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

CONTENTS

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Indian Constitution assures all citizens the right to equality of status and opportunity, including educational opportunities. It means all children should have equal opportunities to participate in educational processes, including children with special needs or children belonging to specific groups.

In this context, the Right to Education (RTE Act 2009), which makes elementary education a Fundamental Right of every child is of great significance. Our classrooms, now more so than before, need to be prepared to include students from different backgrounds with differing needs and abilities.

The written text of NCERT's Mahatma Gandhi Fourth Memorial Lecture, delivered by Justice Ajit Prakash Shah, also elaborates on the right to education of the disabled with focus on Indian context. The lecture concludes by stating that government should ensure all children with disabilities to have access to an inclusive education system.

Besides, corporal punishment which is classified as an act of violence and verbal and non-verbal abuse of children is banned in all Indian schools by law. However, it continues to feature in many schools and is used to humiliate children in front of their peers. Many teachers and even parents still believe that such punishment is important, unaware of the immediate and long-term detrimental effect of these practices. Benudhar Chinara and Soma Banerjee in their research paper reported that corporal punishment is given to students in some elementary schools of Nagaon district of Assam and even parents of the children are in favour of punishment in those schools.

Equal access to opportunity of women is another issue discussed in an article. Women are actively involved in economic activities inside and outside home at workplace. It is highly required that they are protected against sexual harassment at all work places to improve their participation in overall progress resulting in their economic empowerment and inclusive growth as a whole. India has recently passed the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013. Shraddha Deva in her paper examines the problem of sexual harassment of female teachers in select Kendriya Vidyalayas situated in Agra.

A lot of measures have been initiated by government and non-government organisations to improve education of children belonging to SC, ST and children from other religious minorities. Three papers in this

issue highlight that concern. Malli Gandhi in his paper advocates mother tongue as medium of instruction for tribal children and suggests taking suitable measures to help tribal children bridge the gap between their home languages and state language. Manoranjan Pradhan's study on perceptions of teachers about issues and problems associated with schools located in tribal areas and presents suggestive measures given by teachers to provide quality education to tribal children. Savita Kaushal in her paper analyses the policies and schemes initiated to improve participation of Muslims in Indian education and identifies gaps that are responsible for the educational backwardness of Muslims.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched to provide quality education to all children with provision of Alternative Schools. In this respect, Chiter Rekha analyses the role, functions and activities of Alternative Schools functioning under SSA for elementary education of children in Delhi.

Technology has brought about a huge transformation in the education system. Now students and teachers are increasingly making use of information and communication technology in teaching learning processes and, as a result, overall efficiency and quality of the education system is bound to improve. Two articles talk about the use of ICT facilitating teaching learning.

Rajaram S. Sharma in his article tries to explain the genesis of National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER), an initiative of NCERT and the Government of India whereas Pranita Gopal discusses the use of some problem solving skills by pre-service student teachers to develop online Question Bank using the Hot Potatoes software.

The issue also includes written text of speech given by Honourable President of India on the occasion of Teachers' Day 2014 and a review of book, entitled 'Pedagogy of Science: Textbook for B.Ed. (Physical Science) Part II', done by Jasim Ahmad and Aerum Khan.

Academic Editor

BOOK REVIEW

Pedagogy of Science
Textbook for
B.Ed. (Physical Science) Part II

The book under review is the second part of the Text Book on Pedagogy of Science for B.Ed. students by NCERT, the apex research organisation in the field of school education in India.

The book is divided into six chapters and the chapterisation is done in continuation of the first part of the book, hence, it carries chapter 10 to chapter 15. These chapters are 'Print and ICT resources in learning physical science', 'Tools and techniques of assessment for learning physical science', 'Planning for teaching-learning of physical science', 'Lifelong learning in physical science', 'Professional development of physical science teachers' and 'Teacher as a researcher'.

The first chapter of the book, which is 10th in continuation of part-I, tries to develop the understanding of pupil teachers with regard to the variety of print and ICT resources and their application in teaching and learning of physical science. The chapter explicitly describes Dale's cone of experience, how to use and select appropriate media, social networking and integrating ICT in teaching learning process. Chapter-11 is devoted to test, examination, measurement, assessment and evaluation. All these concepts have been explained properly in an easy to understand language for pupil teachers. Special emphasis has been given to Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) and assessment of learning of students with special needs. In Chapter 12, the book

describes various aspects of planning for teaching-learning of physical science. Some of the important concepts dealt in this chapter are elements of physical science lesson, making groups, planning for activities and laboratory work, reflective planning, unit and lesson planning. Chapter 13 is devoted to lifelong learning and its various dimensions. The concept of lifelong learning has been dealt with properly. The needs and ways of lifelong learning is also highlighted with the emphasis on the use of ICT in the process of making lifelong learning a meaningful and an effective tool for personal continuous development. Chapter 14 discusses the professional development of physical science teachers. It has been placed at an appropriate place in the book, just after the chapter on lifelong learning. Pre-service and in-service professional development has been dealt with length and breadth. Role of reflective practices in professional development is also given a place in the chapter, which is worthwhile. The final section of the book i.e. Chapter 15 talks about how to put teacher on the place of a researcher and therefore the chapter is titled as 'teacher as a researcher'. This chapter deals with the importance of research in general and action research in particular and suggests teachers to actively engage in action research to solve problems related to physical science teaching.

Each chapter is written in such a way that every student can understand the book easily. Concepts are described quite lucidly and illustrated with examples and diagrams which are organised, coloured and well-labeled. Activities/ exercises are also given at appropriate places for students' practice so that pupil teachers can construct their own knowledge by doing so. The book is specifically written for B.Ed. students but it is equally a helpful guide for all physical science teachers and physical science teacher educators. It has been prepared taking into account the Position Paper on Teaching of Science of National Curriculum Framework 2005.

On the whole, the book is well-organised. Every chapter starts with a box highlighting the topics and the sub-topics being included in that chapter followed by an introduction. All chapters are fully elaborated, comprehensive and easily understood. At the end of each topic/ sub-topic, one or more activities are given, through which students can not only test their understanding, but also can have practical experiences and enrich their understanding and skills by performing the activity. Each chapter ends with a brief summary and chapter-end exercise, which may be helpful in self-assessment of learning.

The book is available in good quality print and this is an easy reference for student-teachers and teacher-educators (Physical Science) as the important points are

highlighted in colours. The price of the book is kept at a reasonable price of Rs.130 in an attempt to reach out to all students.

References and web resources are also given in the last nine pages of the book. Had the book been provided with additional reading materials at the end of each chapter or at the end of the book, it would have been more useful to the learners. Overall, the book is a very useful guide and it promises to meet the requirement of both teacher-educators and pupil-teachers of B.Ed. alike.

JASIM AHMAD
Sr. Assistant Professor
IASE, F/o Education
Jamia Millia Islamia
New Delhi-110025

AERUM KHAN
Assistant Professor
Planning and Research Division
CIET, NCERT
New Delhi-110016

Some other NCERT Publications

Special Training of Out-of-School Children
Admitted in Age Appropriate Classes
Under RTE Act, 2009

Guidelines

₹ 47.00/pp 54

Early Childhood Education Programme

₹ 195.00/pp 300

Early Childhood Education
An Introduction

₹ 25.00/pp 38

Trainer's Handbook in
Early Childhood Care and Education
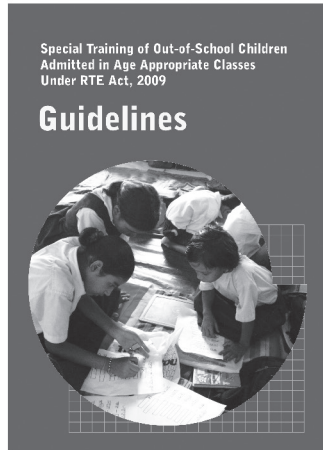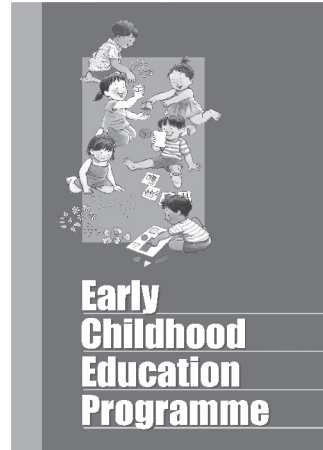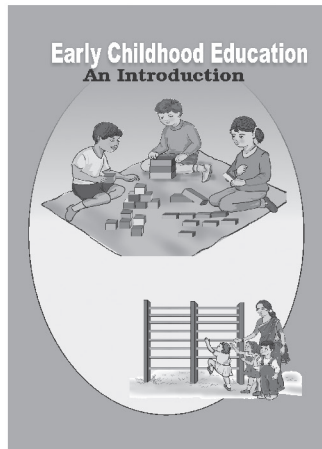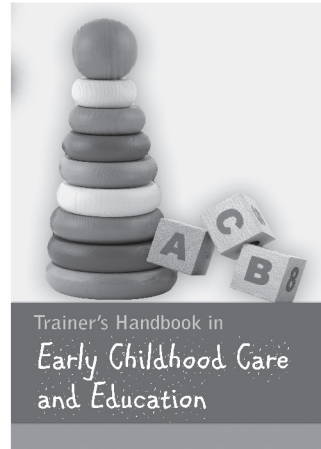
₹ 110.00/pp 224

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SOME REFERENCE BOOKS FOR TEACHERS

Sl. No.	Title	Price
1.	Training Handbook in Early Childhood Care and Education	110.00
2.	Teacher's Manual—Environmental Studies Class II	7.00
3.	A Handbook for Designing Mathematics Laboratory in Schools	60.00
4.	A Kit of Essential Play Materials	85.00
5.	Meeting Special Needs in Schools	45.00
6.	Early Childhood Education: An introduction	25.00
7.	Source Book on Assessment for Classes I-IV, Mathematics	115.00
8.	Source Book on Assessment for Classes I-V (Environmental Studies)	100.00
9.	Mathematics Teacher Training Manual for Classes I and II	150.00
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Right to Education of the Disabled*

Justice Ajit Prakash Shah**

Abstract

The present lecture tries to demonstrate as to how persons with disabilities have been neglected in India, both by the society as well as by the government. The desire of such persons with disabilities to join the mainstream way of life remains a distant dream for now as the present mechanisms and policies in place are grossly inadequate to effect any real change in the current scenario. It is in this light that this lecture discusses the right of disabled children to receive education for their overall development since this right is a fundamental right that is available to every child, including the ones with any form of disability. However, any reformatory measures in this area are seriously impeded by a lack of a standardised and uniformly accepted definition of disability in India, leading to varying and incorrect estimates in identifying children with special needs. Different data bases have their own parameters of judging and identifying disability, leading to large discrepancy in figures.

The rights of disabled children have been viewed in a serious light by many nations in the recent past in pursuance of various International Conventions and other instruments. India also being a signatory to few of such Conventions has enacted legislations specific to the disabled. In fact, now with the enactment of the Right to Education Act, there is a duty upon the government to swiftly move on the correct path and fulfil its constitutional obligations in providing free and compulsory

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* Written text of Mahatma Gandhi Fourth Memorial Lecture delivered on 25 January 2011 at NIE Auditorium, NCERT, New Delhi by Justice Ajit Prakash Shah.
** *Retired Chief Justice* of the High Court of Delhi.

education to disabled children. However, the measures in the said Act, as also in the other legislations in India are inadequate and do not hold a great amount of promise for children with special needs as most measures in these enactments are short-sighted. Therefore, there is an urgent need to study the models of other nations which have enacted legislations in this field so as to gain a better insight into the flaws from which our systems continue to suffer.

The lecture touches upon the crucial debate whether it is justified to continue with the system of special schools or should an all-out effort be made to abolish such system of education and provide a complete inclusive education to such disabled children since such special schools have the tendency to further alienate such children from the mainstream way of education. It is also to be considered whether such a move is tenable given the present scenario and limited resources at hand.

It is, therefore, evident that educational measures for the disabled have been highly myopic in India and the government is increasingly finding it difficult to tackle this problem. The solution however, lies in not viewing these measures and policies and compensatory in nature, but realising that such children with disabilities are equally human and have certain fundamental rights, including the right to receive effective education, which cannot be sacrificed at the altar of negligence and unpreparedness of the government.

RIGHT TO EDUCATION OF THE DISABLED

I am conscious of the honour in being invited to deliver the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Lecture at one of India's leading institutions for educating children. Gandhiji has influenced our lives for several decades now. His approach to most issues was down to earth and holistic, be it social, cultural, economic, health or education. He envisioned a complete transformation of the system of education by way of his social philosophy and the curriculum of what he called 'basic education', which favoured the child belonging to the lowest stratum of society. Therefore, Gandhiji's vision of employing education as a process of social transformation sought to alter the symbolic meaning of 'education' and to change the established structure of opportunities for education.

For Mahatma Gandhi, education meant an all-round development of the faculties, best attained through action. He believed that mere thrust of information on the mind only puts an unnecessary burden on the memory and does not lead to any real gain. Therefore, imparting education should be a wholesome and complete process and not be an isolated exercise. Such a holistic education helps an individual to navigate all the predicaments of life leading to development of a well-balanced

personality. He also believed that every individual child should have full opportunity for the balanced and harmonious development of all her/his faculties and should acquire the capacity for self-reliance in every aspect of a clean, healthy and cultured life, together with an understanding of the social, political and moral implications of such a life.

Six decades after the independence, the promise of universal basic education still remains unfulfilled. By the 86th amendment the Right to Education (between the age of 6 and 14) has been declared as a fundamental right, but basic education still remains a distant dream for many. In this lecture, I have made an attempt to focus on the right to education of the most vulnerable and marginalised class, the disabled.

Disability in India

India has a huge number of persons who are afflicted with one form of disability or the other. Even with the advancements made in the field of medical science, no visible impact has been made in our country due to the sheer number of persons who are suffering from disabilities. Furthermore, in India, it is very difficult to conclusively ascertain the total number of such disabled persons as the estimates vary due to lack of unified and commonly accepted definition and understanding of disability. The two data sets that are largely relied upon for this purpose are the 2001 Census and the 2002 National Sample Survey (58th Round).[1]

The 2001 Census, which covers five types of disability, gave prevalence rate of 2.13 per cent or 21.91 million people with disabilities out of the total population of 1028 million.[2] The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), 58th round survey arrived at figure of 1.8 per cent of the population (18.5 million) having disability. Despite the fact that such figures are by no means small, the actual number of disabled persons are grossly underestimated, especially when certain other credible data sets are also considered.[3] The Registrar General of India[4] admits that the official Indian data on disability are unreliable due to under-reporting of disability fearing social stigma. Therefore, the efforts for advancement in this area are highly impeded by such under-reporting and lack of actual data.

The fact that our country houses one of the highest numbers of disabled persons in the world raises a grave concern, especially when the right to lead a life with dignity is a fundamental right enshrined in our Constitution. In this lecture, I wish to lay stress upon the aspect of education for the disabled which, also being a fundamental right, is integral to lead one's life with dignity. Education is perceived as the most potent instrument of social change and empowerment. The value of education is in fact, more greatly felt

in a nation like ours where ills such as poverty and illiteracy threaten to diminish the sheen of national growth and development.

The Social Reality of Children with Disabilities

In India, it is a common experience that the disabled have hitherto found themselves unable to fit in the mainstream and be accepted as a part of the same. Therefore, marginalisation from the mainstream way of life is greatly prevalent among the disabled. In fact, children with disability are five times more likely to be out of school than children belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.[5] Moreover, when children with disability do attend school they rarely progress beyond the primary level, leading ultimately to lower employment chances and long-term income poverty.

In our country, unfortunately, the government's efforts for social upliftment have not been uniformly adequate across all marginal/disadvantaged sections. It would not be incorrect to say that in comparison to the other disadvantaged groups, the disabled persons have largely remained neglected. The difference between the commitment of the government in ensuring welfare of the disabled persons as compared to that of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes can be seen from the fact that Article 46 of the Constitution makes a straightforward commitment to promoting the 'special care and education' of SC/ST population, whereas Article 41 referring to children with disabilities, states:

The State shall within the limits of its economic capacity and development make effective provision for securing the right to work, old age, sickness and disablement.

The clause, within the limits of the State's economic capacity and development, gives a large amount of leeway to the government for justifying a very slow pace of implementation of welfare measures for the disabled persons and thereby ignoring its social and constitutional commitment.

As per NCERT survey, about 84,000 children with disabilities were enrolled in schools in 1998; and an unpublished data gathered for the MHRD suggested that approximately 55,000 children with disabilities were enrolled in schools in 1999.[6]

The various other data sets again give diverse figures, differing in most cases, by a large percentage. Even as per these figures, using the highest estimate of the total population of children with disabilities, less than 1 per cent of children with disabilities attend school. Surprisingly, enrolment ratios for those with disabilities aged 5 to 18 years in a mainstream school were higher in rural areas than in the urban areas.[7] The figures of enrolment also vary according to the type of disability.[8] Even the World Bank Report of 2007 and NSSO acknowledge that the

severity of impairment is an important variable, with almost three quarters of children with severe disabilities being illiterate and the same share do not attend school. At the other end, those with only mild disabilities, who do not necessarily need any aids/appliances or significant modifications in teaching and learning methods, close to one-third of these are not in school. Thus, across the levels of severity, irrespective of the nature of disability, a shared picture of lack of progress beyond primary school emerges distinctly.

IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY

As already stated above, due to the lack of unanimity of an acceptable standard/definition of disability, there is confusion with regard to the actual number of disabled persons in our country. The data however, get even more confusing when the numbers are calculated individually for each state where differences between identification rates are much higher. In Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, only 0.31 per cent and 0.7 per cent children have special needs, while in Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh, the figures are much higher at 2.45 and 2.3 per cent respectively.[9] Therefore, it is not difficult to fathom that such discrepancies in data and lack of uniform standard shall be greatly detrimental to any policy initiatives that may be undertaken for the welfare of these disabled persons. It is for this very reason of absence

of proper and correct identification methods of children with special needs, the government had launched the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA). However, even the SSA does not provide a definition of children with special needs but assumes that such a group is synonymous with children with disabilities. The various kinds of disabilities listed under the SSA are:

- Visual impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Mental retardation
- Locomotor impairment
- Learning disability
- Cerebral palsy
- Multiple disabilities, and
- Others

The SSA states that identification procedure should be carried out by a competent team comprising of doctors, eye specialist, ENT specialist, resource teachers and general teachers. However, the complete absence of parents and the child is striking as it amounts to excluding the very people from the decision-making process, for whose welfare such measures are sought to be implemented and enforced.

RIGHT TO EDUCATION AS A BASIC FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1949), the United Nations General Assembly Charter (1959) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) all acknowledged education as a human right. The Salamanca Statement and

Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994) suggested 'inclusion' in mainstream education to be the norm so that all children have the opportunity to learn. The Millennium Development Goals endorsed at the UN Millennium Development Summit (September, 2000) targeted the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger and the achievement of universal primary education as its first two goals. Therefore, with the emphasis on the importance of education universally, the idea of inclusive education and the right of a child to receive education gained strength across the world, including India.

Even before any legislative measures were undertaken by India, such as the Persons with Disabilities Act, the Supreme Court had declared in the *Mandal Commission case*[10] that even though words 'backward class of citizens' as used in Articles 15 and 16 do not cover persons with disability, the Constitutional Scheme and spirit of Article 14 allows for reservation or other kinds of affirmative action in favour of persons with disability. In the case of *Unnikrishnan J.P. vs State of Andhra Pradesh,*[11] a Constitution bench of the Supreme Court held that the right to education was a fundamental right available to all the citizens of India but the said right is available only up to the age of 14 years.

However, Right to Education, was for the first time recognised as a fundamental right in the case of *Anand Vardhan Chandel vs University of Delhi,* wherein the High Court of Delhi stated that receiving education is a vital part of 'life and personal liberty' guaranteed by way of Article 21 of the Constitution of India. The landmark though, undoubtedly came with the introduction of the 86th Constitution Amendment Act which brought about the following three insertions to the Constitution and led to the enactment of the Right to Education Act:

(1) Introduction of *Article 21-A,* which provided that the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 6-14 years in such a manner as the State may by law determine.

(2) An amendment to *Article 45*, that is the provision for early childhood care and education to children below the age of 6 years; the State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of 6 years.

(3) In *Article 51-A*, after clause (j), the following clause (k) has been inserted: *a parent or guardian shall provide opportunities for education to his children or ward between the ages of 6-14 years.*

However, the above Constitutional amendment is only a means to realise the right to education. Given the state of affairs in the education sector (especially the reality of the schools run by government bodies lacking even the basic infrastructure),

realisation of such an ideal shall only be a distant dream.

Criticism of the Right to Education (RTE) Act

India was one of the first countries to ratify the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), in October 2007, which says that *State parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education or from secondary education on the basis of disability.* Yet, children with disabilities have not been explicitly included as a category in Section 2(d) of the RTE Act, which otherwise lists children belonging to disadvantaged groups. However, the same section also allows the appropriate government to specify, by notification, any other group of children who are disadvantaged as a result of any other factor.

Free and compulsory education for children up to the age of 14 was to be realised within 10 years of adopting the Constitution of India. However, it took nearly 40 years and a few assertions by the Courts of the country to move the government to draft the first bill for amending the Constitution so as to make education a fundamental right. In 1950, when the founding fathers created the Constitution, the logic of limiting the age of compulsory schooling to 14 was ostensibly based on the prevalent system where matriculation was not important. However, today after sixty years, when one considers that the economy is growing at 8 to 9 per cent, it would be irresponsible to provide for basic education of minimum quality only up to the eighth standard. Therefore, there is an urgent need to go beyond the age group of 14 years and also include children up to 18 years.

Furthermore, as per Census 2001, there are approximately 60 million children in the age-group of 3-6 years. While the 86th Amendment to the Constitution does not cover children less than 6 years of age, it is universally accepted that there is a need for early childhood care, especially for the disabled since in many cases, a great amount of damage (sometimes irreparable) occurs in the child, both mentally and physically, during the initial years. Therefore, there is a greater need to treat these children specially and address the problem of initial care and attention of such children.

That the government is not vigorously pursuing the welfare policies of disabled persons can be understood from the fact that between the Ministry of Human Resources and Development (MHRD), and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE), there is no complete and coherent demarcation of duties with regard to education of disabled. As a result of this confusion and lack of coordination between the two ministries, the implementation of the

policy initiatives has largely suffered. Total fund allocation on children with special needs, most of which directly went to the specialist national institutions for the disabled for aids and appliances for the disabled. In the same year, a low 1.0 per cent of the total MHRD expenditure for education was allocated to the inclusive education arm of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.[12]

Legislative and Policy Framework

Till the 1960's, although the United Nations recognised the importance of education, it did not undertake any cogent effort to make education a fundamental right. It was only after the coming in force of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 that the United Nations started viewing education as a right. Thereafter, in 1989, the rights of a child were further crystallised in form of Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Many countries have long been trying to address the need to spread education as one of its top priorities keeping in mind the international commitments (conventions, treaties, etc.) as well as its impending domestic needs. These international mandates and policy frameworks have been instrumental in providing an impetus to the efforts of the nations which have ratified these mandates.

However, apart from recognising the importance of imparting education, the International frameworks have also realised that the disabled children equally have a right to be empowered with this instrument of social change.[13] *The 1989 United Nation Convention on the Rights of Child*[14] states that disabled children have the 'right to achieve participation in the community and their education should lead to the fullest possible social integration and emotional development'. The 1990 *World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs*[15] states that the learning needs of the disabled demand special attention. *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994)*[16] stipulates that disabled children should attend neighborhood school. It declares that regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. India has been a signatory to all these declarations.

All these international mandates played an important role in highlighting the situation of people with disabilities, especially in the field of education. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that many of these mandates have shaped new national legislations and policies. The following legislations have been enacted in our country as a result of increase in importance of the rights of the disabled persons:

• *Rehabilitation Council of India Act* (1992): states that children with

special needs will be taught by a trained teacher
- *Persons with Disabilities Act* (1995): educational entitlement for all children with special needs up to 18 years in an appropriate environment.
- *National Trust Act* (1999): provide services and support to severely disabled children.

These enactments have further helped shape the comprehensive National Action Plan for Inclusion in Education of the Children and Persons with Disabilities,[17] and the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities in 2006.[18] Over the years, the government has launched various programmes and schemes such as the Project Integrated Education of the Disabled Children (PIEDC) launched in 1987 in collaboration with UNICEF. Thereafter, the Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) scheme, which was initially launched in 1974, was subsequently revised in 1992. This scheme was shifted from the Ministry of Welfare to the Department of Education and greater assistance was provided to children with disabilities in mainstream schools. The IEDC is currently operative and offers financial assistance towards the salary of teachers, assessment and provision of aids and appliances, training of special teachers, removal of architectural barriers, provision of instructional materials, community mobilisation, early detection and resource support. It covers 15,000 schools and has enrolled a total of 60,000 children.

After India became signatory to the Salamanca Statement, 1994, a substantial shift towards 'inclusive education' was seen. With regard to inclusive education, it is important to consider two government reports, i.e. the Sargent Report, 1944,[19] and the Kothari Commission.[20] Both these reports recommended the adoption of a 'dual approach' to meet the educational needs of these children. These reports suggested that children with disabilities should not be segregated from normal children; rather, integrated education should be adopted. The Kothari Commission observed that many challenged children find it psychologically disturbing to be placed in an ordinary school and in such cases they should be sent to special schools. The Sargent Report also endorsed similar recommendations. Thus, both these reports stressed the need to expand special and integrated facilities. This dual approach continued for the next 20 years and was reaffirmed in the National Policy of Education.[21]

However, it would not be wrong to say that the traditional understanding of disability in our country is based on a 'medical' or 'compensatory' model. Such a model, being largely in the nature of an affirmative action only seeks to undo the wrongs that the disabled have suffered at the hands of the non-disabled. This model does not tend to

grant such facets as a matter of right to such disabled persons, thereby undermining the fact that the persons with disability are equally human and have as much a right to live with dignity as any other non-disabled persons. However, in our society, it has been commonly understood that unless the children are cured of the disability, they will not be able to participate in the mainstream society. One of the consequences of medical model of understanding of disability is the segregation of disabled people. The distress and humiliation caused by such enforced segregation is intensified by neglect and a disturbing lack of care.

Even the Persons with Disability Act has a medical perspective. Though the Disability Act deals with education rights, the nature of the Act is not rights based but the governments are being asked to do the best they can for persons with disabilities. Capability development of persons with disabilities on an equal basis with non-disabled persons is not conceived by the Disability Act. It is rather concerned with allowing concessions to persons with disabilities.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Since the legal and policy framework in India is grossly inadequate and has so far not been very effective. Thus, there is an urgent need to bring in a great amount of change in the system by which we are seeking to bring the disabled children into the mainstream education. However, experiences of the disabled children with regard to implementation and effectiveness of inclusive education has varied. In some cases, the experience has been quite positive and fruitful. Therefore, there is a need to study the education systems of such nation states in order to better understand the lacunae in our own system. The Special Education systems of a few nations are given as hereunder:

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Early American judicial decisions on special education indicate that till the late sixties, the education of disabled children was not a priority for the lawmakers.[22] The Supreme Court of Massachusetts in 1893 upheld the expulsion from a public school of a child who was 'weak in mind.'[23]

In 1919, the Wisconsin Supreme Court affirmed a lower court decision authorising the exclusion from a public school district of a child who had the academic and physical ability to benefit from school, but who drooled uncontrollably, had a speech impediment, and exhibited facial contortions.[24] This type of unchecked discrimination against challenged children continued until the mid-1900s. The Illinois Supreme Court ruled in 1958 that legislation requiring compulsory education for children and establishing programmes for challenged children did not require that a public education be provided for a mentally impaired child.[25]

Legislations of many states allowed the exclusion of any child whenever school administrators decided that the child would not benefit from public education or that the child's presence would be disruptive to others. The same can be illustrated by the examples of a North Carolina statute which authorised criminal charges against parents who persisted in forcing the attendance of a challenged child after the school administrator had excluded the child from a public school.

