

**SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF RASHTRIYA MADHYAMIK SHIKSHA
ABHIYAN**

A DESK REVIEW

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rashtriya Madhyamik Abhiyan is a positive and robust move by the Government of India to address the demand and need for Secondary Education in India. With the impressive progress of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in reaching its goals of enhancing access, quality and equity the stage is set for the next phase of intervention – the universalisation of Secondary Education.

The RMSA lays out its goals of universalizing Secondary Education with a special focus on marginalized sections – including girls, disabled children, those belonging to SC, ST, OBC, Educationally Backward Minorities etc. This report undertakes a social assessment of Secondary Education in India on the basis of existing data available on marginalized groups, trends in these communities related to work participation and nature of engagement with schooling to unpack the possible reasons for differential access to Secondary Education.

It also analyses the RMSA framework from a social equity perspective, where different sections of the framework from strategy, to planning, management, quality and assessment are unpacked to demonstrate how equity concerns are embedded within these multiple domains. This analysis, we hope, will stimulate discussion on how it would be possible to integrate equity into the overall vision and roll-out of RMSA as a mission.

I. Access and Equity in Secondary Education

Reports indicate an upward growth in enrollment in Secondary Education (SE) over a period of 20 years (1984 – 2005). Since 2000 the expansion is estimated at an average rate of 5.4% annually, higher than preceding years. This push in SE enrollment between 2000–2008 is seen to be an outcome of the success of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan as well as greater and sustained demand for SE.

Studies indicate that the bulk of the future demand for SE is likely to come from rural areas and poorer classes. Thus we may conclude that the demand for SE exists: it is increasing across all social locations and would likely to be responsive to interventions, even for disadvantaged groups. Secondly, poorer sections are likely to respond more to the intervention. At present, data on participation in SE is limited, yet through a range of government sources and others we can record gaps along various differentials. In this summary we attempt to bring together what data from the education system and the National Statistical Survey indicate regarding the nature of participation of marginalised

communities in Secondary Education along with what more in-depth, qualitative studies point to as factors impacting differential participation.

Indices of Inequity

Demand for SE can be partially tracked through attendance, while drop-out and completion rates indicate not merely demand but also the robustness of the school system to deliver education and the quality of the school experience for the learner. The issue of cost and availability of schools and teachers bring with them additional layers of complexity in unpacking the web of factors that influence the access of diverse social groups to the secondary level of education. Some key statistics and broad trends are important to keep in mind before we undertake the social assessment.

Gross Attendance Rates (GAR) show wide variations across states, with Kerala as high as 116.4% and Bihar dipping to 49.4%. In addition to this, rural-urban differentials bring out the rural disadvantage, with Net Attendance Ratio (NAR) in rural areas indicating close to a 50% drop in contrast to GAR of 65.6%. What this implies is that there is an overcrowding of over-age children in the 14-15 age group, particularly in rural areas.

The gap in attendance exists across different income groups. Interestingly, even in the two highest quintile classes, the GAR is not 100% and NAR for those classes also shows that age appropriate attendance is far from 100%. Despite this, in the case of social groups, we see a disproportionate participation. Only OBC figures for GAR and NAR are somewhat close to the national average. All other disadvantaged groups are at quite a distance. This distance is even more significant if we look at the GAR and NAR for upper-caste Hindus: it is far higher than even the national average.

NSSO data shows that across all categories, girls are under represented as compared to boys; this under-representation is highest in case of ST girls in the rural sector. The gender gap rises to 15% points in SE, from 8% in Elementary Education.

Seeking entry into the system is one aspect, staying on and completing the requisite cycle another. The implications of belonging to marginalized groups become exaggerated at the secondary stage, though there is no denying that some of the baggage of elementary education gets carried over to this stage of learning. This is evident in the fact that the majority of the SE age range children (14-15) who drop out do so before completing Class 8. This is true for all social groups and all income classes. However, dropping out after completion of Class 8 is higher among disadvantaged social groups compared to Hindu upper castes. In MPCE quintiles too, similar drop out patterns are observable. Interestingly, dropping out after completion of elementary schooling among girls of 14-15 age is slightly higher than boys. The difference in the drop-out rate between SC/ST and the overall

dropout rate was to the tune of around 10%, according to SES 2007-08. The difference in completion is stark across religious groups and across age group in all age ranges. Completion rates for Muslims children are similar to those for SCs. STs are the most disadvantaged when it comes to completion of SE. The difference between the two extreme MPCE classes is also very large in all three age groups. In the age category 16-29 years, only 18.2 % of persons in MPCE first quintile have completed SE; the corresponding figure for MPCE quintile 5 is 64.1%.

The time series data from various years' SES since 1990 shows that the drop-out rate among SCs / STs has seen a steady and significant reduction in the primary and upper-primary classes, whereas it has remained steady in the secondary classes.

Another key issue that is distinct for SE is a large presence and growth of private aided and un-aided schools in secondary and H.SE schooling. This trend is in sharp contrast with primary and middle schools, and a trend that is likely to continue. A substantial part (though not all) of this expansion is in urban areas, as the private unaided schools' share of enrollment in urban areas is much higher than their rural counterparts. The World Bank Report on SE in India indicates that the 72% increase in urban IX-Xth class enrollment between 1993-2002 is being provided through un-aided private schooling.

Despite this, 60% of the country's total secondary enrollment is still absorbed by government schools. In rural areas these schools provide for nearly 65% of the total enrollment in Class IX-X and in urban areas, 44%. In fact, the share of enrollment in government schools is greater than their share in total number of schools, indicative of the pressure on the government system. There is a greater availability of government aided private schools, than unaided private schools, that cater to needs of rural households. There is negligible gender gap in the rural share of their enrollment, in contrast with urban private un-aided schools that show a much larger share of boys' enrollment. Government schooling emerges as catering to relatively more urban girls.

II. Understanding Disadvantage in Secondary Education

The broad picture that emerges from some of the trends highlighted above points to the significance of government secondary schools in reaching out to poor, rural, SC- ST, Muslim boys and girls at the secondary level of education. Another key issue to keep in mind is that while there is an increasing interest in pursuing greater number of years in schooling, the gap between those who have access and sustained participation in this level of education is still worryingly large.

The Overlapping Nature of Exclusion

A multiplicity of factors come into play, some distinct to the management of SE, others are an outcome of the resources available in particular regions and states, the trajectories of development in these areas along with the pressures and pulls that this age group experiences vis a vis the family and community and those that are tied to the needs of an adolescent group searching for its own identity.

This is evident in particular states/regions, intersecting across the axes of PTR, GAR, GER, Gender Parity, indicating deficiencies along these multiple indicators. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal and North Eastern states like Tripura, Assam, Arunachal, Meghalaya are some examples of how certain chronic conditions of disadvantage are visible in the provisioning of SE. For instance, all eight states from north-east India have below 60% trained teachers, among which Meghalaya (36), Assam (29) and Nagaland (25) are at the bottom of the list (See Table 13, p. 53). A look at distribution of attendance at state level shows that many of the states in the north east depend heavily on private aided or unaided schools. We see that Bihar, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, M.P, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Rajasthan, UP stand out in terms of percentage of children of secondary school-going age reporting not having a secondary school within 5 km. In all such states, it is the rural segment that reports high incidence of such deviations. Inaccessibility, sluggish developmental activity, lack of infrastructure and transport are areas to focus on to strengthen the school system.

Many of these states are also where marginalized groups reside in high concentration and where the government school system dominates above others. As a result, it might be valuable to identify particular regions that suffer multiple-disadvantages and plan focused interventions and strategies for greater impact in these states.

Quality and Equitable Participation

A classic divide exists in the vocabulary of policy making, monitoring and assessment and measuring outputs in education: the one that exists between quality and equity. Both are seen to inhabit different domains, mostly seen as complimentary to each other. Questions like - why is quality of teaching in remote tribal areas a challenge? bring in critical issues of equity directly impacting what goes on in the classroom. There is a direct link, which gets fragmented across this divide, and the system responds in piece-meal ways to address each. Rarely does it work across these two.

Quality in education has mistakenly become associated with privilege and increased spending, and in terms of aspirations of linked with the private sector. This has resulted in a lack of diversity in schools: students from particular class and caste backgrounds people particular schools. The State too has come to understand quality in fixed ways. It covers

provision of common facilities across schools regardless of their diverse contexts and specific challenges. Certain quantitative, measurable categories have come to represent quality. Take for instance PTR, which is seen as a measurement of quality.

Poverty

Poverty is a critical factor impacting participation. It not only limits opportunities but also creates a ripple effect for those within the school system. It impacts the quality and nature of the learning experience, creating new hierarchies within SE.

Income plays a key role. Figures indicate that the gap between the 1st quintile and the 5th quintile is close to 44 percentage points in terms of attendance, and is 40 percentage points in terms of completion rate in the 16 - 17 year age group.

Drop-out rates among SCs and STs in SE have remained steady since the 1990s: they increase from 10% in Elementary to 16% Secondary level. A significant section of learners drop out prior to completing upper primary. The figures run as high as 24% for Muslim children, 23% for STs, 18% for SC and 16% for girls. Bridging efforts reach out to a small section of never enrolled learners and drop-outs, but the majority of them do not find their way back into the system. The highly sequential and fixed nature of schooling does not provide any possibility of re-entry once a learner drops out.

This denial is indicated in the community profiles, (See Section 1, Part B on page 58) where a large section of young people in the 15 to 19 year age group - close to 50% among SCs (rural) and 33% (urban) - move into the labour force.¹ Among STs the figure is even higher, recording a steep 59% in rural areas and 30% for urban youth.² While we do not have matching figures for Muslims, the transition to apprenticeship and work for Muslim boys is evident and thus a large section of young people are lost to SE.³

¹ 56% of the rural SC population is predominantly engaged in rural labour. Within this, close to 40% work as agricultural labour. In the domain of Self Employment only 20% of SC households are in agriculture, which effectively means that the bulk of SC households are involved in agricultural employment on land owned by others.

² ST population reports much higher participation in workforce than the national average of all communities both in rural areas and among aggregate population of rural and urban taken together.² This is largely attributable to their high female WPR, which is way above the average figure for all communities both in rural and urban areas. 46.4% of all rural ST women and 24.5% of all urban ST women are part of the workforce. The nature of work is largely labour intensive with low economic returns.

³ The most striking feature is the relatively high share of Muslim workers engaged in self- employed activity. This is particularly true in urban areas (Sachar Committee Report pp 111-112) where their share is 57 per cent, while it is 43 per cent for Hindus. As compared to all other SRCs, a much larger proportion of Muslims (both men and women) work in self-owned proprietary enterprises. This is particularly so in urban areas.

When we look at the backward link with elementary education, the vulnerability of children from the ST community and the Muslim community is clear: learners from these groups are still struggling to gain basic education. In the 11 to 14 year age group, NSSO data on ST children shows that there is a significant gap in terms of access to elementary education with 23% boys and 35% ST girls still outside the school. Thereby highlighting that this 'backward link' will impact the figures concerned with transition of ST children from Elementary to SE (See Annexure A4, Table 2).

In the 15 to 19 age group, close to 30% of rural boys and girls opt for self-employment and move out of school and another 28% move into casual labour. Rural ST girls are only marginally less engaged in casual labour than boys. Like their younger counterparts, they too are involved in domestic work (the percentage increasing to 18.5% in this age group). In the case of Muslims, while their educational attainments have improved over the years, it has been at a more gradual pace than other Socio-Religious Communities. In fact, the gap between Muslims and disadvantaged sections has actually widened since Independence, particularly since the 1980s, according to the Sachar Committee report. This is most apparent in urban areas, for women and among rural males. The disadvantage exists already in the 6 – 14 year age group where close to 25 per cent children are out of school. In terms of completion of Class 10, the percentage of Muslim children is only 17%; 26% of Muslim youth who are 17 years and above have completed matriculation (Sachar Committee: pg 60).

Given the negative (or stagnant) rate of growth in male participation in school education for Muslim youth of 15-19 age group,⁴ the observation made of Muslim male youth dropping out to seek/get employment, and the high rate (51% -15% above national average) of male WPR within the 15-19 age group, indicates the challenge that RMSA is likely to face vis-a-vis this community. Working on gender, for instance in this community will involve not merely an increase in participation of Muslim girls but also working with boys and ensuring their retention in both elementary and SE.

In the 10 – 14 age group of SC children we see greater impact of SSA, or rather pro-active education seeking behavior in this group, with reduced percentage of children in casual and self employed agriculture, in comparison with STs and Muslims. Close to 79% children in rural and urban areas report study as their principle activity.

Though the situation might have shifted in Elementary education for SC learners, in the 15-19 age group the major bulk of rural boys not attending school are in casual labour, touching a figure of 33.8% (See Annexure A4, Table 1). Approximately ¼ of the target

⁴ NSS Report 521: pp 25-26

population for secondary and H.SE is in casual labour, working in hard conditions at a young age due to circumstances of poverty.

Working across the Divide: The Costs of Schooling

The income, work and resources available to a community determine to some extent the participation of learners from marginalized groups in education. The other aspect is what does a particular level of schooling demand from the family or community. In the case of SE we see the cost of education coming close to Rs. 4,300 annually for secondary and H.SE, according to NSSO 64th round data. Parents reported spending annually close to Rs. 2700 in government schools, and almost Rs. 9000 in Private Unaided (PU) schools. The monthly average cost of secondary schooling comes close to Rs. 363: Rs. 601 in urban areas and Rs. 252 in rural areas.

The cost of SE in private aided schools in rural areas is closer to that of government schools than it is to private unaided schools. Private Unaided schools are most expensive. Rural-urban difference in average schooling cost is strikingly high, which is possibly an outcome of the prevailing private schooling in urban areas. The government schools are also costlier in urban than in rural areas. The reported household expenditure for girls is less than that of the boys, which might reflect biased resource allocation in keeping with the usual differential allocation of resources within the household.

Each secondary school caters to approximately 3 feeder middle schools. NSSO data indicates that growth of SE schools is not in consonance with growth in enrolment. Distance is a critical factor and rural areas indicate a clear disadvantage in this context. The departure is most in the case of STs: nearly 30% of ST households in rural areas do not have a secondary school within 5 kms of their residence. The second group reporting greater distance is OBC, followed by SC; the category of 'other groups' shows least distance to schooling facility. The trend is similar in urban areas too, but the magnitude is ascribable to 3-5 km range.

Where financial constraint is the reason for discontinuation, this would mean incidence of huge cost burden, especially in the states where the presence of private aided and private unaided schools is high. It is not only enough to have a school within reach, but also to have one that is affordable. The second two major reasons for discontinuation of schooling pertain to the experience of the latter, indicating that quality of secondary school environment and level of preparedness in terms of quality at the elementary level influence continuation at the next level.

Micro studies validate the presence of additional expenditure on private tuitions as a phenomenon impacting families across different economic categories. The majority of

families attempt to 'prop-up' poor quality teaching and learning at school. As a result, learners arrive with the cumulative disadvantage of poor quality learning in elementary school, which gets exacerbated at the secondary level. We see the gender differential at work here: when families have to make choices about whose education to finance, in times of financial crisis, invariably it is girls whose education will be sacrificed.

A key issue that emerges in the context of rural areas is that of quality of the schooling experience. Residential hostels have formed part of the government's strategy to cope with the issue of remoteness and scattered populations in tribal / rural areas. The experience of Ashramshalas has shown that participation of communities is dependent on the quality of schooling and the nature of infrastructure. Sub-standard facilities provided by government and voluntary agencies have resulted in further exclusion.⁵ This is in sharp contrast to the response we see to the more recent intervention - the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyala Scheme (KGBV)⁶ - where girls from marginalized groups have not only participated, but pushed for an extension of the scheme to include not only Upper Primary but also Secondary completion. Therefore, while poverty may explain part of the picture, the manner and conviction with which the State machinery delivers the scheme is critical to ensuring the participation of learners from these communities.

Pupil-Teacher Ratio

Official figures show a regular growth in the all-India total number of total teachers teaching in secondary classes. The Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) varies between 32 (2004-2005) and 33 (2007-2008). In the secondary classes, PTR remained steady despite higher enrollment in those classes.

At the same time, as mentioned earlier, wide variations exist at the state level. For classes IX-X, it ranges from 8 students per teacher in Sikkim to 67 students per teacher in Uttar Pradesh. It is important to observe that states like Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have a GER much above the national average, while some of the states with the poorest PTR have very low GER too. These are West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Bihar. With expansion in access and improved GER, these states will need to develop strategies to reduce their PTR.

⁵ Position paper on Problems of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Children, NCF 2005 clearly points to this stating: "We have detailed accounts of the appalling living and education conditions prevalent in Ashram Schools in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The problems highlighted include poor construction, overcrowding, alienating environment, inadequate numbers and quality of teaching staff, lack of regular inspection, and lack of basis facilities for the children such as toiletries, uniforms and fans. For girls, lack of personal safety serves as a major deterrent." p. 17.

⁶ The 11th JRM recorded that in the 2558 KGBVs that are operational, covering 1.97 Lakh girls in SC, ST and Muslim concentration districts 27% of girls belonged to the SC group, 29% to ST, 27% to OBC and 7% to Muslim.

States with high PTR figures are states where ST, SC or OBC populations are present in greater concentration than their national population. While we see reduced participation from the disadvantaged groups in those states where PTR situation is already precarious, the possibility of a positive and good quality schooling experience for them with improved PTR can pull them into SE.

The Gender Dimension

Gender lies at the intersection of all the factors detailed above, be it poverty, the rural-urban divide, issues related to work, skilling and employment opportunities within particular social groups, along with its own complexities related to culture, sexuality and reproduction. Boys and girls are both impacted by these and while some of the challenges faced by communities are specific, they fall within an overarching patriarchal framework of how girls and their roles within the community, family and the nation are imagined.

Field interactions with community members show withdrawal of girls from school following primary education as also influenced by security concerns. In some cases, mixed schooling too emerged as a deterrent, since SE schools are mostly outside the village. Therefore we see a cumulative disadvantage emerging at each level of education: girls aspire / struggle with their multiple identities, constraining and limiting them specifically on account of their caste, class, religion and region.

Parental literacy and women's work

Research studies establish a positive relation between women's parental literacy and girls' education. In addition to this, women's *sanghas* and federations have been proactively involved in enrolment drives and other initiatives to bring not only their own daughters but also other girls in the community into formal schooling, running bridge courses like Mahila Shikshan Kendras for out-of-school girls into upper primary schools and mobilising girls from marginalised communities to enroll into KGBVs, etc. The importance of involving women in the activities, forums and initiatives of SE will provide the spring board to include girls particularly from poorer section into SE.

Domestic work impacts a major section of young women belonging to these communities. Young girls take on survival and care-oriented work within the household in order to enable older women to move out and work. However, as mentioned earlier, there are cultural differences that mark these communities. Sibling care starts early for girls in the SC and OBC community and records an exponential increase (possibly an outcome of early marriage and shift to marital household) attainment of puberty.

For those girls who enter the SE system, chances of their completing their education are at par with boys. In the case of girls' completion, the younger age group shows improvement

over older age groups; and in the official age range for completion, girls are 35.3% and 36.8% of their population respectively. In the upper age range, there is less gender equity. Coupled with recent increase in enrollment of girls across all segments, it shows the high possibility of completion for girls who have been able to enter into SE.

Marriage, Markets and Mobility

Greater mobility allows young boys the possibility of being 'absent' if quality of schooling is poor or dull, with a final option of leaving school. Once they drop out, their re-entry into the system becomes difficult and many move into casual work. Boys are vulnerable in terms of poverty and poor quality education, which push them into cycles of migration, hard labour and unemployment.

