentally had known an insect very similar to this early in his childhood at Laitkynsiew. His work with the Berkeley faculty yielded spectacular results, which were eventually responsible for saving the apple orchards of California from the marauding Japanese beetle." Not only did B.M. Pugh draw on his own practical experiences as a child, he translated this into scientific knowledge that helped people in a country far from his own. When I think of what I would like to see as the educational future for *adivasi* children, I think of a combination of indigenous knowledge, formal school training which gives one the confidence to compete with others, and a concern not just with helping one's own community, important as that is, but with contributing to the wider world.

Sadly, my lecture today is focused not on this optimistic future, but on the dismal present, the constraints that come in the way of realising this educational dream for the vast

majority of *adivasis* in central India. The situation is, of course, different in many states of the North-East with their high literacy rates, but the problem of cultural destruction and political discrimination that underlies the educational process is perhaps not dissimilar.

One of the areas taken up by the National Knowledge Commission, set up in India in 2005 to enable the development of India as a knowledge-based economy has been 'traditional knowledge.' Arguing that principled commercialisation of our cultural, creative and legacy practices has the potential of generating employment for at least 100 million people and an annual revenue of at least Rs 600,000 crore per year', it lists a number of aspects of 'traditional knowledge', many of which refer to tribal practices in medicine, art and agriculture.[1]

Thus scheduled tribes recognised as possessing traditional knowledge of a kind that is not only useful to them, but has implications for national growth and sustainable development more broadly. However, other aspects of government policy towards *adivasis* systematically denigrate any knowledge that they possess, and make it impossible for them to develop, leave alone adopting their path as the model for others.

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1. "The principles and basic premises that should govern the documentation and use of our traditional knowledge, that is, our creative, cultural and legacy industries. Plant-based drug formulations of which we have over 40,000 that have come to us through the Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Tibetian (all documented) and the non-documented tribal systems of medicine. Traditional agricultural practices of which 4,502 have been documented by the I.C.A.R. in a series of volumes, with 86 having been validated and 38 cross-validated till December 2005. Our culinary traditions which use some 150 documented vegetables for which nutritional and other information is available, and an equal number of fruits. Culture-specific tourism, for example, through identification of tribal art centres, promoting authentic local performing arts, and making use of the unusual sites and practices that we have in our country. Traditional water harvesting practices which have been well-documented, for example in a book brought out by C.B.S.E., New Delhi. Our traditional products, services and art forms that are not included above."

The large-scale displacement, and the growing deforestation and degradation of environmental resources, reduce the habitat in which indigenous knowledge survives. Equally importantly, the formal schooling system often destroys the knowledge that children already possess, and transforms social relations which are relatively equal in the direction of greater patriarchy and hierarchy. While schooling is an important avenue for not just career mobility but identity formation and the creation of personal and professional networks, it is not clear that, as they stand, these networks will help to tap into or enhance the knowledge of *adivasis*. Instead, there is a danger, that unless there are other factors that affirm cultural pride in *adivasi* identity, education will become a means for alienation from the *adivasi* community.

My lecture will attempt to illustrate the manner in which *adivasi* children in central India are transformed through formal schooling and the way in which new kinds of knowledge comes to replace or co-exist with older forms. It is important to keep reminding ourselves that 'educational processes are fundamentally culturally processes' (Luykz, 1999, xxxiii). The material for this lecture is drawn from 19 years (1990-2009) of fragmentary observation of schools in (undivided) Bastar district of Chhattisgarh as well as more specific research I did in 2001-2002 on schools in Jashpur district of Chhattisgarh. I have also drawn on writings by other scholars on *adivasi* schooling elsewhere in central India, such as Orissa or Andhra Pradesh. I regret that I have not looked into educational processes in the North-East, as that would have provided a useful foil.

The educational context for *adivasis* in central India is primarily one of social and political exclusion or discrimination. But there is a widespread desire for education, a need which is being filled by private schooling. According to N.C.E.R.T. (2007: 15) there are over 40,000 unrecognised private schools in rural India. In many places, particularly urban or semi-urban areas, this

proliferation of private schools has exacerbated social differentiation, with the poor being confined to vernacular government schools and anyone with the slightest ability to pay sending their children to private 'English-medium' schools.

There is also a growing religious or cultural gap between those who go to private denominational schools and those who go to government schools. The biggest organised players in filing the educational gap are Christian missionaries and Hindu chauvinist organisations like the R.S.S.[2] or soft Hindu organisations like the Ramakrishna Mission, or the Mata Rukmini Devi Sansthan (followers of Vinoba Bhave). All of them are interested in 'uplifting' *adivasi* children, and making the experience of educational social mobility a simultaneous experience of cultural transformation. On the one hand, these schools provide better education than most government schools (except Central Schools and Navodaya Vidyalayas etc.) in the sense of getting children through examinations, but on the other hand, the extra-curricular activities they engage in have significant consequences for *adivasi* self understanding. Increasing class and communal divisions, promoted through differential schooling, thus diminish the promise of a more meaningful common citizenship held out by higher literacy levels (see Vasavi, 2000; Jeffery, et. al. 2002).

The critical need of the hour instead is a kind of education that enables children both to compete on equal terms in the world of formal employment and not just at the lowest levels, and to affirm their *adivasi* culture, languages and knowledge. When the government talks of 'mainstreaming' it has only the former in mind, but even this mainstreaming is aimed at integrating them only into the lowest levels of the market economy.

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2. As of March 2002, Vidya Bharati, a front of the R.S.S., had 17,396 schools across the country (both rural and urban), 2.2 million students, over 93,000 teachers, 15 teacher training colleges, 12 degree colleges and 7 vocational and training institutions (www.Vidyabharati.com, accessed 2002).

THE STATE OF *ADIVASI* LITERACY AND EDUCATION

As the following table shows, despite some improvement between 1991 and 2001, literacy rates among STs in India are abysmally low. The figures are not differentiated by region and if we take out states in the North-East where STs have high literacy rates, the figures will look even worse.