However, by the late 1960s, the appalling condition of special education services was brought to the nation's attention by the civil rights movement and President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. Public pressure on elected officials and school administrators to change existing policies escalated as special needs children assigned to 'dummy' classes became targets of prejudice and discrimination by their peers and some teachers. The problems manifested as a result of under-education, social stigma and emotional trauma to challenged children prompted concerned parents and citizens to call for urgent changes.[26]

During the early 1970s, there were two decisions which articulated and essentially established the challenged child's right to a free appropriate public education: *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children* (PARC) vs *Pennsylvania*[27] and *Mills* vs *Board of Education*.[28]

In both these cases, it was held that equal protection requires that children with disabilities be also accorded the same access to a public education as other children and that parents have due process rights related to their children's education.

As a direct response to the PARC and Mills cases, the US Congress enacted the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA). The EAHCA was thereafter amended and is now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The primary purpose of the EAHCA was to grant financial aid to the states to enable them to provide challenged children with a free appropriate public education. Congress desire that parents need not resort to litigation to remedy their children's educational deprivation was also an important factor in the drafting of the EAHCA. However, a lack of specificity in drafting and subsequent Supreme Court interpretations of the EAHCA led to extensive litigation.

These Acts established the specific right of children with special needs to 'free appropriate public education' and also gave parents of such children the right to participate in and to challenge decisions made about their children's education. This new regime of laws emphasises the need for inclusiveness by laying down that as far as possible, challenged children are to be educated in regular classrooms. These Acts also specifically call for a substantial increase in funding for special education by state and local

governments. There is also an impetus under these Acts to bring back special children into the mainstream, who had previously been excluded from public education.

Under these acts, Although the school officials still retain primary control over the manner of education of these special children, but the introduction of increased parental rights and their assertive participation have greatly benefitted the children in the decision-making process by exercising a meaningful check on school officials' discretion.

Salient Features of the IDEA[29]

The IDEA is considered to be the backbone of the initiatives in the American state. Some of the key features of this Act are as hereunder:

A. Identification

A school district's obligation to locate and identify children with disabilities lasts until a child turns twenty-one. Not all disabilities are apparent early on, and many disabilities result from injuries or serious illnesses which can occur in a child's later years.

B. Referral

Children with suspected disabilities are 'referred' for consideration of whether the child has a disability requiring services. The most common referrals are from teachers and parents, but the district has an obligation to consider a referral from anyone with relevant information.

C. Evaluation

If the decision is made to evaluate a child, evaluation procedures must be completed within sixty calendar days from the date the parents receive notice of the decision to evaluate. The purpose of the evaluation is to establish eligibility for special education, provide the basis for planning the child's programme, determine any necessary related services and decide the child's placement.

D. Annual Review

Each year the school is required to conduct a review of the disabled children to ascertain the student's progress and to consider revisions. Placement in special education must also be reviewed annually.

E. Due Process

When disagreements arise between the parents and the school district about eligibility, evaluation, programming or placement, a due process hearing procedure may be invoked to resolve disputes.

F. Least Restrictive Environment

The term Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) has been applied to the requirement that in order to receive funding under the IDEA, states must ensure the following:

To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are

educated with children who are not disabled and that special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

G. Related Services

Related services provided under IDEA are transportation, and such other developmental, corrective and other supportive services (including speech pathology and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, social work services counselling services, including rehabilitation counselling and medical services except that such medical services shall be for diagnostic and evaluation purposes only) as may be required to assist a child with disability to benefit from special education and includes the early identification and assessment of disabling conditions in children.

The United States Supreme Court in *Board of Education* vs *Rowley*[30] made it clear that the IDEA does not entitle a child to enable him to reach his maximum potential. The IDEA ensures an 'appropriate' education, not the 'best' education. However, courts interpreting Rowley have made it clear that the educational benefit must be 'meaningful' and not de minimus. For example, the Constitution of West Virginia states that 'the Legislature shall provide, by general law, for a thorough and efficient system of free schools'. This particular provision came before the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia in *Pauley* vs *Kelly*,[31] held that a thorough and efficient system of schools is one which develops, as best the state of education expertise allows, the minds, bodies and social morality of its charges to prepare them for useful and happy occupations, recreation and citizenship, and does so economically.

The Experience in U.S.A.

The goal of ensuring access to public education for students with disabilities has largely been met. Children with disabilities have moved in massive numbers from institutions, home education, or no education to their neighbourhood public schools. They have gone from learning in segregated environments to learning in regular education classrooms with non-disabled peers. Disabilities are being identified at a younger age, and many more infants and toddlers are receiving early intervention services. The IDEA has been a major force behind this progress, but credit is also due to parents and educators and to a general change in people's attitudes about children with disabilities.

United Kingdom

The U.K. has two significant legislations in Education Act, 1980 (for England and Wales) and the

Education (Scotland) Act, 1981. These Acts have greatly altered the rights of not only the children to receive education, but also that of their parents with regard to the admissions in school.[32]

Under these Acts, firstly the parents have a right to request a particular school for their children. Secondly, the child must be admitted to the school unless a statutory ground of refusal exists. In England and Wales, officials could refuse the request, if granting, it would cause 'prejudice to the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources'. In Scotland, the primary ground of refusal was stated more restrictively; schools could refuse parents' requests only if granting them was 'likely to be seriously detrimental to order and discipline at the school or the educational well-being of the pupils there' or would require the hiring of new teachers or significant extensions or alterations to the school. The Scottish legislation limited justifications for refusing parents' school requests to conditions at the requested school.

The vague standard in the English and Welsh legislation allowed education authorities to use a much broader range of concerns to justify refusals, including conditions at other schools or in the authority generally. When officials refused a parent's request, parents could appeal to a local appeal committee. In Scotland, parents had a further appeal to the Sheriff (the lowest trial court judge).

In English law, the development of rights to education is limited by several factors, the most fundamental being the very nature of the British Constitution. The United Kingdom does not have a written Constitution and supremacy of Parliament is unchallenged. As a result, the courts do not have the power to strike down statutes which deny access to education on discriminatory grounds. However, an analysis of the English statutes reveals that they have been carefully drafted to avoid this possibility.

The U.K. legislations do not confer express rights to an education on children or parents. Education is universal and compulsory (up to age sixteen), but this is achieved by imposing duties on the Secretary of State for Education, Local Education Authorities (LEA) and parents which, collectively, secure a suitable education for every child. Thereafter, the parents who feel that the Local Education Authority (LEA) is failing to satisfy its statutory duties may complain to the Secretary of State, who has a corresponding power to direct the LEA to act.

Canada

The Canadian Human Rights Act, 1977 makes it unlawful to discriminate in the area of access to education on the ground of disability. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees equal opportunities to all Canadians, including those with a 'physical or mental disability'.[33]

Access to education for disabled children tends to be dealt within the context of provincial inclusive education policies. In Canada, school districts are allowed to develop alternative achievement standards for children falling in different categories. *The National Council on Disability's 2008* review found that the development of these alternatives is uneven between states and generally lags behind the actual needs. In the leading Supreme Court case, Board of Education of the *Hendrick Hudson Central School District* vs *Rowley*, the Court held that 'personalised instruction with sufficient support services to permit the child to benefit educationally from the instruction is required'. Cases since Rowley have determined that the programme must provide for more than '*de minimus* or trivial academic achievement' but is not required to offer 'every available service necessary to maximise a disabled child's potential'.

The limits to reasonable accommodation in Canada are set out in a Supreme Court case titled *British Columbia (Public Service Employee Relations Commission)* vs *BCGSEU*, known as the Meiorin case. The case outlined the relevant anti-discrimination provisions, explained the requirements for reasonable accommodation (and conversely undue hardship) and further described other anti-harassment and anti-bullying provisions in favour of the disabled children.

The Meiorin test for reasonable accommodation requires that the accommodation must:
- be rationally connected to the function to be performed
- be adopted in good faith
- be reasonably necessary to achieve the purpose or goal, and
- not impose an undue hardship on the service provider.[34]

In Canada, a number of state Human Rights Commissions have also developed guidelines for 'accommodating students with a disability', for example, Ontario and New Brunswick state commissions.

Australia

There are several legislations in Australia that address the issue of discrimination in the education sector:

Disability Discrimination Act, 1992 and the National Disability Standards for Education (2005)

The *Federal Disability Discrimination Act,* 1992 (FDDA) provides for the Attorney-General to issue mandatory standards covering any aspect of disabled people's right to participate fully in society. The Disability Standards for Education came into effect in 2005 and set out definitions of key concepts such as adjustments, reasonable adjustments and 'on the same basis', the phrase used extensively in the disability convention. The exceptions relate to unjustifiable hardship, protection of public health and special measures.

The *Disability Discrimination Act,* 1992 imposes legal obligations and duties on schools in relation to students with a disability.

Section 22 of the Act states that it is unlawful for a school to discriminate against a student on the grounds of his or her disability by:

• Refusing or failing to accept his or her application for admission as a student,

• Denying or limiting him or her access to any benefit provided by the school or expelling the student or by subjecting the student to any other detriment,

• Developing curricula that will either exclude him or her from participation or subject him or her to any other detriment or by accrediting curricula having such content.

NEW SOUTH WALES EDUCATION ACT, 1990

The principles of this Act include that:

• every child has the right to receive an education,

• the education of a child is primarily the responsibility of the child's parents,

• it is the duty of the State to ensure that every child receives an education of the highest quality,

• the principal responsibility of the State in the education of children is the provision of public education.

Section 20 of the Act relates to assistance for government school children with special needs. This section of the Act was amended in 2008 to include children with a significant learning difficulty as a category of children who may require additional support. The Education Act is also read with the *New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act,* 1977 which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race and disability amongst other things. Disability is broadly defined under this Act in similar terms as under the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act,* 1992.

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (CRPD)

Recognition of rights of the disabled persons across many countries even prompted the United Nations to enact a convention entirely dedicated to the rights of such disabled persons in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which is a detailed instrument.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted on 13 December 2006. The goal of disabilities convention is stated as promoting, protecting and ensuring the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities.

At various points in the Convention, different rights such as right to life and liberty, right to equality before law, right to work, right to health, right to education, etc., are simply 'reaffirmed', or the convention obliges states to 'recognise' and

'guarantee' them. The very fact that these previously existing rights have been reaffirmed shows that these basic rights have hitherto not been properly accorded to the disabled since history has consistently been unkind to disabled people. Therefore, the Convention not only seeks to bring all the human rights of persons with disabilities under the same roof but also pushes towards making the existing rights applicable to persons with disabilities. The Convention makes a very significant step in recognising that persons with disabilities are entitled to the same rights as all human beings.

Although the Convention is not specifically described as an anti-discrimination convention in the same mould as CEDAW and CERD, there is no doubt that a concern about discrimination is at its core.[35] Although the anti-discrimination part of the Disabilities Convention does not do much in terms of renewing the concept of the human rights, the Convention outlines a number of key characteristics of the rights which are not otherwise specified in major international human rights instruments and therefore, the disabled group has continually suffered by such exclusion. The rights in this convention focus on the societal dimension of the rights experience, thereby departing from human rights' traditional emphasis on the relationship of the individual to the state. Thus, this Convention shows more sensitivity

to the mainstream human rights framework than was typically done by the previous instruments since the particular circumstances of disability have made it necessary to address them by way of a separate instrument. However, most significantly, the Convention stresses upon the need of mainstreaming and inclusive participation as a separate and equally important right.

Article 24 of the CRPD discusses education to the disabled and states that States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and life-long learning directed to full development of human potential and sense of dignity, talents and creativity, mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential and enabling such persons to participate effectively in a free society.

INDIA'S OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE CRPD

By ratifying the CRPD, India has accepted the two-fold obligation to review all its laws and policies to bring them in line with the Convention and take measures against any action or practice that contravenes the Convention. Although the Right to Education provides for free and compulsory education to children between 6 and 14 years. However, keeping in mind that challenged children need special measures, challenged persons between 3 and 18 years should receive free and compulsory education irrespective of their physical, sensory or cognitive

impairments. This is so because children with disability suffer the maximum amount of damage early on in their life, which in some cases is also irreversible. Therefore, there is a need to identify such children at a very early age and take urgent steps for their educational welfare.

Inclusiveness vs Special Education

The processes of educating the challenged children or 'special education' came to India in the last two decades of the 19th century through Christian missionaries. While special education enables the teachers to focus on the needs of the challenged children and these special schools are equipped with the resources that are required as per the needs of the challenged children. However, the special education system in the Indian scenario turns out be an expensive investment and other alternatives need to be evaluated, analysed and decided upon soon, so that the goal of 'Education for All' is realised as it is not cost-effective in the rural area where the infrastructure is not at par with the urban India. It also leads to the segregation of the disabled and the same time is also considered to be violation of the Human Rights as it leads to the formation of a specific disability culture.[36]

The idea of inclusion and thereby making the disabled children as part of the mainstream has gained strength in many countries now. The experience across the world shows that special educational services has failed to provide appropriate educational services to children with disabilities and therefore, most students with disabilities must be taught in regular schools and classes. Special educational practices have very little positive impact on student achievement and this system contributes to the excessive fragmentation of the student's overall educational experience. If a child is suffering from a certain ailment, it is the duty of the state to bring the child at par with the others by way of including her/him in the mainstream schools, although with any additional support services that are required.

However, at this stage in our country, it would be too early to say that no special schools are required and all such existing special schools should be done away with. Since the difficulty in handing children with different kinds of disabilities varies with the severity of disability, recourse of enrollment of such children should be only when the nature of challenged is so severe that reconciliation of such children with the mainstream is not possible in any manner. Even if the special schools are to be completely eliminated and the challenged children must only be taught in regular schools, the vision, although noble, cannot be fulfilled overnight. There are a large number of factors and concerns that have to be addressed first, such as sensitising the non-disabled and creating awareness about disabilities, putting

in place an adequate infrastructure for the disabled, training teachers to aptly handle and encourage such challenged children, etc., before the dream of a complete inclusive education can be realised. Having said that, it is the fundamental duty of the state to provide for equally efficient system of education for such children, as also the fundamental right of such children to receive education, and therefore, the state cannot shirk from its responsibility by giving the excuse of budgetary constraints for not mainstreaming these children.

Barriers in Implementing Inclusive Education

While the importance of inclusive education cannot be ignored, yet the said agenda is not short of a number of problems that are holding back the implementation of inclusive education on a large and varied scale. The problems in implementation persist both at the level of government policy and also at the level of implementation. While the policy would mandate that all children should go to school, in many cases, quality learning is not taking place, which is contradictory to the ethos of inclusive education. The reasons for the non-implementation of the inclusive education in India can be attributed to a number of factors which are both internal and external in nature. The external barriers exist before a challenged child before coming to and getting enrolled in schools, which includes physical location of schools, non-availability of school, social stigmatisation or economic conditions of the learners.[37]

The internal barriers are mostly psychological like self-concept, confidence, etc., which are sometimes imposed by the external factors and first step to remove the internal barriers is to remove the external barriers. On the other hand, external barriers are the attitudinal barriers of the non-disabled towards the disabled, cost barriers in putting in place a mechanism for special education, barriers of lack of infrastructure and barriers caused by lack of specially trained teachers.

Concluding Remarks

There have been several enactments of legislations and various policy initiatives in our country in keeping pace with the development of the law for the disabled in various other countries as a result of international conventions. Underlying all of this is the deep sense that the existence of an education system gives rise to individual rights in children and parents. This principle is based on the idea that the allocation of educational resources must not be based solely on the aggregate public benefit; it is not purely a matter of a public investment, where the only important consideration is the maximisation of the public welfare (however that might be measured). Children have a stake in their own education which the state must acknowledge and

protect. The underlying assumption is that the education system does not exist primarily for the benefit of society generally, but for the benefit of individual members within society. Children are stakeholders in their education; hence, it is entirely appropriate to relate the state's duty to provide a system of education to the interests of individual child.

In India, the education policy has lacked foresight and vision, and whenever problems have arisen, rather than tackling the problem, the authorities have seen fit to change the policy to suit the circumstances. It is, therefore, high time that the legislators stopped viewing imparting of education to the disabled as a compensatory or a medical measure, but realised that such children are also human having an equal and fundamental right to receive the best possible education for their future development.

There is another important facet which cannot be overlooked is the quality of general education being offered in Indian schools, which has come under scrutiny and highlights a pressing need which demands a critical engagement and re-examination of a general education system. Changes in the classroom require simultaneous development of reforms in professional development, curriculum, alongside a change in attitudes and beliefs as reflected in the culture of the school. While it is essential that teachers are made aware of and assisted in developing innovative teaching strategies, such a skewed focus on knowledge underplays the need for focusing upon and changing values, beliefs and attitudes. There is a need for re-examining perceptions around the values and purposes of education for children with disabilities. The on-going debates around 'inclusion' in India might provide the impetus for a critical reflection on the current teaching practices and educational policies. Inclusion needs a different school culture, and this might be an opportunity for the Indian education system to critically re-examine its many failings to enable the purposeful participation of the nation's children. It should, and will be our objective to make mainstream education not just available but accessible, affordable and appropriate for students with disabilities.

It is clear that to fulfil the goal of 'Education for All' there has to be constant monitoring of children with special needs and disabilities. Because of the advent of special education, and the segregation, thereof, the general population is not exposed to the challenged people and don't know how to react. The people in the mainstream society do not get an opportunity to interact with these people and therefore are not sensitised to their needs. If we, as a society, are exposed to challenged people, from the very inception and interact with them, the phenomena of de-labeling will also gain strength.

The Way Forward
Access to Inclusive Education

Persons with disabilities should not be excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and government should ensure that all such persons have access to an inclusive education system. This inclusive education should include free and compulsory primary and secondary education. The system should be aimed at the fully developing the human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, development of talents and creativity as well as their mental and physical abilities.

Improving the Overall Quality of Education

Another important and overarching aspect would be move swiftly towards a better quality of education and schools, especially, the government schools or the schools in rural areas. The appalling standards of government and municipal schools are evident by regular incidents on absenteeism and neglect on the part of the teachers in such schools. Once the overall quality of education is increased in our country, it shall automatically lead to an enhanced and faster rate of enrolment and training of challenged children into the mainstream education system.

The government must also raise adequate resources in order to fructify the dream of right to education in its true spirit. Thus, it is suggested that the government should allocate more resources to education than the current spending on this sector at the moment.

Identification of Children with Disabilities

There is an urgent need to update the process of identification of children with disabilities since the total number of identified children with disabilities to total population of all children in the age group of 6 to 14 at 1.48 per cent is very low.[38] Therefore, it is required that the government must employ specially trained surveyors, enumerators and other government functionaries at all levels, especially the grass root levels. A study by MHRD has revealed that 40 per cent of all out-of-school children are children with special needs. This requires an early identification of such children be given due importance.[39]

Reasonable Accommodation in Education

The Government should ensure that reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements is provided at all levels of the education system, such as individualised support, facilitating the learning of Braille and alternative script, orientation and mobility skills, facilitating peer support and mentoring, facilitating the learning of sign language and employing teachers qualified in sign language and/or braille, and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education.

Right to Support

Every child with disability has the right to receive necessary, adequate and appropriate support, such as educational institutions being easily accessible to the disabled, free supply of books in formats which the child understands including braille, plain language, large print, etc., the free supply of assistive devices required by the child, transport facilities to children or in the alternative financial incentives to parents and guardians to enable children to attend school, scholarships for students with disabilities with preference to girls with disabilities, extra time to complete tests and examinations as appropriate.

Parental Rights and Accountability

Since parents have primary responsibility for their children's education, their concerns should be respected when possible. In addition, school officials can make mistakes in some cases, and reliance on bureaucratic procedures and standards may result in officials' overlooking important special circumstances in particular cases. Parents can correct officials' mistakes or their having overlooked special circumstances. Parental rights and accountability would increase their participation and influence over decisions concerning their children's education.

It is necessary to evaluate the claims of the rights holders, i.e., the children and their parents and balance the same with the corresponding duty of office bearers. In the context of education, there exists a relationship between the state and the child, the child and the parent, the state and the parent and thus, the law should be very clear how each of these relationships are to be regulated. The nature of legally enforceable claims that a child and his parents would have against the state and the schools should be outlined, i.e., minimum entitlements (both qualitative and quantitative) should clearly be specified in law.

In addition to this, initiatives should be taken to launch programmes for training parents and community members in order for them to be sensitised on how to support children with disabilities.

Right to Higher Education

No person with disability should be denied admission in a higher education institution by reason of his/her disability if he/she fulfil all the requirements for such admission. It should be mandated that all higher educational institutions should reserve not less than six per cent of the seats in each course for persons with disabilities.

Qualified Teachers

Presently, there are about 40,000 registered special educators in the entire country. Therefore, this shortfall in specialised personnel can only be met by restructuring the educational courses for teachers in order to ensure that every teacher is

qualified and trained to understand and address the needs of challenged children. Therefore, the current curriculum of education for teachers should necessarily include training programmes and vice versa, every special educator should also be made to undergo general education curriculum. All educators should be trained to teach a student with disabilities in an inclusive classroom. These teachers should assess the learning ability of each child and accordingly supplement additional instructions, as required and also hold regular meetings with parents and guardians of children to apprise them of a child's ability to learn, progress in learning and any other relevant information about the child. There have been instances whereby the Courts have focused on this aspect by giving due importance and encouragement to extensively cultivate special educators. In a judgement delivered by the Delhi High Court, it was held that these special educators should be paid at par with the teachers of regular courses. However, despite the said judicial pronouncement, the Government has failed to implement any such measure.

Establishment of the Education Reform Commission

The Government should establish a body in the nature of an Education Reform Commission whose task would be to ensure an effective participation of all stakeholders in the process of formulation, implementation and monitoring of the curriculum and related programmes and policies, including disabled and non-disabled children, teachers and parents.

Strengthening the Administrative Machinery

At present, the National Advisory Council and the State Advisory Councils, envisaged under the Right to Education Act, do not include any disability experts. However, these disability experts are required to be inducted into such advisory councils for addressing the educational needs of challenged children and thereby making education more inclusive.

It is also suggested that it is vital to constitute 'resource groups' in the form of local organisations and NGOs at state and district levels for better management and co-ordination and therefore, leading to more effective planning and management.

Furthermore, a National and other state level authorities must also be created which would be in the nature of redressal forums where issues, such as denial of admission, incorrect identifications or refusal of identification of disability, unnecessary discrimination, lack of support and infrastructure, etc., can be addressed by providing a legal framework. This alternate mechanism of resolution of disputes is required to make the process of redressal of grievances of challenged children and their parents, less cumbersome.

Notes and References

[1]National Sample Survey, July-December, 2002.

[2]Census 2001.

[3]The World Health Organisation estimates a global prevalence rate of 10 per cent. A leading Indian disability NGO, the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People, holds that 5 to 6 per cent of our population is disabled. A World Bank Report (2007) states that actual numbers in India could easily be around 40 million people, and perhaps as high as 80-90 million if more inclusive definitions of both mental illness and mental retardation in particular were used.

[4]*Reaching the Marginalised.* Education of Children with Disabilities in India. 2009. Dr Nidhi Singhal, Education for all Global Monitoring Report.

[5]*World Bank Report.* 2007. People with Disabilities in India: From Commitments to Outcomes, World Bank: Washington.

[6]Mukhopadhyay, S. and Mani, M.N.G. 2002. Education of children with special needs. In Govinda, R. (Ed.).

[7]NSS 58th round (July-December. 2008).

[8]Almost one in every three children with disabilities in elementary classes has some problem in moving (28.56 per cent). About 24 per cent are visually handicapped, 12 per cent hard-of-hearing, 12 per cent disabled in speech, about 17 per cent are mentally retarded and 7 per cent have other disabilities.

[9]Nidhi Singhal. 2009. *"Education for Children with Disabilities in India."* A Background paper for EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010. UNESCO. Paris.

[10]1992 Supp (3) SCC 212.

[11]1993 1 SCC 645.

[12]Analysing problems with the implementation of inclusive education policies in India using Multiple Governance Framework, Monika Nangia.

[13]The UN General Assembly declared 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons and thereafter declared 1983-1992 as the Decade of the Disabled; followed by the UNESCAP Decade of the Disabled Persons from 1993-2002. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 emphasises upon 'The Right to Education'.

Protocol 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights, 1952, states that no person shall be denied the right to education.

According to UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education,1960, the States' parties to this convention undertake to formulate, develop and apply a national policy which will tend to promote equality of opportunity and of treatment and in particular to make primary education free and compulsory.

Montreal Declaration on Intellectual Disabilities (2004) lays down that under no circumstance should and individual with an intellectual disability be considered completely incompetent to make decisions because of his or her disability. Article 12 of the International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabililties states that persons with disabilities have the right to recognition everywhere as persons before the law.

[14]Articles 23 and 24

[15]Article III

[16]Article IV

[17]Ministry of Human Resources and Development, 2005.

[18]Initiated by the Ministry for Social Justice and Empowerment.

[19]Central Advisory Board of Education, 1944.

[20]Education Commission, 1966.

[21]Ministry of Human Resources and Development, 1986.

[22]Philip, T.K. Daniel and Karen Bond Coriell, Traversing the Sisyphean Trails of the Education for all Challenged Children's Act: An Overview, Ohio Northern University Law Review, 1992 (18 Ohio N.U.L.Rev.571).

[23]Watson v. City of Cambridge, 32 N.E. 864 (Mass. 1893).

[24]Beattie v. Board of Education, 172 N.W. 153 (Wis. 1919).

[25]Department of Pub. Welfare V. Haas, 154 N.E. 2d 265 (III.1958).

[26]David Neal and David L. Kirp., The Allure of Legalization Reconsidered: The Case of Special Education, 48 LAW and CONTEMP. PROBS., 63,68 (1985).

[27]343 F. Supp. 279 (E.D. Pa.1972).

[28]348 F.Supp. 866 (D.D.C. 1972).

[29]The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Sharon C. Streett, University of Arkansas at Little Rock Law Journal Fall, 1996.

[30]458, U.S. 176, 192-94 (1982).

[31]255 S.E. 2d 859 (W.Va. 1979).

[32]25 J.L. and Educ. 389, *Journal of Law and Education, Summer,* 1996, The Law of Special Education in the United States and England: Civil Rights and Public Duties, Tom Allen.