For adolescent girls, their primary concern about withdrawal from school was the limitation on their mobility, and the fact of being tied to domestic chores. Quality of schooling did not emerge as a critical factor in their case. Current NSSO data reflects the major reason for dropping out as financial constraints, non interest in studies, unable to cope, completed desired level and parent not interested. There is a large proportion of both rural and urban girls citing the latter two reasons, compared with a marginal proportion of boys reporting these as factors, which implies that perceived gain from continuation of education is low for girls.

Community specific variations exist, with SC girls (in comparison with SC boys) not being as actively engaged in casual labour or salaried work. Their major concentration is in domestic work, where their numbers swell to 41% in urban and 36.8% in rural in the 15 to 19 year age group. Clearly early marriage and domestication are key contributors to the shift to this sphere of work for a large percentage of girls. This is the group that SE needs to tap, and bring into the domain of higher education.

We also find a significant difference between SC and ST girls in this age group: as mentioned above close to 40% of SC girls in this age group are involved in domestic work across rural and urban girls, while the figure is 18% for ST girls. This reflects distinct cultural differences regarding marriage, mobility of women and support structures that exists within tribal communities. Therefore, strategies to include tribal girls need to acknowledge these differences while mobilizing them for SE.

Given the negative (or stagnant) rate of growth in male participation in school education for Muslim youth of 15-19 age group,⁷ the observation made in other studies, including the Sachar Committee Report, of Muslim male youth dropping out to seek/get employment, and the high rate of male WPR within the 15-19 age group, needs to be taken into account

⁷ NSSO Report 521: pp 25-26

while strategizing for universalization within the Muslim community. The implication of this has been the community downscaling or creating a 'ceiling' on Muslim girls' education in certain regions. Research studies underline this phenomenon, understanding the need for interventions for both boys and girls within the Muslim community. In addition to this, Muslim women's participation in the labour force is primarily skill-based and Muslim female presence is nearly three times the national employment proportion in manufacturing. This high rate prevails both in rural and urban areas. With such a work profile, when we talk about role of SE in retaining Muslim girls within school, we need to consider an integrated approach at the H.SE level that takes on board skill development programmes or develops foundation vocational courses at the H.SE level.

Female Teachers

A key component of promoting girls' participation in schooling has been the focus on employing female teachers. It continues to be a critical concern for SE too. The time trend in recent years obtained from SES shows that after the growth of female presence in secondary teaching during 2001-2005, it has remained largely stable, at around 61-62 female teachers per hundred male teachers. However there is a negative growth in total number of female teachers in both H.SE and secondary classes in the year 07-08, while total number of male teachers in IX-Xth increased. Also state variations are immense - female teachers outnumber male teachers in Kerala (238), Tamil Nadu (196) and Punjab (130). Some of the major states with less than 30 female teachers per 100 males are West Bengal, Tripura, Assam, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Orissa, while Bihar (18) and Uttar Pradesh (23). Reasons for this differential need to be unpacked further to address specific management related challenges. However, this situation also needs to be understood in the larger context of access of adult women to education in these states, which would have a bearing on the number of women moving into professional training institutes.

Discrimination

Discrimination in schools emerges from deeply entrenched hierarchical structures that carry the power of history, economic capital and social custom to strengthen their group. Inclusion must involve active steps against discriminatory behavior. The forms in which discrimination exist may be specific to particular communities.

While research and documentation of violence against learners in schools has been comparatively higher in the case of elementary education, the issue impacts the Secondary School sector critically, and in complex ways, especially in the context of the high number of private schools and parallel systems of inquiry. Ensuring that action is taken against cases of violence involves negotiations with multiple systems or institutions. The larger context of course is that the age group involves learners who are in the adolescent phase,

and there is a high degree of insecurity around the sexuality of young people at this age among both the community and the learners themselves.

Mechanisms to strengthen the school system and provide clear institutional roles to intervene in cases of discrimination and violence can go a long way in creating trust within the community regarding the school as a safe space. Coverage by the media can be one but not the primary manner of confronting the issue of sexual violence in schools, especially in the context of SE and the fear of 'security' of girls, as well as in the changing urban landscape of mobile phones and internet. Orientation of staff and teachers on sexual abuse and sexual violence; interventions in the curriculum on issues of sexuality, are critical in building responsiveness to such cases.

III. THE RMSA FROM A SOCIAL EQUITY LENS

This section focuses on some areas of concern within the RMSA policy document. The section by and large follows the structure of the RMSA document.

Issues of Approach

Quality and equity are not independent of each other but are closely tied together. Thus far, in the approach and strategy of the RMSA, access is mapped primarily in terms of physical availability of schools; and access is related quality of infrastructure and provisioning of teachers. While the quality section needs to integrate the equity vision, the equity section too needs to address issues of quality of provisioning more explicitly. There is a need to move beyond what has or is being denied to children and take on board how the functioning and working of the Secondary School can be oriented to strengthen social justice and equity. The approach needs to be complicated with issues like differential access of groups to both private/state schools also exists in the domain of the social, economic, cultural and physical. Participation of children from diverse backgrounds, ensuring mixed classrooms, reimagining of curricula to include the life world of children from diverse communities etc would be value added to both quality and equity components.

A way to ensure and also evaluate the interweaving of these components is to develop assessment strategies that include a mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators. In addition to quantitative indicators to track PTR and number of trained teachers, qualitative indicators need to be developed, relating to process of learnings and to record 'markers' of change. Qualitative indicators are particularly important in the context of the equity agenda since conventional quantitative indicators fail to capture the views of learners, particularly from marginalized communities.

The twin objectives of secondary education in general, and the RMSA in specific – that of creating an employable mass of youth, and that of creating citizens - need to converge more meaningfully. The criticality of these two aspects for the inclusion of learners from marginalised communities into SE cannot be highlighted enough. In the event of this it might be worthwhile to look more closely at how the educational structure, planning, pedagogy and content of SE will take these objectives on.

Preparation and Planning

Forums for reflection and analysis need to be planned for concretely if participation of SMCs, PRIs, local NGOs, self-help groups, women's organizations, retired teachers, and literary figures is sought. Mechanisms of sharing, accountability and feedback need to be developed in relation to the baseline studies, the plan and the perspective plan. The role of the school in the planning process also needs clarity. What is the kind of resource support they can provide, and how is school management accountable to the education system, the SMCs or the Panchayati Raj institutions? Accordingly, adequate capacity building for the SMC needs to be built into the plan.

School Infrastructure, Learning Resources, Teachers and Quality Improvement *Curricula reform*

The RMSA in passing mentions curricula reform as a tool for increasing the quality of education. The significance and scope of this engagement in the content of education needs to be expanded considerably. The transformative potential and the role of curricula in building skills, citizenship and in breaking away from stereotypes related to identity, region, gender etc can be set out as a quality objective in curricular reform. The crucial aspect of curricula reform, which will bring about more inclusive teaching learning material, is the vigilance about nature of representation of socially marginalised groups. Mere tokenistic and mechanical representation or increase in the head count of representations of marginalized groups can risk new stereotypes being created, without understanding the context of social inequities. Teaching-learning material need to move beyond the tokenistic to include the realities and lifeworlds of socially excluded groups.

A concrete strategy towards inclusion is to develop an integrated approach to the inclusion of local context across disciplines. Local context in the domain of language, existing oral traditions, local histories, geographical contexts (human and physical) and last but not the least local technologies and the daily use of science all demand a place in the curriculum. Language issues come to the forefront when, for instance, we talk about the exclusion and under-performance of tribal learners. Multi-lingualism is a lived reality for the learners and the education system can and should draw on learners and teachers to create and generate

material in their own languages. This requires planning, and strengthening the connections between universities, SCERT's, local experts and School Boards.

- *Contextualising ICT education*

While promoting ICTs it is critical to vision the forward link for these pedagogies and innovative resources in the curriculum. Who has access to them in the school space, and how do they become relevant to the life world of the poor, rural, marginalised learner? How can we open up new avenues and opportunities through ICTs? These ICT learning packages must be located in the world of the learner. Further, to ensure the access and accessibility of these ICTs to the lifeworlds of socially excluded groups, context specific outputs should be planned to map the use and participation of children from marginalised groups, and especially in underdeveloped regions, in these learning processes.

Adolescence Education

The years of Secondary Education (14-18 years) are critical years in the development of self identity, in the generation of confidence to navigate adulthood. These are years of change for young persons, and not just physical change, but coming into their roles as young citizens. There is a need for curricula to see this important phase in more positive terms, and see the potential of providing a more empowering and enabling education to young people, which develops skills and capacities and the agency to actively participate in processes of citizenship.

The importance of spaces and forums where young people feel like they can have agency and can voice their concerns cannot be understated. Disciplining and fear-based approaches are not the way to work with young people, who are eager to take on proactive leadership roles. In terms of adolescent girls, we also see that it is important to take on board issues relevant to them - of mobility, discrimination and violation, and the need to create role models who take their education and 'life skills' in new directions.

Teacher Education

Teachers are invariably the missing link in terms of substantive change in quality and equity within the school space. Without sufficient capacity building, issues of gender, equity and caste are limited to the enrollment (or lack thereof) of learners from marginalized groups, or then as attitudinal changes that need to be made. The link with curricula or pedagogy is not clear. The current pre-service training curriculum is outdated, and needs reformulation to include an integrated, interdisciplinary course or module on understanding equality / equity. Additionally, context and subject specific in-service training too needs to be designed to continually build teachers' abilities to address issues of equity within disciplinary domains of secondary education.

Inclusion of Special Groups

The substantive inclusion of special groups will emerge if the planning, implementation and monitoring of the RMSA is a participatory process, involving voices of parents and community members especially from socially marginalised groups. Participation and inclusion then expands from the school, to the broader context and environment in which RMSA functions. In the approach to equity too, different categories of marginalisation – gender, caste, class, tribe, religion etc – must intersect as they do in reality, and so it is not possible to have a very sectoral or compartmentalised approach to the mainstreaming of marginalised groups.

Enrollment of girls at the secondary stage of education and their retention is a complex task as girls at this age are particularly vulnerable both to economic constraints and increased control over their mobility. Marital and reproductive realities kick-in in a powerful way for many adolescent girls. Therefore, gender is not merely an issue involving access, but retention and completion are tied to the factors mentioned above, necessitating engagement with the community in multiple ways,

understanding their socio-economic and political realities. As mentioned above, rather than separating gender from other forms of exclusion, it needs to be integrated into other social categories.

There needs to be a change in the perspective of disability from remedying, normalizing and rehabilitating learners – to seeing them as a valid group within a plural classroom. The issues to be addressed, therefore, are in the structures that make it difficult for disabled learners to be in education, rather than how *these learners* cope with 'normal schools'. How are we accommodating difference? What are the ways of integrating piecemeal efforts at inclusion into an education that actually is transformative for different groups? In the context of children with special needs, access is crucial, but greater engagement and empowerment of disabled learners must be simultaneous. Inclusion into mainstream implies better teacher training, necessary resources, and greater participation in the curriculum, culture and community of school setting.

'Safety' is an important issue and needs to be seen at multiple levels, and multiple contexts – gender, class, caste, ethnicity, language, dis/ability and so on. If Secondary Education is to be inclusive, especially of 'vulnerable' groups which easily fall out of the system, the issue of safety and discrimination must be addressed. Teachers in their attitudes and practice might be discriminatory towards learners from such communities. Young people might experience discrimination also within the school from their peers. At the level of management and systems - be it admission or the application procedures for scholarships; or curriculum and pedagogy, the nature of representation in text books, or use of

mainstream languages of power - the exclusion operates at multiple levels. Schools need to be built as 'safe spaces' or then 'zero tolerance zones' for discrimination on these counts.

Management

Community Participation

The experience of implementing the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan provides rich insights into the challenges and possibilities of the constitution of school-level committees. As of now community participation in managing the infrastructural aspects of the school is the most clearly developed area of involvement. The role needs to extend beyond this, particularly in terms of impacting the quality component. Specific challenges that have been raised in the SSA experience (documented in the 11th JRM report), like the absence of women's participation and that of representation of members from marginalized communities need to be taken on board in the constitution of the SMDCs. Additionally, micro research on the working of Village Education Committees shows that when these engaged local activist groups and women's federations, they added value both in terms of pedagogic and infrastructural support to the school.

The 12th JRM recommends that public campaigns be initiated to communicate and unpack the perception that private schooling provides a higher quality of education. Still, within disadvantaged communities, we see an articulation of choice through their exit from the government schools or then by sending their sons to private schools and daughters to government schools. Therefore, quality issues are tied to equity concerns and it is important to create processes and forums for both members from disadvantaged groups and learners themselves to exercise their 'voice' given that majority of the children from these communities access the government school.

For SMDC members to be able to come into these roles more proactively, some capacity building or orientation on gender, legal entitlements (for instance under the SC/ST Act, Sexual Assault/Vishakha Guidelines on sexual harassment etc) need to be planned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ACCESS

- ✓ The mandate of RMSA is ensuring growth of good quality government Secondary schools. The impact of this, it is envisioned, will provide the necessary push for learners from marginalised groups to access or transition to Secondary Education.
- ✓ A committee to set out guidelines for Public-Private Participation so as to ensure that expansion of private schools is mindful and responsive to the overall mandate of RMSA, particularly in the context of equity issues.
- ✓ Conduct campaigns within the community to ascertain reasons for the unfounded perception that private schools provide better quality education. To actively disseminate the quality of learning and inputs provided by Government schools. Building the profile of these schools as those who set the standards and provide substantive learning opportunities.
- ✓ Promote residential schooling opportunities in areas marked by high drop-out rate at the secondary level particularly for girls and tribal learners. Reducing the 5 Km distance norm for remote, inaccessible or hilly regions.
- ✓ Developing schemes and programmes for provision of free academic support for first generation learners in the form of summer camps and regular after school teaching support. Setting common spaces for group learning where learners coming from poor backgrounds might not have space in their homes to study, nor the support from their families. This would strengthen completion or retention.

PLANNING, MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT

The delivery of the Abhiyan needs to focus on how synergies can be created at the block, district and state level. Management needs to take on not only the question of access but also needs to respond to the question ‘access to what?’ Co-ordination across ministries and also among various stakeholders is paramount at this stage of education. It is also critical to recognize that what is tracked is what is valued and it is finally what gets implemented or made visible at the ground level.

- ✓ A National Resource Group be created drawing on people with experience and expertise on issues of quality and equity.
 - The National Resource Group can vision, build capacities, ensure rigour in planning, provide feedback and facilitate external reviews. The NRG can report to the National Mission. As mentioned in the Frame work, the NRG can support the National Mission in fulfilling its mandate of disseminating good practices across states, encourage study visits and publish material for dissemination. The NRG can comprise the Joint Secretary in charge of RMSA (MHRD), Secretary In Charge of SE in different states, representatives from NCERT, NUEPA and NIOS

- in addition to a range of experts in the field of curriculum development, assessment, social inclusion, research, training, etc.
- The NRG can link with the TSG (Technical Support Group) both at the national and state level , through whom support to the State Mission can be provided in a sustained manner on select mandates.
 - ✓ Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRAs) be undertaken in certain select villages and blocks where extreme and chronic inequities exist in access to Secondary Education. The PRA must include experts, state-level functionaries and district programme co-ordinators. The PRA can with efficiency and speed develop skills in formulating equity-based questions that foreground and unpack the multiple sites of disadvantage. It can build on the overall process of formulating district-specific plans through development of specific or innovative perspective plans, helping to set priorities. These skills will transfer to not only regions of stark inequities but also contribute to overall planning with learnings disseminated through District programme co-ordinators.
 - ✓ The process of setting up SMDCs (School Mangement and Development Committees) needs to align itself to the systems outlined in the Right to Education Act (2010).
 - Wherever schools cover both Elementary and Secondary sections, a single committee - the SMDC - be set up to take on the role of monitoring and development of the school. Where the Secondary School is a standalone institution, mechanisms governing the SMDC at the elementary school level should inform the functioning of the SDMC. It might be more efficient for the education system to follow a common system across elementary and secondary school.
 - Specific trainings and inputs be organised for members of the SDMC in order to build their capacities to monitor the school and ensure quality control. A module or modules be developed including issues related to gender, discrimination , equity in addition to building a broad understanding of monitoring and tracking systems. NGOs, education and women's groups be drawn upon at the state level to develop this module in partnership with SCERTs. In states where the Mahila Samakhya Programme is present, it be involved in the development and transaction of this module.
 - District level plans be developed and shared with SMDC and PRI members to build their stakes in the RMSA interventions.
 - ✓ Need for data availability, transparency and monitoring of scholarship schemes across ministries is a critical action point. As of now there is no point of integration of all these scholarship schemes.
 - It is proposed that the Secondary school become the hub of all scholarships and schemes provided for students from marginalised communities across

- ministries. This is necessary as a majority of scholarships begin in the pre-matric stage. The Principal be responsible for identifying appropriate candidates and ensuring that the scheme is accessed by students.
- A study be undertaken on identifying mechanisms of how to streamline these schemes, the support required at the school level, along with the feasibility of tracking disbursement. The study also needs to outline common systems of assessment or periodic evaluation of these schemes.
 - MHRD in consultation with other ministries should also set up a portal where information on all scholarship schemes, their criterion and outreach are made available.
- ✓ One national and four regional workshops be organized to develop equity and quality indicators.
- These workshops can be done in collaboration with TSG, state governments, NUEPA and experts. Tools be developed that combine quantitative and qualitative indicators, where quality indicators relate to process and record 'markers' of change and are promotive of equity. These must be rigorous and can be quantified where possible.
 - Tracking mechanisms can be developed with the support of NUEPA where quality of inputs be part of its information and data collection on Secondary education against tracking of only outputs and outcomes. Trials be undertaken for feedback prior to incorporation of these within the system.
- ✓ An indepth assessment of the quality of in-service and pre-service teacher training be undertaken.
- This assessment includes representatives of NCERT, SCERT, DIET faculty members along with experts and university departments and researchers. The group work towards making recommendations for new in-service and pre-service curricula along with suggestions on how the system can undertake periodic external assessments.
 - Assessments should move beyond data be used to provide feedback for further planning and implementation. The process should be empowering for the learners and teacher community.
- ✓ Initiate longitudinal studies on the nature and impact of secondary education, involving NUEPA, NCERT, University departments, research institutions and individuals if necessary. Inter-disciplinary studies, ethnographies and micro-studies on certain specific areas related to equity are critically required in Secondary Education as there is an acute shortage of both qualitative and quantitative research. Studies are necessary on:
- Understanding attitudes, perceptions and participation in SE among marginalised communities

- The reasons for non-transition from elementary to SE or drop-out or non completion of SE
- The impact of marriage, work and migration on young women's access to SE
- Ethnographies on teachers in SE- their own understandings on gender, caste class and community and how it impacts their role as a teacher
- Tracking SDMCs formation, functioning and role in promoting quality and equity in Secondary Schools
- A study on the nature and forms of discriminatory practices that are experienced by learners within the secondary school space
- ✓ In order to bring quality and equity substantively closer, it is proposed that an Innovations fund be set up at the Centre.
 - The mandate of the innovations fund must include upscaling of the innovation either at the state level or then across states, in order to ensure that mainstreaming of the intervention is built into the design of the innovation.
 - A team be set up at the national level to facilitate this.
 - State Missions be invited to submit projects and proposals that seek to bring quality into their SE interventions with clear outcomes for children from weaker sections. These initiatives can be supported by the Innovations fund
- ✓ In terms of management at the district level the gender and special needs, SC, ST units be integrated into the planning and monitoring, curriculum and pedagogy, teacher recruitment, community mobilization and budget units. Each unit must have clear deliverables and must report on steps and measures taken in this arena. Each team can have one member who is located within these units taking on the mandates of disability, gender and of marginalised groups.