Literacy Rates

	2001	*1991*
Rural female ST	32.4	16.0
Rural female non-SC/ST	50.2	35.4
Rural male ST	57.4	38.5
Rural male non-SC/ST	74.3	63.4

Source: National Focus Group on Problems of SC and ST Children, based on Census of India 1991 and 2001 (N.C.E.R.T. 2007: 32).

Much of the existing research on *adivasi* education in the central Indian belt highlights the lack of educational access, or the poor quality of education received : the absence of conveniently located primary schools, teacher absenteeism, abysmal infrastructure manifested in leaking roofs, non-existent toilets, furniture, blackboards and educational materials such as textbooks, maps, etc. (Furer-Haimendorf, 1982; Ananda, 1994). In the early 1990s when I lived in Bastar, I even heard of a school where liquor was sold from the premises. The exact nature of the linkage between poverty and schooling is contested, with studies by Tilak (2000), Jha and Jhingran (2002) among others, arguing that poverty, with its attendant hunger, malnutrition and ill-health, is a major cause for low attendance. Other studies by Dreze et. al. argue that it is not the cost of absent labour power that is the problem but the cost of sending children to school, as well as the poor quality of education that makes it not worth the expense (PROBE, 1999; Furer-Haimendorf, 1982 : 134).

Although the central government and state governments have a number of schemes for *adivasi*

children, such as stipends, a book bank scheme, special coaching for entry into engineering and medical college, and construction of hostels (see National Commission for Scheduled Tribes 2006, Chapter 5), they do nothing to address the larger structural inequalities which are responsible for the poverty of *adivasis*. At an underlying level, literacy and the denial of minimum educational provision is clearly fundamental to the exclusion of *adivasis* from full-fledged citizenship rights - displacement for large infrastructural projects like dams is lubricated by illiteracy and having people thumbprint away their land, an influx of outsiders for skilled industrial jobs is facilitated by the absence of trained *adivasi* youth, and exploitation by traders and moneylenders is made easier by having a population without even functional literacy in accounts. The low literacy rates also have implications for people's ability to make themselves heard politically since they cannot then document their own problems, write in the media or send representations to government.

Educational Discrimination : Blaming the Victim

Many of the supply problems regarding the poor functioning of schools are shared in varying degrees by non-*adivasis* in regions across the country (PROBE, 1999), but there are also some issues which are peculiar to *adivasi* areas, such as the language gap between students and teachers who do not speak any of the local languages, blatant discrimination or at the very least unequal treatment by teachers compared to non-*adivasis* or upper caste students, and general concessions which makes the educational experience particularly alienating. *Adivasis* are blamed for their own lack of educational progress, such as in the following extract from the Class IX Social Studies Textbook in Gujarat, Chapter 9 under the heading "Problems of the Country and their solutions":

> "There is very poor socio-economic development among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India, although they constitute one-fourth part of the total population.

> They have not been suitably placed in our social order, therefore, even after independence they are still backward and poor. Of course, their ignorance, illiteracy and blind faith are to be blamed for lack of progress because they still fail to realise importance of education in life" (reproduced in Patel et. al. 2002: 246).[3]

Contrary to this view, studies have shown there is a great desire for education among both *adivasis* and *dalits*. A study as old as 1977, of 9 villages in Utnur *Taluk* (Andhra Pradesh) by Abbasayulu (quoted in Furer-Haimendorf, 1982: 133) noted that while a greater number of non-*adivasis* sent their children to school compared to *adivasis* in the same villages, 98.46 per cent of *adivasis* thought education was a good thing compared to only 76.3 per cent among non-*adivasis*. *Adivasis* were often more interested in education than non-*adivasis* because they knew it was their only option for 'advancement', but did not send their children to school either because of poverty or because the schooling process made their children feel inferior, or as Nanda shows, schooling, as practiced, was a waste of time. A study by Ranjit Tigga in 1991-92, comparing the background of children who went to two Jesuit schools in then Raigharh district – Loyola and Prakash – found that while over 80 per cent of children's families were agriculturists and had incomes under Rs. 10,000 p.a. and in the case of Prakash, 90 per cent of parents could not fund the education of their children, the vast majority of parents (90 per cent and 72 per cent respectively for Loyola and Prakash) sent their children to school willingly. The sample was 100 per cent *adivasi* (Tigga, 1992).

Displacement is a major factor in lower rates of schooling among *adivasis*.[4] Impending displacement often

3. Reproduced in p. 246.

4. A very conservative estimate indicates that during the last 5 decades approximately 21.3 million people have been displaced in the country owing to big projects such as mines, dams, industries, wild-life sanctuaries, field firing range etc. Of this, at least 40 per cent, approximating 8.5 million are *adivasis*. Considering that *adivasis* are approximately 8.1 per cent of the country's population, this is an unacceptably high proportion (Ekka and Asif, 2000).

serves as an excuse for not providing schools and conversely, the lack of schools in *adivasi* villages has been cited as a justification for displacing them. The Supreme Court Judgement dismissing the petition of the *Narmada Bachao Andolan*, 2000 stated:

> "Residents of villages around Bhakra Nangal dam, Nagarjun Sagar dam, Tehri, Bhilai Steel Plant, Bokaro and numerous other developmental sites are better off than people living in villages in whose vicinity no developmental project came in. It is not fair that tribals and the people in undeveloped villages should continue in the same condition without ever enjoying the fruits of science and technology for better health and have a higher quality of life style. Should they not be encouraged to seek greener pastures elsewhere, if they can have access to it, either through their own efforts due to information exchange or due to outside compulsions." (Maj. Judgement, pp. 172-73). "At the rehabilitation sites they will have more and better amenities than which they enjoyed in their tribal hamlets. The gradual assimilation in the mainstream of society will lead to betterment and progress" (Maj. judgement, p. 48).

In other words, *adivasis* in general, and not just their children, are seen as people for whom compulsion must be exercised in their own best interest. Inevitably, when it comes to children, then, the disciplinary and civilising aspects of schooling take precedence over the idea of opening them up to new intellectual experiences. The parallels with the schooling of Native Americans and Australian aboriginals are striking.