[33]*World Health Organisation Report,* Young People with Disability in Physical Education/Physical Activity/Sport in and Technical Report for the World Health Organisation.

[34]Undue hardship in Canadian jurisprudence is commonly considered to have three elements—excessive costs, serious risk to health and safety and the impact on other people and programmes.

[35]The Disabilities Convention: Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities or Disability Rights? Frederic Megret.

[36]Ensuring Disabled People: their Right to Education, K.S. Bagga, India Law Journal.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Census, 2001.

[39]Report of Committee to suggest followup action on Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan vis-a-vis the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.

Teachers' Day Speech by the President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee at the Presentation of National Award to Teachers

New Delhi: 5 September 2014

1. I am delighted to be with you today on the occasion of the presentation of the National Awards on Teachers' Day. I extend my heartiest congratulations to all the teachers who are receiving the Award for their commendable work and service to the nation. Today, the 5th of September, is the birth anniversary of the former President of India Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, a great philosopher, thinker, scholar and educationist of the country. Very many years ago, he had perceptively remarked and I quote, *"Education should be imparted with a view to the type of society that we wish to build. We are working for a modern democracy built on the values of human dignity and equality. These are only ideals: we should make them living forces. Our vision of the future should include these great principles" – Unquote.*
The Teachers' Day celebration is a mark of our respect and gratitude to the teaching community.

2. Children are the future of the nation. They are, in fact, the foundation on which a strong, vibrant and dynamic India shall be built. Children are exposed in their formative years most to their parents and teachers, who have a tremendous responsibility towards inculcating in their young minds a sense of values, discipline, dedication and commitment to the nation. A robust and quality-oriented education system is the force multiplier that shall transform India into one of the

leading nations of the world. We as a nation are now investing substantially in our education system. In the Union Budget for 2014-15, Government has allocated an amount of almost Rs. 29,000 crore for 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' and approximately another Rs. 5000 crore for 'Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan'. Other important initiatives include launching of a School Assessment Programme and the 'Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya New Teachers Training Programme' for imparting new training tools and motivating teachers.

3. In the era of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), teaching-learning processes are changing. Teachers have to keep pace with rapidly changing technologies. It is vital for teachers to be comfortable in using ICT and to ensure that students get full benefit of ICT and emerge as citizens knowledgeable in the use of the information technology with the aim of pursuing higher education or entering the job market with relevant IT skills. To take advantage of the reach of the IT, Government has in the recent budget made allocations for setting up virtual classrooms as Communication Linked Interface for Cultivating Knowledge (CLICK) and online courses.

4. Teachers influence the life of students by being their role models. They are the beacons of light who guide and motivate students throughout their academic life and, many a time, even beyond. India today needs many more competent and willing teachers to dedicate themselves to improving the standard and quality of education being currently imparted. Teachers have a vital role to play in the process of upgrading the quality of education which is a direct consequence and outcome of the quality of teachers.

5. A teacher ideally is one who facilitates his students in realising and maximising their potential. In recognition of this stellar role, teachers have since time immemorial been accorded a special place in our society. They have been called *Acharyas* in our ancient texts since they transmit the norms of acceptable conduct to our future generations. It is important that they impart not only knowledge and learning but also our traditional values which form the bedrock of our civilisation dating several millennia.

6. The Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, believed that student interest in learning is sustained not only by the subject matter of study but also, most importantly, by the teacher. Gandhiji recalled his childhood days to illustrate this point. He was taught Chemistry by two teachers. The teaching of one was continuous

and without explanation; the elucidation of the other was such that Gandhiji wished the class would never end. The instruction by one was absorbing and by the other insipid. I am sure all of us have had similar experiences during our student days where we have come face-to-face with teachers who have provided the necessary spark to light our creative journey. The difference an outstanding teacher makes to the learning process is central to the spirit of inquiry that needs to be kindled in young minds. The big challenge that we in India today face is to improve the quality of teaching and learning outcomes in our schools. This cannot be done without upgrading the skill and knowledge quotient of our teachers and without involving them fully as equal partners in the nation's progress.

7. The world today faces challenges of violence, terrorism, intolerance and environmental degradation. The values of truth, tolerance, integrity, secularism and inclusiveness need to be imparted to our children to make the world a safer and better place to live in. Dear Teachers, please remember that your mentoring and your way of educating our children must be such that it transforms them into capable, knowledgeable and worthy global citizens.

8. We are aware that our teachers are working under diverse contexts and conditions. We also know that the working conditions of teachers in many places are sub-optimal. However, over time there have been substantial improvements in salary scales and in the construction of proper school buildings with toilets and drinking water. Regular upgradation programmes for teachers, in-service training and near at hand academic support systems have also been instituted across the length and breadth of our country. These constitute welcome steps, and are part of an ongoing process, aimed at making the work environment for our teachers positive and encouraging.

9. As teachers you devote countless hours of selfless service to the nation in nurturing our most valued resource – our children. Society and the country have high expectations from you. I am sure you will live up to these expectations in ample measure. I once again express my deep appreciation and gratitude to all of you, across the length and breadth of the country, who are imparting knowledge and learning to our future generations with dedication and sincerity. I also take this opportunity to congratulate all the 357 teachers who are being awarded today for their outstanding contribution in the field of education. I wish them the very best in their future endeavours.

Jai Hind!!

Violence in Elementary Schools
A Case of Assam in North-East India

Benudhar Chinara*

Soma Banerjee**

Abstract

Corporal punishment is a major and commonly known form of violence in schools that deepens the crisis in learning. In India even if corporal punishment has traditionally been integral to and socially acceptable as a means of discipline during schooling, this has often resulted in child abuse. With this background, the paper attempted to examine corporal punishment in elementary schools in terms of its policy perspective, modes of prevalence, and occurrence pattern along with students' beliefs about it. It was observed that many countries, including India have developed some legal bindings and stringent policies to ban and regulate such punishment in schools. Despite these measures, incidences of corporal punishment in Indian schools continue to occur even today. Many such unpleasant incidents too occur on daily-basis in many schools of Assam. A field-based study in some elementary schools of Nagaon District of Assam revealed that corporal punishment is given to students in terms of 'scolding' and 'physical punishment'. The range of its occurrence is much wider in rural schools than urban ones at elementary level. The type, frequency, level, and range of punishment to students by the urban teachers were lower than their rural-counterparts. Parents of rural school children supported teachers' scolding to children more than their urban counterparts. Nearly 50 per cent of rural parents and 40 per cent of urban parents punished their children physically at home. The parents irrespective of urban and rural background too believed that corporal punishments at home don't psychologically hamper the individuality and freedom of their young children. Both urban and rural school children felt humiliation equally when teachers punished them in front of other teachers, staffs and classmates in the school. It is believed that continuity of corporal punishment, not alone but along with cognate factors, in elementary schools in the long run may prove dangerous and even fatal to universalisation of elementary education and its quality which the country is striving for nearly seven decades.

 * *Professor,* Department of Education, Institute of Education, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan - 731235 West Bengal.
 ** *Research Scholar,* Department of Education, Institute of Education, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan-731235, West Bengal.

INTRODUCTION

Violence in schools is a global phenomenon. Crisis in learning are compounded by incidence of violence in schools in its varied forms: bullying, teasing, racial discrimination, use of filthy language, greetings with jeers and foul language, sexual harassment, shooting and some others. Of late, ragging has just dug its fangs into school violence. One may easily notice violence in the Indian schools but its frequency is quite often unnoticed because most of us take it for granted that school is a place free from violence. Physical punishment, playground fighting, verbal abuse, intimidation, humiliation, sexual abuse, gang violence or other form of cruel and humiliating treatment at the hands of teachers, other school staffs, senior friends, and classmates are some common experiences of this phenomenon at elementary school level. Among all, physical punishment is a widely and commonly known form of violence. According to the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (2007), the apex body in India seeking to defend child rights, physical punishment is 'understood as any action causes pain, hurt/injury and discomfort'. It includes a wide variety of methods like hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, pinching, shaking, choking, use of various objects like chalk, duster, book, stick, use of painful body structure. Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 (RTE Act 2009) included

physical punishment is one of the three components, the remaining two are mental harassment and discrimination of corporal punishment. Normally, corporal punishment is directed by a teacher in the form of 'physical punishment' and 'mental harassment, i.e. non-physical punishment' to young school children.

The usual forms of corporal punishment, such as making children stand on the bench, kneeling down, stand on one leg outside the classroom, caning, slapping and scolding for maintaining discipline often bordered on violence and abuse of children. Even if such punishments appear to be socially acceptable, they yield some kind of physical discomfort or pain and indirectly force the young school children to learn in an environment with fear, stress and anxiety but not with joy, freedom and happiness. This tends to silently affect the wellbeing, health, and personality development of the young learners and ultimately tend to create an atmosphere of anxiety and insecurity incompatible with learning process and outcomes. The ill effects of corporal punishment have been researched. The studies of Sternberg *et al.,* 1993; and Straus, 1994 found that corporal punishment yielded humiliation, loss of self respect, degradation, feeling of helplessness and lowering self-worth which in turn led to aggressive or withdrawal behaviour. The finding of (Durrant's, 2000) study showed that corporal

punishment resulted in aggregation among children. It led him to conclude that such aggression may lead to depression and suicide. A number of other studies have supported the notion that corporal punishment contributes to aggressive behaviour of children and subsequent violence in adulthood (Mondal and Das, 2011). Have any steps been taken to curb the ill effects of corporal punishment? Does corporal punishment continue to occur at school level? How frequently, in what mode and in what intensity?

POLICY PERSPECTIVE OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS

Considering the adverse effects of corporal punishment, many countries, including India have taken some steps to abolish such punishment in schools. As per the Article 19 of UN Child Rights Convention (1989) 'Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated in body or mind'. Article 28 of the same says that 'Children have the right to a good quality education. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level they can. Discipline in schools should respect children's dignity. Governments must ensure that school administrators review their discipline policies and eliminate any discipline practices involving physical or mental violence, abuse or neglect'. Studies show banning of corporal punishment in the schools by most of the countries of the world:

Argentina in 1817, United States in 1867, Netherlands in 1920, Italy in 1928, Japan in 1947, China in 1949, Sweden in 1958, Austria in 1974, Ireland in 1982, Spain in 1985, United Kingdom in 1987, Australia in 1988, New Zealand in 1990, Germany in 1993, Greece in 1998, Thailand in 2005, and Uruguay in 2008.

It was during the mid-eighties of earlier century, National Policy on Education, 1986 (1992) in India stated that 'Corporal punishment will be firmly excluded from the educational system'. Realising the dreadful impact of corporal punishment on children's psyche, the Supreme Court of India on 1 December, 2000 directed to ensure that 'Children are not subjected to corporal punishment in schools, and they receive education in an environment of freedom and dignity'. India recognises child's right to protection against corporal punishment under the Article 9a of the National Charter for Children, 2003, as well as identifies prohibition and elimination of corporal punishment in schools as a priority under the Article 7 (f) of the National Plan of Action for Children, 2005 and in the Report on Child Protection in the National Plan of Action for 2007-2012 (Progress on Banning Corporal Punishment in India, 2014).

The National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (2007) issued a circular to all state Governments to give education to children in an atmosphere 'of freedom and dignity, without fear' (Times News

Network, 2012). It has since 2007 been communicating with the State Governments to address the issue of corporal punishment in schools through issuance of guidelines and advocacy initiatives. After taking so much of actions, the problem remained same and the teachers are not adhering to the Apex Court Order and norms of other policies. The RTE Act, 2009 which became effective on 1st April, 2010 bans corporal punishment by stating 'No child shall be subjected to physical punishment or mental harassment' (Section 17, p. 6).

In Assam, Juvenile Justice (care and protection of children) Act, 2000 amended in 2006 is a legal source to corporal punishment. The Assam Non-Government Educational Institutions (Regulation and Management) Act, 2006 and Rules of 2007 under Section 16 of the Act contains the following: (a) Code of Conduct for the employee with disciplinary action: suspension for cruelty towards any students (Rules 17d); suspension for misbehaviour towards any parent, guardian, and student (Rules17c); (b) Code of conduct for teachers: 'No teacher shall be guilty of misbehaviour or cruelty towards any parent/guardian, student, teacher or employee of the institution' {Rule 24 (a) (XVI)}. How far these legal protections and policy measures have been effective in controlling and eradicating corporal punishment in schools?

INCIDENCES OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS

Corporal punishment violently caught the attention of public, policy makers and legal experts after occurrence of deadly multiple events in different places across India. One such incident is the 'death of 11-year-old Shanno Khan on April 18, 2009 following standing in the scorching sun with seven bricks on her back and getting kicks when begging for water for not knowing the English alphabet' (Samson, 2009). Samson in her study cited that corporal punishment is very common in the schools of Delhi and it is widely understood as an acceptable means of keeping the children under control. Being summoned by the principal on hearing complaint of History teacher's irregularity from Class VI students, the teacher in Malda district of West Bengal reportedly barged into their classroom with a cane and started beating them up (Maitra, 2012a). The incidents such as 'banging the head of a Class III boy on the classroom wall for playing with a classmate what led to his death' (The Times of India, 2013, May 08), 'hitting children with duster for continuously chatting classmates during class' (The Times of India, 2012, July 20), 'hitting children with duster for sudden screaming by all students in a Bengali class' (The Times of India, 2013, May 4) , 'thrashing severely children due to forgetting to do his Bengali homework despite apology' (Maitra, 2012b), and kicking

children's stomach for not being able to answer a question in mathematics' (The Times of India, 2012, November 24) by elementary school teachers are some of the testimonies. The cases of 'stripping of a 13-year-old girl studying in Class VIII in front of teachers for allegedly stealing a cash of Rs 50/-' (Chakraborty, 2012), and 'pulling girl child's leggings in the presence of boys for not wearing the right uniform by some elementary school teachers' (The Times of India, 2012, July 20) exhibit lack of concern for respecting and protecting girl child and severe form of mental harassment.

Thrashing severely pre-adolescent girls for dropping water in classroom flour and then stripping them in front of their classmates to mop up the water with their uniforms (the water had alleged dropped on the classroom) by headmistress (Sunday Times of India, 2012), and beating KG students mercilessly by group D staff members of a certain schools for crying (not being able to see mother) to go back home after the school (The Times of India, 2012, July 17) show how giving of punishment to school children has been stretched from the top authority to bottom worker: the school head to the school caretaker. A survey (Times News Network, 2012) conducted by The National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) reveals that the youngest children between 3-5 years old constitute a highly abused group in terms of the way they are punished by words. Derisive adjectives have been used for 82.8 per

cent of 3-5 years old, and 54.2 per cent of 10-14 years old respectively. More than 65 per cent primary and elementary school children have been beaten by canes and almost 61 per cent slapped on their cheeks, 57.5 per cent beating on the back and 57.4 per cent boxing ears. 81.2 per cent children were subjected to outright rejection by being told that they are not capable of learning.

Many such unpleasant incidents occur on daily-basis in many schools of Assam. During 2010, a Class VIII student in Guwahati attempted to commit suicide by jumping from the second floor of the institution alleging punishment and humiliation for speaking in Assamese inside the school. A Study on 'Child abuse: India 2007', Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India' (Progress on Banning Corporal Punishment in India, 2014) contains the dimensions of prevalence of punishment in Assam. It reveals that almost all children interviewed reported punishment in schools. However, the frequent types of physical punishments were hitting on the hand with wooden ruler, twisting the ears, making students kneel down, standing on the bench, and pulling hair. In addition, it too mentioned a few significant findings: (a) Assam schools enjoy the dubious distinction of topping the list of Indian schools where corporal punishment and humiliation of students were rampant i.e., '99.56 per cent of children suffer physical punishment in school which

is the highest prevalence rate in the 13 states covered by the study. (b) More girls (55 per cent) than boys (45 per cent) are subjected to physical punishment. (c) Incidence of physical punishment is found highest in State Government schools (64 per cent) compared to NGO run schools (21 per cent), and in public schools (14 per cent). (d) Out of 4,100 parents, 49 per cent parents beat their children (42 per cent for disobedience, 6 per cent for mischievous behaviour, 1 per cent for telling lies). (e) Out of 6,608 children, 41 per cent are beaten by mother and 48 per cent by father at home, and 63 per cent by teachers in school. (f) 68 per cent of parents consider physical punishment bad for children's education (64 per cent believe it harms their studies, and 4 per cent say it has bad mental effect). These few strands of literature tend to reveal that despite legal directives and stringent policy provisions, corporal punishment in schools in India and Assamese schools in particular continues to occur. In order to validate the incidence of such punishment, one attempt is made to investigate in Assam.

A Situational Analysis of Corporal Punishment in Schools

The existing legal protections and policies governing abolition of corporal punishment and re-occurrences of such punishment in schools of Assam raised a few questions stated below:

1. Do the elementary school teachers give any type of corporal punishment to their children? Does punishment occur in elementary schools irrespective of their location, i.e. rural and urban?
2. Do the existing corporal punishments in elementary schools form any patterns of behaviour? What is the nature of structural pattern in rural and urban elementary schools?
3. What kind of feelings do the urban and rural elementary school children hold about corporal punishment? What is about their parents?

In order to seek answer to the above raised queries, a study was conducted in some middle schools of Nagaon District of Assam.

Objectives

The study aimed at attaining the following objectives:

- To identify types of corporal punishment given to elementary school children by teachers, if any, and to examine their variations across schools located in urban and rural areas.
- To study the behavioural patterns of corporal punishment, if any, and their variation in urban and rural elementary schools.
- To study about the feeling of urban and rural elementary school children about corporal punishment.

METHODOLOGY

Subjects: In the present survey type research, four middle schools (Urban = 2; Rural = 2) having the Classes from I to Class VIII in a single campus of Nagaon District of Assam were selected through the purposive sampling technique. Ten students from each school were randomly selected. It gave rise to a total of 40 students (urban = 20; rural = 20; boys = 18; girls = 22) in the study.

Data Collection Procedure: Keeping in view the broad objective in mind, the interactive technique of interview was employed to elicit certain information relating to corporal punishment in

Table 1
Type and Pattern of Corporal Punishment directed to Urban and Rural Young Children by Elementary School Teachers

Statement	Urban (per cent)			Rural (per cent)		
	Always	Some-time	Never	Always	Some-time	Never
Scolding						
• before classmates for poor academic performance	50	50	0	50	50	0
• before parents for poor academic performance	20	70	10	25	70	5
• before other teachers for poor academic performance	20	60	20	10	75	15
• by using slang word like donkey, monkey, and idiot for any wrong response during teaching	40	35	25	65	25	10
• for committing any mistake in school	15	85	0	20	80	0
• for asking lesson-oriented questions in the classroom	0	85	15	15	60	25
• for sharing academic problems in or outside the classroom	0	35	65	15	60	25
• not being able to 'see the black board'/'listen teacher's voice'	0	25	75	5	50	45
Physical Punishment						
• by standing up on bench	5	85	10	15	70	15
• by kneeling down	25	65	10	15	60	25
• by slapping due to inability to perform well in classroom	15	40	45	5	65	30
• by taking a round of the school while acting like a chicken	0	40	60	5	15	80
• by bending forward in the sun and placing school bag on back	0	10	90	5	0	95
• by sweeping the floor of school	0	0	100	0	20	80

school and at home and its related matter from elementary school students and their parents. For this, homes of 40 elementary school children were visited a number of times between June-July, 2013.

Analysis of Data and Discussion

The obtained information were organised and processed to retain the relevant data relating to corporal punishment and its forms and patterns. It followed the transformation of concerned relevant data into per centage values under the division of urban and rural schools as stated below.

Type and Pattern of Corporal Punishment

It may be observed from Table 1 that there were two basic types of punishment at elementary schools irrespective of their location, i.e. urban and rural: 'Scolding' and 'Physical Punishment'. 'Scolding' representing mental harassment displays a pattern of corporal punishment as exhibited in eight different behavioural forms, and 'Physical Punishment' displays a pattern of corporal punishment as occurred in six different behavioural forms both in urban as well as rural elementary schools. The data across urban and rural schools are presented below.

Observation (Urban): In urban elementary schools, nearly 50 per cent of the children under survey opined that they are 'always' scolded by teachers before classmates for

poor academic performance. But 20 per cent of children felt that they are 'always' scolded before other teachers and also before parents for poor academic performance. The range of per centage of opinion of students varied from 50 to 70 for being scolded by teachers 'sometime' on account of poor academic performance. About 40 per cent were of the view that teachers abused them by using slang words like donkey, monkey, and idiot for giving any incorrect response during teaching. Nearly 85 per cent of the children experienced teachers' scolding 'sometime' for committing any mistake in schools and for asking lesson-oriented questions in the classroom. Children were scolded by teachers for sharing academic problems in or outside the classroom and not being able to 'see the black board'/'listen teacher's voice', but majority of children 'never' experienced such scolding: 65 per cent and 75 per cent respectively.

'Physical Punishment' occurred in six different forms. Punishment in the form of kneeling down, slapping and standing up on the bench given by teachers 'always' as opined by 25 per cent, 15 per cent, and 5 per cent of children respectively. But, teachers did not give such punishments 'always'. However, physical punishment like 'standing up on the bench', 'kneeling down', 'slapping', 'taking a round of school', and 'standing in the sun with a load of school bags' were given by the teachers 'sometimes' as reported by

85 per cent, 65 per cent, 40 per cent, 40 per cent, and 10 per cent of school children respectively. All the children opined that they were not punished by sweeping the floor of the school.

Observation (Rural): With respect to 'Scolding' in rural elementary schools, use of abusive words like donkey, monkey and idiot by teachers during classroom transaction was experienced 'always' by 65 per cent of children and 'sometime' by 25 per cent. Almost 50 per cent of the children told that they were 'always' and remaining 50 per cent were 'sometime' scolded by their teachers before other classmates for poor academic performance. The range of per centage of opinion of children varied from 60 to 80 for being scolded by teachers 'sometime' on account of various reasons: 80 per cent for committing any mistake in school, 75 per cent for the poor academic performance before other teachers, 70 per cent for the poor academic performance in front of their parents, 60 per cent for asking lesson-oriented questions in the classroom, and 60 per cent for sharing academic problems in or outside the classroom. A meagre 5 per cent and nearly 50 per cent of children opined that they were treated badly 'always' and 'sometime' respectively by teachers, if they expressed their inability to listen teacher's voice clearly or to see the blackboard.

'Physical Punishment' prevailed in its varied forms in the rural elementary schools of Assam. Almost 15 per cent of rural children opined that they were punished 'always' by 'kneeling down' and 'standing up on the bench'. Around 75 per cent of children viewed that 'sometime' their teachers used the punishment of 'standing up on the bench'. The other form of common punishment, i.e. slapping was used by teachers 'sometime' due to their inability to perform well in classroom as opined by 65 per cent the children. Nearly 60 per cent of children were of the opinion that teachers used 'kneeling down' as a kind of punishment. Punishment of 'taking a round of the school', and 'bending forward in the sun with school bags' prevailed in rural schools. But, both punishments were 'never' as viewed by 80 per cent and 95 per cent of children respectively. Almost 20 per cent of children opined that 'sometime' they were punished by 'sweeping the floor of school'.

Comparison (Urban and Rural): It may be observed from the Table1 that the range of occurrence of 'Scolding' and 'Physical Punishment' in terms of frequency of 'always' is much wider in rural elementary schools than urban elementary schools. Rural school teachers 'always' uttered slang words like donkey, monkey and idiot more frequently than urban school teachers during classroom transaction as expressed by nearly 65 per cent of rural school children and 40 per cent of urban school children respectively. It is so because rural teachers appear more casual in classroom transaction than their urban counterparts. The rural parents too seem less concerned

of using slang words by teachers in the class than parents of urban school children.

Almost 15 per cent of rural children expressed that their teachers 'always' scolded them for asking lesson-oriented questions which was found absent in urban school. However, almost equal per centage of children (urban = 85 per cent; rural = 75 per cent) expressed that their teachers scolded 'sometime' for asking lesson-oriented questions. It shows that urban teachers rarely under-estimate children's academic problems like sharing problems, asking lesson-oriented questions to teachers. The frequency of giving punishment and its level by the urban teachers was lower than their rural-counterparts. Obtained evidences (40 per cent urban students) show that the urban teachers hesitate to give punishment to children, as most parents do not like it. In addition, by mistake, if any teacher punished any child then immediately the parents of the particular child complains to higher authority. This trend was at very lower level in rural schools as conveyed by 30 per cent of the rural children. Parents of rural school children supported teachers' scolding to children more than their urban counterparts. It suggests that rural parents were supportive toward the strict behaviour of teachers with their children for making any mistakes than urban parents.

'Kneeling down', 'slapping' and 'standing up on bench' are mild in nature and common type of punishments teachers give to children in urban elementary schools. But in rural schools, the range of punishment is wider with the inclusion of 'taking round of the school', 'bending forward with school bags on back' and 'sweeping the floor of school' along with what urban school students experienced. From conversations with teachers and parents it was noticed that some of the senior rural teachers are still unaware of punishment banned by the Supreme Court. Most of the rural teachers believed that without punishment children cannot be educated. In fact, some parents supported the same opinion and punished their children at home. The present study revealed that 50 per cent of rural parents punished their children physically at home and 60 per cent of them supported the teachers' scolding to children for any mistake. On the other hand, 40 per cent of urban parents gave physical punishment to their children at home and 50 per cent of them supported teachers for scolding their children. The parents irrespective of urban and rural background too believed that corporal punishments at home do not psychologically hamper the individuality and freedom of their young children. It is further substantiated by the Podar Institute of Education's (Bhandary, 2012) study showing that 77 per cent of mothers across India and in Mumbai were found most likely to beat their

Table 2

Feelings of Rural and Urban Young Children about Corporal Punishment given by Elementary School Teachers

Statement	Urban (per cent)			Rural (per cent)		
	Always	Some-time	Never	Always	Some-time	Never
Feeling of humiliation when punished in front of others in the school	55	40	5	55	30	15
Disliking teachers who punish without any fault	50	40	10	50	35	15
Afraid of attending the classes of teachers who give strict punishment	25	40	35	15	75	10
Fearing teachers' cruel punishment to bunk the classes	0	55	45	0	25	75
Harassing teachers who are very strict	20	55	25	25	35	40
Harassing teachers who punish students	5	25	70	15	20	65
Appreciation for mild scolding for failing to answer correctly in the class	35	50	15	15	75	10
Appreciation for mild scolding for incomplete home task	25	50	25	45	50	5

children. It indicates that the parents try to discipline their children or to make them study or to gain control over child through physical punishments.

Feelings about Corporal Punishment

Table 2 contains the following data about feelings of urban and rural children about the corporal punishment in elementary schools:
Observation (Urban): Table 2 contains information about the urban

children's feeling about punishment. About 55 per cent of children felt humiliation 'always' and 40 per cent 'sometime' when they were punished in front of others in the school. At the same time, 50 per cent of students 'always' and 40 per cent'sometime' disliked teachers when they were punished without any fault. 25 per cent of children 'always' and 40 per cent of children 'sometime' were afraid of attending the classes of teachers who resorted to strict punishment. However, fearing cruel punishment of

some teachers, 55 per cent of urban children 'sometime' bunked their classes.