TACKLING QUALITY AND EQUITY ISSUES

For RMSA to promote social justice and equity, not merely the hardware but the software of education requires intervention. These areas cover a range of domains in Secondary Education such as curricula, teacher education and training, language and identity concerns and the promotion of non-discriminatory practices.

Curricula Reform

- ✓ Process guidelines be developed for textbook review and reform.
 - The NCERT process of writing textbooks post NCF 2005 be used to create these guidelines for states.
 - Process of textbook reform be rigorous and open to peer review by a committee of senior academics, educationists and development workers.
- ✓ Integrations with the local or regional not be in the domain of 'extra-curricular' activities but get institutionalized and developed into the curriculum in a systematic way.

- Exemplar modules be developed in consultation with experts within disciplines at the state level for district level use.
- Monitor-able benchmarks be developed by State governments on how they can track inclusion of a particular percentage of locally developed or district or state-specific material in curricula.
- ✓ The inclusion of ICTs be accompanied by some planning as to the future opportunities that these skills must open up in the lives of learners from marginalized communities.
- ✓ The conceptualization of 'life skills' in adolescent education should be more holistic, including skills that prepare young people to be active citizens and potential leaders.

Teachers Training

- ✓ The period of in-service training to be visioned along a 3-year continuum.
 - This should include a multiplicity of inputs, which follow a structured progression in terms of concepts and skills.
 - The teacher training must include a module on understanding equality/equity and its relationship to society and development of self in the context of schooling. The module needs to make clear connections between subject content and issues of equity in order to ensure that teachers have a more sustained and positive understanding of equity issues and do not view them as mere 'add on's'
- ✓ Planned orientation of teachers on acts such as the SC/ST Act, Disabilities act, Sexual Harassment Bill etc needs to take place in order to upgrade their information levels and build their understanding on discriminatory practices. This will also be a positive and pro-active move to building the school as a 'Zero tolerance Zone' vis-a-vis discriminatory practices in contexts where not only students but teachers too could be victims of discriminatory behaviour. Such inputs will empower teachers.
- ✓ A training programme for headmasters be developed for building leadership, improving their professional skills and perspective, in order to build leadership at the school level. Institutions such as NUEPA be involved in the creation of the design and content of this training.

Recommendations for Gender Inclusion

- ✓ Expansion of bridge courses for young women who have dropped out, to gain entry into the mainstream, particularly in tribal areas.
- ✓ As is evident from the KGBV experience, quality residential bridge courses have been successful in bringing girls from SC and ST communities into upper primary education. Residential centers also hold the potential of reducing girls' vulnerability to withdrawal on account of costs or poor quality of education.

- ✓ Hiring of female teachers that will encourage the community to continue schooling of girls.
- ✓ Strengthening the mechanisms for disbursal of scholarships for SC and ST girls through measures suggested above in this section.
- ✓ Raising community awareness about bringing girls into school
 - Promoting campaigns in the community with women's sanghas and federations to bring girls out from the drudgery of domestic work.
 - Promoting forums for girls, in the form of a 'manch' that gives them a voice and develops their self confidence and self-worth, and where peer support networks can develop.
- ✓ Development of community specific strategies for promoting girls' education.

Language and Identity

- ✓ Setting up of a committee to set forth an overall approach on the role of local language or the mother-tongue in Secondary education.
 - The committee needs to explore how local language can become a bridge in improving command over mainstream languages. For instance the 'standalone' approach to English teaching needs to be revisited and brought closer to the local/mother tongue language curricula. A research study looking into the teaching of English or dominant mainstream language to marginalized groups and the role of the mother tongue in this should be undertaken.
 - Pedagogical innovations need to be thought out – like teaching with ICTs, the internet, mobile phones – films and songs, bringing the engagement of the learners' own worlds with English, thus making it 'meaningful' for the learner.
 - Translations from local/regional languages, especially into 'mainstream' language teaching like Hindi and English, should be a central part of language teaching-learning material at the secondary level. A translation unit should be set up within SCERTs to facilitate this.

School as an inclusive, safe space

- ✓ At the State level, a clear and unequivocal message needs to be sent to the districts that discriminatory behavior will not be accepted in schools. Campaigns, posters and celebration of events like Ambedkar Jayanti, Women's Day, Human Rights Day etc can be promoted.
- ✓ Awareness building of the rights of children and learners in the school needs to be actively built into the curricular process.
- ✓ Timely handling of complaints and documentation is desirable. The involvement of women's collectives – sanghas or samitis – in raising issues of discrimination and violence should be institutionalised, electing representations to the SMCs. Civil society organizations and SMCs can play an active role in these activities

INTRODUCTION

The impressive progress of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in all its goals related to access, equity and quality in elementary education, an outcome of enormous effort both by the states and the Centre, has set the stage for a focus on Secondary Education as the next significant area of intervention. SSA has recorded a decline of 5.3 million in the number of Out of School Children from the number reported in 2005.⁸ The overall figure has now dwindled from 13.4 million to 8.1 million. With 99% of habitations recording access to a primary school and 93% to an upper primary school, the idea of universalization of Secondary School has entered the imagination of planners and policy makers of education as a reachable target. The XI Plan (2007-2012) projects a near 90% transition from primary (grades 1-5) to elementary levels (grades 6-8), thereby pushing up the number of those who will be seeking entry into secondary education.

Another significant development is that the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act has become operational in April 2010. This Act has expanded the idea of access, defining the nature of the school that children are entitled to across the social and geographical spectrum. Over the next three years we will see a standardization and democratization in terms of what parents and children can expect from the government in terms of school provisioning. The ripple effect of RTE will be experienced in Secondary Education at two levels. On in terms of development of a new consciousness among stakeholders that education is an entitlement. Efforts to universalize Secondary Education will function with a backdrop where communities will be mobilized to demand a particular quality of education across the board. At the second level the sheer increase in participation of children in Elementary Education will demand a degree of preparedness for the transition of learners from Elementary to Secondary.

In response to this newly emerging situation, the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan is a positive and robust move to meet the challenges and expectations that Secondary Education is likely to experience. The RMSA lays the ground to universalise SE over the next decade, defining its goals and mission as:

Ensuring Physical Access: Through providing a secondary school within reasonable distance of any habitation, at a distance of 5 kms for Secondary Schools and 7-10 kms for H.SEschools.

Ensuring Quality: Setting out clear norms regarding the physical structure, the nature of activities to be undertaken, the provision of learning resources and the ratio of teaching staff and management.

⁸ See report of the 12th Joint Review Mission of SSA, 2010: p.13

Ensuring Equity: Bridging the social and gender gap is a key objective. There will be a special focus in the RMSA on economically weaker sections of society – the educationally backward, girls, disabled children residing in rural areas and other marginalized categories like SC, ST, OBC and Educationally Backward Minorities. The targets set by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, put forth in its presentation to the parliamentary Committee in December 2007 are as follows:

S. No.	Indicator	2004-05	2011-12 (Target)
1	GER (IX-X)	51.65	75
2	GER (SC) (IX-X)	45.41	70
3	GER (ST) (IX-X)	37.16	70
3	GER Rural (IX-X)	NA	70
4	Girls enrolled/100 boys	71	100
5	%Trained teachers in Secondary Schools	89	100
6	PTR (Secondary)	32	25
7	Physical Infrastructure incl. Disabled Access		All Schools

We can see a clear focus on ensuring equity in Secondary Education on the part of the Ministry in terms of the definition of what constitutes its areas of intervention. It seeks to reach out to young learners from marginalised communities, those who are residing in rural areas and particularly Children with Special Needs (CWSN), with a special focus on girls.

The Challenge of Secondary Education

The CABE Committee for Secondary Education has projected an assessment of infrastructure based on an assumption of 100% success of SSA, listing that by 2017, minimally over one lakh additional classrooms and close to twenty lakh additional teachers

are to be provided from what was available in 2002-03.⁹ The increase imagined in the above projection presumes a high growth of existing infrastructure and teacher requirement/software supply. This is a major commitment considering that at present, on an average only 3% of various states' GDP is being spent on education as a whole. RMSA aims at ensuring universal access by 2017 and universal retention by 2020, the physical provisioning of Secondary Schools, particularly in Educationally Backward Blocks in terms of resources t might be a formidable challenge for the central exchequer.

The secondary school age population is a significant size in India. The population of children in the age group (14–18 years) is estimated at 107 million in 2001, 119.7 million in 2006, and 121.1 million in 2011, whereas, the current enrolment in secondary and senior secondary education together is only 37 million (2004–05).¹⁰ The scale and nature of commitment required from the central and state governments emerges from these two potential figures on the size of the population that RMSA is to reach out to and the sheer infrastructural increase that is necessarily required to make this a reality.

The challenge for RMSA exists not merely at the level of provisioning but also in terms of the age group it seeks to cover. Adolescence, the onset of puberty, concerns regarding mobility of girls, security and sexuality are matters that are centre-stage for this age group. Community norms along with expectations around roles to be played in the near future impact decisions regarding schooling. For instance in the case of marginalized, poor and subsistence-based communities, the search for work and livelihood impacts both boys and girls. Girls, in many communities, are seen to have come of age and marriage becomes a reality limiting their chances to seriously continue with pursuing higher education. It can be argued that in many parts of India the transition is straight from childhood to adulthood in terms of roles and responsibilities that young people in this age group are expected to play. Adolescence is not recognized as specific phase in the process of reaching adulthood in many communities.

The following section charts out the scenario as it exists at present. Since the objective of this exercise is to understand differentials that emerge as an outcome of existing inequities among social groups, we will first examine both what is available in terms of schooling facilities and the larger socio-economic realities of these groups. These are not 'social groups' in the strict sociological sense, but in terms of official categories. Given the degree

⁹ See report of the CAGE Committee, 'Planning for Universalisation of Secondary Education', (2005) p. 35. The transition rate from Grade 8 to 9 was computed by the CAGE committee at 90% in 2009-10, increasing to 100% in 2019- 2020. (Based on SES 2002- 3 figures). It calculated share of underage and overage children at 15% (2010-11) decreasing to 10% in 2014-15 and 5% by 2019-20.

¹⁰ XI Five Year Plan Education (2007-2012) accessed from www.aicre-india.org.in. See Vimala Ramachandran, Kameshwari Jandhyala, Secondary Education for Girls in India,. Unpublished paper for Macarthur Foundation. May 2010

of presence of the State in many relevant domains, actual social groups in real-life situations of decision making are likely to be influenced by, if not conform to, these imposed categories. For example, although there are wide differences in community practices, identity and culture, the knowledge of affirmative action in government jobs is likely to have an effect on decisions regarding the level of education in the case of reserved categories once they have crossed a certain threshold, i.e. when within means. Having said so, one must also observe that some of our categories for differential are fixed and they cut across all social groups. Gender and location are two such categories, which are present within all categories and having effect, though perhaps to a varied degree, in the decision and choice made by all groups. While one of them is intrinsic to groups, the latter, i.e. location is external and often constraining, and to that extent varied, as with the developmental scenario in the state/region concerned. With the great diversity that India has, sufficient caution is required in using national level statistical reports, if the unit level data and time series data are not looked into. This report tries to make use of some other studies and estimates to overcome this obstacle to some extent. However, there are limitations to that, particularly in terms of understanding causality. The report is far less equipped to look into the dynamic aspects of demand, and to that extent, limited in its predictive focus. In fact there is paucity in data-base which tracks cohorts from early childhood through education to mobility.

Section 1 is divided into three parts- A, B and C. Part A examines the nature of demand and supply that exists in the secondary education sector at present. It attempts to work through the multiple dimensions of quantity and quality to point to where gaps and possibilities exist in terms of interventions in the future. Part B offers brief profiles on the nature of work participation, employment opportunities and location of marginalized communities and its implications for their education seeking behavior. Gender forms an integral part of the discussion in both sections. The final section combines section A and B to offer an understanding of the key concerns that emerge for consideration for Rashtriya Madyamik Shiksha Abhiyan. This analysis emerges from a close reading not merely of existing data but also of the few micro-studies that provide more textured insights into the existing scenario. It also brings on board issues related to violence, discrimination, language, cultural alienation, community norms and power dynamics that critically contribute to exacerbating disadvantage.

SECTION 1: THE STATUS OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

PART A: PARTICIPATION IN SECONDARY EDUCATION ACROSS VARIOUS DIFFERENTIALS

This section attempts to map participation in Secondary Education (SE) and the contingent supply environment within which such participation takes place. The household characteristics are not dealt here directly, because to the extent these characteristics are relevant in assessing future behaviour of different social groupings, they are not likely to change in the short run.

Some of the questions explored in this section are –

- Is there any evidence of growth in demand for secondary education in recent years?
- Is this growth witnessed in all sections of society? If not, then what are the differences between broad categories?
- What is the current situation of participation for different sections of society?

The major aspects looked into that signify demand are –

- attendance
- Completion
- drop out rates

The other aspect is the supply environment. Is it contingent upon this demand? What are the constraints?

What is the current scenario in terms of outcomes of schooling?

What follows is a discussion of the scenario emerging from the presentation of disaggregated data on the abovementioned axes, which tries to analyze the extent of inequalities in the current secondary education system.

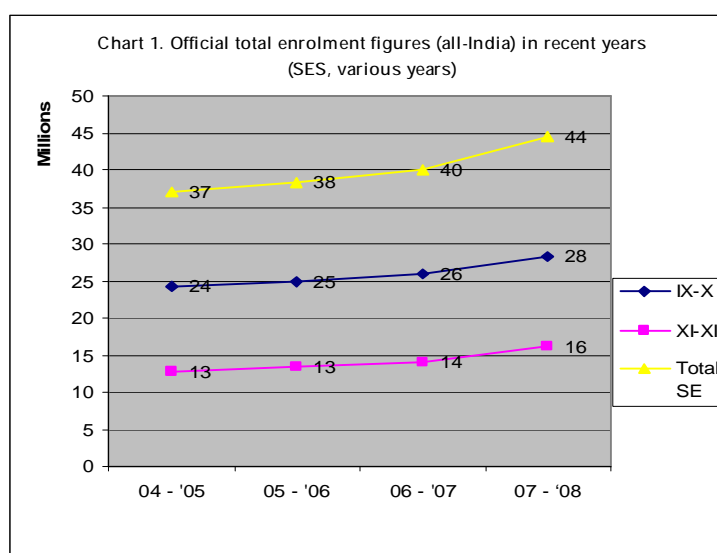
I. Demand

The trend in demand over time

The demand for education may be measured from the actual behaviour revealed by enrollment or attendance in any educational institute. The school census data collected through MHRD provides enrollment figures in Selected Education Statistics (SES) which is published annually. It provides official school enrollment data along with other useful information. The other source of enrollment and actual attendance information is National Sample Survey Organization's (NSSO) education surveys, which records enrollment as well as actual attendance of students from the sample households and have certain advantages

over the SES statistics. Confirming from both the sources improves upon the bias in estimation of various relevant ratios provided by the government data (SES). At the same time, we do recognize that there are limits to how adequately these figures represent the scale or nature of demand. As it evident in the profile of different communities prior to this section, many learners might be keen to attend but the work participation ratio for the 15 to 19 year age group indicates a sharp decline. Thus potential demand might be more than the enrollment figure.

Observing the current secondary attendance status reported in various rounds of NSSO data upto 2004-05, a study by the World Bank observed upward growth in enrollment over a period of 20 years (1984/85 – 2004/05), with an increased growth rate captured in '04-05 NSSO Education Survey. Based on figures provided in SES up to 04-05, the same study observed an accelerated growth in secondary enrollment since 2000 as distinct from the previous slower growth rate. The expansion during this period was estimated at an average rate of 5.4% per year which is higher than preceding years.¹¹



Source: NSS 64th Round

We may observe from further SES enrollment data provided after 2004-05 that the trend of increase in enrolment in Secondary Education (SE) has continued (See chart 1). In the IX-th & X-th class alone, the increase during 2005-2008 was 4 million. The enrollment in Lower and H.SE(H.SE) taken together, the total increase of nearly 7.5 millions in these three years is comparable with 12 million in the previous five years. This continuous increase in secondary enrollment from 2000 to 2007-08 is often interpreted as a push coming from increased success in output in middle school due to implementation of SSA, as well as greater and sustained demand for SE.

Is the recent rise in demand concentrated only in specific sections of society?

While the trend reflects an increased demand for secondary education, one pauses to think whether this demand is consistent along various axes of differential, for eg, rural/urban, male/female and socially disadvantaged groups. Looking at the trend and future projection, the World Bank study comments that the bulk of the future increased demand is likely to

¹¹ Secondary Education in India: Universalizing Opportunities, The World Bank, 2009, p.11.

come from an increased secondary participation from rural areas and poorer classes.¹² As per NSS figures 2007-08, the Gross Attendance Ratio in Secondary Schooling (IX & X) is 65.6% and in HS it is 41.1%. The GAR for urban was 85.2% for SE and 64.8% for HS.¹³

To ascertain the trend of demand disaggregated at the level of various social groups we may take a look at the data presented by a study commissioned by UNESCO for Education For All Global Monitoring Report (EFAGMR) 2010.¹⁴ The study took various rounds of NSSO education survey from 1993/94 up to 2004/05 and created a panel data using specific definition of attendance rate, completion rate and drop out rate for different school-going age groups.¹⁵ The panel compares the changes between 1993-94 to 1999-2000 (Period I) and 1999-2000 to 2004-2005 (Period II).

On a preliminary observation of this panel data, it can be noted that the age-specific attendance rate for all school-going age groups (6-11, 12-14 & 15-18) had increased during both the periods – more during Period II than during the first. However, the rate of increase was much higher in the age groups corresponding to primary and upper primary levels than secondary. While the accelerated demand in Period II ('99/'00–'04/'05) at elementary level is expected as a result of the SSA intervention, at the same time the increased (though smaller) growth in attendance in secondary age group indicates the push resulting from the increased output from SSA.

Some pointers from this panel data are presented below, focusing on change in attendance over time for various social groups, income classes, location and gender –

- § There was an increased secondary attendance in both the periods among rural households as well as among girls. This increase was larger in Period II.
- § Both periods have seen increased attendance in all social and religious groups, viz. SC, ST, Muslims and general category Hindus, in all age groups attending school.
- § Across all social and religious groups, the increase observed in the secondary attending age group (15-18) was significantly less than the increase in lower age group children.

¹² Secondary Education in India: Universalizing Opportunities, The World Bank, 2009, p11.

¹³ Status of Secondary Education Participation in India: An analysis of NSS 64th round data by Deepa Sankar. The World Bank: 2011.

¹⁴ Bhalotra, Sonia, 'Educational Deficits and Social Identity in India: Paper commissioned for EFAGMR 2010 Reaching the Marginalised, UNESCO, 2009.

¹⁵ Since we are going to make extensive use of this study, some of the ratios estimated in this study from NSSO are reproduced in the Annexures (p. 121-125) with a note on the definitions and estimation procedure used in the study. The age ranges used differ from official age group for secondary education but captures most of secondary attendance given the actual attendance scenario marked with over-age enrollment, particularly relevant to assess the situation of disadvantaged groups and rural students. For example, 15-18 years are taken for assessing secondary attendance.