LANGUAGE[5]

There are several policy documents and a constitutional provision (350A) recognising that linguistic minorities should be educated in their mother tongue at primary level. However, even languages like Bhili, Gondi or Oraon which are spoken by over a million people (Nambissan, 1994:

5. Some sections, like this one, are taken from an earlier note on *adivasi* education I had written, and which was replicated verbatim in N.C.E.R.T. (2007), the report of a focus group of which I was a member.

2747-48) are not recognised in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution, and Bodi and Santhali which are spoken by 1.2 and 6.5 million people respectively, were added only in 2003. Correspondingly, there is practically no education in *adivasi* languages. Although states in India were organised on linguistic grounds, in the absence of political power, none of the major *adivasi* groups managed to carve out states for themselves. Consequently these groups are distributed across state boundaries and the languages they are taught in, are those of the state in which they live, so that even if they share the same customs and have marriage relations across state borders, the educated youth of these states do not develop a sense of oneness. Coupled with the fact that only 6 per cent of primary teachers are from *adivasi* communities, and several do not bother to learn the language even after several years of being posted there (Kundu, 1994 : 31, personal experience), the general picture at primary level in *adivasi* areas is often one of mutual incomprehension for students and teacher.

In common with stories of indigenous people's education in Australia and America, *adivasi* children in India have been punished for talking in their own languages (Saxena and Mahendroo, 1993; Kundu, 1994: 31). Quite apart from the pedagogic problems this creates– such as destroying the child's self esteem, and reducing the possibilities of successful learning in later years – the denigration of *adivasi* languages amounts to denigration of *adivasi* worldviews and knowledge.[6] Even outside the confines of school, educated youth often speak to each other in the language of the school, perhaps also to mark themselves off from their 'uneducated peers'. As one Halba student at Dilmilli ashram school in Bastar said *Jyada shikshit hote ja rahein hain to*

6. Although there are 4,00 *adivasi* languages in India, several languages, especially those spoken by small numbers, are dying out. Given that so much knowledge is stored in a particular language, particular words for things that have no existence in other languages, (Geertz, 1983 : 88), loss of a language means the loss of a certain way of knowing the world.

hindi bolte hain. (The more educated we become, the more Hindi we use). Where Hindi is the medium of education, *adivasi* languages are themselves changing to use more Hindi words, and Hindi grammar.

Even where *adivasis* are passionate about their own language, they do not expect schools to teach in them. Indeed, for many *adivasi* parents, the main advantage of schooling is that it gives access to the regional languages, and enables people to deal with the bureaucracy and non-*adivasis* (Grigson, 1944: 398; Patwardhan, 2000 : 82). Tigga (1992) notes that in his survey 58 per cent of both teachers and *adivasi* parents saw tribal language as a barrier to their children's education. On the other hand, if *adivasi* languages were given official recognition by the state and if they were connected to job prospects, there might be more people who would want education for their children in their own language (Nambissan, 2000: 197). And indeed, wherever *adivasis* have been politically mobilised to celebrate *adivasi* identity, they have been more clear and open in their demand for education in indigenous languages (Patwardhan, 2000; Nambissan, 2000: 213). One of the reasons why the Maoists are so popular across the central Indian belt is that they have developed Gondi literature, and have cultural troupes which perform Gondi songs and dances, which makes their message accessible to the people.

There is a concrete problem, however, in determining which language will be taught in primary schools as the 'mother tongue', given the common feature of several *adivasi* communities inhabiting the same village but speaking different languages. Using the local *lingua franca* – Sadani or Nagpuri in Jharkhand, Halbi in Bastar, etc. – is one option, but even this will not address the problem. Finding teachers who will teach in the local language is another problem, unless *adivasi* teachers are more heavily recruited. Currently, there is no political will on requiring non-*adivasi* teachers to learn *adivasi* languages.

One positive feature however, is the emergence of a large literature in some *adivasi* languages like Bodo and Santhali. Curiously, the growing commercial culture of music videos and low budget films enabled by digital technology, have led to a proliferation of media in *adivasi* languages like Nagpuri, Santhali, Mundari, Halbi etc. Although the themes remain modelled on Hindi films, and they are usually of very poor quality, popular demand has ensured a certain engagement with various vernaculars. Many of these films also incorporate some degree of ethnographic description. It is possible then, that where official apathy has failed, market forces may come in to atleast somewhat save *adivasi* languages.

Curriculum and Textbooks

Adivasi children are not only denied their own languages, but also their culture and history. The curriculum is usually based on the experiences of urban middle class children, and the kinds of objects they refer to, are often unlikely to be found in a rural home (see Kundu, 1994: 61). Not only is the knowledge and linguistic or cognitive ability that *adivasi* children possess ignored e.g. the capacity to compose and sing spontaneously, to think in riddles and metaphors and their intimate knowledge of their environment – but schooling also actively encourages a sense of inferiority about *adivasi* cultures, which persists into later life.

Adivasis rarely feature in textbooks, and when they do, it is usually in servile positions to upper caste characters; or as 'strange' and 'backward' exotica (Kundu, 1994; Kumar, 1989: 71). Nanda quotes from a second grade textbook that Bonda children are made to learn: 'Bonda life is very strange indeed. They live in tiny huts built of mud. The entrance to these huts is rather narrow. They enter the huts by bending forward. For the upliftment of the Bondas, the government has planned development programmes. Cash loans are being extended to the Bondas for the purpose of improved agriculture and animal husbandry. There is now a steady improvement in their

condition. Hunting in the forest is no more their primary occupation. There are changes in their disposition and diet. Now they know how to count cash.' (State Board textbook quoted in Nanda, 1994: 173). In a marvellous essay titled, 'Learning to be Backward', Krishna Kumar points out the cleft position that such texts place *adivasi* children in. If children fail to answer questions about *adivasi* backwardness based on readings from the text, they are judged educationally backward. If they acknowledge that the texts are correct, they accept an external judgement about their cultural backwardness. Either way, 'there is no escaping the label of backwardness. As a social institution, the school has set up a situation in which the tribal will acquire responses that match his description in society as a member of a 'backward community' (Kumar, 1989: 68).