In the study, it was found that 20 per cent of children 'always' and 55 per cent of children 'sometime' felt to harass their teachers who were very strict. It was 5 per cent and 25 per cent respectively to harass their teachers who were resorted to punishing children. On the contrary, children did appreciated teachers' punishment. Nearly 35 per cent and 25 per cent of students 'always' appreciated mild scolding by teachers for failing to answer correctly in the classroom and for non-completion of homework respectively. 50 per cent of children 'sometime' appreciated teachers' mild scolding in each of the two tasks.

Observation (Rural): It may be observed from Table 2 that 55 per cent of rural children expressed that they 'always' felt humiliation when punished by teachers before others in the school. 50 per cent of rural children 'always' disliked their teachers when they were punished without any fault. 15 per cent and 75 per cent of rural children opined that they were 'always' and 'sometime' afraid of attending the classes of some teachers who gave strict punishment to them. Fearing teachers' cruel punishments, 25 per cent of children 'sometime' bunk their classes.

The rural children expressed that 15 per cent of them 'always' support harassing teachers if they punish them and 20 per cent of them also did the same 'sometime'. Even 25 per cent of children 'always' and 35 per cent of children 'sometime' attempted to harass their teachers who were very strict. 15 per cent of children 'always' and 75 per cent 'sometime' appreciated the mild rebuke of teachers for failing to answer correctly in classroom. Again, 45 per cent of children 'always' and 50 per cent of children 'sometime' valued scolding of teachers for not doing the home task respectively.

Comparison (Urban and Rural): Both urban and rural school children felt humiliation equally (55 per cent each) when teachers punished them in front of other teachers, staffs and classmates in the school. Both student-groups also (50 per cent each) did not like teachers when they punished them without any fault. From the above results it is clear that both urban and rural pre-adolescents were very much conscious of their own 'self', 'individual dignity' and 'hidden reputation in school'. But 55 per cent urban children and 25 per cent rural children 'sometime' preferred bunking the classes of the teachers who resorted to cruel punishment. The trend of bunking the classes was more felt by urban school children than their rural counterparts may be due to the 'more aggressive nature' of and 'lower teacher-taught relations' with respect to the urban school children. Both feeling of humiliation and dissatisfaction, as well as bunking of classes as the outcomes of punishment gets support from

Volokh and Snell (1998) who observed that violence in school causes serious psychological harm to young learners and it is one of the reasons for school dropout.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The present study tends to reveal that the students of elementary schools in Assam still suffer from corporal punishment despite it is a willful and illegitimate act of teachers and against law. The schools appear as a place for exposing school children to violence and even teaching violence to them. When investigated further it was found that many teachers still believe in the age-old philosophy of 'Spare the stick and spoil the child'. Parents who do not give proper attention or the required support to their children at home too justified that punishment a means of imparting education to them with discipline. They have failed to understand that corporal punishment to students tends to develop fear, anxiety, depression, low-self esteem, tendency to achieve low, tendency to avoid school and hinder in the natural process of learning.

Corporal punishment is widely understood as a means of exhibiting teacher's power to keep the students under control, maintaining discipline in the schools, assuring good education to students, and helping children to grow with competency and responsibility. This misconception needs to be eradicated from minds of teachers through in-service and counseling programmes. Teachers should be guided to exhibit non-violent behaviour by treating students with care, love, praise, appreciation and understanding. They along with school administrators, parents and community members have to join their hands to create a violence-free environment in school. All the stakeholders must ensure that as per the provision of RTE Act, 2009, the School Management Committee (SMC) should review the complaints of corporal punishment, if any, in its monthly meetings and take necessary actions accordingly. In conclusion, it may be said that every individual related with child should try to build a world where punishment has no place and school children can learn with joy and happiness and grow with dignity and respect. It is not only the right thing but also the smart thing to do. If it is not done, continuity of corporal punishment, not alone but along with cognate factors, in elementary schools in the long run may prove dangerous and even fatal to universalisation of elementary education and its quality which the country is striving for nearly seven decades.

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Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace – A Legal Myth

Shraddha Deva*

Abstract

Our Constitution enshrines equality as one of the basic features; despite that woman in India is a disadvantaged lot who suffers violation of her rights based on gender. Sexual harassment of women at workplace is one such form of violation of her rights. This problem has its roots embedded in the patriarchal nature of our society. Parliament has recently enacted a law to counter the menace, seventeen years later the guidelines issued by the Honourable Supreme Court in Vishakha case. This paper studies the problem of sexual harassment in Kendriya Vidyalayas situated in the city of Agra. The paper attempts to provide some important insights in the form of observations and recommendations and finally concludes with an outcome that law can be implemented effectively only when there is a scope for change in attitude of the citizens of a country.

INTRODUCTION

Equality is one of the Fundamental Rights provided to all by our Constitution despite that the condition of women is a matter of continuous discourse. The recent incidents of Justice Ganguly and Tarun Tejpal have shocked the nation and brought the issue of sexual harassment of women at workplace under the public gaze. Sexual harassment of women has become a norm for most workplaces in India and, for years, women had been tolerating it due to the fear of cultural stigmatisation, economic exclusion and lack of confidence in one's ability to stand against it. It

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* *Ph.D. Scholar,* Centre for Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi-110067.

is only with the recent emergence of the women as products of liberal and professional education and training that they are able to raise their voice against this very subtle way of violence against their womanhood. This paper attempts to study the problem of sexual harassment from many angles set in the backdrop of Kendriya Vidyalayas situated in the city of Agra.

The inequality between men and women was constructed primarily through sexual relations, and sexuality has no significant existence outside gender hierarchy. MacKinnon puts forward that harassment is problematic precisely because it is sexual in nature and because heterosexual relations are the primary mechanism through which male dominance and female subordination is maintained. In her words, sexual harassment undercuts women's potential for social equality in two interpenetrated ways: by using her employment position to coerce her sexuality, while using her sexual position to coerce her economically. According to her, a major substantive element of masculinity is the sexual conquest of women and, in turn, woman's feminity is defined in terms of acquiescence to male sexual advances (MacKinnon, 1987). Schultz identifies two categories of sexual harassment: *quid pro quo* harassment and hostile environment. '*Quid pro quo* harassment is created when an employee is forced to choose between giving in to a superior's

sexual demands or forfeiting an economic benefit i.e., salary increase, promotion, continued employment, etc. … whereas the claim of hostile environment is based upon the concept that the sexual conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment' (Schulz, 1998).

The problem of sexual harassment has its roots deep inside the socio-cultural structure of a given society. India is primarily considered as a patriarchal society. Patriarchy is a legacy in which our society is trapped. Patriarchy literally means rule of father in a male dominated family. A society is patriarchal which promotes male privilege by being male dominated and male centered. It is organised around an obsession for power and control over women leading to their oppression (Mcintosh, 2000). Patriarchy is male dominated in a way that the positions of authority–political, economic, legal, religious, educational, military, domestic are all generally reserved for men. Socio-cultural models of sexual harassment reflect a feminist perspective, conceptualising sexual harassment as an outcome of patriarchal systems that enable men to exercise sexual power to assert and maintain male dominance. Sexual harassment is seen as 'the unwanted imposition of sexual requirements in the context of a relationship of unequal power', such as in the situation of a male boss

harassing a woman in a subordinate position, or 'any action occurring within the workplace whereby women are treated as objects of the male sexual prerogative'. In these models, sexual harassment derives from gender socialisation processes that create and maintain power differences between men and women at the societal level. Support for socio-cultural models rests on evidence that harassers have overwhelmingly been found to be men, and targets are usually women. Carole Pateman puts the point somewhat differently: 'The patriarchal construction of the difference between masculinity and femininity is the political difference between freedom and subjection' (Pateman, et al 2011). In domination theory's viewpoint, to be masculine is to be free, whereas to be feminine is to be subjected. It holds the view that what it means to be a woman is to be powerless and what it means to be a man is to be powerful. The master of the organisation who represents male, subjects the weaker group called the women. Women are subjected to this powerlessness in the tiers of hierarchy and every other aspect of the organisational setup. Women are not given a share in the decision-making role of an organisation, they are an absent link in the chain of communication, their grievances are not the concern of the organisation, and leadership tasks are seldom assigned to them. Due to their absence in the top levels of the hierarchy, gender concerns are not reflected in the policies of the organisation. This power sharing is perpetuated in workplaces based on the socio-cultural patterns of the society.

EVOLUTION

Honourable Supreme Court for the very first time addressed the issue of sexual harassment at workplace in the landmark judgment of Vishakha vs State of Rajasthan in the year 1997 and gave extensive set of guidelines in a writ petition filed before it. It was the incident of a brutal gang rape of a social worker in a village of Rajasthan. In this case, it was held that each incident of sexual harassment of women at workplace results in violation of the Fundamental Rights of gender equality and Right to Life and Personal Liberty. It is a clear violation of the rights guaranteed under Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Indian Constitution. Gender equality includes protection of women from sexual harassment and right to work with dignity, which is a universally accepted basic human right. To check the evil of sexual harassment of working women at all the workplaces, the contents of international conventions and norms are significant for the purpose of guaranteeing gender equality. Some such provisions in the 'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women' are significant in this respect. India ratified it in June 1993. At the Fourth World Conference on Women in

Beijing, the Government of India has also made an official commitment to formulate and operationalise policy in this regard.

In view of the above and in the absence of the enacted law, Supreme Court laid down guidelines until legislation is enacted for the purpose. However, it was emphasised that these guidelines would be treated as the law declared by the Supreme Court under Article 141 of the Constitution. The prominent guidelines laid down were as follows:

All employers, persons in-charge of workplace whether in public or private sector should take appropriate steps to prevent sexual harassment and shall take following steps:

• Express prohibition of sexual harassment which includes physical contact and advances, a demand or request for sexual favour, sexually coloured remarks, etc.

• The rules and regulations of Government and Public Sector bodies relating to conduct and discipline should include rules prohibiting sexual harassment and conduct and discipline should include rules prohibiting sexual harassment and provide for appropriate penalties for the offender.

• The victims of sexual harassment should have the option to seek transfer of the perpetrator or their own transfer.

• Where such conduct amounts to specific offence under IPC or any other law, the employer shall initiate appropriate action in accordance with law by making a complaint with authority.

• An appropriate complaint mechanism should be created in the employer's organisation for redress of complaint made by the victim.

However, it is unfortunate that the above mentioned guidelines have hardly been complied with and they only remained on papers defying the implementation.

The Legislation

It is after a long wait of sixteen years the government has finally come up with a consolidated legislation dealing with the issue of sexual harassment. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal), Act, 2013 provides for the detailed provisions to tackle the menace. Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013 defines sexual harassment to include any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behaviour namely:

• Physical contact and advance, or
• A demand or request for sexual favours, or
• Making sexually coloured remarks, or
• Showing pornography, or
• Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature.

Apart from above acts, sexual harassment also includes following acts:

- Implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in her employment, or
- Implied or explicit threat of detrimental treatment in her employment, or
- Implied or explicit threat about her present or future employment status, or
- Interference with her work or creating an intimidating or offensive or hostile work environment for her, or
- Humiliating treatment likely to affect her health or safety.

Some of the important provisions of the Act are as follows:

- Aggrieved woman means a woman of any age.
- Workplace includes both public and private sector organisations, educational institutions, NGOs, trusts, hospitals, nursing homes, sports institutes, stadiums, dwelling houses.
- Workplace also includes unorganised sector meaning thereby an enterprise owned by individuals or self-employed workers, where number of such workers is less than ten.
- Every employer shall constitute an Internal Complaints Committee, to be presided by the women employed at the senior level. Such committee shall also include one member from NGO.
- Every District Officer, who is a notified DM, ADM, District Collector or a Deputy Collector by the Government, shall constitute a Local Complaints Committee in every district, where internal complaints committee cannot be constituted due to having less than ten workers.
- Compensation shall be provided to the victim for mental pain and trauma.
- The Internal Complaints Committee and the Local Complaints Committee shall submit an annual report to the District Officer.
- The appropriate government shall take steps to monitor the implementation of the Act and to take measures to publicise the Act.
- Failure to constitute Internal Complaints Committee shall amount to a fine which may extend up to fifty thousand rupees.
- The Internal and the Local Committees shall submit an annual progress report to the Employer and the District officer.
- It shall be the duty of the employer to display at the conspicuous place in the workplace the penal consequences of the sexual harassment.
- It shall be the duty of the employer to organise awareness programmes at regular intervals to sensitise the employees.

The legislation provides for a simple yet effective mechanism for redressal of complaints relating to sexual harassment. The Internal Complaints Committee shall consist of a Presiding Officer, who shall be a

woman employed at a senior level at workplace from amongst employees, and not less than two members from amongst employees and one external NGO member who are committed to the cause of women or familiar with the issues relating to sexual harassment. Procedure of enquiry has to adhere to the rules of natural justice to give fair opportunity of hearing to the respondent. For government servants, where service rules are in existence they are required to be followed however in rest of the situations, this new Act of 2013 and Rules shall apply. One remarkable feature of the Act is the option available to the aggrieved woman in the nature of conciliation before stepping into the process of enquiry by the Internal Committee or Local Committee. But this measure can be resorted to only on the application of the aggrieved woman.

Where Internal Committee arrives at a conclusion after enquiry that misconduct is proved, the 2013 Rules provide for punishments like - written apology, a warning, reprimand and censure, withholding of promotion, withholding of payrise of increments, termination from service, counseling and community service for the respondent. The Act also provides for the compensation to the complainant in the case of:
(a) Mental trauma, pain, suffering and emotional distress.
(b) Loss in career opportunity.
(c) Medical expenses (physical or psychiatric).

In order to keep aggrieved women out of the influence and control of the respondent during proceedings, the Act provides for some interim protection measures in the nature of – transfer of aggrieved woman or the respondent to another workplace, grant of leave to aggrieved for a period up to three months, restraint on the respondent from reporting on work performance of aggrieved women or from writing her confidential report. Act also places an obligation upon all the persons involved in the proceedings to protect the identity of the aggrieved women confidential.

The only problematic and highly debatable provision in the Act is the punishment for the complainant in case of false or malicious complaint. This provision may somewhere discourage the complainant to expedite upon the journey for justice which in itself is so cumbersome.

The Study

This study attempts to research the issue of sexual harassment in the Kendriya Vidyalayas hereinafter referred to as KV No. 1, KV No. 2 and KV No. 3 situated in the city of Agra. The data are collected from the primary sources that are the Teachers and the Principals appointed in these schools. The research tool used is the Personal Questionnaire in order to get a deep insight of the problem. The sampling is done from random technique however, to make the sample-representative, teachers from every section i.e. PRT, TGT and PGT

have been interviewed. A sample size of 10 teachers has been chosen from each section.

Result of the interviews held with the teachers revealed following observations:

On the question pertaining to general working environment and culture in KVS, 25 out of 30 teachers feel that the work pressure is very high upon them in Kendriya Vidyalayas as compared to their counterparts in State Govt. run schools. Due to introduction of new technologies and innovations in teaching strategies, teachers have to devote extra time in school campus for imbibing them which, at times, develop a feeling of being oppressed. Teachers also complained that in such state of affairs they are unable to spare time for core course content which they can self-innovate simply.

Due to immense work pressure, the relations between the Principal and the staff has, over the time, shown a downtrend. The timeline for assignments keep a sword hanging on the head both for the staff as well the Principal. The Principals always keep the teachers upon toes being totally apathetic towards their personal problems. The whole exercise has become mechanised leaving a very small scope for people involved to enjoy their work.

Twenty-one out of 30 teachers have a grievance that whenever they apply for taking leave from work, their competency is questioned on the lines of gender. In a reply to a question of nature of remarks, female teachers felt that they are often tagged as incompetent being females. Principals often keep saying 'lady teachers don't know how to work but they know how to make good excuses'. In most of the cases, the Principals make gendered remarks out of the work pressure. Rather it can be said that making gendered remarks is a regular feature.

One good feature that figured out in this study is that gendered remarks seldom come from male colleagues. They share a healthy work relationship with female teachers and are supportive to them.

In a question to cases of sexual harassment, 28 out of 30 teachers replied that very few cases of direct sexual harassment from bosses have come to picture. Teachers feel that even if direct sexual harassment takes place, it is a private affair and it becomes almost impossible to prove it. Teachers were completely clueless about any grievance redressal mechanism to which they can approach in case an incident takes place.

Even though the teachers feel offended by the remarks of Principals, they stay quiet and accept it as a part of work. Teachers in fact fear to raise voice against the Principal because they believe that he has ultimate authority to transfer them and spoil their ACRs.

Interview with teachers makes it clear that they have no idea about any law for their safeguard, any redressal mechanism in the organisation and they stick to a belief that no hearing

shall be given to them at higher channels. However, only two to three teachers in KV No.2 had a faint idea of any redressal mechanism at the Regional Level.

At the school level, neither there is any internal committee to inquire into cases of sexual harassment nor there is any display of information in school premises regarding this. The interview reveals that there has been no organisation of workshops or programmes in order to disseminate awareness among teachers.

Social stigma and humiliation among staff members is one of the biggest demotivating factor in poor registration of sexual harassment cases. Majority of the famale teachers believe that whenever such incident takes place with someone, it becomes very hard for the aggrieved teacher to muster the courage to talk about it. The worst part is that the fellow-teachers also do not show the support to raise voice against the erring individual rather they have a tendency of appeasing the matter.

From the interviews conducted with the teachers of the KVs, one thing which is clearly visible is that the type of sexual harassment which is prevalent in these institutions is that of hostile work environment type. This type of sexual harassment is not directly visible in the system but it gradually permeates into the organisation leading to negative growth. It develops fear, antipathy and repulsive attitude for the colleagues and bosses. This somewhere breeds negativity in the aggrieved individual which is reverberated in her work and upon the students. Since female teachers in KVs hold a good chunk of proportion, it would be worrisome if their working environment is not healthy and conducive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of above study it can be inferred that the problem of sexual harassment of women at the workplace is a deep rooted phenomenon and women accept it as a part of work culture. The nature of sexual harassment prevailing in the KVs is not of *quid pro quo* type rather it is of hostile work environment type. This type of sexual harassment is very subtle and most of the times it is not even treated to be as wrong because the erring bosses cover their acts under the garb of incompetency of female workers. On the other hand, fear of social stigma discourages the aggrieved woman to raise voice against it and even if she musters courage to do that, it becomes very difficult for her to prove the harassment meted out to her. In the backdrop of prevailing work conditions, some recommendations can be made, which if followed, can work wonders for improving the lot of women employees as well as can contribute to the positive growth of the respective organisations.

• Women should be made aware of the law which exists for their protection by organising workshops and seminars.

- The personnel grievance mechanism which exists at the regional levels should be replicated at the individual school level to provide an easy access to the aggrieved women teachers.
- Internal Committee should be constituted in every school to specifically address the matters of sexual harassment.
- Notices and information regarding the redressal mechanism should be displayed at the notice boards of the school.
- Female teachers should be trained to overcome the fear of social stigma and be encouraged to report the instances of sexual harassment.
- Male colleagues should also be trained to encourage and standby their female counterparts in case of occurrence of such incidents.
- Male bosses also need conselling to digest the fact that women are equally competent and have the ability to deliver. They should follow restraint in making gendered remarks as that also amounts to sexual harassment.
- An overall attitudinal change in the mindset of the society is the dire need of the time accepting that 50 per cent of the female population cannot be prohibited from entry in workplaces if the nation has to rise high on the trajectory of growth.
- Effective implementation of the law is indispensable to bring about the required social change.

Conclusion

Sexual harassment at workplace is a ubiquitous phenomenon in India. It chokes the growth of the very organisation and the society as a whole. An understanding should be developed that every human being is born equal with equal amount of capacities irrespective of gender. It is upon the societal patterns which shape the fabric of the society. It is high time now when we need to amend the patriarchal nature of our society and provide equal opportunity to women. A country can never prosper if half of its population is kept out of the development process. Women can work wonders for their family, society and the nation when they are given equal opportunity at social, economic and political fronts. Therefore, we should collectively curb all the hindrances which obstruct their growth and sexual harassment at workplace is one such menace which we need to combat holistically.

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Mother Tongue Education for Tribal Children

Malli Gandhi*

Abstract

This paper attempts to discuss the status, problems and issues relating to tribal children and their languages through an exploration of policies, curricular frameworks and practices at state and national level. The paper also tries to explore the intricate relationship between tribal languages, culture, society and literature in the development of STs in a pluralistic society like India. However, the paper mainly focuses on the importance of mother tongue education in tribal schools, the position of the tribal languages in India, innovations in the development of tribal languages and education, identifying current problems and issues and to suggest suitable measures in helping tribal children to bridge the gap between the home language of the tribal children and the state language by sustaining mother tongue in tribal schools. The paper suggests the need to shift from the stage of advocacy to the stage of empowerment in dealing with the issues of tribal communities.

"I am convinced that children who receive education in a tongue other than their own commit suicide."
– Mahatma Gandhi.

WHO ARE SCHEDULED TRIBES?

Scheduled tribes are communities who are notified as STs under Article 342 of the Indian Constitution. They are based on the following characteristic features: primitive traits, geographic isolation, distinct culture, shyness of contact with other communities at large and economically backward[1]. The main issues concerning the development of the tribal population

* *Professor,* DESSH, RIE, NCERT, Mysore – 570 006.

at present are: (i) lack of awareness regarding the specific problems of STs and always clubbing them with other disadvantaged groups, (ii) low level of human development index as compared with the rest of the population, (iii) poor infrastructure leading to low capacity of the economy in tribal areas to effectively absorb institutional finance, (iv) inaccessibility of tribal areas and tough terrain, mostly forests, (v) non-marketability of social sector programmes leading to increased vulnerability in liberalised economy, and (vi) food insecurity in spite of food production[2].

It is a regrettable fact that adivasi children are deprived of their basic rights. Rehabilitation of adivasis through education of their children is not taken seriously. In fact, the tribal children were made victims in the name of development. Tribal children have lost touch with their language, culture, traditional life-style, ethics and values. If this situation continued, they could go extinct. Implementation of the Right to Education Act, and Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers Act is the only panacea to restore their basic rights, such as education of the adivasi children[3].

The adivasis should make all efforts to avail of government schemes. Child rights should be protected and the parents should prevent migration in order to prevent children from dropping out of school. Tribal panchayats should perform the protective role and so any violation of the rights of their children should be brought to the notice of the government. As the government supplies adivasi children with learning materials, such as school bags, uniforms, notebooks, pens, textbooks and other materials, they should grab such opportunities and make the best use of it. In addition, the government should implement RTE Act in tribal areas rigorously[4].

Extracurricular activities help children improve their academic performance. Likewise, efforts should be made to encourage tribal children to involve in extra-curricular activities, as these exercises will help contribute to their overall growth as well. Extra-curricular activities will also help children to learn more effectively as children become more active if they are involved in group/cultural activities. At the same time, children in tribal schools should be encouraged with multi-talent awards so as to encourage them to participate in extra-curricular activities with enthusiasm and exhibit their talents. Participation in various tribal dances, sports, games and other activities can help retain the students in schools and hence help arrest the dropout rates[5].

MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION IN TRIBAL SCHOOLS

India promotes multiculturalism in view of its rich cultural diversity. Indian Constitution has recognise the right to mother tongue education.

Therefore in order to honour our Constitutional vision and spirit, there is a need to enrich tribal education, safeguard tribal culture and tribal heritage. The constitutional vision is essentially of a society in which every community and every individual will be in charge of shaping her/his life with full dignity. Tribals in the country constitute the poorest category not merely in economic terms but also in all aspects of human development. They are deprived of access to quality education and health care. They are resource poor and their traditional resources of livelihood are dwindling. Therefore there is slow pace of development among STs in India. STs are contextualised in the vicious circle of deprivation and poverty[6].

Role of UNESCO in Promoting Mother Tongue Education

UNESCO is committed to assist in creating a platform for inclusion of tribal mother tongues especially in the initial stages of education and to enhance multilingual competence. It is committed in promoting mother tongue education among all tribal communities. UNESCO's studies have shown that multilingualism is an asset and mother tongue based education remains the best alternative in Indian tribal context[7].

Views of NCERT in Support of Mother Tongue Education

National Council of Educational Research and Training supported the issue of mother tongue education in its draft National Policy of Education 1986, 1992, 2000, and 2005. The National Curriculum Framework, 2005 based on the 21 position papers specified its policy in the Focus Group Report on the Problems of Education of SC/ST Children with regard to teaching of Indian languages[8]. Prominence is given to multilingualism, centrality of language in the curriculum, language across the curriculum and education of the disadvantaged groups particularly the tribal groups in India. The National Curriculum Framework, 2005 stated that learner's own mother tongue should be used as the language of instruction, especially, in the earlier years of education. Children acquire language informally and naturally from their environment, including home. They bring their verbal reposition, language and culture as a resource to school. The national Focus Group Report on the problems of education of SC/ST children further stated that: "the tribes are living under different conditions and depending on levels of cultural absorption and adaptation; however, several STs may not look to schools to teach in their home language. Indeed, for many ST parents, the main advantage of schooling is that it gives access to new languages, new occupations and a new life and enables interaction with the non-tribal world. But wherever STs have been politically mobilised to celebrate ST identity, they have been

clearer and open in their demand for education in indigenous languages"[9].

UNICEF's Views on Mother Tongue Education

UNICEF is an advocator of mother tongue approach in tribal schools. UNICEF strongly believes in multilingual education. It has a very critical role to play in the quest for universalisation of elementary education. UNICEF advocated that given the large-scale socio-cultural and linguistic heterogeneity in India and the accompanying problem of social exclusion there is a need to involve the communities and experts to promote mother tongue education[10].

Efforts made by Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore (CIIL)

CIIL is very much committed to work with the scheduled tribes for the development of their languages in turn their education. Its main focus is to build up the pressure for equality and justice to all speech communities and use the collective wisdom with responsibility, to endeavour for a common vision of development of tribal languages[11].

Attitude of Parents Towards their Mother Tongue in Education

The issue of education of tribals is linked with the native knowledge of their languages. In some states,

textbooks for adivasi children were prepared by some adivasi children refused to use these books for they wanted to learn English. Some of the tribal parents questioned "Do you want us remain backward forever"? This is the paradox. However, Government of India is committed for the development of tribal languages, local languages, mother tongue and minor languages[12].

How to Empower Smaller Languages in India?

India has a large number of languages. There is a huge linguistic network functioning. The linguistic network system is running across language families and speech areas. There are differences and inequalities persisting with regard to minority languages. There is an urgent need to protect the linguistic rights of adivasis. They contribute a large share to enrich the linguistic heritage of India[13].

Use of Tribal Languages in Schools

The home languages of the tribal children are generally not used in tribal schools. In some cases the school language is completely alien language to tribal children. Most of the teachers do not speak or understand the children's language. So there is no communication between teachers and children. Even when the teachers come from the children's home, community, they often do not use the local language in teaching the

curriculum as the textbooks are in the state language. Classes are teacher-centered. Teachers do all the teaching. Children copy from the chalk board or from the textbook. Children in Classes IV and V read with difficulty and with little comprehension[14].

How to Conserve the Cultural Tradition of the Adivasis?