- § Comparing the quantum of increase in secondary attendance between Period I and II, it was varied among social groups; – each period had positive growth.
- § For disadvantaged social groups, the increase in secondary attendance ranged between 2.3 and 5.5 percentage point from their base attendance rate at the beginning of every period.
- § All three lower consumption quintiles reported larger increase than the two uppermost quintiles
- § The increase in secondary attendance was much larger in Period II than in Period I for all consumption quintiles except for the topmost two.

From the above pointers, it may be assumed that at least in part the increased demand for SE in recent years in the case of the rural sector, poorer classes and girls is an outcome of the effect of SSA intervention at the elementary level. But in the case of disadvantaged social groups, such an assumption of translation effect of SSA into secondary school participation is difficult. This is because in most cases the change in demand (in terms of percentage point difference in attendance) among these groups was nearly even in both the periods demonstrating no significant increase. However, a strong response to the direct intervention of SSA among disadvantaged classes, reflected in the larger increase in their elementary participation compared to the increase in upper caste Hindus in Period II (99/00 – 04/05), shows a potential future increase in the demand for secondary education from these disadvantaged groups (given the intervention of RMSA) is imminent.

Minimally we may conclude that the demand for SE exists; it is increasing across all social locations and would likely to be responsive to interventions, even for disadvantaged groups. Secondly, the poorer classes are likely to respond more to the intervention.

The potential for demand increase in disadvantaged sections of society has a major policy implication. Much larger increase in attendance rate among the age-group covering elementary level from most disadvantaged sections (all differentials) was evident in 2004-05 survey as compared with the 1999-00 survey. Naturally it is likely to increase the number of eligible students seeking SE from these disadvantages sections of society, for whom cost may prove to be the crucial consideration for secondary enrollment. These sections need to be specifically targeted for policy intervention, lest the cost of secondary education become a bar to entry from lower quintile groups. This observation corroborates with the anticipation expressed in the World Bank Report about the future situation of demand and its policy implications.¹⁶

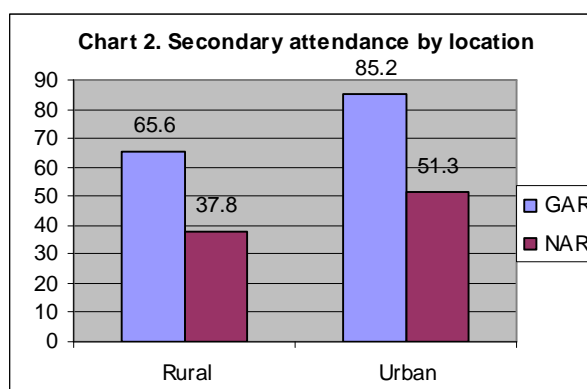
¹⁶ World Bank Report, pg 13. "...the anticipated large increases in the number of grade 8 graduates from poor, rural areas over the next 7-8 years who will be unable to afford private secondary schooling mean that inequity is poised to increase..."

It is important to assert here that though we have noted above a positive trend over time across all categories, the attendance rates in each of the disadvantaged groups, and lower income quintile remain far below than general Hindus or upper quintiles; rural-urban difference as well as gender difference also remained substantial in 2004-05 according to this time series data. Therefore it is critical to unpack the nature and reason for disadvantage or inequities that persists in secondary education.

Is Participation in Secondary Education Equitable?

There are large gaps along various lines of differentials – gender, location, social groups.

This section presents an account of gaps in attendance and completion along these differentials using updates from the latest available NSSO (64th round) data collected in the year 2007-08 for cross-sectional comparisons. The description here mainly deals with the situation prevailing in SE, i.e. class IX-Xth, which is the present focus area of the RMSA intervention. Reference to other levels of school education will be made whenever relevant. In some cases SES data is also used.



Source: NSSO 64th Round

Attendance

The all India Gross Attendance Rate (GAR - all children attending in the secondary classes) estimated from NSSO 64th round is approximately 70, which is an improvement over the previous round (04-05). However, the states vary widely from this average, ranging from as high as 116.4% in Kerala to 49.4% in Bihar. Among the states falling behind the national GAR, there are many large and densely populated states, including MP, Chattishgarh, Orissa, WB, UP, Gujarat and Jharkhand. The NAR is also lower than the national average in most of these states.

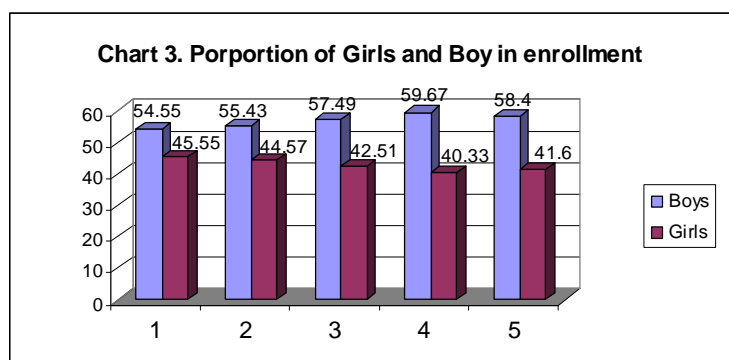
By location

Rural-urban differential widens in the upper end of school education compared to the lower levels. While at primary level the respective share of rural and urban areas is representative of their share of population in the official age range children, at each higher level, the rural share in attendance falls below the rural share of population, leading to a 5 percentage point under-representation in secondary attendance and 10 percentage point under-representation in attendance at H.SE level. While this is equivalent to the crude measure of coverage in rural areas, the Net Attendance Rate (NAR) should bring out the rural disadvantage more sharply given that the NAR is estimated as the ratio of number of

students from the official age range in the population to those who are present at the particular level of education appropriate to their age. Thus the NAR in secondary classes signifies the spread of coverage to the children who are in terms of their age, attending secondary classes. NAR shows that only 37.8% of the rural children in the age group of 14-15 are under coverage, thereby bringing home the rural disadvantage more sharply. It should be noted that the higher over-age students crowding in rural areas observable from NSSO 07-08 data.¹⁷ Therefore, in terms of assessing the coverage, even though the gender gap is narrowed down in terms of NAR, the more important point is that the coverage in secondary education is far from being extensive for both boys and girls of appropriate age (14-15 years).

Gender

Data obtained from the 2007-08 school census shows that in the preceding 10 years, the presence of girls increased from 58 per 100 boys to 77 girls per 100 boys. In spite of this increased participation of girls, the overall gender gap in SE is over 13 percentage points, obtained from the SES data(07-08), which reports the share of girls to be 43.66% of all secondary students compared to the boys' share of 56.34%. The gender gap becomes more pronounced with each consequent stage of education from primary to higher secondary. In case of primary education, the present enrollment of girls is almost representative of their population share of corresponding age range, while the gap starts showing up in the age of middle schooling and later.

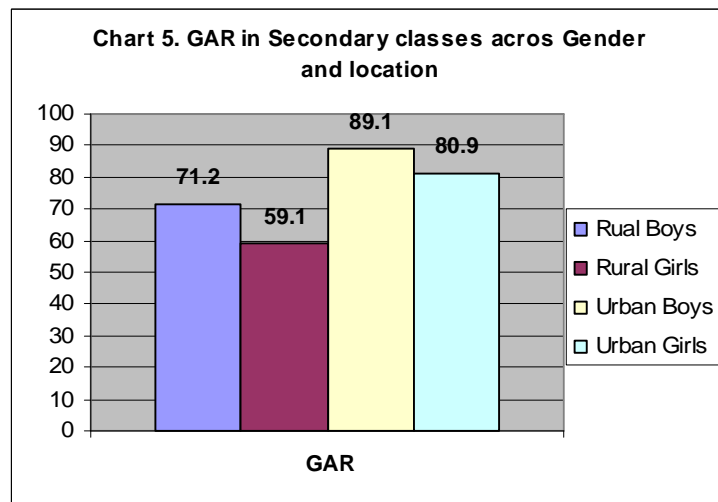
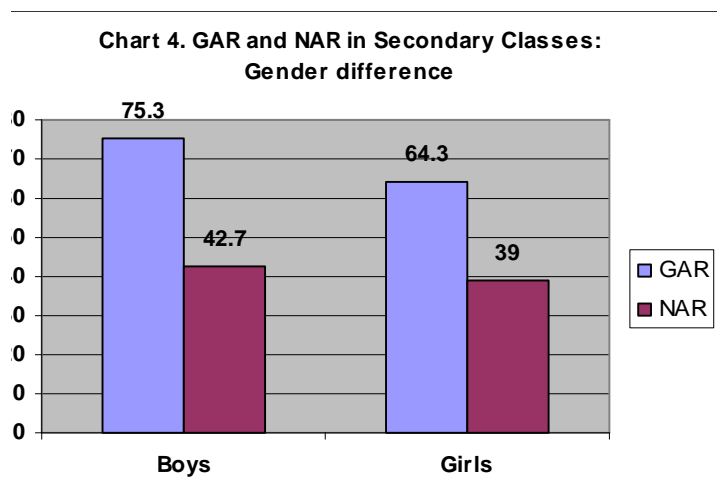


NSSO data in 07-08 on girls' attendance (chart 3) too corroborate with the trend shown by the enrollment statistics, while establishing a larger under-representation of girls compared to the girls' share in the population of 14-15 age group children. The girls share in attendance was only 42.5 percent of all attending students – the gap between girls and boys share in attendance becomes 15 percentage points compared to 13 reported above from official enrollment data. In Higher Secondary, the gap becomes sharper. Only 40.33% of attending students were female while boys' share in HS attendance was 19% more.

¹⁷ Statement 4.1: Percentage distribution of students in age-groups across different levels of education NSSO 64th Report, pg 38

In terms of GAR for secondary classes (IXth-Xth), as shown in chart 4, the gender gap in GAR is 11 %. In terms of NAR, however, girls' overall attendance rate is close to boys, the gap being only 3.7 percentage points. This is possibly an outcome of girls' attendance being more age appropriate than boys. The gap in GAR however is still large enough between boys and

girls, showing that the vulnerability of girls is greater in rural locations. GAR for rural girls is only 59% (see chart 5), lagging behind that of rural boys by 12%. This low GAR of girls indicates that overage enrollment for girls is lower than boys, which might be an outcome of relatively better performance or the likelihood of their being withdrawn after a certain age or parental decision to pull out girls to allocate resources to their son's education. In urban areas, the gender gap is less than the gap in rural areas by nearly 4 percentage points. One important deviation from the whole trend is that of urban Scheduled Tribe population, where girls participate in secondary education more than boys.¹⁸



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When we focus on the situation of gender disparity in various states, presented in the NSSO 64th round survey report, we observe deviation from the national scenario. In some states the general level of participation of girls is high. In Kerala, Mizoram, Manipur, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, the GAR for girls in secondary classes is above 90%.¹⁹ In many major states, GAR for girls is lower than the national average – Rajasthan, UP MP, Jharkhand and Bihar stand out for their low GAR among girls. Gender gap is varied in different states. Only in few states – Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Mizoram – girls' GAR is higher than that of boys. In all other major states, the gap between attendance of boys and girls in secondary education remains unfavourable towards girls. It can be generally observed that

¹⁸ Select Education Statistics 07-08, and other sources

¹⁹ NSSO 64th round report

lower girls' participation is associated with incidence of lower overall secondary participation in the states.

The understanding of gender disparity emerging from the above observations shows that the gender gap is of crucial concern. Even though the trend shows some positive development in girls' participation, in general participation in secondary school is less. In the light of gender-based preferences in household resource allocation, which are likely to be tilted towards boys, unless attempts to address the gender gap are built into the intervention plan, the gender gap is likely to posit an area of challenge. The World Bank report also observes gender to be of crucial concern due to various considerations, especially from the perspective of high economic return observed in case of girls, per increased level of education.²⁰ There is another aspect from which it remains crucial – studies have brought out the positive impact of female parental education level on children's education participation and completion.²¹ If that is the case, an adequate policy thrust to achieve 100% gender parity is highly important for sustainability of achievements from RMSA intervention for future generations of children.

By wealth class

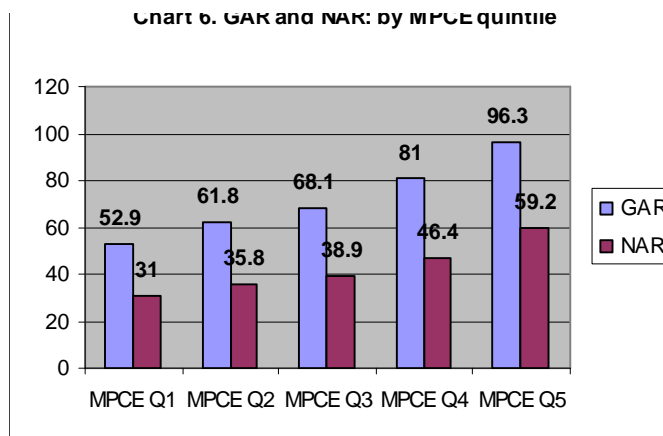
Monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) in a household may be taken as an indicator of wealth class of the household. The NSSO surveys collect information on the consumption profile of sample households. According to the consumption expenditures status, the households then may be grouped into quintiles. The five quintiles contain equal number of households (20% of the population in each quintile), varying around the mean consumption expenditure of the quintile. These mean consumption expenditure of the quintiles may vary widely between the quintiles according to the degree of inequality prevailing in the population. In other words, every quintile represents 20% of the population, which is richer than the 20% belonging to the previous quintile.

There is a steady increase in both the GAR and NAR as we move up the MPCE levels. The difference between the highest and the lowest consumption classes is almost 46 percentage points in GAR and 28 percentage points in NAR (see chart 6). From the NSSO survey data of 07-08, we may observe that there are substantial gaps not only between the most rich and the most poor, but in between the intermediate consumption classes also. Interestingly, even in the two highest quintile classes, the GAR is not 100% and NAR for those classes also show that age appropriate attendance is far from 100%. Another important observation from the gender disaggregated NSSO data is that there is a larger gender gap in the first MPCE quintile compared to the fifth.

²⁰ WBR p 14

²¹ See Socio-Economic Determinants of School Attendance in India by Usha Jayachandran, Working Paper No.130, June 2002, Centre for Development Economics. Pg no.19

The inequitable enrollment in secondary education by expenditure quintile may result from inequitable completion rates of elementary education by expenditure quintile. However, looking at the completion

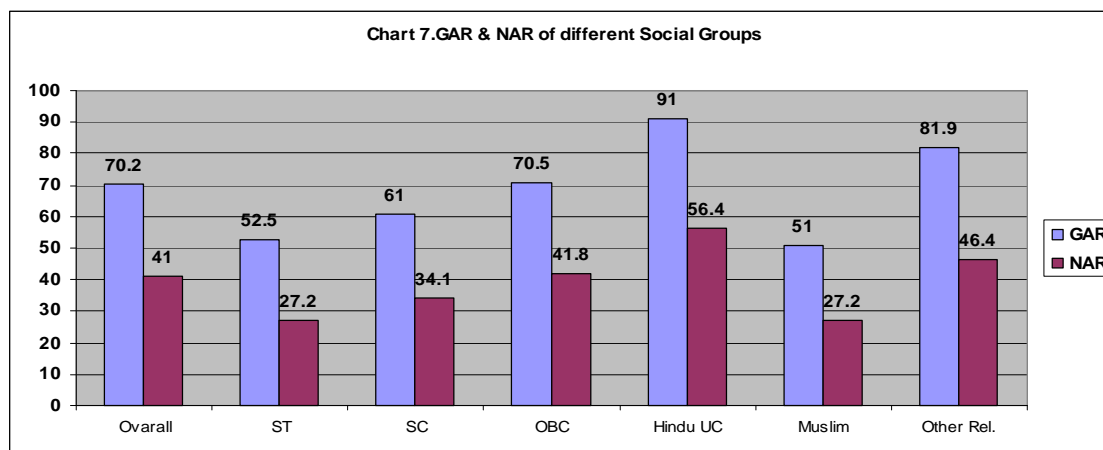


data on elementary schooling from the previous NSSO round (04-05), it may be observed that the difference in various consumption quintiles in attendance in secondary is larger than the difference in completion.²² The explanation may be the difficulty in access, lack of choice, especially a choice of school within means of the household, and so on. In the later sections, we shall see the lower presence of poorer classes in private schooling; this fact together with the sudden rise in the cost of schooling at secondary level from upper primary may be a hurdle. It follows that equitable elementary education completion may not translate automatically into equity in secondary school participation. The effort to ensure participation in SE involves not only a move in the direction of making schooling at this stage more affordable, but also to develop strategies to work on attitudes within the community regarding non-prioritization of girls education. Additionally economic vulnerabilities are also likely to impact learners, and a holistic approach would require financial support in the form of scholarships or residential schooling as enabling a push towards completion of SE.

By social group

The disparity among various social groups is a feature characteristic to the Indian situation, wherein society is differentiated along caste and religious lines. The disadvantage incident upon SC and ST is commonly observed. Following the highlights underscored by the Sachar Committee Report, there is now a wider acceptance of the fact of educational backwardness of Muslims. Importantly, when compared to the Hindu upper castes and a small minority population categorized as other religious groups, the disparity stands out even in case of OBCs. Among those attending secondary schools in the population 14-15 years, the disadvantaged groups tend to have a less proportionate presence - with the exception of OBCs.

²² Table 2.1, WB report, pg 13-14, source NSSO 61th round



As can be observed from chart 7 (using NSSO 64th round data), only OBC figures for GAR and NAR are somewhat close to the national average of 70.2% GAR and 41% NAR. All other disadvantaged groups are quite at a distance from the national average. The GAR and NAR for upper caste Hindus are far higher than the national GAR and NAR. On closer examination of NSSO data, it is revealed that across all categories, girls are underrepresented as compared to boys; this underrepresentation is highest in case of ST girls in the rural sector.

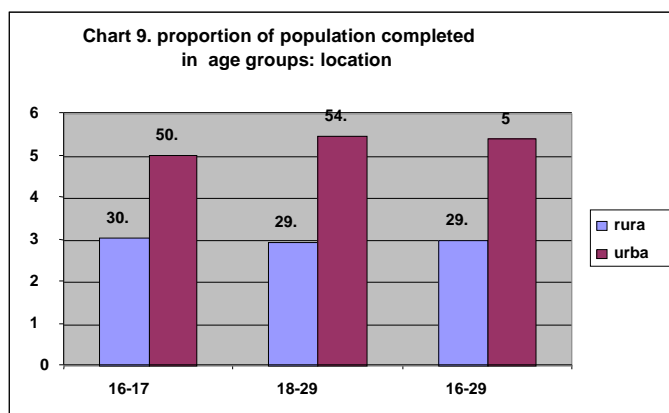
Again, as in the case of inequity in attendance among MPCE quintiles, lower presence of disadvantaged groups in SE may be reflective of the much lower elementary education completion rates of disadvantaged groups, though there are other factors influencing the demand.

Completion of secondary schooling in the population 16-29 years

Completion may be defined differently to suit the purpose of capturing best the outcome of current levels of participation, as well as to show a historical trend. For example, since the official age range of secondary classes (IX-Xth) is 14-15, the completion may be measured at 16-17 age range as a proportion of population of that age range. NSSO education survey focuses on the 5-29 age range, to capture the population engaged in all levels of education. If we define completion rate as the proportion of population completing SE in the age range 16-29, or 18-29, it will carry effects of lower participation trend in preceding years, which is particularly true in the case of at least some sections of society.