While the general problem is with the absence or denigration of *adivasi* culture, in R.S.S. schools, there is a more specific problem with the use of additional textbooks that have a communal slant meant to promote Hinduism and denigrate other religions. Among private religious schools, only the R.S.S. seems to pose this problem.[7] In the Ramakrishna Sharada Sevashram, Jagdalpur, the Principal explained that there was no question of teaching outside textbooks because the students are unwilling to learn more than the bare minimum and even colleges use guidebooks. In the Gyanodaya school in Jagdalpur, run by the Catholic community, while the school has its own textbooks for Classes I and II, these do not have any religious content and are chosen because of their large format and illustrations.

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7. This observation is based on a survey I carried out among five schools in Bastar and Jashpur districts of Chhattisgarh, including the Loyola boys school in Kunkuri; Nirmala Kanya Unch Madhyamik Shala, Navatoli, Kunkuri; Mata Rukmini Devi Sansthan, Dimrapal and Chhindgarh; Ramakrishna Sharada Sevashram, Jagdalpur; Gyanodaya school, Jagadalpur.

Most of the Vidya Bharati (R.S.S.) schools are affiliated to C.B.S.E. or their local State Boards. In general, these schools follow the syllabi (and the textbooks) published by the N.C.E.R.T. But in addition, Vidya Bharati brings out its own textbooks, which 'supplement' and 'correct' the history that is taught in the official books, working as much by selective emphasis on certain figures as against others, as by crude propaganda against Muslims and Christians. *Itihas ga Raha hain* (history is singing) for Class V blames 'internal disunity' for the invasions by the Turks, Mongols and Mughals, but notes that even in the medieval period the 'freedom struggle' was kept alive (Singh, 1997: 9). While professional historians point to the presence of Hindu generals in Mughal armies and the fact that Shivaji, the archtype Hindu king had a Muslim general, as evidence of the fact that medieval power struggles cannot be understood in religious terms, the R.S.S. sees this as a betrayal of Hindus and reserves its greatest criticism for such 'collaborators' (Singh, 1997: 78). Christian pastors are described as one of the main instruments of colonialism (Singh, 1997: 27), thus strengthening the association in children's minds between Indian Christians and anti-national activities and laying the roots for divisions between Hinduised and Christianised *adivasis* (for more discussion of the content of these textbooks, see Sundar, 2004).

All students from the 3rd grade upwards in the Vidya Bharati schools also take the Sanskriti Gyan Pariksha, a cultural general knowledge test once a year, for which they get certificates. The examination is, on the face of it, a disinterested test of knowledge about the country's geography, history and culture based on the Sanskriti Gyan primers published by Vidya Bharati at Kurukshetra. The primer is in question-answer format, and has sections on pilgrimage sites, actual and mythical Hindu figures, events from the *Mahabharata, Ramayana* etc., including some pure inventions such as the idea that Christ roamed the Himalayas and that Homer's *Illiad* was an adaptation

of the *Ramayana*. Needless to say there are no references to anything Christian, Muslim or *adivasi*, and the version of Indian culture that is produced is thus an exclusively Hindu upper caste (mostly Northern) culture.

Hidden Curriculum

In all schools, however, textbooks are only one instrument for transmitting cultural messages – most of this takes place through the composition of students and teachers, with both Christian and Hindu schools engaged in some amount of boundary keeping,[8] extra-curricular activities like morning and evening prayers, especially in those schools which have hostels attached, and the general atmosphere of the schools (see Sundar, 2004, 2006). The communicative function of schooling extends much beyond the actual curricular content, through what Corrigan calls a 'repertoire of forms' that include space, time and textuality (Corrigan, 1990 : 160).

The fact that, even in regular government schools, most teachers are Hindu influences the manner in which annual days or other school events are celebrated. Breaking a coconut and lighting incense at the base of the flag pole on Republic or Independence Day is common practice. When teachers talk about imparting 'sanskriti' to *adivasi* children, they usually have in mind upper caste, non-*adivasi* practices, and this is something that is internalised by *adivasi* teachers as well. In one scene at examination time in a primary school in Bastar, I was witness to this. Ranu Nag, one of the few Dhurwa school-teachers, and keen to revive the use of Dhurwa, was acting as external examiner. He asked the children their names. Yet as they called out each distinctive *adivasi* name, like Gagru or Aitu or Devli, he ironed it out to standard Hindu names like Gagru Ram, Aitu Ram, Devli Kumari etc. On the other

8. For example, in the R.S.S. schools the children were predominantly Hindu, while in the Loyola school in Kunkuri they were largely Christian.

hand, government schools are not marked by the kind of intense religious exposure that private schools provide, and beyond one or two pictures on the wall of Gods or Goddesses, there is no strong effort to culturally transform the children. It is true that children who go to these schools come out thinking for example, of Diwali and Holi as more important than their own festivals, because they are 'national holidays', but this is as much due to the way the academic calendar is structured and the wider media, as due to the specific efforts of teachers.

By comparison, even in those soft-Hindu schools which see themselves as 'secular', ideas of cultural change are so engrained that they seem synonymous with schooling. At a school run by the Mata Rukmini Ashram in Chhindgarh, the girls were taught to observe *Makar Sankranti*, *Ganesh puja*, and so on, and the money that was collected from their sale of tamarind was used to buy the *Ramcharitmanas*. Statements like these from a school teacher from Uttar Pradesh are common: "If people hadn't come from outside and taught them, how else would they have progressed" or " earlier their parents used to insist they come home for the seed sowing festival – but now they don't. The girls have learnt all our festivals."

In R.S.S. organisations, we see the most conscious attempt to turn *adivasi* children into Hindus. This is carried out not only through the schools, but especially through hostels. The R.S.S., following the Church before it, sees hostels as nodal points for Sangh extension activities in the villages:

> We know that not all students of our *chhatravas* (hostel) will become full-time workers. But all of them will have received our *sanskars*....of all our activities, the most important one is the running of the hostels. The rationale behind our hostels is different from the usual ones. We want to make our hostels the focus or centre of attention for the region. Through this medium we want to bring about awareness in the whole region (Deshpande, 1990: 17).