A conspicuous feature of Indian culture is the survival of tribal society and culture in the midst of rapidly changing society. In post-Independence context, education has successfully served as a key instrument of change and emancipation for the SCs and STs. It has brought them self-respect and socio-economic advancement raised consciousness and empowered their identity struggles. Tribals have suffered large scale land alienation and dispossession from natural resources. Scheduled tribes appear to lag behind the scheduled castes in most of the states barring the North Eastern States, due to specific socio-historical factors. Curriculum has served as mediator of ideological dominance and hegemony. It does not acknowledge cultural rights of STs. They are denied of their own culture and history. Despite several policy documents, there is no imparting of education in tribal languages. This includes even those like Santhali, Bhili, Gondi or Oraon which are spoken by over a million people. Primary teachers are predominantly from non-ST background that does not bother to learn the tribal languages.

This causes an impediment in the education of the tribal children[15].

Core Issues in Mother Tongue Education

Through language and culture, community relationships are established. The three language formula was an experiment solution to a language discord situation in India. Every school-going child learns a new language once she/he goes to school. Mother tongue education is available to a large majority of children all over the country. Our education system does not pay much attention to mother tongue education of tribals, linguistic minorities and others. There is lack of studies with regard to mother tongue education in tribal schools in Indian context. Government of India has not formulated any draft national policy on tribal languages[16].

The parents of tribal communities are also indifferent to mother tongue education in tribal schools. They feel the policies of the government to teach and educate tribal children in their mother tongue may keep them more backward, while other children who are more privileged to learn English move forward further. In this context, the parents of tribal children should understand that mother tongue education at the primary level is done only to make the learning process easier for the child. Article 50 of Indian Constitution gives special provisions to protect the interest of tribals in the country, however, in practice

this is yet to achieve. In real sense, multiculturalism is not practiced in the country. On the contrary, it appears that the country's agenda, over a period of time, eventually is to assimilate smaller cultures into the mainstream. The multilingual character of Indian society should be seen as a resource for the enrichment of school life[17].

Issues Connected with Mother Tongue Education in India

Bilingualism at the grass root level is a maintenance strategy. Multilingualism is a positive force. Complementaries of languages help early socialisation for multilingual functioning. There is now sound evidence from a variety of cultural settings supporting the positive role of bilingualism in cognitive development, which can be attributed to the meta linguistic and meta cognitive advantage of bilinguals and to the social context of bilingualism particularly in multilingual countries. The voiceless minorities are suffering from the exclusion of their mother tongues. The hierarchical pecking order of the languages in our educational system is keeping the tribal languages in a disadvantageous position. Children are taught in school through dominant/second foreign language at the cost of their mother tongue. Studies have shown that the Bodo children in Bodo medium schools perform better than Bodo children in state medium

schools. This may be true of other tribal children as well[18].

Place of English in Tribal Schools

English ranges from first, second to third language across the school curriculum. Language is learnt when learning opportunities are created. Very often the school curriculum is a restrictive framework. Implementation of mother tongue education in the classroom is even more restricted. Language is learnt at the initiative of the child, in her/his own pace, not because somebody else is telling the child to do something. Tribal children, who have difficulty in picking the local language, find much more difficulty in learning English language. This does not mean that English should be kept away from them. Rather they should be provided with effective teaching learning environment to enable them to master this language[19].

How to Plan for Mother Tongue Education in Tribal Schools?

Mother tongue education will enable tribal children/communities to achieve the educational goals. It will act as a strong supportive language for the tribal children. To begin with, the first two years of schooling could be in the mother tongue and, during the third and fourth, it could be bilingual that is mother tongue and State language and thereafter State language gradually taking over[20].

Endangered Languages

In India, many of the tribal languages are endangered. If nothing is being done, 90 per cent of world's living languages would pass out of use very soon. Several measures are suggested to protect tribal languages which are as follows: (1) tribal people should take pride in their language and use them, (2) they should understand and promote the wealthy treasure of their languages, and (3) adivasis should empower themselves through education. The Universal declaration on the rights of persons belonging to ethnic groups emphasised rights of learners to be taught in their mother tongue. Tribals should write in their own language. They should be trained to make use of electronic technology. A strong presence of tribal languages should take place in the educational system. These steps can help in protecting the endangered languages of the tribals[21].

Efforts made so far to Promote Mother Tongue Education in India.

North-Eastern Region: Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya have more than 80 per cent of tribal population. They have showed a strong bond for mother tongue education. Church has played an important role in the spread of education among the different tribal groups in the region. Angami in Nagaland (Tenyidie), Mizo in Mizoram, Khasi and Garo in Meghalaya are taught up to post-graduation level[22].

Arunachal Pradesh: 60 per cent of the state population belongs to adivasis.

The state has more than 24 tribal languages. In schools, tribal children are taught in English and Hindi at all levels. The State government is seeking the intervention of the Central government and NGOs for the support and promotion of tribal languages[23].

Assam: Nearly 13 per cent of population is tribals in Assam. The state is using Bodo language. Devanagari script is widely used in the state. Bodo-language is included in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Mishing/Mirmi is used as the second language in schools in the Roman script. Karbi/Mikir is also used in schools[24].

Nagaland: The state has 17 recognised tribal languages. Tribal languages are used in tribal dominated schools. English is considered as the official language. Among Ao community, there is 100 per cent literacy. The State government had set up literature committees for the promotion of tribal languages[25].

Meghalaya and Mizoram: Tribal languages taught in these states are Khasi Garo and Mizo respectively. Tribal languages are standardised. They have succeeded in orthography. But the problem of dialects needs serious consideration[26].

Manipur: The state has several tribal groups comprising of one-third of the total population. Some tribal languages are taught at high school level but not at primary level. Naga Communities, such as Poumai, Mao and Tangkhul are showing their

support for the development of tribal languages[27].

Tripura: The state has undergone a dramatic change in demographic profile as the tribals are now reduced to minority status. Kok Borok is recognised as associate official language but support for tribal languages is still required in the state[28].

Central India: There are several languages belonging to different population groups — Indo-Aryan, Dravidian and Austro-Asiatic (Munda Group). The adivasis belong to marginalised group and their languages are still neglected. There is apathy from all quarters towards inclusion of tribal languages in schools. This way, many tribal languages in Central India are endangered[29].

Chhattisgarh: There are 16 districts in Chattisgarh out of which 7 districts are predominantly tribals and nearly 88 blocks out of 146 blocks are occupied by adivasis. In schools, the medium of instruction is Hindi. The local tribal dialects/languages are yet to get introduced in formal education[30].

Madhya Pradesh: There are 82,000 primary schools and 27,000 upper-primary schools in the state. Bhili and Goandi are widely spoken but they are not included in formal schooling. Over two-third of Gonds use Hindi as mother tongue, consequently causing a shift in tribal language use and language loss in this process of assimilation. Tribal languages like Bhili and Korku are neglected[31].

Jharkhand: Santhali has been included in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Despite this, the language is not strongly established in the domain of education. Mundari and Ho are taught along with Santhali up to post graduation level. Oraon speakers are inclined towards speaking Sadari as the link language or *lingua franca.* SSA has prepared primers in five languages and distributed the same in tribal schools for implementation[32].

East-West and South: States like Orissa, Gujarat, and Maharashtra have sizable tribal population. Orissa has as many as 62 tribes speaking over two dozen languages belonging to Austro-Asiatic group. Gujarat and Maharashtra have different tribes, many of them speaking varieties of Bhili. Attempts are being made to include the Bhili language into the state language. Gondi is also spoken in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. States like Karnataka and Kerala did some efforts to promote their tribal languages. However, the overall picture with regard to promotion of tribal languages and tribal education is very dismal, and still several smaller languages are considered as endangered[33].

Andhra Pradesh: The state government has neglected the issue of mother tongue language teaching-learning in schools for a long time. Now, different agencies are coming forward to work with the tribal communities to protect their languages[34].

Karnataka and Kerala: Both the states have many tribal communities

but the state governments have given very little importance in promoting tribal languages. In the state of Karnataka, primers were prepared on Jenukuruba (Jenu-Nudi) and Soliga Siddhi for Soliga tribal children. On the other hand, the Kerala government started a project on environmental literacy in mother tongue. Likewise, the state governments should continue to encourage and support mother tongue education in their respective states[35].

Orissa: The state government of Orissa has prepared primers in many languages and conducted some studies on tribal languages. Since 1996, many efforts have been made to promote tribal dialects/ languages. Some of the activities in this direction are linguistic mapping and survey, commissioning of an agency for protection of tribal languages and dialects, training of tribal teachers and gathering of experiences from teachers who were already working in tribal areas. Besides, the state government has appointed teachers from the local areas in Koraput district, especially from the tribal communities, to develop Kuvi dialect. This experiment was started in 33 centres. In consequence, over a span of two years, the government has achieved 12.3 per cent increase in the literacy level among tribal children[36].

Gujarat: Tribal population accounts for 14.76 per cent in the state. Out of 224 blocks, 45 blocks are filled with tribal population where there are also tribal schools close by. There

are 3351 clusters, out of which 749 clusters belong to adivasis. Dang is a rural district having 100 per cent tribal population. Glossaries, dictionaries were prepared in Dangi, Bhili, Panchmali and in Rathoa[37].

North India: *Jammu and Kashmir:* Greater emphasis is given to Urdu, which is the official language of the state, and indigenous languages like Dogri and Kashmiri received less attention as compared to Urdu. Besides, there are nomadic communities like Gorjis/Gujjars living in the state that also need special protection. Thus, in an attempt to protect the interest of minorities, the government should preserve the culture and languages of all tribes[38].

How to Promote Tribal Education and Tribal Languages?

Promotion of tribal languages and tribal education is progressing at a slow pace, and this calls for a change to demonstrate the importance of multilingual education in tribal schools. The government should find a way to succeed in the mission by providing proper encouragement. There is a need to move beyond the experimentations done so far. Government policies should reflect on the common concern and shared vision. The value of mother tongue education should not be undermined. Tribal people should not be deprived of their languages at the cost of dominant languages[39].

Mobilisation of Support from Tribal Communities

Mobilisation of support from all sections of society matters a lot for the promotion of tribal languages and tribal education. The support from the community members, Gram Panchayts, Gram Sabhas should be taken into consideration in order to sensitise the adivasis on this issue. Top educational institutions/organisations should come forward to take up this issue on effective lines. Leading role must be taken by SSA/NGOs/DIETS/BRCs/CRCs and the community leaders. The role of the mass media can be emphasised in this connection[40].

Production of Culturally Appropriate Materials

Use of mother tongue in education can play an important role in transmitting knowledge to students from the viewpoint of effective learning process. In this context, tribal children may be made to learn their first language in school too as it will prove advantageous for a child to make her/his learning more effective. The materials prepared by different organisations for children and teachers must enliven tribal culture. The materials used in tribal schools must be appropriate and suitable to the needs of tribals. Therefore, documentation of indigenous knowledge system in tribal languages is imperative to encourage the non-tribal children also to access the knowledge known to tribals; teachers

working in tribal schools should at least know their language to enable them communicate better with tribal children; tribal teachers recruited by the government should be posted in their own locality so that teachers can use their language more effectively. In addition, supplementary reading materials should be made available to all tribal children in primary grades for effective learning[42].

What Needs to be Reflected?

1. Tribal communities must be encouraged to work with professional bodies such as SSA/ CIIL/ DSERTs/ SCERTs/ NCERT/ DIETs/ Ministry of Tribal Affairs and lend their support to promote multi-lingual education.
2. All the tribal languages are worthy to study and worthy to use in school domain. The government should nurture their growth by providing appropriate support.
3. Mother tongue must be made as the medium of instruction at primary level. It must be linked with other languages at school level.
4. There is a need to promote sound research to characterise the problems of tribal people emerging from various problems related to tribal development.
5. The issue of mother tongue education needs encouragement in the country. Two important issues should be taken up seriously by the government with regard to mother tongue

education in tribal schools: (i) the role of research, (ii) educational planning, curricular planning and pedagogical reforms in the context of tribal education[43].

Conclusion and Suggestions

The unity of the country can be understood in the linguistic diversity. Linguistic diversity is an asset. Tribal culture should be understood in the context of pluralistic diversity of Indian life. Mother tongue education for the tribal children should be at the centre of national educational planning. The spirit of Indian Constitution is empowerment of minority and marginalised communities. Based on the above analysis, a few suggestions can be made to improve the educational needs of tribal children: (i) mother tongue education must be implemented in tribal schools on priority basis, (ii) the linguistic rights of STs must be protected by introducing mother tongue education in tribal schools, (iii) materials prepared by the State and Central government organisations must be modified to suit the needs of tribals, (iv) co-operative networks must be developed with government and non-government organisations to work with tribal communities, (v) action plans must be prepared with regard to quality education in tribal schools, (vi) baseline surveys must be conducted with regard to the educational status of various tribal communities, (vii) special training programmes must be arranged for tribal teachers, school complex resource persons and district education officers (agency) for active implementation of mother tongue education in tribal schools, and (viii) teaching-learning materials, such as textbooks, glossaries, dictionaries, bridge inventories and other resource materials must be made available to children in tribal schools.

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Perceptions of Young Teachers about the Issues Associated with Bringing out Model Schools in Tribal Areas

Manoranjan Pradhan*

Abstract

Koraput, a tribal dominated district, is one of the educationally backward districts in Odisha. The literacy rate of the district is far below the state and national average, and the dropout rate at schools is also higher than national level. To protect the interests of tribal children, both central and state governments have launched several schemes and projects for the educational upliftment of the people in the district but the actual socio-economic parameters present a gloomy picture. Recognising the significance of model teachers and schools in quality education, the present study intends to know the perceptions of the newly appointed young teachers of Koraput district about their schools and students. The study specially emphasises on identifying the issues and problems associated with the schools which restrict the teachers to make their schools model schools. Besides, the investigator tries to know the suggestive measures from the teachers directly in order to provide quality education to tribal children by making their schools as model, ideal, exemplary.

Introduction

Every good teacher likes to work in a model school. A model school refers to a school in a congenial environment with necessary infrastructural facilities, dedicated, competent and trained teachers, active and supportive non-teaching staff, ideal

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* *Lecturer,* District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), M.G.Road, Jeypore, Koraput-764001, Odisha.

students, active involvement of community members, exemplary performance of pupils in scholastic and co-scholastic areas, etc. But who can make a school an ideal? The answer is the teachers with the co-operation of administration, community and supportive staff. It is seen that the young generation of today, particularly the gifted students, do not like to opt teaching as their profession. Rather the average students show more interest in teaching profession. So it is the responsibility of the administration to train and make them more competent and dedicated. In this view, the School and Mass Education Department of Odisha Government organise pre-service and in-service trainings, workshops, etc. through Teacher Training Institutes (DIETs, CTEs, IASEs, B.Ed. Colleges, etc.). During the in-service training programme to the untrained teachers (Shiksha Sahayakas and Gana Shikshakas) at DIET, Koraput, Odisha, a workshop was organised to know the vision of the young untrained teachers working in the tribal dominated Koraput district of Odisha. The paper is based on the output of the workshop and it tries to answer the following questions:

What are the perceptions of the young teachers about a model school?

What are the issues and problems associated with bringing out model schools in tribal dominated areas?

What suggestive measures to be taken to make the schools model in tribal dominated areas?

Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of the study were:
1. To study the perception of the young teachers about a model school.
2. To enlist the views of the teachers towards the basic ingredients of a model school.
3. To identify the issues and problems associated with their working schools in order to make them model schools in tribal dominated areas.
4. To find out remedial measures from the teachers in making their schools model for others.

Population and Sample of the Study

120 untrained young teachers from different elementary schools of 12 blocks of Koraput district were selected as samples of the study. The cluster sampling technique was used for selecting samples. The age-group of the teachers (samples) of different social categories ranges from 20 to 40 years. The sample status of the study is stated in the following table:

Key Terms Defined

The following key terms in the study are felt necessary to be defined:

Young Untrained Teachers

The study was conducted among newly appointed untrained teachers in elementary schools in different blocks of tribal dominated district of Koraput in Odisha. The teachers

Distribution of Samples

Sl. No.	Blocks	Gender		Educational Qualification		Age	
		Male	Female	+2	Graduation	Below 25	From 25 to 40
1	Lamtaput	13	7	15	5	6	14
2	Semiliguda	6	7	10	13	8	5
3	Laxmipur	10	6	12	4	6	10
4	N.Patana	5	6	8	3	8	3
5	Bandhugam	4	3	4	3	4	3
6	Nandpur	3	5	1	7	6	2
7	Potangi	4	4	3	5	5	3
8	Koraput	2	2	2	2	4	0
9	Borriguma	4	3	4	3	4	3
10	Kotpad	4	3	6	1	2	5
11	Dasmantpur	8	3	8	3	4	7
12	Boipariguda	6	2	5	3	1	7
Total	**12**	**69**	**51**	**78**	**42**	**58**	**62**
Grand Total	**12**	**120**		**120**		**120**	

belonged to 25-40 years age-group. Those teachers with teaching experience or in service as teacher between 1 to 5 years were considered as young teachers.

Model School

The schools in congenial study atmosphere having all facilities for providing quality education are called model schools. The young teachers were asked to give a perception of model school which will be able to provide quality education to the children for all-round development.

Collection of Data

The data for the present study were collected through a workshop during an in-service training programme to the untrained teachers in DIET, Koraput at Jeypore of Odisha. The workshop, organised in two phases at the conference hall of DIET, was on the perceptions of the untrained young teachers towards (n) model / ideal school. In the first phase, there were 58 teachers and in the second phase 62 teachers participated. The data were collected through open group discussion under the guidance and co-ordination of investigator. For the discussion, the teachers were divided into three groups, viz. 1st group — the male teachers of below 25 years, 2nd group — the male teachers above the 25 years and the 3rd group consisted of only lady teachers (most of them below 25 years). Before the group discussion,

the teachers were instructed to write their individual opinion in blank papers regarding the definition and basic ingredients of model school, the major constraints in their schools to become model schools and sought suggestions of how to convert their schools into model schools.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Objectives 1 and 2: Perceptions of the young untrained teachers about model school

Youths are the future of every nation. Their vision and dedication makes a nation progress. To know the expectations and vision of the young untrained teachers towards their schools, a question was asked regarding the definition and basic features of a model school. The opinions of the teachers are stated below:

- A model school should be located in safe and pollution-free environment.
- A model school should have adequate infrastructural facilities, including well-equipped classrooms, office room, common staff room, TLM corner, study centre, separate Headmaster's chamber, resource room, well-equipped and updated library, laboratories (for all disciplines), separate kitchen for mid-day meal preparation, residential facilities for teachers and staff (quarters), multi-purpose hall (for conferences, dance, music, drama, literary completions, school cabinet, Meena Mancha, etc.), playground, sports room with adequate play and sports materials, first aid box, etc., idea box, dust bins, drinking water facilities, separate toilets and urinals for staff, boys and girls, strong and safe boundary wall, well-maintained gardens (kitchen, botanical, geometrical and mathematical, flower garden), etc.
- Classrooms in the model school should be well-equipped with effective sitting arrangements, ventilation, proper lightings, attractive black board, achievement board, work board, board for picture and writings on the classroom walls, etc.
- A model school should have adequate trained, dedicated and devoted teachers as per Student Teacher Ratio of Right to Education Act, 2009. The teachers should be updated, oriented and trained from time-to-time with innovations in pedagogy, curriculum, evaluation and emerging trends and issues.
- Most of the teachers strongly stated that library and laboratories are the two eyes of a model school. Thus, the libraries should be well adorned with adequate number of textbooks, reference materials, supplementary study materials (story books, novels, dramas, poetry, etc.), dictionaries, encyclopedias, etc. Similarly, the laboratories also should be well

equipped and updated. These will assist the learners to broaden their scientific outlook and sensitise them in different aspects.

- The teachers think autonomy to teachers can only make a school model, ideal and exemplary for others. So the school administration should provide complete freedom to the teachers to improvise the study materials, teaching aids, tools and techniques for effective evaluation on the basis of the needs and nature of the learners.

- The teachers categorically emphasised that a model school should have better sanitary facilities. The school campus should be neat and clean with adequate safe drinking water, separate urinals and toilets for all (i.e., staff, boys and girls).

- A model school should share a good rapport with the community through regular interaction with Parent-Teacher Association, Mother-Teacher Association, School Managing Committee, and home visit of teachers, participation in different events of village or locality where the school is situated.

- A model school is not only meant for holistic progress of the learners through quality education but also for social welfare, social harmony and social awareness.

- Besides the curricular activities, a model school should organise multi-dimensional activities to identify and draw out the hidden qualities of the learners.

- Inclusive growth should be the main goal of a model school. It should provide equal opportunities to all pupils for progress and prosperity, including the differently-abled (physically and mentally challenged) children and those belonging to weaker sections of society.

Objective 3: Problems and issues in the working schools that hinder in making model schools

Being the practitioners of different schools, the in-service teachers spelt out several issues and concerns in their schools which stand in the way of making their schools model or ideal schools. They are as follows:

- The teachers stated that the schools in tribal dominated Koraput district of Odisha are not located in suitable places. Inaccessibility and lack of effective communication facilities are the major challenges facing the teachers. On the other hand, non-availability of residential facilities, neither government quarters nor rented houses, to stay nearby schools in remote areas adds more problems for the teachers and school staff. Thus, these problems adversely affect the education quality to a considerable extent as the teachers fail to devote more time (other than school hours) for betterment of their schools and students.

- Lack of required subject teachers (mainly for teaching Science and English) and inadequate Student Teacher Ratio are the major concerns in rural and tribal areas. They said most of the schools are run by single teacher.
- Lack of necessary infrastructural facilities is another major problem in the schools of the district. In most of the schools there is no separate classroom for each class, separate office room, safe drinking water facility, functional well-equipped library and laboratory, strong retaining wall, etc are available.
- Linguistic problem is the prominent issue in the schools of tribal dominated areas. The tribal children fail to understand clearly the Odia language used by the teachers as they frequently use their local language at home and also with peers. Similarly, the teachers are also not competent enough to understand the languages used by the students. So the communication gap remains the main problem in making teaching learning process qualitative and fruitful.
- Owing to illiteracy, ignorance, poor financial background and non-cooperation of the parents, the students do not come to school regularly. Most of the time, the school-going children instead of attending school devote more time to parental profession or take care of their younger siblings. Hence,

poor attendance in schools is a major issue in tribal areas. Even after lunch, no child is interested to stay at schools.
- Non-availability of regular full time headmasters poses a major problem in managing the schools effectively. The teachers opined most of the schools in remote areas are managed by inexperienced *Shiksha Sahayakas* (temporary or contractual teachers). So how can professionally inexperienced and immature teachers make model schools?
- The teachers raised an issue that the teachers are unnecessarily engaged in other activities like management of mid-day meal scheme, construction of school buildings, survey works, etc. Such type of engagement in non-academic activities not only wastes the teaching hours but also makes teachers overburdened.
- The young teachers said the autonomy to teachers in organising academic activities can only make the teaching qualitative and effective. But the teachers are put to a lot of stress due to administrative and political interventions.
- The matters of financial insecurity also leave the teachers disturbed. They stated the step-motherly attitude of the administrative authorities to solve the basic problems of the teachers, sometimes seriously impacting

the professional competency of the teachers.

- The teachers are of the opinion that though they are the actual practitioners in schools, they are not engaged while developing curriculum or in pedagogical innovations.
- Faulty transfer and promotion policy sometimes creates discontentment among teachers.
- Besides, dropout is also a major issue in elementary schools in tribal areas.

Objective 4: Suggestions of the teachers to make their schools model schools

The teachers in tribal areas do not find it difficult to make their schools model schools, if the following suggestions are taken into consideration. These are:

- Provide all infrastructural facilities needed to make the schools model schools. The facilities like well-equipped classrooms, office room, headmaster's chamber, common staff room, resource centre, TLM corner, study corner, multi-purpose hall, kitchen, sanitary facilities, urinals and toilets, usable library and laboratory, staff quarters, effective teaching aids, etc. should be provided to each school for holistic development of children through quality education.
- Regular and experienced headmasters with administrative competency and managerial skills may be appointed in schools.

- Adequate number of trained teachers with subject experts may be appointed in schools as per RTE norm.
- The untrained teachers should be given adequate training. Besides, regular orientation and workshops for capacity building of the teachers should be organised. It can also update them with emerging pedagogical innovations.
- Strict supervisory team should monitor the school activities and collect feedback from the teachers also on regular basis. This will also help bridge the gap between school authorities and the teachers.
- Being the district educational hub, the teacher education institutes (DIETs, CTEs, IASEs, B.Ed. colleges, etc.) should always be ready to provide all sorts of academic support to the schools.
- The study materials (reading and writing materials, uniforms, etc.) of the students should be supplied at the beginning of the academic year so that students can make optimal use of it.
- Residential facilities (quarters) to the teachers should be provided in inaccessible areas so that they can devote more time in schools as well as on students.
- Teachers' autonomy is highly essential to make competitive study atmosphere in the schools. They should not be pressured to follow prescribed format or method

during teaching, evaluation and other activities.

- The teachers should not be made to involve in administrative work like operating mid-day meal programme, conducting surveys, etc. which hamper their professional works.

- Instead of appointing *Shiksha Sahayakas/ Gana Shikshakas/* contractual teachers/ part time teachers, etc., regular teachers should be appointed following the norm and conditions of the RTE 2009.

- Efforts should be made to involve community members in school functioning through PTA, MTA, SMC, etc. This will help to increase attendance and solve dropout problem of the school-going children.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The newly appointed young teachers in tribal areas have willingness to make their schools model and exemplary. However, it will get materialised, only when they are properly guided by experts and competent academicians of teacher training institutes. Similarly, the district administration should provide the necessary administrative support to teachers and headmasters to organise innovative programmes in schools. Besides, the community members, local educationists, intellectuals and senior citizens should also extend their help, as schools and students are of significant assets in nation-building. Most importantly, the district administration in collaboration with RTE-SSA should provide essential requirements, such as adequate teachers, teaching learning materials, etc in order to make model schools the best platform for providing holistic education to tribal children and hence mainstream the socially disadvantaged group through education. In addition, from time-to-time, teachers should be updated and oriented with emerging trends and issues, pedagogical innovations, policies and programmes of government concerning elementary education. They should be completely acquainted with the targets and be guided by the principles of NCF-2005, RTE-2009, NCFTE-2009, CCE, etc. which will help develop teaching-learning strategy and improvise learning materials for better learning of the learners.

Participation of Muslims in Education Policy Perspective and Provisions

Savita Kaushal*

Abstract

This paper presents analytical review of the policy perspective and schemes initiated to facilitate inclusion and participation of Muslims in education in India. It seeks to map the measures and resultant outcomes, in an effort to identify gaps and suggest suitable initiatives to better understand the drivers and facilitators of the exclusion, and how the challenge for inclusion of Muslims in education in India could not be met. In the light of the available data, the paper re-examines the existing government policies to tackle the educational backwardness of Muslims in terms of the extent to which they have been successful in dealing with their problems.