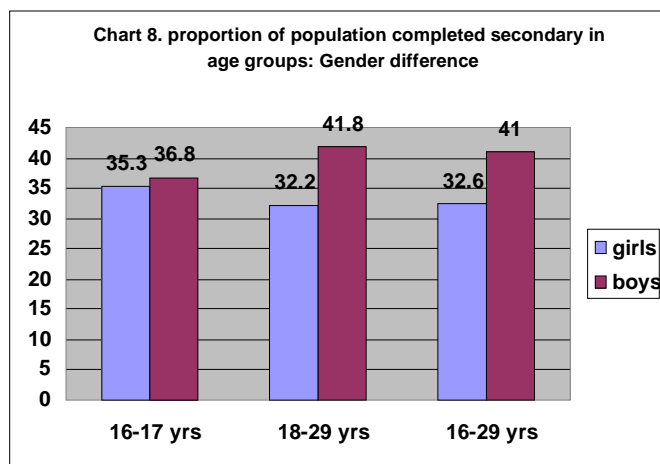
The following charts (no. 8 to 11)²³ presents the completion scenario for 16-17, 18-29 and 16-29 age range. It allows us a glimpse into whether the recent trends in participation (attendance) are leading to completion of SE. As in the case of girls' completion, the younger age group shows improvement over older age groups; and in the official age range for completion, girls are almost at par with boys – 35.3% and 36.8% of their population respectively. This validates the panel data regarding the overall trend post 2000 of increased demand for SE coming primarily from rural households and girls. In the upper age range, there is less gender equity. Coupled with recent increase in enrollment of girls across all segments, it shows high possibility of completion for girls who have been able to enter into the secondary schooling system (see chart 4 for NAR figure for girls and boys).

In case of rural-urban differential, one can observe that the improvement in the younger age group is not very high (See Chart 9). However, the actual rural completion must be better than the picture emerging here if we consider the huge over-age enrollment in the rural sector compared to the urban sector who are likely to complete secondary education at a higher age. These students are still enrolled 17 + age. In any case, considering the importance of rural sector, a 20 percentage point gap in completion from their urban counterpart is important to note.



Source: NSSO 64th round

From chart 10, it emerges that the rates of completion are lower among the disadvantaged. General upper caste Hindus have the highest rates of completion of SE in all age-groups. The difference in completion is stark across religious groups and across age group in all age ranges. Figures for Muslims are similar to those for SCs. STs are the most disadvantaged



when it comes to completion of SE. These figures however should be read in conjunction with NAR. A quick glimpse tells us that inequities seen in preceding years continue to have an impact.

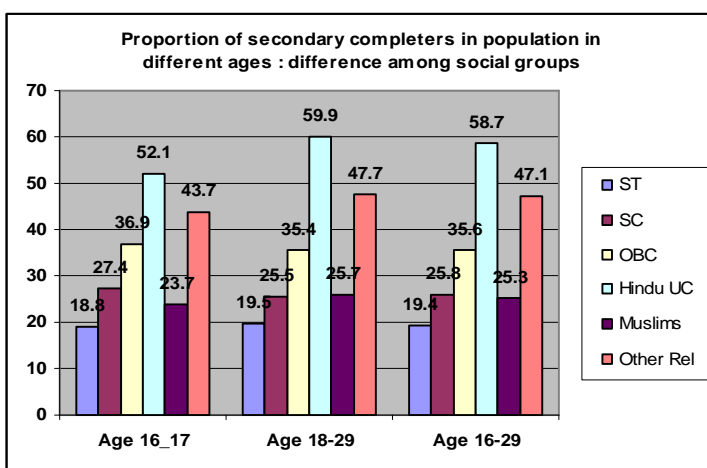
²³ Deepa Shankar's estimation from NSS 64th round data (Presentation)

The decline in the Muslim community in the age group 16-17 years in contrast to the 16-19 years category reflects what the Sachar Committee report highlights regarding the widening disparities between Muslims and 'all others' over the last four decades vis-a-vis completion of matriculation. In the case of upper-caste children it reflects the under performance and the possibility that economic resources might be available to repeat class ten.

Difference between the two extreme MPCE classes is also very large in all three age groups (See Chart 11). In the age category 16-29 years, only 18.2 % of persons in MPCE first quintile have completed secondary education; the corresponding figure for MPCE quintile 5 is 64.1%. However, in the younger age group of 16-17 years, 23.4% completed secondary education which is an improvement of 6 percentage points. It may be said that in terms of completion, the gap between various income classes is slightly narrowed, though there is a long way is to go.

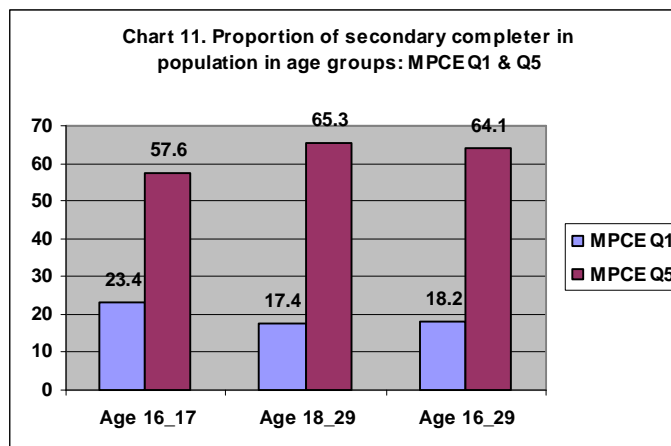
Drop-Outs

Like completion, drop-out rates are also calculated using various methods. SES 07-08



estimates that the drop-out rates for SC and ST students are higher than the average national drop-out rate. The difference in drop-out rate between SC/ST and over all was to the tune of around 10% according to the SES 07-08. The time series data from various years' SES since 1990 shows that the drop-out rate among SCs / STs has seen a steady and significant

reduction in the primary and upper-primary classes, whereas it has remained steady in the secondary classes. In some years between 1990 - 07, specifically 1998-99 and 2001-02, an increase was observed in the drop-out rate of SC and ST students in secondary classes. This may be attributed to an increase in enrollment, which may be due to the



effectiveness of various programmes of DPEP/SSA which specially targeted these groups. It could be the case that student from these groups having completed upper primary enrolled in larger numbers in secondary school, but subsequently dropped out, because they could not cope. It may be concluded that the previous interventions proved somewhat effective from the lower drop out rates of SC/ST population in primary and upper primary classes. The difference between the drop out rate of SC/ST population at elementary levels and secondary level is of the range 10% to 16%.²⁴

An unpublished paper by Deepa Shankar indicates an estimation of the scenario of drop outs using data from NSSO 64th round survey.²⁵ The table is reproduced in the appendix (table no A1 and A2). It locates the children in age group of 14-15 and 16-17 in the context of schooling, being out of enrollment, current attendance situation and dropping out. Some interesting points that emerge are: most of the secondary age range children (14-15) who drop out do so before completing class 8. This is true for all social groups and all income classes. However, dropping out after completion of class 8 is higher among disadvantaged social groups compared to Hindu upper castes. In MPCE quintiles too, similar drop out patterns are observable. Interestingly, dropping out after completion of elementary schooling among girls of 14-15 years age is slightly higher than boys. However, all these results are to be seen in the light of age distribution in various levels of education.

Reasons for dropping out

Current NSSO data reflects the major reason for dropping out as detailed in Table T1.²⁶

These are - financial constraints, child not interested in studies, unable to cope, completed desired level, parent not interested. These reasons are cited by households having children between 5-29 years who were ever enrolled in any formal education. Therefore the proportions reported here are not applicable to the secondary age groups. However, the reasons cited here are still

T1	Major reasons provided for dropping out by 5-29 years old	% of reporting
1	Financial constraints	21.4
2	Child not interested in studies	20
3	Unable to cope	10.3
4	Completed desired level	10
5	Parents not interested	9

indicative of the situation in SE, considering that only a small percentage discontinue at an age lower than 14 years. Discontinuation is observed to be very largely post secondary age groups, i.e. 18+. Some responses that show higher frequency - like leaving education for work - may be the result of responses of the older age group. As a result, many of the

²⁴ SES, various years

²⁵ Estimation provided in the forth coming document Status of Secondary Education Participation in India: An Analysis of NSSO 64th Round Data by Deepa Shankar, South Asia Education, The World Bank 2010, pp 15 & 16.

²⁶ NSSO 64th round, P 85, statement 5.8

reasons mentioned here are applicable to the secondary age and above. Broadly, one can assume the first four major reasons would stand out in an even more pronounced way, if we disaggregate the citing of reasons for discontinuation at the level of secondary age range. The specifics of discontinuation of education can be observed from the age-specific usual activity reported for various social groups, in the next section.

Financial constraint as reason for discontinuation would mean incidence of huge cost burden, especially in the states where the presence of private aided and private unaided schools is high. It is not only enough to have a school within reach but to have one that is affordable. The second two major reasons pertain to experience of schooling, indicating that quality of secondary school environment and level of preparedness in terms of quality at the elementary level influence continuation at the next level. The last two may have a reference to consideration of opportunity cost in economic terms or cultural preferences. There is a large proportion of both rural and urban girls citing these two reasons compared with a marginal proportion of boys reporting these as factors in their drop-out. It implies that perceived gain from continuation of education is low for girls.

II. Supply Availability

Elementary pass and secondary enrolment (Table from SES: various years) TABLE 2

Total numbers	Class 8 th enrolment	Class 9 th enrolment	Middle schools	Secondary schools
07-08	17,495,128	14,914,829	3,25,174	1,13,824
06-07	16,622,436	13,439,040	3,05,584	1,12,165
05-06	15,766,769	13,185,851	2,88,493	1,06,024
<i>*SES, Various years</i>				

In the present scenario, each secondary school caters to around 3 feeder middle schools, with considerable state level variation as well as rural/ urban variation. From the above table, the enrolment has increased in 8th standard at a steady rate of 5.5%, the number of middle schools also grew steadily near 6% annually, whereas the growth in enrolment in 07-08 is large (11%), yet the increase in number of secondary schools is 1.5%. Nearly 10-15% of students enrolled in class 8 class from the previous year didn't enroll in class 9. There may be saturation in terms of available capacity in secondary schools at least in some states. Availability from the perspective of population is also determined by the distance, cost and other considerations. Cost will certainly be impacted by school management type, i.e. a school may be available in the locality, but being private it may not be available for many, or else, the admission criteria prevailing in the school in the vicinity may pose a bar to entry to secondary level. One is then left to choose a far away government school, travel to which might prove to be an obstruction for a girl child.

Various other studies show that distance to school is an important factor. The data reported from NSSO education survey 07-08 shows that rural areas have much more access

The proportion of households more than 3 km distance from school for primary, middle school and secondary level class for each social group (TABLE 3)						
	distance of school	% of households in different social group				
		ST	SC	OBC	Other s	all
primary	3 – 5km	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2
	More than 5km	0.8	0	0	0.1	0.1
Middle school	3 – 5km	9.5	5.6	5.5	5	5.8
	More than 5km	8.1	2.2	2.6	2.3	3.1
secondary	3 – 5km	17.5	15.3	17	13.3	15.8
	More than 5km .	29.8	14.9	17.5	12.4	17.1

disadvantage due to distance from school than urban areas. The following table prepared from NSSO 64 report gives us a picture of rural situation in terms of secondary school provision at accessible distance.

There is a difference in terms of availability of schooling facilities among various social groups. According to the NSSO 64 report, non-availability in the vicinity of residence is greater in the context of many marginal groups. This disadvantage is more pronounced in upper school levels than in primary (See Table 3). At secondary level, the departure from the declared goal of providing a school within 5 kilometers of every household is high enough for all rural households. The departure is most in the case of STs: nearly 30% of ST households in rural areas do not have a secondary school within 5 kms of their residence. The second group reporting greater distance is OBC, followed by SC; the category of 'other groups' shows least distance to schooling facility. The trend is same in urban areas too, but the magnitude is ascribable to 3-5 km range.

In terms of state variation on this aspect, we see that Bihar, Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, M.P, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Rajasthan, UP are the states which stand out in terms of percentage of children of secondary school going age reporting not having a secondary school within 5 km. If we were to enumerate the states where more than 10% of school age children report a similar difficulty, many more major states will come under this deviation from the norm. In all such states, it is the rural segment that reports high incidence of such deviation. The urban areas in most states are far better on this count and in most cases have schools within 2 km. However in Bihar, Chattisgarh, Kerala, MP, Jharkhand and Jammu & Kashmir and Arunachal, a larger share of urban population too reports schools at a distance between 3-5 km.

School management

In terms of school management and financing in SE, there are three broad categories – Government or local body run schools, private aided schools and private unaided schools. Aided schools are supported by government grants to a varied extent according to the prevailing practice/policy in different states, but in most of them, the staff salary is covered by government grant-in-aid. In these schools, usually the government has substantial control over school management, including determining the fee payable by the students. In some states, such aided schools are the most common type of schools available. For example, in West Bengal, according to the school census, private unaided and government schools are present only in negligible number in comparison with private aided schools. From the consumers' point of view then, there is little difference between government and aided schools, because expenditure in both is similar. This phenomena gets reflected in the fact that almost all households in WB in NSSO 64th round reported sending their children to government schools in secondary classes, while in reality there are only few government schools. Thus the enrollment distribution along school type in NSSO is inflated towards showing higher government enrollment though actual enrollment in aided schools should be more. In states like Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, U.P., a large presence of private unaided is

observed, while Bihar, Jharkhand, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh have a well developed large government school system.

Recent official statistics of school type distribution all over India show a large presence of private aided and un-aided schools in secondary and H.SE schooling (see Table 4). This is distinct from the trend in primary and middle schools. From the time series data provided by the SES, we can say that there is a high growth of private un-aided schools in recent years, which is likely to continue. In fact a closer look at the time series reveals that most of the expansion in recent years is coming from the expansion in the private segment, while the number of government schools has remained static. Though SES does not provide a rural-urban break-up of distribution of these schools from the enrollment data of NSSO 64th round, we can say that a substantial part of this expansion is in urban areas, as the private unaided schools' share of enrollment in urban areas is much higher than their rural counterparts. The World Bank Report comments that 72% of increase in urban IX-Xth class enrollment between 1993-2002 was provided through un-aided private schooling.²⁷

TABLE 4					
Total number of schools in different levels and distribution of schools by management type* in 07-08					
Type of school	Total numbers	Govt/local bodies	Private aided	Private un-aided	total
Primary	7,87,827	86.73	5.76	7.51	100
Middle	3,25,174	73.6	9.30	17.10	100
Secondary	1,13,824	39.3	26.1	34.6	100
HS	59,166	35.3	30.3	34.4	100
* Data from SES 07 – 08					

The attendance figure obtained from the NSSO report 07-08 (see table No.5) also shows that, in rural areas too, the presence of private un-aided schools is not negligible, as we see that their share of rural enrollment is

comparable with private aided schools' share, and together these two types of private schools cater to nearly 33% of all attending students.

²⁷ (WBR pg no. 12)

TABLE 5									
Type of institution in secondary attendance*									
Type of institution	Rural			Urban			Rural+Urban		
	Female	Male	Total	Femal	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Govt.	62.3	62.4	62.4	46.2	39.6	42.6	56.8	55.6	56.1
Local body	3.8	3.5	3.6	2.9	2.4	2.6	3.5	3.2	3.3
Private aided	18.9	18.8	18.8	25.8	27.9	27	21.3	21.5	21.4
Total *	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
*NSSO 64 th round; *incl. n.r. & 'not known' case									

Given the growing importance of private schools, it should also be noted that they still cater to a smaller fraction of secondary students, compared to the total number of such schools. 60% of the country's total secondary enrollment is still absorbed by government schools. In rural areas these schools provide for nearly 65% of the total enrollment in IX-Xth grades. In urban areas too, government schools take in a major chunk of enrollment (44%). In fact, the share of enrollment in government schools is greater than their share in total number of schools, which is indicative of the pressure on the government system. It may also be the case that government schools are larger in size and do accommodate larger number of students. The strategy of the government to deal with increased numbers is to introduce double shift, in order to make more efficient use of existing infrastructure and resources, in an attempt to make optimal use of resources. However, to achieve universalisation in the future, expansion of government infrastructure is necessary.

Two more important observations regarding the privately managed schools may be noted. First, that private aided schools' enrollment share is relatively less skewed towards urban areas, compared to private un-aided schools. This means greater availability of such schools, that cater to needs of rural households. Secondly, in the rural share of their enrollment, gender gap is not observed in any of the school types. In contrast urban private un-aided schools show a much more skewed distribution of share of girls' and boys' enrollment in favour of boys, where government schooling emerges as catering to relatively more urban girls. However, this might not only be indicative of cost based decisions taken by families (higher cost of private schooling), but also other conditions like the preference for 'girls only' schools may influence decisions regarding choice of school.

Another important consideration about private schooling is the affiliation to a Board. Only 7000 private schools are affiliated to the CBSE, which is the biggest central Board.²⁸ Other central Boards like ICSE have much smaller numbers affiliated to them. The majority of

²⁸ Discussion with CBSE board Chairperson Vineet Joshi, November 2010.

private schools are affiliated to various state Boards, which indicate that at least in terms of curriculum equivalence government and private un-aided schools are expected to transact the same content. Along with the fact of often observed poorer service condition/salary for teachers in such schools, there may be supply constraint to recruitment of qualified teachers in these schools.

TABLE 6									
Average expenditure on different levels of education*									
level of edu.	Rural			Urban			Rural+Urban		
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
Primary	741	897	826	3458	3764	3626	1308	1501	1413
Middle	1289	1434	1370	3893	4587	4264	1959	2193	2088
Sec./HS	2803	3166	3019	6721	7615	7212	4140	4503	4351
*NSS 64th round									

In the context of the important role the private sector is to play in the future, the cost implications across different types of schooling is important in understanding school choice, especially for people from poorer consumption classes. We shall examine

the cost aspect next.

Cost of secondary education

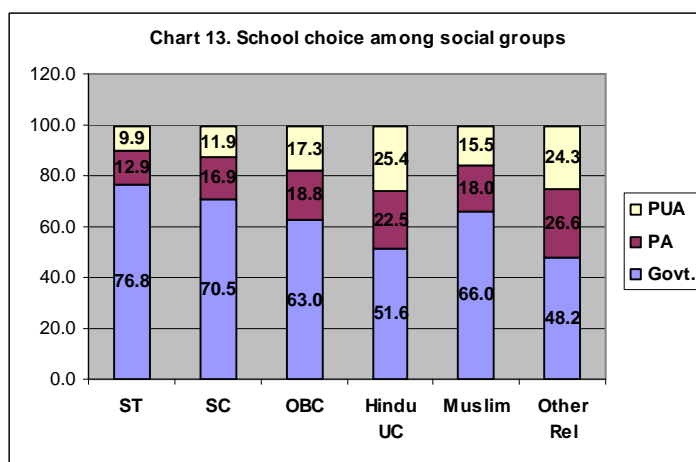
The cost of secondary education in private aided schools in rural areas is closer to that of government schools than it is to private unaided schools. The latter are the most expensive schools. In the case of private aided schools, part of the cost incurred reported in the NSSO survey may be due to the cost incurred to arrange private coaching, which is incurred by those who

TABLE 7					
Average annual expenditure in Rs. Per secondary student by type of school management					
	Type of institution				
	Govt.	Local body	Private aided	Private un-aided	All
Rural	2345	1663	3323	5836	3019
urban	4000	4037	7294	12514	7212
All-India	2745	2258	4911	8931	4351
*NSS 64th round					

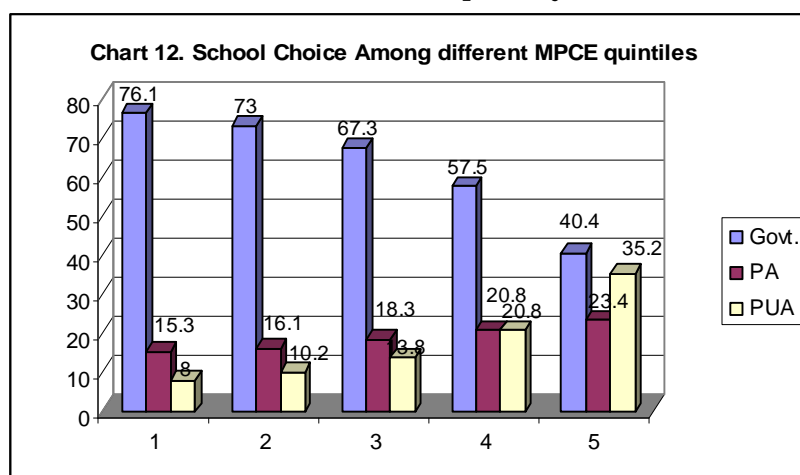
could afford it. So, the essential school related cost should be lower than the average cost as it appears now. The monthly average cost of secondary schooling comes close to Rs. 363; Rs. 601 in urban areas and in rural areas, Rs. 252.