A handbook for the private use of *Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram* workers notes that in addition to the hostel warden,

an additional worker should set up a centre in or near the *chhatravas* to keep in touch with a circle of 20-30 villages around and organise them through pre-school centres, *eklavya khelkud kendras, gram samitis*, dramas, etc. (A.B.V.K.A.; Sapre, 1991). Children are trained to hold *bhajan mandalis, satsang kendras, shakhas* and other activities when they go home for the long summer vacations.

The hostels are in much demand and even some Christians apply. Although the surroundings are shabby and food is basic, there is a proliferation of Hindu visual imagery – all of which is part of a carefully planned design to expose children to Hindu idioms. At the same time, there is an attempt to integrate what they call 'vanvasis' into the wider Hindu fold, by saying that the hostel should be named after a famous vanvasi man or woman. At the pre-school centres (*Balwadis* or *Bal sanskar kendras*) children learn the rudiments of reading, writing and *sanskars*, including learning to say *pranam* instead of their own *adivasi* greeting *johar*, and singing the *Saraswati Vandana*. Not every child understands what they are chanting, but sustained exposure to these centres inevitably inculcates respect for Sanskrit as a language worthknowing, and a belief that 'civilisation' consists in Hindu markers of behaviour. More important than the actual information that children may or may not remember is the symbolic message transmitted. At the *Eklavya khel kud centres* for older youth, the *sangh* teaches the children 'indigenous' games with names like *Agnikund* and *Rama-Ravana*. Here, as in the *shakha*s, the referee calls out directions in Sanskrit. While local languages are not forbidden in R.S.S. schools and hostels, Sanskrit and Hindi are glorified. Like the Catholics before them, who set hymns to local tunes, the Sangh may keep in references to the Singbonga or local gods in their *bhajans*, but Hindu gods like Ram and Krishna inevitably involve pride of place. There is a real reluctance among Kalyan ashram students to admit to knowing *Kurukh*.

Much of what the R.S.S. schools are doing was done by the Christian mission schools in the early part of the 20th century. Now, however, the Catholics confine their religious teaching to their own community. Non-Christian children do not have to attend Cathechism classes, and can carry out their own prayers or study during prayer time. For the Catholic children, however, the education is deeply Christian. The model, overall, is modern Western culture – when children see fathers in Loyola school, Kunkuri, eat with forks and knives, this becomes something to aspire to.

Each type of school has its own version, thus, of what constitutes suitable culture for *adivasi* children to learn, but there is very little attempt to find out what *adivasi* culture itself is, and how it can enrich the school curriculum.

School Regimen

In all private schools, whether R.S.S., Christian, or otherwise, the hostel regime emphasizes discipline and prayer, creating a totalising and intense experience. Government schools are far more relaxed. In these private schools, children normally wake up at 4:30 a.m., pray for an hour or so, then bathe and breakfast, and attend classes. They may do some exercise either in the morning or evening, but are bound to pray again in the evening. So much prayer is in sharp contrast to their homes, where there is no such practice of daily prayer, and life is far less regimented. The following two timetables show how regimented and prayer filled the school day is:

***Dainadin Karyakram* (daily programme) of the *Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram*, Jashpur, as pasted on the wall**

Prata: (Morning)	
4:00-4:30	*Jagaran Prarthna;*
4:30-4:45	*Ekatmata Stotr;*
4:45-6:00	*Surya Namaskar;*
6:00-6:30	*Ramayan Path;*
7:00-9:00	*Swadhyay;*
9:00-10:30	*Bhojan;*
10:30-4:30	*Pathshala.*

Sayan (Evening)	
5:00-6:00	*Khelkud, Vyayam;*
6:00-6:45	*Kirtan, Bhajan, Aarti;*
6:45-8:00	*Bhojan.*
Ratri (Night)	
8.00-8.30	*Sawadhyay;*
9.30-9:45	*Prarthna Deep Nirvan.*

Note

1. On Sundays, children are given information of national and social happenings, stories and life histories of famous people.
2. Children must maintain cleanliness in the *chatravas* and its compound.

Daily Time-Table at the *Loyola School*, Kunkuri, as related by students

A.M.	
4:45-5:15	Wake up and wash;
5:15-6:00	Prayer in Church for Catholics (non-Catholics worship separately in classroom or study);
6:00-7:15	Study in hostel;
7:15-7:30	P.T. drill;
7:30-8:15	Cleaning hostel premises, collecting vegetables from garden;
8:15-8:30	Bathing;
8:30-9:15	Breakfast (*dal* and *chawal*);
9:15-9:30	Religion class (in classroom);
10:00-10:15	Assembly prayer;
10:15- 4:00 pm	Classes (with three short breaks).
P.M.	
4:00- 5:00	Hostel high school games;
5:00-5:15	Washing up;
5:15- 6:00	Dinner;
6:00-6:15	Church prayer;
6:30-10:00	Study (with two 15 minute recess Breaks in between);
10:00 pm	Sleep.

In general, both Sarangapani and Padel point to the way in which the school regimen of timing, discipline, hierarchy is alien to children socialised in a world where individuality is respected from early on, and where parent-child interactions are relatively egalitarian (Sarangapani, 2001: 24-27; Padel, 1995: 224).

Kundu (1994) points out that testing procedures too are based on urban middle-class values – the competitiveness and system of rewards that examinations represent is often culturally anomalous to *adivasi* children who are brought up in an atmosphere of sharing. In classroom interactions too, non-*adivasi* children dominate, even when they are in a minority, by virtue of their greater social confidence. In one classroom interaction I observed at Loyola school in Kunkuri, two of the boys who were very vocal turned out to be from the local trader community, and it is they who set the terms of debate. One of them complained that it was impossible for children these days to go into medical school as seats were reserved. But when I pointed out that this would not be a problem for most of the children in the class, who were *adivasis*, they again spoke up, and said 'but we are not'. The complaint of the upper caste children is thus used to silence the experiences and claims of the rest of the children.