INTRODUCTION

It is well known that education squarely leads to the development of the disadvantaged groups in the society. Without educating them it is not possible for the nation to develop as well as deal with the issues of oppression. In this context it will be appropriate to cite what eminent sociologist Durkheim (1956) stated about six decades back 'education is to arouse and develop physical, intellectual and moral states'.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENTS

The equality of opportunity and social justice were not seen in isolation from each other and they have been recognised as the guiding principles of development planning in independent India. As a result, there are several constitutional provisions that give

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* *Assistant Professor,* Department of Training and Capacity Building in Education, National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), New Delhi -110016.

stress on safeguarding interest and rights of Muslims as a minority. In Indian Constitution, there are certain fundamental rights (Articles 15-17, 25 - 30) and directive principles (Articles 330-339 and 380) that are meant for protection of minorities in the Nation. Article 29 talks about the minorities in terms of protection of their interests (1A). As per this Article, any sections of the citizens residing in India have a right to conserve their own distinct language, script or culture. Furthermore, it also states that on grounds of religion, race, caste, language or any of them, no citizen will be refused admission into any educational institution maintained by the state or receiving aid out of the funds of the state.

Article 30 of the Constitution focused on the rights of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions. As per this Article, all minorities (based on religion or language) have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. Furthermore, it also states that while granting aid to educational institutions the state shall not show any distinction or discrimination for any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority (based on religion or language).

The Article 29 (2) aims at providing the protection not only of the religious minorities but also of local or linguistic minorities. As per this Article, on the grounds of caste, race, religion, or language no citizen will be denied admission into any educational institution that is maintained by the state or receiving aid out of state funds.

Here, it would be relevant to cite the Supreme Court judgement of 12 August 2005 as per these un-aided intuitions (minority as well as non-minority) had full right to admit students of their preference in medicine, engineering and other professional courses without government interference. The bench also said that that the minority institutions would be given freedom to grant admission to students as per their own choice, including students of non-minority community and also members of their own community from other states, both to a limited extent only and not in a manner and to such an extent that their minority educational institution status is laid out. On doing so, they lose the protection of Article 30 (1) of the constitution relating to minority communities.

INTERVENTIONS INITIATED

A number of programmes were initiated and institutions were set up by the Government of India from time-to-time for meeting the constitutional provisions and also plan requirements. At first in 1978 the National Commission for Minorities was. In 1993 it was granted the constitutional status. The commission took up number of functions for the effective implementation of

safeguards provided under the Constitution for protection of the interests of the minorities and making recommendations in this context to the central government or the state government as per the requirements of the case. There is also a minority cell under this commission which looks after the problems being faced by minority educational institutions with a view to recognition, affiliation, grant-in-aid, etc.

In order to give more attention of government schemes and programmes to minorities, a list of 41 minority concentration districts was prepared in 1987. This list was based on criterion of 20 per cent or more minority population in a district based on the data from 1971 Census.

Minorities kept on getting the developmental benefits along with other backward classes till the Seventh Five Year Plan. The Government of India set up Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF) for providing educational plans and schemes for the advantage of educationally backward minorities and also weaker sections. It also helps in setting up residential schools particularly for girls in order to provide up to date education to them and also promote research and other initiatives for the advantage of educationally backward minorities.

The Foundation provides grants-in-aid to NGOs for construction and expansion of schools/hostels, technical/vocational training centres having emphasis on girl students and scholarships to meritorious girl-students. The different schemes run by the Foundation are financial assistance for purchase of equipments and furniture and also for setting up/strengthening vocational/technical training centre/institutes. It also gives Maulana Azad Literacy Awards.

The National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC) established in 1994 aims at promoting economic activities amongst the backward sections of notified minorities. The NMDFC provides concessional finance for self-employment activities to the poorest of poor among the minority communities. In addition to this, it also gives education loans to them.

In the year 2005 on the occasion of Independence Day the Prime Minister, declared a 15-point programme that aimed at the well-being of minorities. The programme aimed at ensuring that the benefits of the government schemes for the underprivileged reached the targeted sections that are basically underprivileged sections among the minorities. The 15–point programme also intended to ensure even handed flow of benefits of the scheme to minorities. It also emphasised that the minority concentration areas should be allocated some proportion of the development projects. It specifically mentioned that, wherever possible, 15 per cent of the outlays and targets under the different schemes should be outlaid for minorities. The programme basically intended to

enhance opportunities for education and ensuring an equitable share for minorities in economic activities and employment, not only through the existing government schemes but also through new government schemes. It also focused on support for self-employment by the way of credit support and recruitment to state and central government jobs. It also envisaged at ensuring an appropriate share for minorities in infrastructure development schemes thereby improving living conditions of minorities. The programme objective is also to prevent and control communal disharmony and violence.

The plight of Muslims was elaborated in the Sachar Committee Report, 2008 (Government of India, 2006: 14-15). The appalling socio-economic plight of the Muslim community was presented by the Justice Rajinder Sachar Report. It emphasised the urgent need to implement special measures for the upliftment of the socio-economic conditions of Muslims. Accordingly, the Multi-Sectoral Development Programme was conceived as a special initiative of the follow-up action on the Sachar Committee recommendations. This scheme was launched in 2008-09 in the beginning the Eleventh Five Year Plan and launched in the year 2008-09. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) approved by the Government. It was introduced in 90 Minority Concentration Districts (MCDs). It is an area development initiative that

aims at addressing the development deficits of minority concentration areas by creating socio-economic infrastructure and providing basic facilities. The programme mainly aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of minorities and also providing basic amenities to them for improving the quality of life of the people and reducing imbalances in the identified minority concentration areas during the Twelfth Five Year Plan period. The projects to be taken up under Multi-Sectoral Development Programmes (MsDP) would be associated with the provision of better infrastructure for education, skill development, health, sanitation, pucca housing, roads, drinking water, besides schemes for creating income generating opportunities. The scheme aimed at providing additional resources and taking up projects for the welfare of the minorities was to plug in the gaps in the prevalent schemes of the Government of India.

In addition to this, there is centrally sponsored free coaching and allied scheme that aimed at empowering the students/candidates of notified minority communities in terms of their skills and capabilities to make them employable in industries, by assisting them as well as those institutions working for them, to the market dynamics on a continuous basis so that they were not deprived of the professional wisdom demanded by business sectors in addition to the government sector.

'Project Hunar' initiated by National Institute of Open Schooling keeping in mind the unique existential problems of the young Muslim girls. It was initiated as collaboration in between through Bihar Education Project Council (BEPC), Bihar Government and Government of India. National Institute of Open Schooling and 'Project Hunar' was aimed at providing free, skill based training to poor, Muslim girls (11-14/16 years) mostly out of school. The project was successful in Bihar and as a result, later on, the Project was also started in walled city area of Delhi which has a large Muslim population.

Gaps Still Unfulfilled

This socio-economic backwardness of Muslims is not simply established by the individual surveys, researches, and papers and voluntary organisations but also by various Committees appointed by Government of India from time-to-time. Under the chairmanship of Dr Gopal Singh a High Power Panel, that was set up with the purpose of knowing about the socio-economic state of the Indian minorities established that the Muslims are backward. After three decades, the findings of the Prime Minister's High Level Committee under the chairmanship of Justice Rajinder Sachar, constituted to find out into educational and socio-economic position of Muslims (GOI, 2006) reaffirmed these findings.

Along with this, the Gopal Singh Report, the reports of 43rd Round and 55th Round and 64th Round of the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) and the programme for action under the new education policy of 1986 also showed that the Muslim minority is educationally the most backward segment of the nation. The NSSO confirmed that in educational front, Muslim minority which is the India's biggest religious minority is the most backward community. In higher education also, Muslims' ratio is lower than even that of the Scheduled Tribes (STs) who are considered to be most backward. On the basis 64th round household survey, the NSSO brought out a report that presented the state of participation and expenditure in education. Under this survey, a random sample of more than four hundred thousand persons (4, 45,960) were covered. These persons were from 63,318 rural households and 37,263 urban households from nearly eight thousand villages (7953) and about five thousand urban blocks (4682), spread over the entire geographical area of the country. As per the report out of every hundred Muslims in the education system, just ten moved higher up the leader and got enrolled in high school and above. In fact, this ratio for Scheduled Tribes (STs) is eleven, Scheduled Castes (SCs) twelve and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) fourteen thereby indicating that position of Muslim was worse than that of the Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and the Other Backward Classes. Another astonishing fact that was brought forth by the report was

that high education among Muslims in rural areas was more than their counterparts in urban areas.

As per the Sachar Committee Report, there was 85.3 per cent enrolment of children in the age-group of 6 to 14 years at the all-India level. It was further noted that the enrolment of Muslim children of this age-group was lower than the national average (81.8 per cent _ as well as relative to 'All Others' (89.9 per cent). The report however stated that enrolment of Muslim children in the age-group of 6 to 14 years was higher than SCs/STs (79.3 per cent). The report further stated that the gap between Muslims and other SRCs advanced as the level of education became higher. As per the report, there has been spreading out of educational opportunities since Independence (Chapter 4, Section 3, Page 60). This has not resulted in the convergence of Muslims and 'all others'. In its chapter four the Report, (Section 10, Page 85) states that Muslims have appreciably low achievement level in higher secondary attainment rate and this is one of the main reasons for low participation of Muslims in higher education. Muslims appear to have considerable disadvantages *vis-à-vis* most SRCs (socio-religious communities). The report also concludes that that this community feels that it is getting increasingly marginalised and discriminated.

The Committee further stated that the Muslim Community felt discriminated as they had experienced deprivation in quality education not only in absolute but also in relative terms. They felt alienated as they were feeling that are getting increasingly marginalised. The findings pinpointed that the overall literacy rates of Muslims was lower (59.1 per cent as against 65.1 per cent - national average) and also lower in comparison with growth rate of literacy across different SRCs, in terms of enrolment rates, attendance rates, dropout rates and matriculation completion rates, mean years of schooling, differentials in educational attainments of different SRCs. On the basis of the findings, the report finally concluded that Muslims have one of the lowest enrolment rates at school level. In addition, among Muslims, it is the girl child's condition which is most vulnerable. As per the report, the biggest stumbling block in access to higher/technical education was the elementary education. This restricted their employment and income generating potential. It cited that state could make urgent interventions firstly in the field of elementary education; secondly, it could also promote Urdu medium schools in the immediate neighbourhood; thirdly integrate traditional educational institutions like *Madarsas* and *Maktabs* into the mainstream education system and last, but not the least, by the way of imparting suitable skill/vocational based training at elementary/ secondary level to Muslim children, both girls and boys.
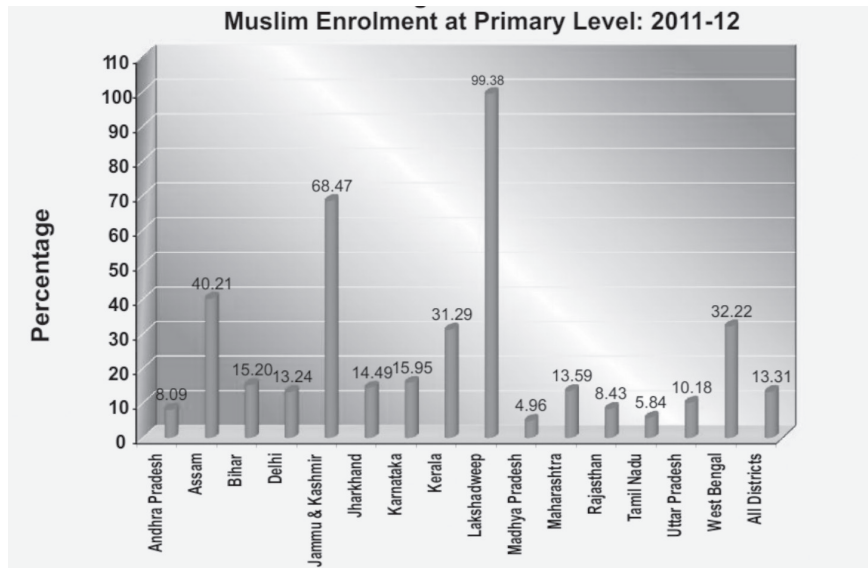
Fig. 1

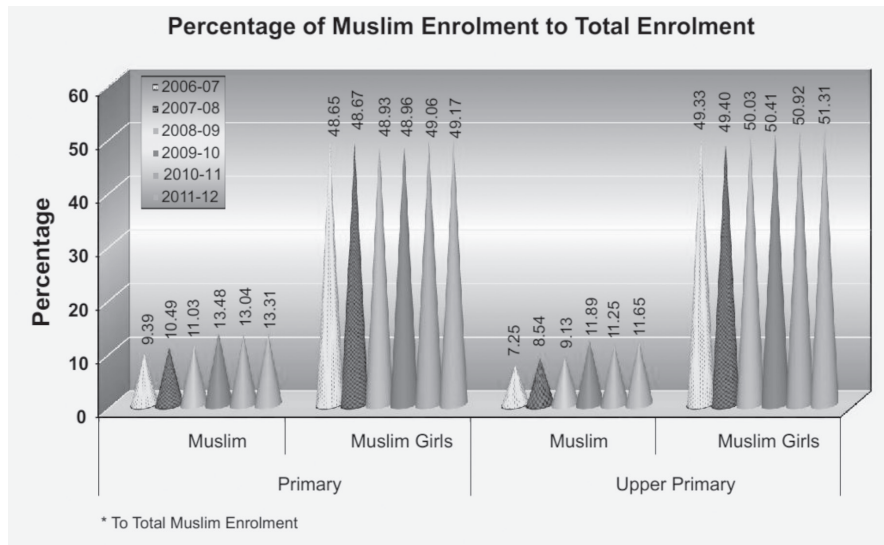*Source:* NUEPA (2013) : Elemenatry Education in India : a Graphic Presentation Based on DISE Data

Fig. 2

Source: NUEPA (2013) : Elemenatry Education in India : a Graphic Presentation Based on DISE Data

As per the DISE data, the representation and subsequently per centage of enrolment of Muslim girls in the total Muslim enrolment at primary level has shown a slight improvement from 48.65 per cent to 49.17 per cent at primary stage over a span of 6 years i.e. from 2006-07 to 2011-12. Likewise, at upper primary level also there is slight improvement in enrolment of girls from 49.33 per cent to 51.31 per cent at upper primary level from the year 2006-07 to 2011-12 (Figure 2)

(Dreze and Kingdon, 1999) found in their study that the parents' decision and the situation in the child's household play the most influential role in children's participation in school. Other factors include poverty and lack of education that determine Muslim children's participation. These major factors play a greater role than the notion that Muslim culture is inimical to schooling. As per (Ramachandran, 2013) higher number of people in poverty, those from disadvantaged communities (SC, ST, new migrants, Muslims) end up attending schools that are more likely to have very poor facilities, indifferent teachers (in government schools) or poorly qualified teachers (in low-cost private schools) or are multi-grade with two or more classes sitting together with one teacher. Such schools are now referred to as high-poverty schools. Such schools exist in both the government sector as well as the private sector. Income inequality has led to the increasing

spatial segregation of high-income families from middle-income and low-income families – with the poorest often relegated to the outskirts of cities or specific habitations in rural areas.

As per the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities Report (2007) within the minorities, Muslims (65.31 per cent) are better off at primary level of education but their proportion goes down at the higher level as evident from data — secondary (10.96 per cent) and senior secondary (4.53 per cent) stages. At the primary level, Christians (45.79 per cent) are lower than the national average but situation is not so as their level increases not only at the secondary level (17.48 per cent) but also at the senior secondary (8.70 per cent) level. In national average is being followed by other religions.

(The Prime Minister's High Level Committee, 2010) in its report entitled "Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India" stated that in India there have been a broad range of programmes and policy initiatives by different governments from time-to-time for promotion of the economic, social and educational development of the minority communities. The Muslims have made some noticeable improvement, but the view still remains that the educational and economic gap among the community and the rest of the SRCs has been widening. By providing equal opportunity and rights to all its citizens, the Indian

Constitution makers hoped that the problem of minorities in India could be solved and, some day, minorities and the majorities could form 'one community', but it could not.

The Muslims comprised 12.4 per cent of the population of India as per the 2001 Census. In the year 2012-13, the enrolment figures clearly showed that the per centage of Muslim children in elementary level exceeded that number. The enrolment of Muslim children at primary level was 14.2 per cent. For upper primary level, it was slightly low (12.1 per cent) in 2012-13. As per this the enrolment of Muslim students at the elementary level 13.15 per cent. There has been a visible increase in enrolment from barely 8.3 per cent to more than 13 per cent is due to improvement in access to elementary education.

It is also observed that there is increase in enrolment of Muslim girls in schools and their retention. As a result, the number of dropouts from the community came down from three crore in 2001 to 30 lakhs by March 2013. The Maulana Azad Taleem-e-Baligan has also been drawn up to impart functional literacy to a crore Muslim adults in the 15-plus age-group (quoted from news item entitled 'Enrolment of Muslims in elementary schools' (Hindu, 7th January, 2014). The figures for the National Literacy *vis-a-vis* Muslim literacy for the 2001 and 2011 indicate that over the last decade, there has been not much improvement in terms of Muslim literacy (Table 1).

Recent data on development (India HDI 2011; NSSO, 2011; NSSO 2013) does not demonstrate any noteworthy improvements in the status of Muslims, which is a serious folly. It is also right that data collection, systematic tracking as well as analysing of performance of Muslims is a bit sketchy and is not profound at best. The fact that there are insufficient academic thoughts on Muslim deprivation and development, one is not fully aware as to what works best for Muslims, countrywide. This is a noteworthy gap, keeping in view of how important their outcomes are for inclusive growth and development.

Table 1

Literacy Among Muslims vis–a–vis National Literacy

Year	Muslim Literacy			National Literacy			Difference of Average Muslim versus National
	Male	Female	Average	Male	Female	Average	
2001	67.6%	50.10%	59.10%	75.3%	53.7%	64.8%	5.7%
2011	74.9%	50.3%	67.69%	82.14%	65.46%	74.6%	6%

Conclusion

The minority issue in Indian society and polity is a very broad one involving several dimensions: social, political, religious, linguistic, cultural and ethnic. In recognition of the unique problems of the Muslims, the Indian government has consistently developed policies for their economic, social and political empowerment. The Constitution of India has provided safeguards to Muslim minorities in respect of their religious and cultural freedom. In light of various reports regarding the educational backwardness of Muslims, government has framed different programmes with enough monetary allocations to tackle the inequity faced by minority communities in particular the Muslim minority community in the social, economic and educational sphere. Though these policies and constitutional provisions aim to bring out some positive change, however, the process of transformation has been extremely slow in reducing the gaps between the Muslim community and the rest of the Indian society. Keeping this in view, India has to make appropriate interventions for inclusion of Muslims and face challenges of their education and subsequent empowerment.

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Study of the Alternative Schools (ASs) under Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and its Contribution to SSA (Delhi)

Chiter Rekha*

Abstract

Education is the fundamental right of every child and in that direction Delhi Government is also determined to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age-group 6-14 years. NCT of Delhi has shown good progress in the field of education and has obtained higher literacy rate than the national average in 2011 census, even so hundreds of children remain out-of-school and hence, the prospect of achieving UEE remains a distant dream. In this backdrop, the paper attempts to highlight the role and functions of Alternative Schools (ASs) under EGS for UEE for children in age-group 6-14 years in Delhi. This study involves various aspects related to quality dimensions of elementary education like infrastructure and basic facilities, teaching learning material and teaching learning process, perception of ASs functionaries' towards ASs. The paper tries to ascertain whether the activities undertaken by the ASs are in accordance with the prescribed guidelines of SSA and RTE, and how far have they been successful? Thus the ultimate purpose of the study is to bring out the reality of the implementation of SSA with regard to Alternative Schools.

INTRODUCTION

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a programme launched by Government of India to achieve the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). It was launched in Delhi in the year 2003. SSA provides support to out-of-school children in the form of Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and many other strategies under Alternative and Innovative

* *Lecturer*, Department of District Resource Unit, DIET (South West), Ghumanhera (SCERT), New Delhi-110073.

Education (AIE) Programme. These non-formal education schemes (EGS and AIE) are the main components of SSA. Alternate education programme, such as Alternative Schools, under SSA, attempts to bridge learning gaps and hence reduce the number of out-of-school children in the National Capital Territory (NCT). Alternative Schools (ASs) were designed under the Education Guarantee Scheme to address the specific needs of out-of-school children and provide them with an opportunity to complete primary schooling.

Delhi is the second largest metropolis in India after Mumbai with a population of 16 million. NCT of Delhi has shown good progress in the field of education as it is evident from Table 1 which shows an increasing trend of literacy rate ranging from 61.95 per cent to 86.34 per cent during 1961-2011 as per census.

Table 1

Delhi Literacy Rate (1961-2011) – in percentage

S. No	Year	Person	Male	Female
1	1961	61.95	70.37	50.87
2	1971	65.08	72.55	55.56
3	1981	71.94	79.28	62.60
4	1991	75.29	82.01	66.99
5	2001	81.67	87.33	74.71
6	2011	86.34	91.03	80.93

Source: Economic Survey of Delhi 2005 and Census 2011
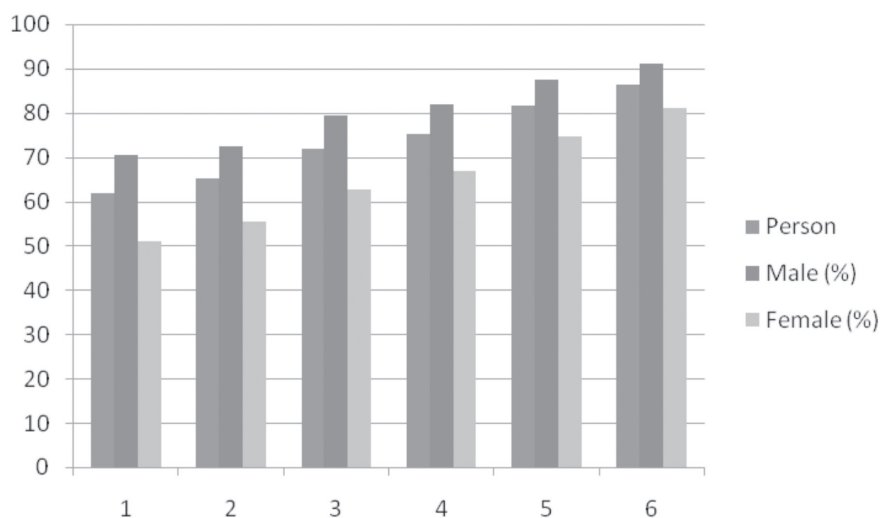
Literacy rates for 1961 and 1971 relate to population aged five years and above. The rates for the year 1981 to 2011 relate to population aged seven years and above. Literacy rate by sex for Delhi and districts is given in the following table:

Out-of-School Children in Delhi

Estimation of the correct number of out-of-school children in Delhi is a daunting task. The NCT of Delhi is a major destination for migrants from neighbouring states and other parts of the country. The rate of migration has seen an increase over the past years which also means an increasing presence of street children and out-of-school children in Delhi.

Table 3 shows that thousands of children remain out-of-school. AWP and B puts the figures of the out-of-school children as 30001 in 2007-08, 38922 in 2009-10, 32063 in 2010-11 and 23536 in 2011-12. Going by this report, the goal of achieving UEE is still distant.

Table 2

District-wise Literacy Rate of Delhi

S. No.	State/ District	Literacy Rate					
		Person		Male		Female	
		1991	2001	1991	2001	1991	2001
	NCT of Delhi	**75.29**	**81.67**	**82.01**	**87.33**	**66.99**	**74.71**
1.	North-West	72.22	80.57	79.59	86.67	63.06	73.08
2.	North	75.87	80.10	80.83	84.64	69.69	74.54
3.	North-East	67.83	77.53	77.08	84.78	56.52	69.94
4.	East	77.50	84.91	84.14	89.65	69.52	79.26
5.	New Delhi	80.59	83.24	86.33	88.62	73.19	76.33
6.	Central	75.42	79.69	79.85	82.73	70.26	76.05
7.	West	79.01	83.39	84.17	87.85	72.85	77.99
8.	South-West	78.40	83.61	85.95	89.86	68.66	75.55
9.	South	75.69	81.96	82.79	88.26	66.67	73.94

Source: Directorate of Education, GNCTD

Table 3

Out-of-School Children in age-group 6-14 years

Delhi	Out-of-School children
2007-08	30001
2009-10	38922 (urban)
2010-11	32063
2011-12	23536

Source: AWPandB 2009-10

Table 4

Number of Out-of-School Children in Delhi – District-wise

Districts	No of Out-of-School Children (OoSC)
East Delhi	2380
North East	3860
North	960
North West	3200
West	3665
South West	2520
South	5751
New Delhi	160
Central Delhi	1140
Total	23,536

Source: Project Approval Board (PAB)

Table 4 shows district-wise out-of-school children in Delhi. According to the Project Approval Board (PAB) Meeting (held on May 2011), 25,536 children are out-of-school in Delhi.

MAJOR INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN BY DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION OF DELHI FOR UEE

Delhi *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Samiti* (DSSAS)

In 1993, the Department of Education, Delhi launched the 'Education for All' programme for school students and teachers. The target is to cover about 12 lakh illiterates of Delhi in age-group of 6-35 under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor of Delhi and Secretary, Department of Education, Delhi.

Universalisation of Elementary Education Mission (UEEM-2002)

In Delhi, *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) was initiated in the year 2003, two years after its first launch in the country in 2001. A society was formed and got registered in the name of 'Universalisation Elementary Education Mission' (UEEM 2002) under the Department of Education, NCT of Delhi for the implementation of SSA programme. UEE Mission in Delhi envisages two kinds of integration of the formal school systems (MCD, NDMC, and DCB) as well as of the formal and alternative education system. The SSA in Delhi is being implemented in partnership with Directorate of Education of the Government of National Capital Territory (GNCT) of Delhi, Municipal Council Delhi (MCD), New Delhi Municipal Corporation, Delhi Cantonment Board, State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT), 9 District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET), Community, NGOs.

Teaching through CALTOONZ

UEE Mission has developed the course

material for upper primary classes to help learners in overcoming their weaknesses through CALTOONZ, a programme based on computer animation. The aim of the programme is to check school dropout rate by making the learning process more interesting and attractive in the Government schools.

YUVA

UEE Mission has launched this innovative programme to make learning more joyful and more skill-oriented.

BaLA

Every child needs a harmonious environment for personality development. Realising the need of child-friendly environment, it has been decided by Education Department that all school buildings be suitably developed with architectural designs in such a way that the school's entire physical environment itself acts as a learning aid.

Enrolment Drive *(Dakhila Abhiyan)*

The concept of *Dakhila Abhiyan* took shape in the year 2001. Delhi Government in its initiative passed an order that no school would insist on showing a birth certificate or an affidavit for admission up to Class V.

Automatic Admission from Class V to VI (Twinning of Schools)

To check students dropout at Class V stage, Twinning of Schools system has been evolved in which every primary school is attached to one Directorate of Education school and the admission of students from primary school to the Directorate of Education school is automatic.

Online Admission in Directorate of Education Schools

Mid-day Meal Programme

This is provided to boost universalisation of primary education by improving enrolment, attendance, retention and learning level of children and to improve nutritional status of the students. Delhi Government has been providing Mid-day Meal to the students of primary stage since 2005.

No Retention Policy

In order to achieve the target of UEE and bring down the dropout rate to zero, the government launched the policy of "No Retention" till Class VIII from the year 2009.