Rural-urban difference in average schooling cost is strikingly high, which is possibly an outcome of the prevailing private schooling in urban areas, and other differences between rural and urban cost of living. The government schools are also costlier in urban than in rural areas. The reported household expenditure for girls is less than that of the boys,

which might reflect biased resource allocation in keeping with the usual differential allocation of resources within the household. However, there may be other effects as there might be greater availability of girls' schools in the government sector etc.



Two important points emerge here. The monthly average cost of secondary schooling is much higher than the middle school expenditure in rural as well as urban areas. (See Chart 12) Though we do not have exact figures for year 07-08, three years ago in 2004-05, it was observed that 51% of STs fall under Rs 410 per month per capita consumption and 40% of SCs are under this consumption bracket in rural areas. In urban areas, a similar fraction of SC/ST's are under Rs 675 per month. For an average family size of 6 with three children, the cost burden on the household is high enough to bar entry at least for the poorest consumption class. The increase in cost from middle to secondary school, which is almost two fold in rural and urban areas, alone may prove to be prohibitive for poorer sections to continue with secondary education for their children. At the level of household decision making, one is likely to consider the cost of schooling to be much higher when the adolescent potentially could be gainfully employed or could be absorbed by unpaid family labour in agriculture or other work. Our economic profile section observes that the usual activity status of 15-19 age group among various disadvantaged social groups has a substantial participation in the labour force, specially in low-yielding jobs.



The second point that emerges is the importance of government schools for weaker sections of society. The picture emerging from chart 12 and 13 is not surprising at all.²⁹

²⁹ Status of Secondary Education Participation: by Deepa Shankar, Pg 37

The composition of private aided schools appears to be more diverse in terms of students coming from all MPCE classes, while there is a large switch over from government to private un-aided as one moves beyond the third expenditure quintile and this sharply rises in case of the fifth. It also emerges from chart 12 that both types of private schools taken together absorb nearly fifty percent of secondary students from Hindu upper caste and 'other religious groups', whereas a comparatively larger proportion of students from disadvantaged communities are in government schools. Though there are differences among these communities in terms of their school choice, their presence in costly private un-aided schools is much less. One can well estimate that especially the poorer sections of these groups have no other access to SE except through government schools. It is equally applicable to large rural populations where the overall enrollment is also largely tilted towards government schools.

Looking at the cost component in secondary schooling shows a substantial increase from upper primary on many items (Table 8). Fee increase and increased cost of books & stationary involves doubled costs. Transport cost too increases largely. It is observed that the subsidy provided for transport is utilized increasingly at higher levels of schooling. The provision of free transport to school in Kerala has paid rich dividends. The largest increase over upper primary cost is in private coaching, which comes close to the average amount paid for tuition fees. Keeping in mind the general education profile of social groups from various disadvantaged backgrounds, it is likely that many of the students from this section are first generation in secondary

TABLE 8				
All-India Average annual expenditure* (Rs.) per student of age 5-29 years by				
Item	General			
	Pri	Middle	Sec./ HC	Above HC
Tuition fee	430	519	1,053	2,438
Exam. Fee, Other fees & payments	193	246	573	1,362
Books	285	500	954	1,458
	206	295	398	158
	127	148	297	905
Total	1,413	2,088	4,351	7,355
*NSSO 64 th round				

schooling and are likely to need additional support to supplement the school education, given the high content level, poor pedagogy and conventional assessment approach prevailing in the school system. Most schools are not equipped or oriented to provide individual care and feedback to the students. It is possible that even poorer classes will overstretch their capacity to finance children's education in the hope of strengthening for the quality of their learning.

III. Indicators of Quality

In quantitative assessments, the pupil teacher ratio, proportion of female teachers, existence of monitoring tools and variation across secondary boards are viewed as

indicators of quality. In this section we shall look at some of these more closely. However, Quality cannot wholly be ascertained by the macro quantitative indicators - particularly the aspects of quality related to equity and access. For example, as we have noted previously, the cause of discontinuation can also be partly due to the school environment which pushes out at least some students.

Pupil Teacher Ratio

The official figures show a regular growth in the all-India total number of total teachers teaching in secondary classes. The time trend in recent years obtained from SES however reports a negative growth in the total teacher strength in H.SE classes in the year 07-08. The Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) varied around 32 between 04-05 and in 07-08 it was 33. In the secondary classes, PTR remained steady despite higher enrollment in those classes. In

TABLE 9				
		PTR	total teachers	Growth in total teachers
Sec	04 – 05	32	1,082,878	
	05 – 06	32	1,122,876	Positive
	06 – 07	31	1,173,030	Positive
	07 – 08	33	1,175,058	Positive
HS	04 – 05	33	1,000,112	
	05 – 06	34	1,031,779	Positive
	06 – 07	34	1,074,930	Positive
	07 – 08	37	951,817	negative
<i>SES, various years</i>				

the H.SE classes, PTR is slightly higher than the secondary level, and in the year 07-08, it rose to 37 from the previous 34. The major reason for this should be the negative growth reported in the teacher strength at H.SE level (Table 9).

TABLE 10		
States with Higher PTR- Above National Average		
States/UTs	PTR	GER 07-08
Himachal Pradesh	34	97
Tamil Nadu	40	91
Uttar Pradesh	67	64
Andhra Pradesh	33	61
Madhya Pradesh	34	60
Meghalaya	34	51
West Bengal	60	48
Jharkhand	60	30
Bihar	52	28
INDIA	33	58
<i>SES, various years</i>		

However, there is a wide variation at the state level in the PTR. Considering the IX-Xth classes, it shows a range from a lowest of 8 students per teacher in Sikkim to as high as 67 student per teacher in UP. The states where PTR was higher than 33 in 07-08 are Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar. It is important to observe that states like Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have a GER much above national average, while some of the states with poorest PTR have very low GER too. These are West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Bihar (See Table 10). We may conclude that at least

these states need special attention in order to meet the challenge should there be any substantial growth in enrollment following RMSA intervention.

Karnataka, Haryana, Tripura, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Kerala, Nagaland, Uttarakhand, Orissa and Rajasthan are some of the major states with better PTR. Some of the states which do have less than 30 PTR like Kerala, Uttarakhand or Karnataka have a higher than average GER. They are still in a better situation in handling increase in enrollment, for example, Kerala, which is close to saturation in terms of GER, can easily accommodate the increase. Not all states in the North-east that figure in the list of states with small PTR, have a good GER. For instance Nagaland's GER is 29, way below the national average, same is the case for Assam. Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim are better equipped in this regard. On the other hand, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Gujarat have close to average PTR (31-32), but all of them with the exception of Maharashtra have lower GER than the national average.

Another fact that needs to be taken into account is that the above-listed states with high PTR figures are states where either ST or SC or OBCs populations are present in greater concentration than their national population. Except for West Bengal and Himachal Pradesh, the presence of other than ST/SC/OBC category in the population is much less in all other states listed in the table above. Among the states with a PTR close to the national average, half of them have greater concentration of 'other' than SC/ST category. If we incorporate OBC category, whose secondary participation is better than SC/STs, then these states accounts for three fourth of the states with better PTR. While we have no way of measuring the PTR for students from disadvantaged groups, we can take this as indicative of the situation. It is possible that higher and prolonged participation from 'other' category groups yielded better resource allocation at the state level leading to improved quality condition. While we see reduced participation from the disadvantaged groups in those states where PTR situation is already precarious, the possibility of a positive and good quality schooling experience for them with improved PTR can pull them into SE.

Female teachers

The presence of female teachers in the school system is another area which needs attention. In secondary classes, both in HS and IX-Xth, the presence of female teachers is less than elementary levels.³⁰ The time trend in recent years obtained from SES shows after the growth of female presence in secondary teaching during 2001-2005, it remained largely stable around 61-62 female teachers per hundred male teachers. However there is a

³⁰ SES 07-08 shows that in middle school, there are 67 female teacher to 100 male teachers and the time trend given in SES 04-05, it is observed that there was a great increase in female teachers in SE/HSE level during 01-05, while a slight drop is recorded in the proportion of female teachers at elementary level during the same time.

TABLE 11			
		Female /100 male	Growth in no of female teachers
Sec	04 – 05	62	
	05 – 06	61	Positive
	06 – 07	63	Positive
	07 – 08	61	negative
HS	04 – 05	63	
	05 – 06	62	Positive
	06 – 07	61	Positive
	07 – 08	58	negative
<i>Source: SES, various years</i>			

negative growth in total number of female teachers in both HS and secondary classes in the year 07-08, while total number of male teachers in IX-Xth

increased in the same year (Table 11). At the state level, again we see a great variation. In general, most of the major states have more male teachers than females, the only exceptions being Kerala (238), Tamil Nadu (196) and Punjab (130), where female teachers outnumber male teacher. Some of the major states having less than 30 female teachers per 100 males are West Bengal, Tripura, Assam, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Orissa, while Bihar (18) and Uttar Pradesh (23) are poorest on this count.

The implication of the markedly reduced presence of female teachers is important not only for the participation of girls within secondary education but also for the creation of the school system and classroom

environment as a gendered space. It has implications for the state education system, which at present is dominated by male teachers who form the critical mass of those in the network of the teaching community and education administration. Teachers' unions, peer networks and professional grouping/associations are primarily managed by male members. Development of leadership, participation of female teachers in these arenas can lead to a different kind of sensitization of the system. Issues related to female teachers could be different from those prioritized by a predominately male leadership. Also form and nature of leadership might emerge differently with women in the forefront of decision making. Handling of issues of gender-based discrimination in the class room might also be impacted by their presence.

Trained teachers

TABLE 12		
		% of trained teachers
SEC	04 – 05	89
	05 – 06	89
	06 – 07	89
	07 – 08	89
HS	04 – 05	90
	05 – 06	90
	06 – 07	90
	07 – 08	93

There are wide variations in qualifications required for secondary teaching across states, but broadly it is a Bachelor's degree in education along with graduation in a subject. However, in many states, it is not an entry level criterion: teachers can join and clear B.Ed. degree at some point in their career. There is some common in-service training, including language trainings. But

Table 13	
West Bengal	80
Madhya Pradesh	75
Chhattisgarh	73
J&K	64
Tripura	60
Sikkim	52
Manipur	42
Mizoram	41
Arunachal Pradesh	41
Meghalaya	36
Assam	29
Nagaland	25

here again, in-service training and availability varies widely across states. Time trend of proportion of trained teachers in the secondary classes shows that in recent years the proportion of trained teachers has remained stagnant at 89% in the secondary and around 90% in the HS level (Table 12). At the HS, a slight growth is seen in 07-08. While overall this is a positive scenario, there is scope for improvement, considering that there are some states recording large deficits in teacher training. State level data for trained teachers available from SES records that the majority of the major states have more than 95% trained teachers. Rajasthan, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh are the four major and populous states where trained teachers are way below all-India average with 70-80% trained teachers. All eight states from North-East India have below 60% trained teachers, among which Meghalaya (36), Assam (29) and Nagaland (25) are at the bottom of the list (See Table 13). A look at distribution of attendance at state level shows that many of the states in the north east depend heavily on private aided or unaided schools. For example, in Nagaland enrollment scenario government schools are conspicuously absent. The infrastructure for teacher training too varies across states and is often inadequate. For instance in the North East, there is a dearth of teacher training institutions. At the same time the data presented in the SES proves to be inadequate in terms of representing the actual situation regarding the quality of teacher training relevant to secondary education.

This should constitute an area of concern for the RMSA to focus on. Another important point to note here is that whatever be the education situation, drop out rates and non-participation prevailing in different states, barring some states, most others have many trained teachers already placed in the system. While many other factors may influence the ultimate outcome of schooling, it must be noted that despite having 95% of trained

teachers, and low PTR in many states, this has no significant impact on the drop out or completion rates. This demands reflection on the extant quality and curricula of teacher training courses, to understand whether the content of teacher training is updated and oriented to take up the challenge of univerzalization of SE.

Monitoring system

The schools in India are usually governed by various state education administration. School inspection is the usual provision for supervision. The state administration usually keep control over administrative information, but for SE there is no centralized and accessible database as compared to that available for the elementary level (DISE).

Fortunately, recent initiatives in creating a similar database for the secondary level attempt to enable monitoring as well as to generate a relevant database for long-term trend observation. This should address the present paucity of centralized data. The dataset can also be innovatively used to map subject choice, layered with gender and economic profiles of students. ICT initiatives can be integrated in the process. So far no such thought is reflected in the documents of RMSA, neither from the SEMIES Apex agency (i.e. NUEPA). Can these feed into ongoing assessment practices? And thus ultimately break free from the routinized mode of data collection and inspection to a more participatory, transparent mode where supervision and intervention at school administration and district level will be strengthened in the ongoing process.

Standardization of Curriculum and Achievements:

As many as 39 Boards are in operation in the country as certifying authorities for Secondary and HSE, with some Boards overlapping between both levels. These boards vary in terms of options on offer for students, examination patterns, and pass rates. Since completion would also mean completion with a successful graduation after the Board examination, not only do the Boards effect the quality of classroom transaction and text books offered (academic achievement), but also in determining the completion rate. Hence it is important to have a look at the pass rate, which is available from the SES, furnished by the administration. (However this doesn't provide a comprehensive understanding about learning levels.) We find a wide range in the pass rate of these Boards, which are mostly specific to states. The national completion rate of disadvantaged groups in particular - such as SC/STs' - is affected by this large variation.

More importantly, the wide difference in pass rate, and in the result (grade achieved) in the certificate is likely to have an impact on the future of students enrolled in different Boards. The wide range of pass percentage alone puts students from different states at a relative disadvantage when it comes to a national-level job market, which is likely to have a long-term impact in education-seeking behaviour at the secondary level. Secondly, it is likely

that a preference for central Boards will emerge as a source of competition, which will have some impact accentuating cost differentials, with a tendency to move to central board affiliated private schools.

With the rational of developing the quality of the labour market as well as standardization too, it is desirable that the various Boards and curricula be comparable, with some basic equivalence, while leaving space for context specific learning. We shall discuss this further as part of our section on curriculum.

Outcome: Results in 10th standard board examination for some disadvantaged social groups

From SES data, we are provided information on completion of secondary stage of education for broad social groups. However, we cannot ascertain from SES the Board examination for every social group we discussed earlier. Below are listed pass rates for SC and ST learners. Table 14 and 15 compare children from these two communities with the overall figures in terms of enrollment, appearance in Board exam in the end of class X and exam pass rates.

Table14						
	Class X-th enrolment			Appeared Class X-th Board Exam		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
all category	7,508,365	5,795,659	13,361,787	8,221,187	6,300,457	14,521,644
SC	1,087,024	811,823	1,898,847	1,276,147	928,153	2,204,300
SC as % to total	14.48%	14.01%	14.21%	15.52%	14.73%	15.18%
ST	470,391	322,844	793,235	535,830	381,314	917,144
ST as % of total	6.26%	5.57%	5.94%	6.52%	6.05%	6.32%
Source: SES 07-08						

Table 15: 10th board examination Result Taking all Boards together						
	Boys %age	Girls Pass %age	Total Pass %age	As % of total boys passed	As % of total girls passed	As % of total passed
ALL Students	66.02	71.34	68.33	100%	100%	100%
SC students	55.95	62.27	58.61	13.15%	12.86%	13.02%
ST students	59.60	59.59	59.60	5.88%	5.06%	5.51%
Source: SES 07-08						

We have observed earlier that Secondary enrolment for both SCs and STs is less than their population share. Their respective shares in 10th standard enrollment are also less than their share in the population. The number that appear for Board examinations (according to SES 2007-08), is slightly inflated because of the re-appearing students among them, which reflects relatively lower pass rate in the previous as is the case in current year. We can observe that in the case of SC students, we see that of the total enrolled, they constituted approximately 14% while 15% appeared for their board exam and only 13% of them cleared it. Thus the SC share in total students who cleared the examination is less than their share in total appearing. Another point to note is that the higher pass rate of girls in all categories taken together is a pattern present among SCs too. Similar observation can be made for ST students either.

The results vary widely in terms of pass percentages across different states, as the examinations are conducted under various state Boards. There are 30 boards for secondary examinations (class X) for regular students and three Boards for open schools. Even a cursory glance at pass rates in the last few years presented in various SES reveals that the pass rates from SC and ST often lag behind the overall pass rate. However, in some cases they come up with equal pass rate.

If we look at SC and ST students' presence and success in central Boards (assuming uniformity without the effect of inter-Board variations), the first point to note is that the share of both SC and ST students in two central Boards (CBSE and ICSE) is negligible compared to their overall share in total examinees. Among these two Boards, more SC students are appearing under CBSE Board, almost double their share in ICSE examinees. STs are appearing equally in both the Boards.

The pass rate is high in ISCE across all communities, close to 99% in all cases. CBSE result reported in 07-08 SES shows nearly 75% pass rate among SCs and STs, while among all

categories taken together, the pass percentage was 93% in the same year (estimated from SES 07-08). Another interesting point to be noted is that SC boys passed much less even from the average: only 65% passed in the examination. The pass percentage of SC girls was close to the national average for CBSE board that year. However, it is difficult to conclude whether this is a trend, without looking at time series data. The previous year's SES reports a similar pass rate for SC boys and girls, in line with the overall pass rate. However, in that year, ST students who passed were considerably less. The same pattern was seen in 2006-07 too. However, the ICSE result in these three years shows consistency in similar pass rates in all social groups. There are wider variations when it comes to state Boards. The above discussion signifies the difficulty of using Board results as a measure of educational performance of any social group.

PART B: A GENERAL PROFILE OF VARIOUS SOCIO-RELIGIOUS GROUPS

The following section looks at the nature of ST, SC and Muslim children and youth at different levels of education. The effort is to locate the community accessing SE in order to understand the specific realities that mark or possibly influence their engagement with education.

SCHEDULED TRIBES

Scheduled Tribes constitute 8.2%³¹ of the Indian population with a higher rural presence of 10.4%. In urban areas they constitute 2.4% of the population. The overall sex ratio among STs is 978, significantly higher than the national average, with their urban sex ratio recorded at 951 and rural 974. Given that majority of STs are in rural areas, the overall sex-ratio tends to be significantly higher than the national average.

ST: Economic Activity Profile

Rural

The principle economic activity of Scheduled Tribes is agriculture, ³² 73% of all rural ST households are self employed in this sector or work as agricultural labour, as compared to all other social groups, who constitute close to 60% of rural households engaged in this sector.