Learning among *adivasi* children is usually intimately connected to the work process – children learn the names and medicinal uses of many plants and trees while accompanying their parents on foraging trips in the forest (Sarangapani, 2001: 44; personal observations). When children are away at school, especially when they are sent to residential schools, they lose connection with this world of labour and their capacity to learn from it. Nanda describes a walk in the forest with Bonda children in eastern India. While some children wandered off to explore the forest and collect edible items, those who had been to the residential schools, kept to the path and were indifferent to their surroundings (Nanda, 1994: 177). Parents used to be reluctant to send their children to school because

they lost the capacity to engage in agriculture (Nanda, 1994: 173). However, with high unemployment rates, many hostel returned *adivasi* youth have no option but to stick to agriculture or do manual wage work.

Given such a 'demeaning educational experience' (Kumar, 1989: 76) in a setup which privileges the 'visions and meanings' of dominant groups in society and teaches *adivasis* subservience, it is hardly surprising that drop-out rates among *adivasi* children are much higher than those of other students and literacy rates much lower (Nambissan, 1994: 2747).

Education in a Time of Counterinsurgency

The logic of using education or the lack thereof, to justify displacement has also been used in counterinsurgency operations in central India, where villagers have been herded into camps as a form of strategic hamletting. In Chhattisgarh, since 2005, the government forces in collaboration with civilians whom it has armed and christened the Salwa Judum, euphemistically calling it a 'people's movement', has been burning villages, killing people and raping women. Officially 644 villages, comprising some 3 lakh people, have been affected by Salwa Judum, and live under the daily threat of attack and displacement. Some 50,000 were forcibly herded into camps, similar to the regrouping that happened in Nagaland in the 1950s and Mizoram in the 1960s. Those who escaped the regrouping – a lakh or so – migrated to Andhra Pradesh.

In 2006, all the children in Dantewada were promoted for the academic year 2005-06, because no examinations could be held. Curiously, in 2007 while this mayhem was still on-going, the Dantewada administration got the National Literacy Mission-U.N.E.S.C.O. award for spreading adult literacy. In 2007, I visited a Salwa Judum camp on the border of Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh at Maraigudem. The teacher in-charge of the ashram school said that the population in the hostel kept

fluctuating because their parents would bring the children in when conditions were particularly disturbed, and then take them back again.

One of the big casualties of this war has been school buildings, in a region where they were scarced to begin with. The security forces use schools as military camps because they are the only *pucca* building in the villages, and in turn the Maoists blast schools to prevent this happening. They bring in villagers from neighbouring villages to destroy the schools, since they know people find it hard to break buildings they have themselves built. In one place, a strong local leader prevailed upon the Maoists not to destroy the school in his village, but then the C.R.P.F. moved in and children were moved out. In response to a court ordered investigation, the N.H.R.C. recommended that the security forces be moved out of schools, but the Chhattisgarh government has done precious little on this.

But even where the school buildings exist, the government has moved all the teachers and children from affected zones to camps, ensuring that if children are not in camp, they have no access to education. In 2007, the government also issued directives that the children would not be allowed to go home for the summer. Ostensibly this was for their own safety; but also worked as a way of forcing the parents to come to camp if they wanted to be with their children. Most of the people have now come back from the camps to their villages, but schools and teachers continue to work only in the camps, and not in the villages where the majority of children now are. Salwa Judum leaders refer to teachers as 'their property': "These teachers belong to our government. We have kept them (teachers) all together in one place. Those who don't join the Judum will get no school or be allowed to go to school." As a further attempt to 'capture' the children, and wean them away from Maoist influence in the villages, the government is building 1,000 seater ashram schools. These, however, are next to Salwa Judum camps and

police stations, ensuring that their education will take place under the watchful eye of these Salwa Judum leaders. The physical space of the schools is also restricted, with rooms in narrow lines.

Even the U.N.I.C.E.F. has colluded in the argument that children are better off in camps, with a UNICEF film made for educational purposes noting how great it was that these *adivasi* children who were in Salwa Judum camps had now learnt to brush their teeth with foaming toothpaste. At a time when these children had lost their homes and in many cases, seen their relatives or co-villagers killed before their eyes, learning to brush with toothpaste which they can ill-afford, as against their traditional *datun*, would hardly seem like a big achievement for either U.N.I.C.E.F or the Indian state. U.N.I.C.E.F tents, meant purely for educational purposes, are being used for shooting cover and to house paramilitaries; and yet U.N.I.C.E.F has been silent on these violations.

For the teachers themselves, always reluctant to travel to interior villages, the Salwa Judum has been a period of pay without work . Officially, the government claims that it is the Naxalites who have driven teachers and other government staff away, but this is denied by many villagers. In December 2008, I was shown a threatening letter written in red ink, in a purposely illiterate hand, ostensibly from the Naxalites to the school principal, commanding him to shut the school down within two weeks or else! On enquiring into the issue in the village concerned, we learnt that it had originated from a disgruntled teacher, upset with the principal's insistence that he come to work on time!

Many teachers, who are either outsiders, or educated tribals, who have got alienated from the poor villagers who comprise the Naxal base, have been active with the Salwa Judum and made enough money to become contractors. The Salwa Judum leader in Kutru, Madhukar, was a middle school teacher, who by his own admission, rarely attended school or only *beech-beech-mein*, whenever he

could spare a few hours from his Salwa Judum activities. Following court cases against Salwa Judum,[9] the government woke up to the need to signal accountability. An article in the Indian Express describes the bewilderment of one 'leader', Soyam Mooka, who was served notice:

> Soyam Mooka, a teacher in a school being run by the department, is among the frontline leaders of 'Salwa Judum', ever since the anti-Naxalite campaign was launched in South Bastar in June 2005 to isolate the Maoist rebels and to create awareness among the masses against the Naxalite menace. Like Mukka, a number of other school teachers of Konta and Bijapur regions are closely associated with the movement. The state Government, which has been extending support to 'Salwa Judum' terming it as a spontaneous movement by the locals against bloodshed and violence in the tribal region, had encouraged these Government employees to actively participate themselves in the movement during the last three years……
>
> Mukka told The Indian Express that he had received a notice from his department asking why action should not be taken against him for making 'political statements' at 'Salwa Judum' meetings and not attending to his duties. "The department knows of my association with Salwa Judum for the last three years", he added. [10]

Luckily for Soyam Mooka the government was never serious about implementing the notice against him, and recently has strongly defended him in the Supreme Court on rape charges, a defence it has mounted by virtue of simply asking him to justify himself and dismissing the girl's complaint on this basis. In other words, these Salwa Judum leaders have got rich on government salaries, contracts, as well as the relief money they have siphoned off from camps, and it is they, rather than the government, who effectively run the local administration. Where then is the question of doing anything as mundane as teaching?