Right to Education Act, 2009

According to this Act, every child in age-group 6-14 years shall have a right to free and compulsory education in a neighbourhood school till completion of elementary education.

INITIATIVES FOR THE COVERAGE OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN

(a) Household Child Census

As directed by MHRD, Government of India, Household Child Census was conducted in approximately 15, 20,272 households. The analysis of the data indicates that there are

Table 5

Out-of-School Children (in thousands)

Age group	Male	Female	Total
6-10	18949	16693	35642
11-13	9757	8821	18578
Total	28706	25514	54220

Source: SSA report 2009

54,220 out-of-school children as given in Table 5.

(b) Learning Centres (2002-03)

The UEE Mission involved NGOs on annual contract basis to run Learning Centres (LCs) which were established as an alternative approach.

(c) *Khulja Sim Sim* Project (2008-09)

In order to provide education to out-of-school children and adult learners through an interactive, interesting and enjoyable manner, the department has initiated an innovative project to establish ICT based learning stations on the boundary wall of the Government schools all over Delhi.

(d) *Chalta Firta Schools*/Mobile Schools (2008)

The two *Chalta-Firta Schools* / Mobile Learning Centres (MLCs) are being run very successfully by the organisations namely Butterflies and Salaam Baalak Trust.

(d) Residential Bridge Course Centres (2006)

The Government of Delhi has launched a campaign for the education of all children and adolescents who live and work on the streets under SSA. The Department has operationalised three Residential Bridge Course Centres (RBCCs) for street and working children, with the involvement of 'Samya Centre for Equity Studies' - an NGO.

(E) KGBV

In view of the low female literacy rate, in the Mustafabad area of North East Delhi, MHRD Government of India has directed the Department of Education to set up one Hostel-cum-School under the *Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya* (KGBV) Scheme of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.*

(g) Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE)

In order to provide quality pre-primary education, 300 Model Early Childhood Care and Education Centres have been operationalised in various schools.

(h) Alternative Innovative Education (AIE) Centres

Alternative Schools are an alternative approach for the education of out-of-school children under the Education Guarantee Scheme.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the role of the Alternative Schools in achieving the goal of SSA.
- To study the infrastructure and basic facilities available at the ASs.
- To find out the extent of activities undertaken by Alternative Schools (ASs) under the prescribed duties of SSA.
- To study the perception of children, parents, instructors, supervisors, project heads (PHs) and Directors of ASs on the effective implementation of ASs.

Sample for the Study

Forty-five Alternative Schools were selected for the research. 28 Learning Centres (LCs) and 4 Mobile Learning Centres (MLCs) were chosen randomly from the same area. 10 *Khulja Sim Sim* (KSS) - Hall in the Wall Education Limited (HiWEL) were selected through systematic sampling and all the 3 Residential Bridge Course Centres (RBCCs) were

also taken into consideration. All the stakeholders (Directors, project heads, supervisors, instructors, parents, and children) were also taken into consideration.

Methodology and Tools Used

Survey Method was adopted for the collection of data. The data for the present study were collected through the medium of questionnaires, interview schedule, observation schedule and checklist. Questionnaires and interview schedule were prepared mainly to study the perception of parents and Alternative School functionaries' regarding the role of ASs in implementation of SSA. Observation schedule and check list were prepared to assess the extent of the activities undertaken by the Alternative Schools in accordance with their prescribed duties under SSA and RTE. For the analysis of the data, simple statistical technique like percentage was used.

Table 6

Responses of Instructors Regarding the Role of ASs

Role of Alternative Schools	ASs (45)	Percentage
Children living in the red light area/children of sex workers	04	9
Children of parents working at construction sites or railway stations	30	67
Out-of-school children	45	100
Street children/working children	35	78
Migrated children/off the state children	33	73
Orphan children or children of dysfunctional families	25	56

Data Analysis

On the basis of data analysis and interpretation, the following main findings have emerged out of the present investigation.

This study was conducted on 45 Alternative Schools. Table 6 reveals that majority of instructors agreed that ASs which were established as an alternative approach for the education of out-of-school children under Education and Guarantee Scheme have played an important role for the education of dropout and never enrolled children, working children and children who are not in a position to reach out to formal school, children of parents working at construction sites or railway stations, out-of-school children, migrated children, street children, orphan children or children of dysfunctional families in the age-group of 6-14 years. RBCCs are providing education

to entire population of children living in slums, open streets, children working in tea stalls, dhabas, domestic help, garbage collectors, begging on traffic signal and religious places, loitering around the railway stations and also the children most difficult to approach. *Khulja Sim Sim* were providing education to out-of-school children and adult learners.

Children in red light areas or children of sex workers are also one of the target groups to be covered under SSA. Only 9 per cent ASs (MLCs) were providing the education of the children of sex workers or children living in the red light areas.

Table 7 exhibits the responses of the 22 directors and project heads about the role of ASs. All the PHs and Directors of Alternative Schools said that their ASs were playing a major role in enrolment, retention, mainstreaming, mobilising,

Table 7
Responses of Projects Heads and Directors about the Role of ASs

Role of ASs	Directors and Project Heads (22)	Percentage
Checking dropout	20	91
Enrolment	22	100
Retention	22	100
Mainstreaming	22	100
Mobilising	22	100
Quality improvement in education	22	100
Curriculum development	14	63

checking dropouts, (63 per cent) curriculum development and quality improvement in education of the children in ASs whereas *Khulja Sim Sim* Centres were not playing the role in checking dropouts and curriculum development.

One of the major objectives of SSA is to provide basic facilities to children, such as stationery, drinking water, and separate toilets for girls, separate classroom, teaching equipments, etc. The analysis of the data shows that all the objectives are fulfilled partially. 96 per cent ASs do not have separate classrooms for the different classes of children and 62 per cent of ASs have less space for group activities. Most of the Alternative Schools, especially LCs, run under one roof. MLCs run

in a bus whereas Khulja Sim Sim run in constructed cabin attached with boundary wall of government schools (shown in the photograph no 4). Only 44 per cent of ASs have computers. Each kiosk *(Khulja Sim Sim)* has only two computers which is not sufficient for the children. It is very difficult for them to learn daily. There are no chairs/benches available at KSS for students and instructors. RBCCs are running in old Government school buildings and the condition of buildings is not so good. 76 per cent of ASs have no separate toilet for girls and (91 per cent) ASs had no play ground and play materials. Only 4 per cent ASs have chairs and 96 per cent students have to sit on the floor. 58 per cent have no adequate

Table 8

Basic Facilities Available at the Alternative Schools

Facilities	Observation Result (45 ASs)	Percentage
Stationery /books	32	71
Drinking water	21	46
Toilets for girls	11	24
Daris	32	71
Chairs, benches	02	04
Separate classrooms	02	04
Proper light in the classroom/sun light	22	48
Adequate space in the classroom	17	38
Teaching aids/learning aids	15	33
Computer	20	44
Playground	04	09
Uniforms	08	17
Libraries and their use	17	38
Mid-day meal	07	15
Medical	19	42
Vocational training	16	35

medical facilities and 85 per cent ASs have not provided Mid-day Meal and uniforms to the students.

Only 33 per cent of observed ASs were found to be using adequate teaching learning aids and 71 per cent Projects Heads claimed that they provide vocational training to the students of their ASs, however the observation reveals that only 35 per cent ASs were providing vocational training to the students of ASs. Textbooks, stationery were provided to the students at 71 per cent ASs. *Khulja Sim Sim* Centres have no provision of textbooks, stationery and teaching learning material for the students.

The library forms an essential component of SSA. The study revealed that 62 per cent of ASs did not have a library which is the most important objective of the SSA. Thus, it can be inferred from the data that ASs are not able to play their role effectively and meaningfully in implementing the SSA.

Table 9 depicts that 77 per cent instructors used formal school books and only 22 per cent instructors have developed their own teaching plans before teaching in the classroom to make teaching-learning effective. 20 per cent instructors were using effective teaching methodology and audio-video aids and other teaching aids (such as models, charts, maps, specimens etc.) while teaching.

According to NPE 1986, the child centred and activity based process

Table 9

Observation Results with respect to Teaching Learning Process

Teaching Learning Process and Teaching methodology	Alternative Schools (45)	Percentage
Instructors develop their own teaching plans	10	22
Books are used for teaching (Formal school books)	35	77
Audio-Video aids and other teaching aids while teaching	09	20
Methodology of teaching are used by the instructors' books	32	71
Peer group learning	09	20
Demonstration	11	24
Learning by doing	09	20
Approach of teaching (child centred)	11	24
Punishment is used for classroom management	01	02
Class handled by the instructors (multigrade)	42	93
Continuous and comprehensive evaluation of learner done by the instructors	07	15

Table 10

Activities undertaken by Alternative Schools (ASs) are in accordance with their prescribed duties under SSA

SSA Norms	ASs (45)	Percentage
All the EGS and AIE provide free education to 6-14 age-group of children	45	100
Provision for the education of children with special needs	45	100
Special educator / special facilities for CWSN	02	04
Bridge the gender and social gap	45	100
EGS and AIE centres function for at least four hours during the day time	21	46
Preference was given to women in selection of EVs/ instructors	31	69
Teacher qualification laid down by the NCTE under Section 23 of the RTE Act	12	27
30 days induction training of EVs for primary level centres and 40 days for upper primary centres were completed prior to the starting at the centre	31	69
Alternative Schools are playing major role in checking the dropouts/enrolment/retention/mainstreaming, etc.	32	71
Door-to-door survey of OoSC done	45	100
For age appropriate admission of OoSC, and continued support to them	45	100
If the no. of children exceed 40, additional EVs can be provided at the centres. Pupil teacher ratio should be 40:1	45	100
Facilities provided by the community like suitable space, drinking water facilities, etc.	10	22
Community involvement through parents' group SC/PTA's/ MTA's	31	69
Bridge courses	45	100
Remedial teaching	45	100
Residential camps	03	07
Mainstreaming of children into formal schools	45	100
Record-keeping and close monitoring of the learner admitted in the ASs in regard to their regular attendance, dropout, child profile, and promotion to next class	36	80
HMs were involved in regular supervision of ASs from which children likely to be mainstream	16	35
Regular evaluation of the functioning of EGS and AIE intervention	45	100
Regular academic support form CRPs/BRPs	15	33
Curriculum development, particularly of bridge courses	13	29

of learning should be adopted at the primary stage. It was seen that most of the ASs were not using the child centred approach. In 71 per cent of the classes of ASs, the concepts were being taught by the instructors using traditional method of teaching (by books) while only 24 per cent instructors used child centred approach during TLP by involving the students in class activities. Only 15 per cent instructors were used Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation for the evaluation of the students of ASs. After the observation, it was found that all the instructors of LCs, MLCs and KSS taught the multigrade classes at ASs whereas the monograde classes were handled by the RBCCs instructors.

Out of the norms prescribed by the SSA, the following points are being observed in all alternative schools:

- The entire ASs were providing education to 6-14 age-group (Classes I to V) of children except KSS. All the *Khulja Sim Sim* were providing education to 4-18 age-group (Classes I to VIII) of children.
- RTE mandates that all children in 6-14 years of age-group should be educated in the neighbourhood schools. This also includes CWSN. Hence, SSA ensures that every CWSN, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability is provided quality inclusive education. SSA has a 'zero rejection' policy so that no child is left out of the education system. School preparedness of CWSN must be ensured by providing 'Special Training' as envisaged in the RTE Act. The existing alternative schools are providing special training to the children who are not enrolled in schools or have dropped out. All the ASs have a provision for the education of children with special needs and trying to bridge the gender and social gap. There was only 4 per cent physically challenged children in these centres. Special needs units are running by some NGOs like Samaya Centre for Equity Studies and Prayas for CWSN. 60 per cent of the ASs did not have support services for children with special needs.

- As per the norm under SSA, teacher-pupil ratio in a class should be 1:40. All the functionaries reported that the teacher-pupil ratio at their ASs was 1:40 which was as per norms under SSA.
- The RTE Act recommends free education and bans physical punishment and mental harassment. It was seen that entire ASs followed this Act.
- All the ASs (LCs, MLCs., RBCCs and KSS) are conducting house-hold surveys for locating OoSC as well as dropout children which were in line with SSA and helping in mainstreaming the children in formal schools like MCD, NDMC and *Sarvodaya Vidyalayas,* etc.

- Close monitoring of the learner admitted in the ASs with regard to their regular attendance, dropout, child profile, and promotion to next class was conducted in all the ASs (LCs, MLCs., RBCCs and KSS).
- Bridge course, remedial classes and mainstreaming are an important objectives of ASs assigned under SSA. The entire ASs were providing bridge course facilities, remedial classes to the children of ASs and helping the children in mainstreaming into the formal school.

However the norms which were not being followed by all the sampled ASs were:

- SSA prescribed minimum 4 hours per day for each AS. 53 per cent alternative schools are open 3 hours per day. RBCCs being Residential centres remain open for all 7 days in a week and working hours are round the clock.
- According to the norm of SSA/RTE, 50 per cent women instructors should be recruited under SSA but KSS are not following this norm. 70 per cent KSS have male instructors.
- Out of 35 instructors of LCs, MLCs and RBCCs, only 27 per cent instructors of ASs have a required qualification. All the KSS instructors have required qualification (diploma in computer) as recommended by RTE Act. So

instructors' qualifications as laid down under Section 23 of the RTE Act are not being fulfilled. 69 per cent instructors got the induction training of 30 days.
- Only 7 per cent (RBCCs) ASs were providing residential facilities to the children enrolled there in. Although some of the parcel institutions running these LCs (such as Prayas, Ritanjali) have some residential facilities but these are not being provided to even orphan and destitute children enrolled in their LCs.
- Twenty-two per cent ASs received the facilities provided by the community like suitable space, drinking water facilities etc. and 69 per cent ASs involved the community through parents group PTM/SC etc. 35 per cent ASs get the support from the HMs of the schools. Only 33 per cent ASs get regular academic support from CRPs/BRPs whereas none of the MLCs, RBCCs, and KSS gets regular academic support form CRPs/BRPs and only 29 per cent ASs are developing their own curriculum and textbooks according to the NCF 2005.

PERCEPTION OF THE STAKEHOLDERS ABOUT THE ASs

All the respondents (directors, project heads, instructors, parents) agreed that the ASs had been successful in effectively implementing SSA. 50 per cent respondents felt that the government should take more

initiative and also make efforts in the improvement of ASs physical environment. Most of the ASs are running in slums in congested areas, that too in one room. There was no proper sitting arrangement for the children. It therefore affects the enrolment and retention of the children in ASs.

As far as the provisions for children were concerned, 64 per cent Alternative School functionaries reported that they were getting ₹1535/- per student per annum for primary (6-11) and ₹2960/- per child per annum for upper primary (12-14). RBCCs are getting ₹10,000/- per student per annum from which they were paying the salary to the instructors, giving rent for the learning centres, salary to the maids who were looking after the children and were also purchasing copies and other necessities for the students. 36 per cent (RBCs and KSS) functionaries reported that building facility is provided under SSA. Only 9 per cent said that computers are also provided under SSA. All the NGO functionaries were highly dissatisfied with the amount of money that they were getting and stated that the money was too less.

SUGGESTIONS

The following discussion could help the ASs in paving the path towards effective implementation and achievement of the goal of SSA and RTE:

- Instructors' qualifications need to be followed for future recruitments. The salary of the instructors should be increased for motivating them in their work.
- Library, mid-day meal, proper sitting arrangements, chairs and health check facility must be made mandatory in all ASs.
- Children of KSS were not satisfied with the teaching equipments and sitting arrangements. According to them, each kiosk has only two computers which are not sufficient for the children. It is very difficult for them to learn daily. There are no chairs/benches available at KSS for students and instructors. The instructors of KSS said that the number of computers on each kiosk should be increased and seats should be provided to the students as they find it very difficult for the instructors to teach the students in extreme weather.
- Around 65 per cent of the surveyed ASs has 30-40 students enrolled at the centre, at different grades or levels. Many of the enrolled students are first generation learners or OoSC with no support at their homes. It is important to understand that this target group needs special care in the early formative years, for which instructors need to be provided special orientation not only to provide bridge courses but also remedial classes to make schooling feasible to new entrants and to curb dropouts.

- In case of children without adult protection, lack of community support and ownership has been a major challenge. To overcome this, children's own community should be encouraged to mobilise people in the form of 'collective' or 'support group' and they should be given enough space to voice their concerns and participate in planning, implementation and monitoring interventions for the education of these children.

- An orderly atmosphere and an attractive working environment will make children happy and comfortable. Therefore, number of classrooms should be increased in all ASs and better infrastructure must be provided.

- Separate LCs, MLCs, for boys and girls have to be established so as to motivate the conservative parents to send their girl child to LCs as they are not interested in sending their daughters to co-education school and LCs.

- The number of RBCCs should be increased and separate RBCs should be established for girls. Three RBCCs are not adequate for whole of Delhi. According to NBT newspaper dated 1 February 2011, there are 1 lakh street children in Delhi and most of these children are girls.

- An educational plan should be prepared for child with special needs in consultation with parents and experts. Its implementation should be monitored and reviewed from time-to-time.

- In ASs where there are children of different age-groups and of different abilities, providing adequate and appropriate need based TLM is a major cause of concern. Therefore, it is important that children should have a variety of TLMs that are relevant to their age and ability so that they are actively engaged in teaching learning process.

- The SSA framework states "children should be encouraged to think and observe independently and the classroom should be the forum for interaction". The ground reality, however, seen in most of the LCs is different than that advocated in SSA. Teachers generally use the traditional 'chalk, talk, and text' method. Therefore, the teacher should use child centred activity based approach.

- Teacher should be made competent in undertaking activities like community surveys, survey of school/LC mapping, total population survey, survey of community resources and their use in furthering educational development.

- The vision of SSA is to enable each child to understand skill and dignity involved in manual work. Work education and art and craft education will enable children to consolidate their experiences through manual work and realise its significance. So, work education and art and craft education should be provided to the learners.

CONCLUSION

Some of the major findings may be given as under:

- There is less rigidity in terms of age of the child to seek admission, timings of classes, date of admission, attendance, and leave rules, etc. unlike in the formal schools. It was observed in the study that though the class timings of ASs are flexible, children also come late and stay beyond the school time. This cannot happen either in government schools or in private schools.

- Instructors make special efforts to encourage and enrol students.

- Those children who have been out-of-school or dropped out from schools get a chance to study in ASs. The entry into formal education is made possible and easy.

- If children after studying for a few years in the ASs can be admitted to a formal school then one of the purposes of opening SSA is achieved, i.e. of preparing the child to enter formal school. This is in consonance with an important objective of SSA that all children in such schools should be 'back to school' by a prescribed time. In this sense, these EGS Centres work as preparatory mechanisms to groom a child to enter the formal school.

- The RTE Act stipulates age appropriate admission for out-of-school and dropout children. The rational of this provision is to ensure that older children do not lose self esteem by being made to sit in a class of younger children, and consequently drop out-of-school system. The RTE Act also provides that such children shall be entitled to free and compulsory education even after attaining the age of 14 years till they complete elementary education. All the ASs were providing remedial education and bridge courses to slow learners, out-of-school children, never enrolled children or children who had been absent for a considerable period of time. RBCCs being run by NGO- Samaya Centre for Equity Studies – were providing residential facilities to homeless and street children.

- In conclusion, one can say that SSA encourages participation of NGOs by way of participatory need assessment, implementation and monitoring. In addition, these agencies are expected to play a proactive role in advocacy for children's rights with emphasis on the Right to Education. SSA should review the nature of its engagement with NGOs and initiate the process of dialogue to open up new areas of collaboration in keeping with the parameters of the Act. Areas where partnerships have worked well should be continued taking into cognisance the new realities thrown up by the Act and fresh areas of partnership explored. NGOs would also have to relook their roles in the light of RTE Act for running Alternative Schools for out-of-school children.

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NROER: The Indian OER Initiative

Rajaram S. Sharma*

Abstract

Modern day Information and Communication Technologies hold the promise of equitable access to information and resources. Combined with the concept of the creative commons, the goal of universal access to quality education has entered the realms of a common human's aspiration.

State education systems have striven against systemic, economic, geographic and socio-cultural barriers to ensure convenient access to resources of a comparable quality to all. It is in this context that the National Repository of Open Education Resources (NROER), an initiative of the National Council of Educational Research and Training and the Government of India, should be studied.

Making a significant departure from the conventional definition of OER, this initiative aims to network students, teachers, educators, institutions, governments, curricular and extra-curricular resources, forums, courses, museums, exhibitions, events . . . treating each of these as a resource.

This expanded definition enables the creation of collections of a very heterogenous and diverse nature, simultaneously catering to a wide array of activities ranging from teaching-learning to teacher support, teacher professional development to school planning, system level governance to data representation and data analysis for informed decision making.

The partnership model being adopted creates identities for individuals and institutions, enabling them to showcase their expertise and resources, reaching out to students and teachers. State education systems as partners enable the collation and curation of all digital and digitisable resources, leveraging them to create local and localised collections. This also is an attempt to transform the looming linguistic and socio-cultural differences into celebrations of diversity and catalysts of human resource development.

Began in August 2013, the activity is entering its beta stage shortly and is expected to reach optimum performance over the next three years.

* *Joint Director,* Central Institute of Educational Technology, National Council of Educational Research and Training, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016.

Introduction

In any large educational system, geographic remoteness coupled with economic backwardness tends to deny children access to resources, which are essential to broaden their outlook and provide them opportunities to realise a learning level commensurate with their talents and efforts.

Experiments have been tried out with different technologies, exploring possibilities they have for enhanced educational access, ranging from classroom devices to broadcast to conferencing. Each of these has helped understand issues at the systemic level, educational delivery and of capacities in the system, which need to be addressed before educational technologies can be meaningfully applied. They have also helped focus attention on what constitutes appropriate technological solutions for different educational problems.

Learning from these and critically applying the insights to exploring modern day Information and Communication Technologies, educationists have come to believe that ICT holds a better promise of equitable access to information and resources. ICT appears to have a combination of features, each better suited to educational delivery than their predecessor technologies – anytime, anywhere access, delivery of multiple media and in multiple languages, capable of reaching out to the physically challenged, two-way synchronous and asynchronous communication and most of all not restricting the users to the role of mere consumers, but enabling them to become producers.

Underscoring the potential of these features of ICT, the National Policy of ICT for School Education (2012) initiated a wide range of initiatives for the school system, including appropriate choices of hardware and software, a comprehensive ICT curriculum for teachers and students, development of digital content repositories, localisation and e-governance.

The National Repository of Open Educational Resources (http://nroer.gov.in), one of the significant mandates emerging out of the Policy came into existence in August 2013. It has begun as a repository of digital media content (audio, video, interactive objects, images and documents) collected into their own libraries. These resources are mapped to key concepts spanning different subjects of the school curriculum. Gradually, the repository intends to cover all grades of school, teacher education, vocational education and adult education. It will also be available in all languages used in the school system in the country, reaching out to all stakeholders.

The NROER platform is undergoing a technological upgrade and its beta version was expected by July 2014.

What is the NROER Platform?

The proposed NROER platform treats every teacher, every

student, every individual and every institution, a node on the network. Similarly, it treats every digital and every digitisable information, be it a media object or even data, a node on the network. This will enable the platform to collect the nodes into collections, which then lend themselves to innumerable activities, interactions and knowledge objects.

This also enables it to make a significant departure from the conventional definitions of OER, treating each of the nodes a resource. This expanded definition enables the creation of collections of a very heterogenous and diverse nature, simultaneously catering to a wide array of activities ranging from teaching-learning to teacher support, to teacher professional development to school planning, to system level governance to data representation and data analysis for informed decision making.

What can Happen on this Network?

Network the school system

The platform enables placing the schools into larger and larger collections, growing from the local to the national. Information generated at each individual school level can be cumulated to facilitate school administration, informing parents and local communities, coopting them in to the system, enable district and state level governance and inform policy planning.

Some immediate examples of data flow and informed decision making can help highlight these possibilities. Longitudinal tracking of children's growth and development, mapping of and identification of talent, say in sports or music, planning of training support to teachers, recognising and catering to infrastructure needs, showcasing and celebrating achievements and raising the bar.

Network teachers

Teachers on the network at an individual level would seek support, critique resources, create and share their resources, and participate in events and activities. Teacher collectives can form self interest groups, academic forums which promote professional activities.

Teacher collectives can curate and showcase resources, offer courses, participate in curriculum development, online seminars and symposia, run their own journals, and, in general, support each other.

Network partners

Any individual or institution can be a partner. Sharing the goals of NROER, the institutions offer their collections of resources, create and manage events, or even offer technological support to the platform. The partnership model being adopted creates identities for individuals and institutions, enabling them to showcase their expertise and resources, while reaching out to students and teachers.

State education systems are also treated as partners. States typically

are a collective of agencies and institutions specialising in curricular resource development, development of student talent in a variety of areas, school administration and management. Together this represents a wide collection of local and localised resources. Translation of resources, digitisation of print resources, collecting and curating resources, and catalysing the participation of artists, educators and thought leaders, offering the school system an opportunity to benefit from their expertise and guidance.

Taking note of the absence of resources in different Indian languages, the shared platform is a way of encouraging the generation of an interest and participation in activities in these languages. This also is an attempt to transform the looming linguistic and socio-cultural differences into celebrations of diversity and catalysts of human resource development.

Create, curate, map and serve curricular and extra-curricular resources

The National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi is mandated with the responsibility of periodically assessing the knowledge base of the education of children, developments in the disciplines, pedagogical understanding, methods and techniques of delivery and assessment of learning. NCERT offers to the nation a curriculum framework guiding the articulation of syllabi

across grades and in the different subjects. Development of teaching learning resources – textbooks, teacher manuals, training, laboratory kits, audio-visual resources, manipulatives and interactive materials and assessment tools – ensues. Institutions in the states – the State Councils of Educational Research and Training, the Boards of Secondary Education, Institutes of Educational Technology, along with the NCERT are involved in the experimentation and development of these resources.

Thus, there exists a very large range of educational resources in print and non-print forms, which can be digitised and made available to the school system. These span all areas of the curriculum and all stages of education. The NROER has set out to collect these publicly available resources.

The NROER presents the curricular mapping, organising the whole into themes, sub-themes and topics. Topics are collections of concepts, people, places, discoveries and inventions, dates and times, measures and measurements. Digital resources are then associated with these topics, providing ready searchable access. Not only does this expand the range of resources available to the teachers, potentially enriching transactions in the classroom, it also involves the teacher in the curation process. Teachers can comment, critique or even reject particular resources. This participatory process is expected to

gradually enhance the specificity and relevance of the resources.

While each of the syllabi, those proposed by NCERT as well as those developed by different states, can simultaneously represent their curricular mapping. At the same time, the platform invites users to propose their own unique mapping. Topics and resource collections so proposed can be based on resources already available on NROER or can be creations contributed to the network. A comprehensive peer review process has been established to critique the proposal and successful proposals are showcased as featured topics. This aims to encouraging diverse use of the resources, innovative applications in the form projects and activities, and showcasing alternate examples of curriculum transaction.

Expand the resources riding on the creative commons possibilities

The NROER in consonance with the directions of the National Policy, has adopted a creative commons licensing. All resources on the NROER shall be available with a cc-by-sa license. This enables the participation of a very large community of users within and outside the formal school system in sharing, remixing and adapting the resources.