The proportion of ST households depending on Self employment in agriculture (40%) is double that of SCs, higher than that of OBCs and the national average. In terms of holding size (both possession and cultivated) although within ST households land is more equitably distributed, with nearly 30% of households belonging to the upper three MPCE classes, there is still a crowding at the lowest levels of land possession. ³³ In fact inter-state variation in this regard is high, which possibly pulls the national distribution towards the upper quintiles. Self employment in non-agriculture is the least significant source of income (6.4%) for ST rural households.

For those who do not directly work on their own resources, agricultural labour is yet again the most important source of income within rural labour. Close to 34% households reported it as their main source of income. Only 11% of ST households are engaged in Non-agricultural rural labour.

³¹ Census of India 2001

³² Agriculture used here in a broad definition to include hunting, fishing, forestry, agriculture related services etc. The figures given in this section are drawn from NSSO 61st round.

³³ NSSO 61st round data on land holding size, and cultivated land size; statement 3.7 & 3.8

Urban:

Regular wage or salary employment provides the major source for nearly 42% urban ST households, which is close to the national average. Enterprise ownership is limited as self employment provides principal income to only 26% of urban ST households, the lowest among all groups. Nearly 17% urban ST households are dependent on casual labour, as their main source of income, which is almost 1.5 times the national average. Among the urban ST population, the proportion of residual households³⁴ is highest among all social groups (14.5%).

The nature of employment pattern of ST households is indicative of the deep relationship that the community has with primary activities. Survival and subsistence economies are where a significant section of the STs are engaged and as a result they are susceptible to conditions of poverty. This is evident from the large section of residual households in urban areas and the fact that, 37% of ST households are below Rs. 675 MPCE which forms the lowest 5 MPCE classes in urban areas.³⁵ 50% of ST rural households, whose monthly expenditure is less than Rs. 410 are within the lowest 5 rural MPCE classes. Considering that the bulk of the population resides in rural areas, one can see the extent of poverty and marginalisation of this social group. In fact poverty among lowest rungs of rural ST is higher than SCs.

It may also be observed that the ST population in urban areas is more evenly distributed in terms of MPCE classes than their SC counterparts, but in rural areas, it is not the case. This might be the impact of salaried employment in urban areas within particular sections, possibly the outcome of affirmative action by the State.

Understanding the Link between Work, Education and Livelihood

In light of the broad occupation distribution and activity status of STs, we shall now examine the nature of work, the division of labour among men and women and the impact of these economic realities on children and youth to understand three issues: a) The level of economic participation of the community, b) the economic participation of children (10-14 years) and young age population (15-19), and those who are in school in both these categories. This will enable us to identify the key areas of intervention for this age group, keeping in mind the specificities of the community.

Worker Population Ratio

³⁴ The term residual household is for those households that are principally living off pension, remittance or dole, with a small fraction of earning from some economic activity.

³⁵ NSSO 61, 2004-05, p. 27

ST population reports much higher participation in workforce than the national average of all communities both in rural areas and among aggregate population of rural and urban taken together.³⁶ The high WPR in STs is largely attributable to their high female WPR, which is way above the average figure for all communities both in rural and urban areas. 46.4% of all rural ST women and 24.5% of all urban ST women are part of the workforce. However, the point to note is that there are a large number of ST households 'without a single literate woman'. In rural areas, it is more than 60% and in urban areas 30%,³⁷ which implies that the bulk of the female participants in rural areas are devoid of educational endowment to exploit employment opportunity. It also points to the nature of economic participation, which is likely to be largely labour intensive with low economic returns. In the case of self employed women, the majority do not run non-agriculture enterprises, and the few who do, manage at a level where literacy is not a prime requirement. The nature and degree of disadvantage is indeed acute. In rural areas, girls reflect the general trend in education (i.e. girls attending less than boys). With the rural WPR higher than all categories together and above every individual social group, except perhaps for Christians (but then it is again not an exclusive category as many STs are Christian), young rural ST girls are absorbed mostly in agriculture as well as unpaid family labour.³⁸

The urban profile throws up some interesting aspects. One is that the urban ST girls' proportion in school (secondary) attendance (65%) is higher than ST boys (56%), and the sex ratio too is high as mentioned above. Also there is a low incidence of girls involved in unpaid family labour in urban areas. Among women, given their access to SE in urban areas, the employment of a large number of urban ST women may assumed to be resulting from other market activity including salaried jobs. (See Annexure A4, Table 1.2.)

Interestingly diploma graduates (male and female) in rural areas report higher employment than their SC counterparts. (See Annexure A4, Table 1.1.1) In fact those who have completed diplomas record higher employment than their ST graduate counterparts. This has implications for the direction of intervention in SE, which serves as entry point not only for higher studies but also for various and divergent technical education. From enrolment data, we have also noticed that many STs are coming back to further studies after completing a diploma course. Many of them are likely to be simultaneously employed.

Another important observation to be noted is that among rural females, the employment of graduates is high. Their WPR is more than all other social groups and in fact double their urban counterparts. Given the low proportion of salaried jobs in the rural domain (which is

³⁶ See Annexure A4, Table 1.1

³⁷ NSS 61st pg 29

³⁸ There will be considerable variation at the state level, reflecting variety in culture of particular identity groups which is worth exploring

much more pronounced in case of females than men), the employment of these women is an area to be explored. Self employment could be one category where they might be present with an under-utilisation of their educational qualifications. (See Annexure A4, Table 1.1.1)

The Backward Link

The following section looks at the nature of challenges that exist with elementary education in the case of ST children. The activity status of children in age group 10-14 years, through the reporting in Labour Force Participation (LFPR) (pp A 24-31, NSSO 516) gives us insights into what children who are not in school are engaged in. This enables us to simultaneously look at what boys and girls are doing outside the school system, despite SSA interventions. (See Annexure A4, Table 2)

Close to 12% of ST boys in rural areas are involved in the labour force, with a major chunk engaged in agricultural work at home (7%) or as casual labour (3.7%). In all likelihood boys are engaged in significant ways in supplementing work undertaken by their families. In the case of rural ST girls the situation is stark. Their participation is higher than that of boys in both agricultural labour (9%) and also in casual labour (5.2%). It is interesting to note that casual labour is also high for ST girls in urban areas. Under-age employment among rural ST girls population is nearly 4% more than that of boys. 3.8% of boys in urban areas are engaged in salaried employment. In fact, compared to other marginalised groups like SCs, the existence of child labour and disguised form of child labour is more prevalent among STs. Children involved in begging, sex work and those without the care and support of family are as high as 9 to 10 per cent among rural ST boys and girls. This number is less than half among urban ST boys and girls. Given that child labour is illegal, it is possible that all these boys and girls are exposed to unsecured and harsh conditions of work.

In addition to this, close to 12% rural ST girls reported primarily being involved in domestic and other unpaid tasks in rural areas. It is apparent that rural ST boys face the burden of poverty, but in the case of girls it is a double burden, engaged in domestic and survival chores like fuel/wood gathering, tending cattle from an early age. These figures confirm what has been noted consistently in rural and urban areas, that school attendance is higher among boys of this age range. The difference is mainly due to the fact that girls rather than boys of this age are away from school specifically for domestic work, including sibling care, or else because they are engaged more in casual labour both in rural as well as urban areas.

It is also important to note that in rural areas, the proportion of girls in domestic duties, sibling care etc. is equal to that of the SCs, whereas in urban areas, it is significantly lower

than their SC counterpart as well as rural ST girls. This could be due to a number of factors, including:

a) Urbanization is more mobility driven in case of STs, ³⁹ hence salaried class and classes with greater endowment would be more among urban STs; b) there is a large variation within STs, which may be analysed at state level – it is likely that in NE states urban female ST weighed down this proportion for the all-India level, because of greater access to state resources' of schooling, legacy of missionary activity, etc; c) significantly low literacy in rural areas than urban; d) distance playing a big factor in NE and other remote areas to keep rural girls away from school and to be tied to domestic work rather than working.

In the light of the above, if we assume a cultural similarity between rural and urban ST populations, the urban scenario points to the possibility of overcoming the gender gap even in rural areas. If the urban section have not shown a cultural opposition to send these girls to school, then lack of opportunity (*read provisioning*) and poverty are the key obstructions to the high percentage of rural ST girls being out of school.

There is a 23% gap that we see overall in terms of boys who are in the labour force and outside the school and close to 35% ST girls who are unable to reach the school, making it clear that in the case of ST girls and boys in rural areas, we are nowhere close to 'the last mile' in terms of elementary education.

The Forward Link

Close to 30% of rural boys and girls opt for self-employment and move out of school in the 15 to 19 age group and another 28% move into casual labour. It is this gap that will prove most formidable for universalising SE. The major number of ST boys (1/3 in urban and 1/2 in rural areas) who are not attending school are in casual labour. (See Annexure A4, Table 2.) This might be an outcome of poor accessibility to secondary schools in tribal areas, given that many live in remote, hilly or sparsely populated regions in addition to the demands of contributing to agricultural tasks.

With the onset of puberty, the ability to work might be viewed by the household as an important human resource that can contribute to enhancing productive capacity. Rural girls are only marginally less engaged in casual labour than boys. Like their younger counterparts, they too are involved in domestic work with the percentage increasing to 18.5% in this age group. However, we do find a significant difference between SC and ST girls in this age group: close to 40% of SC girls in this age group are involved in domestic work across rural and urban girls. This might partly be a function of the higher incidence of

³⁹ From the activity distribution, we may find evidence of that in urban STs salaried proportion (32%) in adult population (15+) is 6 times more than the rural STs (5.4%)

casual labour performed by ST girls, given the nature of livelihoods they are involved in. It also reflects distinct cultural differences regarding marriage, mobility of women and support structures that exists within tribal communities.

In urban areas, the total employed proportion (nearly 43%) among males is less than rural employed, and salaried jobs are availed by close to 11.2% boys. Given the high urban middle school attendance, and education status distribution of workers, many of these salaried employees are expected to be middle school graduates. An increase in schooling is likely to increase better work opportunity in this segment. The general trend of increased salaried employment in younger age cohort (15-24 compared to 15+all), along with increased schooling in recent years signifies the possible benefit of secondary and above education to be accrued to betterment of employability of this community.

Generally there is a scanty presence of urban 15-19 girls in the labour force, which is explainable by their high school attendance figure (nearly 63%), in sharp contrast with the same age group in rural areas, which reports very high labour participation. Girls do not record a high presence in salaried work in this age group. What the situation of the urban ST girls possibly point to is that where there is an availability of schools and the pressure to contribute to productive activities is less, cultural factors do not constrain or impact ST girls' participation.

SCHEDULED CASTES

The overall share of SCs in the Indian population is 16.2% (Census 2001). They record a higher rural presence: four fifth (79.8 per cent) live in rural areas and one-fifth (20.2 per cent) in urban areas. Sex ratios are much better among rural SCs, touching 936 which is marginally better than the national average of 933. However their urban sex ratio is low at 924 per thousand males. In terms of overall sex ratio which is 936, it is marginally better than the nation average.

Poverty

Labour is the predominant occupation of SC households: a significant section of the community is located in the lowest income category. In urban areas, 51% of SC households are below Rs. 675 MPCE, according to NSSO 61⁴⁰. 40% of SC rural households are within the lowest 5 rural MPCE classes, whose monthly expenditure is lower than Rs. 410.

The distribution of MPCE also throws some light on the nature of job participation, especially in urban areas. The high presence of urban households within the lowest 5 MPCE classes shows that even though regular wage/salaried work predominates among urban SC

⁴⁰ 2004-05 ,p. 27

households (similar to STs - see section above), many of these jobs are low income jobs. Therefore, poverty is a real condition in both urban and rural areas.

The Predominance of Casual Labour

The rural SC population is predominantly engaged in rural labour,⁴¹ with 56% located in this category. Within this, close to 40% works as agricultural labour, only 16% are involved in non-agricultural activities. In the domain of Self Employment only 20% of SC households are in agriculture, which effectively means that they work on their own land or leased in land. While comparing the NSSO 61st round data on land holding size, and cultivated land size, SC land holding size can be said to be usually smaller than all other social groups for most of their population, which renders self employment in agriculture to be a relatively less significant source of household income for majority of SCs. It reflects the fact that the bulk of SC households are involved in agricultural employment in land owned by others. For the rest of those who are self employed in non agricultural activity (including trade) are a mere 15.4% of the population. Self employment among SC's in rural India is generally low compared to OBCs and 'other' social groups.

In urban areas, regular wage or salary employment provides the major source of income for 41.1% of SC households, which is close to national average. Nearly 22% urban SC households are dependent on casual labour, as their main source of income, which is 10% above the national average, and highest compared to all other social groups. However, enterprise ownership is limited as self employment provides principal income to only 29.4% of households from this social group.

Clearly, skills required for such trade and casual work are not in the domain of formal skills, given the conditions of agricultural work. As a result, the jump in the drop out rate on the attainment of puberty- from 10% to 16% recorded between elementary and SE for SCs – validates the non-motivation for enrolment and continuation in higher education partly being driven by the lower order skills required for casual work.

Nature of Employment

The Sachar Commission's tables provide a non-disaggregated SC-ST job profile.⁴² Since ST urban population is a smaller fraction among total urban population, this non-disaggregated profile of SC-STs can be taken as a close proxy to SC employment profile.

Among urban SC/ST working population of prime working age (15-64 years) 40% is salaried and casual worker is 26.8%, which is well above the national average of 15%

⁴¹ From the reporting of source of more than 50 percent of Household income coming from a particular activity

⁴² See Sachar Committee report, p. 117

casual worker. Both in rural and urban areas, employer status, indicative of higher income among household enterprises, is much below the national average. Formal sector employment is slightly above average and only below Hindu upper caste in both rural and urban areas. This formal sector employment, the majority of which comes from government employment rather than private sector, may be a result of positive discrimination and it has the potential of encouraging access to formal education till higher levels. Many of the SC salaried workers are crowded at the lower ranks, indicating the low level of qualification of SC candidates. There would be a greater scope of better employment in the salaried segment if SE completion is increased.

If we take a look at the type of industry SCs are working in urban areas, we observe that their participation is widely dispersed. The few industries that show a concentration of SCs are –

Construction	Much Higher relative concentration than other communities	Low female participation among SC/ST
Retail trade	Much less relative concentration than other communities	Low female participation among SC/ST
Agriculture and related services	Higher relative concentration than other communities except OBC	Very high female participation among SC/ST
Land transport etc.	Higher relative concentration than other communities except OBC	Females virtually absent
Public admn & defense	Higher relative concentration than other communities except OBC	Females virtually absent
Pvt household with employed persons	Higher relative concentration than other communities except OBC	High female participation among SC/ST

As is evident from this table there is a major gender difference in the industries which are important in providing employment to SC/STs. For example, women are virtually absent in land transport and Public Administration and Defence: the vast majority of SC/ST women work in agriculture. Retail trade which constitutes an important source for work among females in all other communities plays a less important role in case of SC/ST women. In the construction industry, female SC/ST workers report a lower presence than their male

counterparts, yet in comparison with all other communities, they dominate the female workforce. Education employs a bigger proportion of women among SCs than men.

SC/STs are conspicuous by their absence in professional classes, or employment in managerial, administrative capacities, which would require higher education. A much larger proportion in urban areas are employed in bricklayering, other construction work, transport equipment work, or as building caretakers, sweepers, cleaners etc., maids and house-keeping service workers, salesmen and agricultural workers. Only a small proportion report clerical jobs. Interestingly, even now, sewage, sanitation, refuse disposal and similar activities record 3 times the national average, among which SC/ST women work more than men.

Worker Population Ratio

While we mapped the broad occupation distribution and activity status of SCs above, we shall examine worker population ratio now, to understand mainly three issues, which have some relevance in terms of education correlates. a) The level of economic participation of the community, b) incidence of child labour as well as the participation of children in elementary education along with WPR for 10-14 year age group c) the economic participation of young age population (15-19), who could be in education rather than being in employment.

SC population reports slightly higher participation in workforce both in rural and urban areas than the national average. Among women, in rural areas, they reflect the general trend, but the urban participation is much higher than all categories together. Low incidence of unpaid family labour in urban areas at 7.3% (below other social groups) indicates the employment of large number of urban SC women in other market activity, while rural SC women are absorbed in agriculture as well as unpaid family labour.⁴³ SCs as social group rank second in terms of female worker population proportion, below STs, showing high economic participation of women. Similar to STs we see a large number of SC households that report no literate women members.

We also see among SC men and women the classic U curve indicating a drop in work participation amongst those with general education level spanning middle, secondary and HS. However, it is important to note that SC women report higher work participation at every level.

⁴³ See Annexure A4, Table 1

The Backward Link

In the 10-14 age group the Labour Force Participation ratio not only gives us an understanding of what are the concerns at elementary level but also its implications for policy. We possibly see greater impact of SSA or rather pro-active education seeking behavior in this group, with reduced percentage of children in casual and self employed agriculture, in comparison to STs. Close to 79% children in rural and urban areas report study as their principle activity. Approximately 11% girls in rural and urban areas are away from school as a result of their involvement in domestic work. Close to 4% SC boys and girls in rural areas are in self employed agricultural work. However, the critical point is that close to 3% urban SC boys still report being employed in salaried work in urban areas. Also, the category of children in vulnerable and exploitative conditions is equally high both for boys and girls in rural and urban areas, averaging 8% across these categories. This underlines the need for provisioning and creating specific programmes for children in vulnerable situations, both in terms of care and in terms of provision of educational opportunities.

SC girls both in rural and urban contexts record only a marginal presence in casual or self employed work. However, it is important to remember that they are present in equal number among children in vulnerable conditions, which is a form of hidden, exploitative work. As mentioned earlier, domestic work emerges as a critical area of work for both rural and urban girls, which might be a function of older women / mothers seeking employment in labour and market activities outside the home. In terms of unpaid family work, the percentage is as low as 7% in urban areas and 22% in rural. Clearly, the burden or prime responsibility for this is borne by girls, starting as early as 10 years of age. This is a potential group to be brought in, into elementary education, as well as SE. If a culture of sending girls to school is created, then the push for SE will also emerge from this group.

The Push-out Factor

If we look at the key areas where young people are involved in work in the age group 15 to 19 years, we see that in rural areas, the major bulk of rural boys not attending school are in casual labour - touching a figure of 33.8% (See Annexure A4, Table 1). Approximately ¼ of the target population for secondary and HSE is in casual labour, working in hard conditions at a young age.

In urban areas, boys are equally divided in salaried and casual labour and close to 10% are seeking employment. Middle school attendance might provide boys with some form of salaried work but the economic returns of this are not clear. Approximately 32% of rural boys and girls report study as their primary activity, with girls recording a significant difference of points from boys. In urban areas too the average is 45.8% with girls indicating a similar difference.

In the case of girls we see participation in some self employed and casual labour in rural areas, averaging at 14% in each category, while in urban areas this is not as high. SC girls in comparison with SC boys are not as actively engaged in casual labour or salaried work. Their major concentration is in domestic work, where their numbers swell to 41% in urban and 36.8% in rural. Clearly early marriage and domestication are key contributors to the shift to this sphere of work for a large percentage of girls. This is the group that SE needs to tap, and bring into the domain of higher education. Girls' participation in schooling both in urban and rural areas is less than boys. This gap reflects the bias that exists in the community, in contrast to the situation of ST girls. SC girls are twice more likely to be trapped within domestic responsibility than ST girls in urban areas. Reproductive behavior and expectations related to producing offspring at an earlier age need to be studied more closely to understand the nature of expectations from this group within the community.