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9. WP 250 of 2007, Nandini Sundar and others versus Government of Chhattisgarh, and WP 119 of 2007, Kartam Joga and others versus Government of Chhattisgarh and Union of India.
10. Tribals see conspiracy in notice to Salwa Judum leader before election. Joseph John, *Indian Express*, 16 October 2008

Consequences of Schooling

But dismal as this picture sounds in terms of *adivasi* identity and indigenous knowledge, the consequences of formal schooling are often considerably complex. Even as residential schooling creates a certain 'educated *adivasi*' identity that makes it difficult for ashram school alumni to relate to the occupations of their parents (agriculture or the gathering of forest produce), the interaction with children of other castes and villages that residential schools make possible, allow new networks or 'new epistemic communities' (Bayly, 1999) to develop. It is interesting, for example, that many of the male youth activists of the Communist Party of India in Bastar came to know each other in the residential schools, and it is these networks that have helped them to organise for land rights and in defence of a particular *adivasi* identity. Again, although Christian missionary education often led to an initial loss of *adivasi* identity, culture and religion, it is often in the areas where such education has had a long history that we now see the strongest movements for tribal autonomy and identity (e.g. in the North-East or Jharkhand). Educated *adivasis* take the lead in such movements, which in turn creates a demand for the institutionalisation of tribal languages in schools (Nambissan, 2000: 212-213; Devalle, 1992: 175-176). Inevitably, however, the language they seek to preserve may not be the language as it is actually spoken, but a more 'civilised' version that follows the structures and written codes of the dominant languages (Devalle, 1992: 177). In short, formal education may both destroy and create 'indigenous' identities and claims to possess indigenous knowledge.

Advocates of indigenous knowledge and concerned educators argued that it is possible to combine formal schooling with a concern for the preservation of indigenous knowledge, such as the curriculum developed by the Maori in New Zealand and the *Inuit* in Canada which draw on culture-specific learning expectations, use local languages etc (Michie, 1999; Bartels and Bartels, 1995). In India,

however, although there have been some attempts, such as the Dhumkuria school in Kanke, Bihar, based on the indigenous dormitory system among Oraons and in which children were taught both local crafts and prepared for state board examinations (Toppo, 1978) or the attempt by Kundu to use *adivasi* riddling practices to develop curriculum–such efforts are still rudimentary. There is also the danger that unless such efforts are part of a political agenda that is led by indigenous people themselves and aims to empower them, the transmission of indigenous knowledge through schools will amount to no more than the colonial model of schooling in which crafts and agriculture or hygiene and applied sciences were seen as the most suitable subjects for native children (Grigson, 1944; see also Simon, 1998). While education was seen as essential to enabling *adivasis* to avoid exploitation, it was also felt that too much literary education would alienate *adivasi* children from their own culture (Prasad, 1994: 276-277). As Kelly and Altbach argue, in the absence of appropriate history and science education and by denying native children skills for anything other than what s/he had traditionally done, such schooling 'represented a basic denial of the colonised's past and withheld from them the tools to regain the future' (1978: 15). To reiterate then, what I started with – the model for *adivasi* schooling that we should aspire to is one where children are introduced to new skills and knowledge but in a manner that builds upon their existing knowledge and culture rather than in a way that destroys it. And here, I must once again mention B.M. Pugh as the inspiration for such an endeavour.

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About the Speaker

Nandini Sundar is Professor of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics, Delhi University, and Co-editor, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*. She has previously worked at the Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi and the University of Edinburgh.

Her publications include *Subalterns and Sovereigns*: *An Anthropological History of Bastar* (2nd ed. O.U.P., 2007), published in Hindi as *Gunda Dhur Ki Talash Mein* (Penguin, 2009), and *Branching Out: Joint Forest Management in India* (O.U.P., 2001). She is also editor of *Legal Grounds: Natural Resources, Identity and the Law in Jharkhand* (O.U.P., 2009) and co-editor of *Anthropology in the East: The Founders of Indian Sociology and Anthropology* (Permanent Black, 2007), as well as *A New Moral Economy for India's Forests: Discourses of Community and Participation* (Sage Publications, 1999).

Her interest in *adivasi* education goes back to the early 1990s when she observed the workings of village schools in Bastar, while doing fieldwork for her Ph.D. Since then she has looked at the impact of R.S.S. and Christian missionary education in Chhattisgarh, resulting in the following articles: 'Teaching to hate: The R.S.S.'s Pedagogical Programme', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 39 (16), 2004, 1605-1612; 'Indigenise, Nationalise and Spiritualise: An Agenda for Education?', *International Social Science Journal*, 173, September 2002, 373-383; *Adivasi* vs. *vanvasi*: *the Politics of Conversion and Re-conversion in Central India*, in Satish Saberwal and Mushirul Hasan (eds.) *Assertive Religious Identities*.

New Delhi, Manohar, 2006, 357-390. She was a member of the N.C.E.R.T. focus group on education for SC/STs, 2005.

Nandini Sundar has been a member of several government committees concerning the welfare of scheduled tribes, and was a member of the Technical Support Group to draft Rules for the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2007; a member of the Working Group on Empowerment of Scheduled Tribes, Planning Commission, Government of India, 2007 and a member of the Working Group on Decentralised Planning and Panchayati Raj Institutions, Tenth Plan, Planning Commission, Government of India, 2001. She also serves on the advisory committees of various academic programmes, such as the Programme for the Study of Discrimination and Exclusion, Jawaharlal Nehru University, the Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies, Arunachal University, the Developing Countries Research Centre, Delhi University, and A.T.R.E.E., Bangalore.

Sundar has also tried to hold the government accountable for its violations of law and human rights and in 2007, filed a Public Interest Litigation before the Supreme Court on the use of vigilantism, and large scale killings, rapes and arson in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh.