One of the immediate benefits of this licensing is in creating an awareness of the legal issues associated with digital content and discouraging piracy. Also, immediately possible is large scale participation in translation

of the resources into different Indian languages, making them accessible to wider audiences.

Celebrate the local and the localised – in every language and for every context

While large-scale adaptations and translations can meet an immediate need for resources in the school system, a better investment would be in developing local resources. The former can serve as a good catalyst of the latter. Constitution of state core teams to spearhead the participation of all has been initiated. Beginning with curricular mapping, progress has been made in translating resources like video documentaries, interactive objects, charts and maps. It is hoped that adequate interest will be generated in making NROER available in every language.

In the larger context of developing capabilities and capacities among teachers and students, localisation carries a far greater significance. The success of NROER is seen in the development of local networks of people and resources even in the remotest corners, their diminishing dependence on the larger world of resources outside seen as a measure of their empowerment- the national rightly being perceived as a collection of a million locals.

Custom collections to meet every need

The NROER platform is capable of supporting a variety of different

applications. The participatory process and the possibility of creating heterogenous collections can support among others the creation and management of books, journals, exhibitions, courses, research, festivals, contests and celebrations. Some of these possibilities have been tried out with encouraging results.

The educational implications of these can be enormous. Teacher education institutions, particularly those that are engaged with only pre-service courses tend to remain outside the mainframe school system. Individuals and institutions outside the system also find it difficult to participate. This is arguably a great loss of human resources. Facilitating their participation in the system can pay rich dividends, not only in the additional energy infused but also in the diverse perspectives that can accrue.

CUSTOM VIEWS OF DATA TO MEET SYSTEM NEEDS

One of the important applications of the network of NROER is the possibilities for data as resource. The school system stands to gain enormously from timely availability of relevant data. In the absence of ICT, each data collection exercise remains separated and insights gleaned from its analysis rarely benefits the end user.

With every teacher, every school, every educator and every institution considered a node, NROER perceives a wide variety of data applications.

Suitable data entry apps, data visualisation apps, customised views of data and data mapping (with geo-code, for instance) and cumulation of data at multiple levels (from local to national) are proposed to be developed.

Beginning with the individual student and teacher, who can use it for tracking and monitoring of achievement, inventories and mapping of resources (infrastructure and personnel), it can be used for financial applications, monitoring of scheme implementation, students' and teachers' data (for system level planning), school mapping, among the activities being experimented are geocoding of schools for creation of interactive maps and analysis of board examination results.

Data are also seen as a curricular resource. Availability of large data sets facilitates a variety of activities. Students using these data, their representation and analysis learn to solve problem. Students of teacher education and researchers can use these data to extend the knowledge base and assist in informed decision making. Data available publicly help generate a better understanding of the system and its challenges.

THE ROADMAP FOR NROER

The NROER began its journey in August 2013 and is expected to reach optimum performance over the next three years. Three distinct areas of development emerge–mapping the curriculum to include

all areas of interest to students and teachers at all levels; establishing a system of collecting, curating and mapping curricular and extra-curricular resources; and developing the network of teachers, partner-institutions and all individuals desirous of participation.

Mapping the Curriculum

The NCERT curriculum forms the basis for selection of themes, sub-themes, topics and concepts. Currently, the collection spans grades 6–10, covering sciences, social sciences, mathematics and the arts. It will expand to include grades 1–12, covering all subjects of the school curriculum by the end of the year. It will gradually expand to include teacher education, vocational education and adult education sectors.

Curating the Resources – The Metadata, Review and Featuring Process

The responsiveness to search, the relevance of a resource and its availability for repurposing depends on the metadata the resource is associated with. The NROER platform has adapted the metadata standards defined by schema.org and the Learning Resources Metadata Initiative (LRMI).

The challenge of seeking contributions from the public at large is in ensuring the suitability of the resource. A comprehensive peer review

process has been established. Every resource is subjected to a review by three independent reviewers against a published criteria. The process aims to ensure age appropriateness, sensitivity to constitutional and social norms and validity of content.

In the final version of the NROER platform, due to be launched in 2015, every user would be provided a private space to work. This space would contain custom collections of resources, personal creations, work in progress. The user desirous of contributing the resource to the repository declares the resource public (a change of state in the appropriate metadata field), which then notifies the editorial team. This initiates the review process and accepted resources become available on the platform as featured resources. Such contributions can be individual resources or collections.

Bringing the System Together– The Platform, Apps, Users and Partners

The software platform hosting the NROER is based on MetaStudio (http://www.metastudio.org), an initiative of the Gnowledge Labs, Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education, Mumbai. The beta version of the platform was to be rolled out in July 2014 and further developments will continue over a period of three years. While a core team of programmers help develop the features, the activity leans on the support of different

software professionals who have been contributing ideas. The model encourages a wide participation of people.

Each individual component – be it a video player, or a data form, or a course container or an item bank– is developed as an app, which can be added on by the user. This helps each user to create customised spaces, serving specific applications. Again, the support of a large number of people is being encouraged and facilitated.

Advocating the platform amongst potential users and enrolling them into the activity is being done in two different ways. While every educational system – state governments, boards of school education, teacher colleges, . . . are being requested to enrol teachers under their jurisdiction, many orientation and advocacy programmes are being organised to encourage individuals and institutions to register. As of May 2014, there are about 10,300 registered users. Each state core team will be enrolling all the teachers in the respective states. With the advent of individual user spaces, it is expected that interest will be kindled and participation likely to grow manifold. NROER plans to network all teachers and schools

in three years. Contests, festivals and other events are also being organised to expand participation.

The partnership model of NROER has attracted a number of public institutions. They include institutions with large media collections, educational institutions seeking reach into the school system, and technology partners who have evinced interest in particular applications. All state education systems are being drawn into the partnership and will explore applications in tune with their respective mandates. Individuals with specialised collections have also joined the network. Over the three-year frame, all schools, teacher education and vocational education institutions, and all institutions of the state involved in education would become active participants on the NROER network.

The model hopes to encourage partnerships in a variety of activities, including courses, exhibitions, contests and other events, specialised collections, educational research and teacher support activities. Participation of local groups and institutions will provide more relevant resources at the same time providing enhanced visibility to the institution itself.

Problem Solving Strategies used by Pre-service Teachers in Learning Technology

Pranita Gopal*

Abstract

Using technology in the classroom to augment the learning of the students is becoming a professional responsibility of teachers in today's technology infused world. Teachers have to constantly learn new software. Learning new software is akin to solving an ill-structured problem and it requires the use of various problem solving skills used either in tandem or individually. The present study is an interpretive qualitative study of eight pre-service teachers, narrowed down from 99 pre-service teachers who participated in this study. The study discusses the problem solving processes used by these pre-service teachers while learning how to use Hot Potatoes™ to create an Online Question Bank in their discipline. Implications of working in such a technology enabled problem solving environment are also discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers at all levels are expected to use technology (i.e. computers) as it is considered to enhance the teaching learning process in the classroom (for example: Christmann and Badgett, 2000; Waxman, Connell, and Gray, 2002; Blok, Oostdam, Otter, and Overmaat, 2002). There are many problems to using technology (discussed in Butler and Sellbom, 2002) but one major issue is not being able to keep pace with the changing pace of technology and being able to learn software on their own. This problem of learning new software is a challenge to many and needs to be addressed because if the

* *Educational Consultant*, O–1090, Devender Vihar, Sector 56 - 122011, Gurgaon, Haryana.

quality of education in India needs to improve, assistance from technology is a necessity. One way to address this issue is to present a learning environment to teachers wherein the process of learning new software that has many uses in education, they are able to develop certain skills that can help them experiment and learn more software for their classroom teaching in the future. One such skill is that of problem solving.

Problem solving is the process of constructing and applying mental representations of problems to finding solutions to those problems that are encountered in nearly every context (Jonassen and Woei, 2012). Jonassen (2012) clarifies that problems that we encounter in our lives – both in the formal educational system and in the informal arena of life - occurs somewhere in the continuum between a well-structured problem and an ill-structured problem.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

Learning new software is akin to solving an ill-structured problem. Simon (1978) defines ill-structured problems as those that (a) are more complex and have less definite criteria for determining when the problem has been solved, (b) do not provide all the information necessary to solve the problem, and (c) have no 'legal move generator' for finding all the possibilities at each step. Just like, an ill structured problem learning new software provides the learner with opportunities to explore features

that she finds useful, interesting and learnable. As the learner learns the new software, she is able to understand the relevance of the new software into her own contexts and gains familiarity with the working environment of the software. In order to learn various features of the software, the learner could use either a well delineated path as given in the tutorials or could follow a self created mechanism that is helpful to complete the task in hand.

In this present study, pre-service teachers were asked to use Masher Program in Hot Potatoes™ to develop your own question bank with all types of questions possible using Hot Potatoes™ Modules. Hot Potatoes™ (freely downloadable from- www.hotpot.uvic.ca) are a set of authoring tools for creating interactive exercises for the World Wide Web; this authoring tool can be used by anyone with basic computer skills. No prior knowledge of HTML is required and the tool creates an exercise in two formats – one the Hot Potatoes format (that can be used for editing the exercises) and the .html format that can be used for viewing the exercises and doing the exercises in a web browser.

The Hot Potatoes™ authoring tool comes in six modules: JBC creates multiple-choice quiz; JQuiz that allows text-entry quiz and lets the learner type in words, phrases or even sentences (open-ended); JMix creates jumbled-word exercise and this makes the learner arrange jumbled words into phrases or sentences; JCross

creates crosswords; JCloze creates fill-in-the-blank exercise where the learners are expected to enter the words that are missing; JMatch creates matching exercise, and the learner is expected to match items in the 1st column with those in the 2nd either using a drop-down menu or by using a drag and drop option. The Windows version of this tool also has a module known as the Masher. The Masher is a tool for automatically compiling batches of Hot Potatoes™ exercises into units. The Masher links the various exercises created using above mentioned modules, together using the navigation buttons, and create an index file for the unit. All the six modules along with the Masher programme have a uniform screen appearance of icons, menus and lay-out, but the steps of creating the exercises in different formats vary in them.

As a scaffold for the pre-service teachers, two video based modules were created and given to the pre-service teachers. These modules used the Cognitive Apprenticeship Model as the theoretical construct in their conceptualisation and design. Cognitive apprenticeship (Collins et al., 1991) is a well-recognised instructional approach with extensive roots in the instructional design literature (Brown, Collins, and Duguid, 1989; Ceci, Rosenblum, and De Bruyn, 1998; Quinn, 1994, 1995; Tripp, 1994) that is prescribed for designing learning environments. The cognitive apprenticeship

framework specifies four dimensions for designing powerful environments, namely: content, method, sequence, and sociology. Gopal (2011) discusses how video based material developed using Cognitive Apprenticeship Framework augments pre-service teachers' technology skills in directly using, applying and learning technology.

During this study, the pre-service teachers were engaged in learning Hot Potatoes™ and developing their question bank. This allowed them to use various problem solving approaches. The questions of interest for this research were:

(i) What problem solving processes did the pre-service teachers use while learning how to use Hot Potatoes™ to create an online question bank in their discipline?

(ii) What was the quality of the question banks created by the pre-service teachers using Hot Potatoes™?

Methodology

Sample

The sample in the experiment consisted of 99 (94 Females and 5 Males) pre-service teachers from Army Institute of Education, Delhi Cantt., a teacher education institute for the dependants of Indian Army personnel. The pre-service teachers are admitted into the Institute based on their performance in an entrance examination. This was the first time in

the history of the Institute that such a skewed sex ratio was observed. These 99 pre-service teachers are expected to choose two teaching methodology subjects from the following options of Integrated Sciences, English, Hindi, Mathematics, Sanskrit, Social Sciences, Economics, Business Studies and Accountancy - based on their educational qualification. In this batch, maximum number of students had the subject combination of Integrated Sciences and English, followed by Social Science and English followed by Integrated Science and Mathematics. An important point to note is that Hot Potatoes™ does not have provisions for Hindi font, the Hindi methodology students had to choose perforce their second methodological option – Social Science or English.

TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Question Bank Evaluation Rubric: Scoring rubrics are descriptive scoring schemes that are developed by teachers and other evaluators to guide the analysis of the products or processes of students' efforts (Brookhart, 1999). This rubric was used to evaluate the Question Bank that was developed by the pre-service teacher. The rubric evaluated the following seven parameters – Planning of the Question Bank, Research into the Questions, Levels of Questions, Authenticity of Content, Grammar and Language, Utilisation of Features like Timer, Images, Hints and Configuration, Seamless integration of Technology and Pedagogical Principles in the Question Bank. (Table 1 Question Bank Evaluation Rubric)

Table 1

Question Bank Evaluation Rubric

Dimension	3	2	1
Planning of the question bank	The question bank was well planned covering the concepts in the chapters	The question bank covered many concepts of the chapters	The question bank covered few concepts of the chapters
Research into the questions	5 or more type of questions were used to test the students' understanding	3–5 types of questions were used to test the students' understanding	1-3 types of questions were used to test the students' understanding
Levels of the questions	Most of the questions were of knowledge/ comprehension/ application level	Most of the questions were of the knowledge/ comprehension level only	Most of the questions were of the knowledge level only

Authenticity of the content	Questions were framed correctly without any conceptual or grammatical error	Questions were framed correctly with only grammatical errors	Questions were framed with both grammatical and conceptual errors
Pedagogical principles of framing questions	Appropriately used in context	Used but not suited to the context	Loosely framed questions
Utilisation of features	4	2	0
Timer	Appropriately used in context	Used but not in context	Did not use
Images	Appropriately used in context	Used but not in context	Did not use
Hints for answers	Appropriately used in context	Used but not in context	Did not use
Configuration of the outlook in the web browser	Appropriately used in context	Used but not in context	Did not use

Reflective Journals: All pre-service teachers maintained a reflective journal where they recorded their day's progress, the problems they faced, how did they overcome the problems and their experience in the lab. Loughran (2002) argues that reflection emerges as a suggested way of helping educators better understand what they know and do in developing their knowledge of practice through reconsidering what they learn in practice. Reflective Journals offer a place for teachers to explore the planning and outcomes of curricular, instructional, relational and other classroom activities (Cole and Knowles, 2000). To help the pre-service teachers' document their experience in the lab, questions like- What did you plan to do? What sequence did you follow – Did you directly experiment with the software or did you view the tutorials – Are there any specific reason for choosing this option? What discussion did you have with your peers today about the lab work? – were given as guided questions to help in their documentation process.

Procedure of Data Collection

Before the commencement of the study, the pre-service teachers had already completed 6 months of training in the Institute. They had also completed their *teaching internship programme for 20 weeks @ 3 days per*

week. This programme ran parallel to the college curriculum and the pre-service teachers were expected to deliver a minimum of 20 lesson plans in their respective methodologies and also conceptualise, conduct and analyse a test based on the lessons taught by them in their respective methodologies and allotted classes.

They were then instructed to develop a question bank on the class and topic of their choice. This topic should have been something they would have taught during their teaching-internship programme. This question bank was prepared on the paper and was to be used as a starting point during the study.

The study took place over six days, where all the students came in groups of 20 into the laboratory. Each group was given 90 minutes per day to work on their project. The lab was equipped with internet connection (so that the pre-service teachers don't access the tutorials, etc. from the publisher's website without the knowledge of the pre-service teachers the sites were blocked and help files deleted from the programme). At the end of the six-day period, it was expected that the students learn how to use Hot Potatoes™ and create the question bank in their topic of choice. It was not binding on them to use the same questions that they had initially planned for the question bank, they had the freedom to change the questions – both in content and level-to maximise assessment process

using computers. No instruction on this accord was given to the pre-service teachers. The duration of six days @ 90 minutes was chosen based on the ease learning the software and the experience of the researcher-where pre-service teachers were seen creating question banks within five days @ 60 minutes in the lab. In order to give an advantage to the pre-service teachers who were using the computer for the first time, the time duration was increased and the Masher programme was included in the task. Figure 1 represents the parameters involved in the study.

All the 99 pre-service teachers created question banks and these question banks were analysed using the rubrics mentioned above. These scores were then arranged in an ascending order – according to their subject disciplines of Integrated Science, Social Science, English and Mathematics. Based on these scores two groups were created, Group A consisted of the Adept Hot Potatoes™ Users based on the high score on the rubric, and Group B constituted those students who had lower score on the rubric due to either poor quality questions, questions not integrating computers in assessment purposes, incorrect questions, incorrect question type, and non-functioning of the question bank in the web-browser. The middle scores were left as such. *The reflective journals of top four and bottom four scorers were chosen for analysis in this study.*
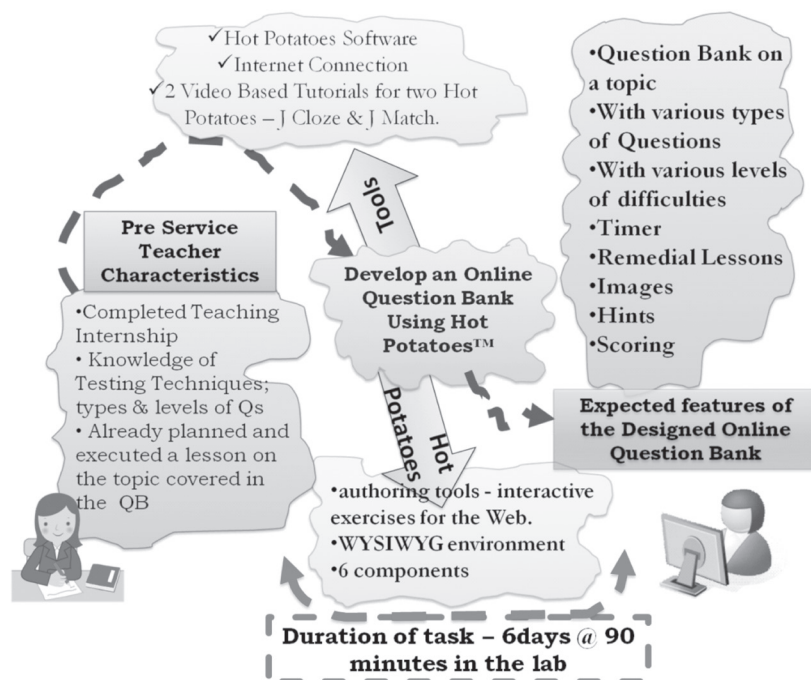
Fig. 1: Schematic Representation of the Study

Discussion

The research was an *interpretive qualitative study.* An interpretive approach provides a deep insight into 'the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it' (Schwandt, 1994) and assumes that reality is socially constructed and the researcher becomes the vehicle by which this reality is revealed (Cavana, Delahaye, and Sekaran, 2001). The researcher *used a process approach* towards the research to study the problem solving processes used by the pre-service teachers while learning how to use Hot Potatoes™ to create an Online Question Bank in their discipline.

A problem solving strategy or process is a technique that may not guarantee solution, but serves as a guide in the problem solving process (Mayer, 1983). The reflective journals analysed show evidence of the following types of problem solving processes commonly used by pre-service teachers:

- **Trial and Error:** Where the pre-service teacher worked on numerous alternative solutions before zeroing down on the best possible solution. This approach was used for deciding the look, feel and appearance of the question bank; whether images were required for a particular question; whether timer was required for a

particular set of questions. Some instances are:

• **_Problem Description:_** "Why is the computer not saving my file in JCloze?" – (S1–Subject: English - Group A).

Solution Process: _I wanted to save my file as 'fill in the blanks.jcl' so that it would be easy for me to use the file later. But every time I typed the file name, the computer gave an error of 'gap in file name, do you want to proceed? May create problems later?' I didn't understand what was being said, so I renamed my file as 1fill.jcl and it saved it easily. As I wasn't sure about my mistake, I tried 1 fill.jcl when the computer again gave me the error, I understood that file names need to be saved without spaces_ (Dated: 27 February).

Researcher's Comments: As one advanced in the use of Hot Potatoes™, one realises that Hot Potatoes follows the basic HTML rules and there are known issues in HTML where if the image file has a space in between, the servers are not able to display the image correctly. This rule was built into the HotPotatoes™ system, due to which if an image is inserted with a space in its name, it presents it as an error. The way a user can know about this issue, is either by having a bit of knowledge of HTML or by trial and error of file names.

• **_Problem Description:_** 'My quiz was not able to distinguish between true and false answers.' (S2 – Subject: Social Sciences- Group A).

Solution Process: _I was puzzled when I saw the output of my True and False quiz, where all answers were being marked correct by the computer. Not knowing what to do, I redid the whole exercises, only to realise that I was getting the same output. Then I went back to the J Quiz module, and unchecked the true options - It worked fine the first time. But then again I realised in some questions the true answers were also marked false. When I went back to the J Quiz module, I realised, I was supposed to only select the correct answer and not the other options—because of which I was going wrong._ (Dated: 29 February- 2012).

Researcher's Comments: As JQuiz also allows multi-select questions, if all answers are left checked, JQuiz will not present an error. Hence, the user needs to take appropriate precaution while choosing the correct response (Mark as correct option).

• **_Problem Description:_** 'I didn't know which module to use for

True and False' – (S3 – Subject: Social Sciences; Group B).

Solution Process: *I just could not find where to do true and false. At one point I was wondering if it was a mistake in the instructions given by the professor....So, I saw again. I didn't find any Hot Potato with True and False. Although when I opened J Quiz I saw the right(✓) and wrong symbols (✗) but no way to do it. I gave up.* (Dated : 28 February).

Journal Entry Dated 29 Feb: I was very excited about coming to the lab. Because I asked my friend where to do True and False and she told me I had to do it in JQuiz... yepieee.

Researcher's Comments: JQuiz can create four different types of question: multiple-choice/ true or false, short-answer, hybrid (a short-answer question that turns into a multiple-choice question after several attempts), and multi-select (in which the student has to choose several of a set of options, then check the choices). The default action of the software is set at Multi-select questions, and the user needs to change this setting to the MCQ or T/F option to work on those exercises. With a bit of tweaking in the programme, one can very easily reach this option.

• ***Looked for patterns*** (where the pre-service teachers tried to look for patterns within their own learning and tasks in hand).

• ***Problem Description:*** 'Today I spent the whole time, trying to insert image into my file.' (S6- Subject- Social Science; Group B).

Solution Process: *Then, I remembered from my experience of Open Office Impress and Writer that to insert an image, we first download the image, place it in a folder and then go to the insert option and insert the image. I used the same steps today in JCloze, I first downloaded the picture from the internet, saved it in a separate folder called Images, then went to insert and inserted the image. My image came...But I wanted my image in the centre and that is not happening.* (Dated : 1 March).

Researcher's Comments: Inserting image in the Hot Potatoes™ exercise is just like other software and the process used by the pre-service teacher is correct.

• ***Means-End Analysis*** (where the pre-service teacher first analysed the problem by viewing the end—the goal being sought —and then tried to decrease the distance between the current position in the problem space and the end goal in that space).

- **Problem Description:** 'Problem of pictures not coming in the HTML file.' (Student 8; Subject Mathematics, Group A).

  Solution Process: *When the file was exported to the HTML file, the inserted picture was not visible and without my image, the question had no meaning. So, first I tried changing the compatibility in the explorer being used. I also tried inserting smaller size of the image. I also enabled Java because I kept getting the msg of Java needs to be enabled. So, I thought that it was the reasons. Anyways, I don't know what was the reason, but in the end, my image was visible in my browser. That's all I want for now.* (Dated: 2 March).

  Researcher's Comments: As discussed earlier, the inserting images require a bit of caution in two parameters: location of the image saved and the file name of the image. If these two are taken care of then, the images are always visible.

- **Other Strategies** (here the pre-service teacher was not able to distinguish a software related problem and an educational issue).

  - **Problem Description:** 'My J Cross kept crashing today. I kept getting a violation error. Drrats....' (S4- Subject – English; Group A).

Solution Process: *I was pretty sure today, that I kept getting a violation access that because I had not made the crossword myself and I had plagiarised it from a site. I was baffled at the intelligence of this software, that it was able to detect plagiarised questions too. So, I decided to make another crossword all by myself and it worked. I am not pretty sure that this is a very intelligent potato – unlike our real life ones...* (Dated: 29 February).

Researcher's Comments: What the pre-service teacher experienced was a case of software issue, where the software needed to be restarted. But the pre-service teacher mistook this for a case of plagiarism and in fact warned many pre-service teachers about the intelligence of this software. Later on, a few students tried to debunk this myth that the software was able to detect plagiarised crossword, but somehow the access violation error surprised many. The result was that many pre-service teachers made their own crosswords. After the completion of the study, the researcher explained the cause of the error and clarified it was not about plagiarism.

- **Problem Description:** 'My crossword is not looking

like others crossword'. (S5; Subject – Science; Group B).

Solution Process: *When I see my crossword, it looks not like others. I don't know what to do. I tried to add clues nothing happened. I asked my friends and no one knows my mistake. I cannot show my file to anyone. I am leaving it for you Madam to tell me what is not good with crossword of mine.* (English as per Journal entry dated: Not mentioned in the Journal).

Researcher's Comments: The pre-service teacher was not able to differentiate between a Crossword and Word Maze. The teacher made a maze and was not able to get the look of a crossword as all the blanks were filled with redundant alphabets. The researcher did not correct this error when spotted, because it is expected that pre-service teachers know various methods by which they can impart instruction or conduct test.

IMPLICATIONS

The present study focussed overtly on the various problem solving strategies used by pre-service teachers to develop an Online Question Bank using Hot Potatoes™; while covertly it also aimed at also seeing whether the pre-service teachers were able to translate their pedagogical content knowledge into a technology based environment, harnessing the potential that technology has to offer to education and educationist. This study has two major implications:

(i) ***Strengthening Teacher's TPCK:*** Koehler and Mishra (2009) state that TPCK is the basis of effective teaching with technology, requiring an understanding of the representation of concepts using technologies; pedagogical techniques that use technologies in constructive ways to teach content; knowledge of what makes concepts difficult or easy to learn and how technology can help redress some of the problems that students face; knowledge of students' prior knowledge and theories of epistemology; and knowledge of how technologies can be used to build on existing knowledge to develop new epistemologies or strengthen old ones. Working with Hot Potatoes™ allows the teachers in the classroom to present students with interesting learning environments for testing. This environment can be used for additional practice tests and can be taken by the students whenever they wish to practice. As Hot Potatoes™ can also be used for remedial and enrichment lessons; knowledge of this tool is an asset to the teachers. Working in a self-learning, technology rich problem-solving environment gives the teachers' confidence to work and explore new tools in

education and make their classes interesting.

(ii) ***Strengthening Teacher Education Curriculum*** *by including activities for teachers following the paradigms of constructivism, problem solving modules, individualised learning experience, and confidence to experiment with technology:* Present-day teacher education curriculum presents the above mentioned activities as theoretical constructs and does not provide the teachers with experience to work in such paradigms. In this study, using problem solving strategies, pre-service teachers themselves learnt (constructivism) the various ways and uses of adapting Hot Potatoes™ in their subject areas. Pre-service teachers gained confidence to explore technology and find out ways in which they are able to rectify their own mistakes – a very essential step when we learn any new software.

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