Her current research interests include citizenship, war and counterinsurgency in South Asia, indigenous identity and politics in India, the sociology of law, and inequality.

ANNEXURE I

Memorial Lectures : 2007-08

Name	*Date*	*Venue*	*Speaker*	*Theme*	*Chairperson*
Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Lecture	17 January 2007	India International Centre, New Delhi	Professor Christopher Winch Educational Philosophy and Policy, Kings College London, U.K.	Individuals Workers or Citizens Reflections on the Limits of School Based Educational Reform	Professor Mrinal Miri *Former Vice-Chancellor* N.E.H.U. Shillong
Zakir Hussain Memorial Lecture	19 January 2007	R.I.E Mysore	Dr Radhika Herzberger, *Director* Rishi Valley School Chittor Andhra Pradesh	Religion, Education and Peace	Prof. B.L. Chaudhary *Vice-Chancellor* Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur Rajasthan
Mahadevi Verma Memorial Lecture	17 August 2007	R.I.E Bhopal	Prof. Karuna Chanana *Former Professor* at Zakir Hussain Centre for Educational Studies School of Social Sciences, J.N.U.	Women in Indian Academe; Diversity Difference and Inequality in a Contested Domain	Prof. R.S. Sirohi *Vice-Chancellor* Barkatulla, University Bhopal
B. M. Pugh Memorial Lecture	11 March 2008	Laitumkhrah Women's College Shillong	Shri Ratan Thiyam *Chairperson*, Chorus Repertory Theatre Imphal	Theatre Language and Expression	Professor T. Ao *Dean*, School of Humanities, N.E.H.U. Shillong

Name	*Date*	*Venue*	*Speaker*	*Theme*	*Chairperson*
Majorie Sykes Memorial Lecture	8 April 2008	R.I.E. Ajmer Jawahar Rang Manch, Ajmer	Ms Medha Patkar Social Activist	Socialisation vs. Politics of Education	Professor M.S. Agwani Former Vice *Chancellor*, J.N.U.
Sri Aurobindo Memorial Lecture	2 July 2008	Dorozio Hall Presidency College Kolkata	Shri Manoj Das International Centre of Education Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry	Education for a Faith in the Future	Professor Sanjib Ghosh *Principal*, Presidency College, Kolkata
Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Lecture	19 July 2008	R.I.E. Bhubaneswar	Professor N.R. Menon *Member*, Commission on Centre State Relations	Realising Equality of Status and of Opportunity: Role of Government, Judiciary and Civil Society	R.I.E. Bhubaneswar
Gijubhai Badekha Memorial Lecture	11 September 2009	R.I.E. Mysore	Shri U.R. Ananthamurthy Jnanpith Awardee	My Writing My Times	Professor G.H. Nayak
Savitribai Phule Memorial Lecture	12 December 2008	S.N.D.T. Women's College Mumbai	Dr Sunderaraman *Director* State Health System Resource Centre	School as a Preventive and Promoting Health Centre	S.N.D.T. Women's College Mumbai *Chairperson*

ANNEXURE II

Memorial Lectures : 2008-09

Name	*Date*	*Venue*	*Speaker*	*Theme*	*Chairperson*
Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Lecture	28 January 2009	N.I.E. Auditorium N.C.E.R.T. New Delhi	Shri Anupam Mishra Gandhi Peace Foundation Delhi	Raj Samaj Aur Pani	Professor M. H. Qureshi *Former Professor* Geography, Centre for the Study of Regional Development J.N.U.
Zakir Hussain Memorial Lecture	30 January 2009	R.I.E. Mysore	Professor Padmini Swaminathan Madras Institute of Development Studies Chennai	Literacy and Levels of Formal (General and Professional) Education of the Indian Population: A National Report Card	Professor B. Shaik Ali *Former Vice-Chancellor* Mangalore and Goa University
Mahadevi Verma Memorial Lecture	5 January 2009	R.I.E. Bhopal	Ms Kalpana Sharma Former Chief of Bureau, The Hindu Mumbai	Can Media teach us anything?	Dr Pushpendra Pal Singh *Head*, Department of Journalism, National University of Journalism and Communication, Bhopal

Name	*Date*	*Venue*	*Speaker*	*Theme*	*Chairperson*
Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Lecture	14 January 2009	R.I.E. Bhubneswar	Professor Swapan Majumdar Director Culture and Relations Vishva Bharati	Education as Empowerment Twins in Search of an Alternative Education	Professor Shantanu Kumar Acharya Eminent Writer
Gijubhai Badekha Memorial Lecture	20 January 2009	M.I.D.S. Chennai	Professor T. S. Saraswathi, *Former Professor*, Maharaja Sayaji Rao University Baroda	Culture and Development Implication for Classroom Practice	Professor S. Jankarajan *Director* Madras Institute of Development Studies
Savitribai Phule Memorial Lecture	29 January 2009	S.N.D.T. Women's University Mumbai	Professor Sharmila Rege Director Kratijyoti Savitribai Phule Women's Study Centre, University of Pune	Education as Tritiya Ratna: Towards Phule Ambedkarite Feminist Padagogies	Professor Chandra Krishnamurthy *Vice-Chancellor* S.N.D.T. Women's University
Sri Aurobindo Memorial Lecture	27 March 2009	Presidency College Kolkata	Professor Jasodhara Bagchi, *Former Professor* Jadavpur University	Education for Women and Women for Education : the Case of Bengal	Professor Sanjib Ghosh *Prinicipal* Presidency College Kolkata
B. M. Pugh Memorial Lecture	27 March 2009	Don Bosco Youth Centre Shillong	Shri P. Sainath *Rural Affair Editor*	India in the Age of Inequality : Farm Crisis, Food Crisis and the Media	Ms Particia Mukhim *Editor*, Shillong Times
Majorie Sykes Memorial Lecture	28 October 2009	R.I.E. Ajmer	Professor Kamal Dutta *Former Professor* Department of Physics Delhi University	What should we teach? An Examination of Issues uderlying the College Curriculum.	Yet to be finalised

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