MUSLIMS

Muslims constitute 13% of India's population, placing them as the largest minority in the country.⁴⁴ The Muslim population is primarily rural, but the degree of urbanization is much higher in this community. 35.7% of the Muslim population was urban compared to 27.8% of the overall population. The sex ratio has improved over the last four decades and has moved up to 950 in 2001 which is higher than the national average. The spatial distribution of the community varies substantially. For instance 22% of the total Muslim population lives in one state – U.P. West Bengal, Bihar, Maharashtra along with Uttar Pradesh cover the majority of the Muslim population.⁴⁵

Nature of Work

Higher urbanization among Muslims, has translated into a relatively reduced link to land and agriculture. 2001 census data indicates that among Muslims only 30% were rural workers, while the average for all religions was 40% workers.

While WPRs provide an indication of the extent of participation of a community in economic activities, the activity status describes the capacity in which workers participate in these activities. While earnings across these categories may vary a great deal, one can safely say that within the self-employed category, an employer is likely to be better off than the employed category. Similarly, within employees, jobs providing regular salaries or wages would be preferred over wage-based casual work. It is important to assess if Muslim workers are concentrated in specific types of activity.

⁴⁴ Census 2001

⁴⁵ See Sachar Committee report – pgs 29 - 35

Concentration in Self-employment Related Activities

The most striking feature is the relatively high share of Muslim workers engaged in self-employed activity. This is particularly true in urban areas (S C Report pp 111-112) where their share is 57 per cent, while it is 43 per cent for Hindus. Within self-employment, Muslims are less engaged in agriculture as compared to non-agricultural activity. The overall work participation of women is 25.2%, and of this the majority (close to 73%) are also self employed.

Low Participation in Salaried Jobs

As employees, Muslims generally work as casual labourers (S C Report pp 111-112). As in the case of SC/ST workers, the participation of Muslim workers in salaried jobs (both in the public and the private sectors) is quite low. While 25 per cent of Hindu-UC workers are engaged in regular jobs, only about 13 per cent of Muslim workers are engaged in such jobs.⁴⁶ The conditions of Muslims with respect to regular jobs does not seem very different from those of OBC and SC/ST Hindus when one compares the aggregate estimates and those for male and female workers separately. However, distribution by activity status of workers in urban areas brings out sharply that participation of Muslims in regular jobs is quite limited as compared to SCs/STs. Only about 27 per cent of the Muslim workers in urban areas are engaged in regular work while the share of such workers among SCs/STs, OBCs and Hindu-UC workers is 40, 36 and 49 per cent respectively. Regular workers can be located in smaller unorganized enterprises as well. However, the large-scale industry jobs are considered stable and lucrative. However, dramatically low participation of Muslims in the formal sector - 7.9 in urban, and 5.8 in rural areas – shows their extreme exclusion from such job opportunities. (See Annexure A5, Table 1)

Consistent with the earlier conclusion that Muslims have higher than average reliance on self-employment, the distribution of workers by enterprise type for different SRCs categories show that a significantly larger proportion of Muslim workers are engaged in small proprietary enterprises and their participation in formal sector employment is significantly less than the national average.⁴⁷ More specifically, the estimates bring out the following interesting facets of Muslim employment:

- a. As compared to all other SRCs, a much larger proportion of Muslims (both men and women) work in self-owned proprietary enterprises. This is particularly so in urban areas
- b. Participation of women workers in women-owned proprietary enterprises is significantly higher for Muslims. This implies that the prevalence of own account enterprises run by women is higher among Muslims than in other

⁴⁶ Sachhar comm rep page 85

⁴⁷ See Tables 5.5 and 5.6 from Sachar Committee report, p. 94 and 96

SRCs. However, as enterprises of Muslim women are mainly home-based, they are typically engaged in sub contracted work with low levels of earnings.

- c. A more detailed exploration of employment in various industrial (non-agricultural) categories shows that as compared to other SRCs, the participation of Muslim workers is relatively higher in the following manufacturing industries where they are mostly concentrated:

- (i) Manufacture of tobacco products (especially for Muslim female workers); and
- (ii) Manufacture of textiles and textile products like wearing apparel (especially for Muslim female workers);

Studies also point to another reality, which is the low representation of educated Muslim men and women in government services, the police force, defence services, public and private sector companies and large-scale industries.⁴⁸ There is a mindset that emerges from this reality that limits the imagined outcomes of education that parents would have for their children.

Women's work is skill-based and they record an above national average presence in manufacturing. Muslim women are engaged nearly three times the national employment proportion in manufacturing, and this high rate prevails both in rural and urban areas. With this profile, when we talk about role of SE in preparing the population for employment (skilling), we should also take note that the source of existing skilling is not through school education, relegating the motivation for completion, even enrolment into SE for Muslim children as vulnerable to this critical factor.

Education

Although the all-India literacy levels of Muslims are upward and in line with other communities, the state data, by urban-rural division and by gender, shows disparity in the status of Muslims. Educational attainments of Muslims have improved over the years, though at a more gradual pace than other SRCs. As a result of this, the expected convergence has not occurred, instead, the gap between Muslims and advantaged sections has actually widened since Independence, particularly since the 1980s. When alternative indicators of educational achievement, more representative of the progress made in education, are considered, not only is there a significant disparity between the status of Muslims and other SRCs, their proximity to the SC/ST levels can be noted (see Table 1 & 2

⁴⁸ See Empowering Differences : Political Actions, Sectarian Violence and the Retreat of Secularism pg 282, 283, 290-91 and 294 in India's Muslims : OUP 2007 Omnibus Metcalf Ahmed and Hasan.

below). The Sachar Committee Report measured the Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) and found this to be low in absolute terms in contrast to all other SRCs, except in some cases marginally higher than SCs/STs. The same is true of attendance levels of Muslims. In fact, in some states/regions, SCs/STs have overtaken Muslims. While there is a significant rural-urban differential, the Sachar Report observed that the gap between Muslims and the other SRCs is generally higher in urban areas than in rural areas. Analysis of time trends too indicate that, despite overall improvement in educational status, the rate of progress has been the slowest for Muslims.⁴⁹

Table 1: Percentage distribution of persons aged 5-29 years by current enrolment and attendance status among muslim children in secondary and H.SE– All India

Age Groups	Hindus			Muslims	Other
	Gen	OBC	SCs/STs		Minorities
6-13 years	19.1 (17.3)	36.1 (35.5)	25.7 (27.4)	14.0 (15.1)	5.1 (4.8)
14-15 years	24.3 (19.9)	36.1 (35.2)	21.4 (25.2)	12.2 (14.5)	6.0 (5.3)
16-17 years	28.9 (21.1)	33.7 (35.0)	17.7 (25.5)	10.2 (13.9)	7.6 (5.5)
18-22 years	34.0 (20.8)	30.5 (34.40)	17.7 (25.5)	10.2 (13.9)	7.6 (5.5)
23 years & above	35.6 (23.9)	29.2 (35.1)	18.3 (24.1)	7.4 (10.9)	9.5 (5.9)

The disadvantage exists in the 6 – 14 year age group where close to 25 per cent children are out of school. In terms of completion of class ten the percentage of Muslim children is only 17% while it is 26% of those who are 17 years and above and have completed matriculation (Sachar Comittee: pg 60). According to the Sachar Committee report, the disparities between Muslims and 'all others' have widened over the last four decades and this is most apparent in urban areas, for women and among rural males. West Bengal is a state where the position of women completing matriculation has worsened by over ten points in both rural and urban areas.

⁴⁹ Sachar Committee report pg no. 68-69

Table 2: Gross Attendance/Participation Rate by Social/Religious (NSSO 64)

	Overall	ST	SC	OBC	Gen Cat Hindu	Muslim	Other religious Gp
GAR	70.2	52.5	61.0	70.5	91.	51.0	81.9
NAR	41.0	27.2	34.1	41.8	56.4	27.2	46.4

Backward and Forward Linkages

'It is important to find out the rate at which persons from different communities move into higher levels of education. For example, once a person has completed primary education, does the probability of pursuing middle school education differ by SRCs? A recent study has computed these probabilities by SRCs showing very interesting patterns.⁵⁰ The first striking feature is that the probability of completing different levels of school education (primary, middle, secondary etc.) has increased for all communities during 1983-2000. The sharpest rise has been in the probability of completing middle school for all communities, including Muslims. But differences still exist and the Muslims and SCs/STs are behind others. On an average based on four years of data, about 62% of the eligible children in the upper caste Hindu and other religious groups (excluding Muslims) are likely to complete primary education followed by Muslims (44 %), SCs (39%) and STs (32%). However, once children complete primary education, the proportion of children completing middle school is the same (65%) for Muslims, STs and SCs but lower than 'All Others' (75%). The next transition also shows a similar pattern; about 50% of Muslim and SC/ST children who have completed middle school are likely to complete secondary school as well, which is lower than the 'All Other' group (62%).'⁵¹

Further, in the transition from secondary to college education, Muslims perform somewhat better than SCs and STs; while only 23% of the SC/ST students who complete SE are likely to complete college education, this percentage is 26% for Muslims and 34% for other groups. Given these estimates, while disparities exist at every level, *completion of primary education seems to be the major hurdle for school education*. Availability of good quality schools like Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas in rural areas was expected to partly improve the supply of good quality education but Muslim participation in these schools is not satisfactory. (Both KV and JNV figure show this as well.) Thus it is explicit that there is lower than average attainment of Muslims in school education.

⁵⁰ Desai and Kulkarni (2005) quoted in Sachar Committee Report. pg.62

⁵¹ Sachar Committee Report p. 62

With the above set of observations made by the Sachar committee and the earlier observations regarding the crucial role of primary completion in increasing the probability of completion of upper primary, and thus providing the baseline for secondary enrolment, we may conclude that focus needs to shift from enrolment to retention, especially in the case of social groups with disadvantage. As we can see, those who reach higher levels of education, the probability of them completing is higher than at elementary levels.

Linking Education and Work Participation

In the table below, we see that participation of Muslim boys in SE is lower than their share of population in the age group 14-15 years and it is also lower than the participation of Muslim girls. This has to be understood in light of the nature of economic activities the community is engaged in. As discussed in detail above, we know that the majority of Muslims are engaged in self employment activities.

Share in Population and Secondary Participation: Muslim & Other Minority rel Groups

	Population	Secondary Attendance
	Age 14_15	Gr IX-X
Muslims	14.1	10.3
Muslim boys in total boys	13.7	9.8
Muslim Girls in Total Girls	14.6	10.9
Share of boys in Total Muslims	52.1	54.9
Share of Girls in total Muslims	47.9	45.1

Given the negative (or stagnant) rate of growth in male participation in school education for Muslim youth of 15-19 age group,⁵² the observation made in other studies including Sachar committee of Muslim male youth's dropping out to seek/get employment, and the high rate (51% -15% above national average) of male WPR within the 15-19 age group, indicates the challenge that RMSA is likely to face vis a vis this community. Here, working on gender will involve not merely the inclusion of Muslim girls, and increasing their participation, but also working with boys and ensuring their retention in both elementary and SE.

⁵² NSS Report 521: pp 25-26

PART C: UNDERSTANDING DISADVANTAGE IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

This section brings together the analysis of school-related data that demonstrates where gaps / inequities exist in Secondary Education (SE) in terms of the available school infrastructure, with the economic/ work-specific profiles of the different social groups. In stitching these together, the analysis below attempts to provide a holistic analysis of how both the education system and specific context of communities interact to result in the 'push out' or non-participation of young persons from marginalized communities in SE. This, no doubt, is a complex process that would be marked by regional and historical variations, which studies and work in the future needs to dwell on with greater rigour.

The first section, on poverty, gender and location needs to be viewed in the context of the overall trends related to participation in SE. All groups recorded a positive growth in the numbers attending SE, though the percentages varied - with lower consumption quintiles reporting larger increase than the two uppermost quintiles. The discussion on SE in the previous section indicates that over the period 1993 to 2000 and from 2000 to 2007, the most significant increase in secondary attendance occurred among rural households as well as among girls. Before noting the gaps, therefore, it must be noted that the demand and value of good quality SE for groups across social categories, gender and region needs to be underlined, along with the recognition that universalization in the coming years involves coverage of precisely this group of learners.

In the second section we attempt to bring in some issues significant by their absence in the data, related to quality and equity. These concern the participation of the community in SE, culture, identity and language - data might only reflect these as outcomes. Yet they too lie at the heart of the educational experience, and need to be focal areas if high quality, equitable education is to be imparted at the secondary level through RMSA.

1.1. POVERTY

As our figures indicate, the gap between the 1st quintile and the 5th quintile is close to 44 percentage points in terms of attendance, and is 40 percentage points in terms of completion rate in the 16 - 17 year age group. Drop-out rates among SCs and STs in SE have remained steady since the 1990s: the range from Elementary to Secondary level is 10% to 16%. If we look at the communities that are clustered primarily within the lowest MPCE quartiles, we see that they all record high work participation rates. The majority of SCs and STs and Muslims are engaged in casual labour, self-employed agricultural work, in small proprietary enterprises or then even salaried employment that involves low economic returns. Close to 50% of these groups are in a consumption bracket which recorded a

monthly per capita consumption of below Rs.410 in rural and Rs 675 in urban areas in the year 2004-2005.

As indicated in the community profiles, a large section of young people in the 15 to 19 year age group - close to 50% among SCs (rural) and 33% (urban) - move into the labour force. Among STs the figure is even higher, recording a steep 59% in rural areas and 30% for urban youth. While we do not have matching figures for Muslims, the transition to apprenticeship and work for Muslim boys is evident and thus a large section of young people is lost to SE as a result of economic pressures within families. The attainment of puberty is a watershed in terms of expectations regarding contribution to family income within poor households.

High Costs:

Poverty becomes a major constraint in SE if we look at the costs involved in pursuing education for this level. The cost of education is close to Rs.4, 300 annually for secondary and H.SE, according to NSSO 64th round data. Parents reported spending annually close to Rs.2700 in government schools, and almost Rs.9000 in Private Unaided (PU) schools. The implications of this become even more worrying if we look at the types of schools recording an increase in Secondary level. The expansion is primarily in the PU schools, evident in their growing numbers not only in urban but also in rural areas. SES data for 2007-8 indicates the presence of 26.1% of private aided (PA) schools and 34.6% PU schools. In contrast, the growth of government schools nationally has been static.

The likelihood of poor families spending on an average Rs 252 (rural) and Rs 600 (urban) per child per month in a year on SE (2007-2008) is very low. 'Financial constraint' is reported by almost 21.4% families as the primary reason for drop outs across all levels of education (NSSO data). In addition to this an immediate potential gain from employment of the adolescent is lost which also has an indirect cost effect.

Private Tuitions:

Micro studies validate the presence of additional expenditure on private tuitions as a phenomenon impacting families across different economic categories. In a survey of a 1000 households, ⁵³ undertaken in six districts of Rajasthan and MP, covering both rural and urban populations with a significant representation of OBC, SC, ST and Muslim communities, it was found that, of the families surveyed, close to 41% families in rural areas and 48% in urban areas availed private tuitions in SE. ⁵⁴ In primary education the

⁵³ See Educational Outcomes and Poverty: Some findings from a Household Survey in Rajasthan and Mahdya Pradesh by De, Endow and Ghosh working paper no.32 – 2010 Research Consortium on Education. Outcomes and Poverty, (RECOUP).

⁵⁴ Ibid pg 39

figure was lower, touching 15% in rural and 18% in urban areas. This possibly indicates not only that there are hidden costs involved but that those who have reached this level of education among marginalized communities are invested enough to complete this level of education to meet the additional expenses involved.

In another study conducted by CORD,⁵⁵ parents and learners reported considerable expenditure on tuition fees, in order to 'prop-up' poor quality teaching and learning at school. What the study points to is that private tuitions in West Bengal are so widespread and common that they almost represent a parallel system of education. This indicates that not only is support required at the secondary level, but the quality of Primary and Upper Primary school is also an issue. Learners have not achieved the requisite competencies of reading and writing that are assumed to be present at the time of entry into this stage of learning. As a result, learners arrive with the cumulative disadvantage of poor quality learning in elementary school, which gets exacerbated at the secondary level.

Many poor families are willing to pay the tuition costs of local 'low fee' private schools, as a large public perception persists that teaching in government schools is not on par with private schools. This phenomenon is also articulated as the child's own lack of ability to 'cope'. The CORD study also validates the gender differential, indicating that often families have to make choices in times of financial crisis and invariably it is girls who first experience the impact of this. Gender gaps crop up in urban private schools, since families prioritize sending girls to government and boys to private schools. Yet not all families are able to sustain education for even boys and the outcome is evident in the significant percentage that shifts to casual labour, exposing them to tough working conditions at an early age.

As we have pointed out in the first section, the drop-out rate has reduced substantially at the primary level, but becomes significant during the transition from Upper Primary to Secondary and to Higher Secondary. The EFA GMR report too notes that drop-out rate at 15 years is 28%, accelerating to 63% at the age of 19 years (which it views as the age for late completion of Upper Primary and Secondary).⁵⁶ Thus parents' own ability to support their child in terms of financial resources becomes a barrier for young learners at secondary level.

⁵⁵ See On the Brink of Adulthood: Glimpses of schooling and work in the lives of adolescents. A De, C. Noronha & M. Sampson - Mimeo CORD 2005.

⁵⁶ See Paper Commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010 'Reaching the Marginalized' by Sonia Bhalotra.

Certification for Employment:

Education is a critical factor in marginalized groups accessing both economic and social opportunities and in claiming their rights and entitlements. Certification - be it for class 10 or class 12 - is a key factor in realizing the benefits of education. Families are aware that to move away from casual labour to any form of salaried employment requires minimum certification. Another point to note is that in urban areas, among both SCs and STs we see a presence of close to 40% to 42% households in regular wage employment. This is a reflection not only of improved economic status or increased employment opportunities in urban areas but partly the impact of affirmative action on the part of the state through reservations. Secondary or HSE certificate qualifications enhance opportunities for access to (reservations in) clerical level jobs. Reservations in educational institutions too become operational post HSE. State support, at least for SCs and STs, is better in HSE as more scholarships are available at this stage. Therefore, a move into SE has the potential of opening up new opportunities both for support in higher education or in terms of increased avenues of employment.

The vulnerability or fragility of young learners to crisis within the family (brought on by costs incurred on health for a family member, the impact of a fast changing labour market, etc) also translates into dropping out at a given point. The highly sequential and fixed nature of schooling does not provide any possibility of re-entry once a learner drops out. There are limited options available for such learners to continue or re-enter the system at a later stage.⁵⁷ It is also important to recognize that a significant section of learners drop out prior to completing upper primary. The figures run as high as 24% for Muslim children, 23% for STs, 18% for SC and 16% for girls. Bridging efforts reach out to a small section of never enrolled learners and drop-outs, but the majority of them do not find their way back into the system. For those states that have a no-retention policy, the push out occurs at the stage of writing the Board examination.

Conclusion

What we see therefore is an interplay between the kinds of schools available, and the costs involved in accessing SE moving in the direction of increased investment by families not only to go to school but also to supplement poor quality of schooling, with private tuitions. Thus low quality and not *just* paucity of resources creates the push out factor – and girls emerge as the most vulnerable to these circumstances. The 'pull-out' from school emerges from the need of poor families to supplement their economic survival through labour contributions of its young members. Once learners drop-out, there are virtually no opportunities to re-enter the system.

⁵⁷ The National Institute for Open schooling (NIOS) has eleven regional centres and in 2004-2005 had close to 2,750 centres in India and abroad. Studies indicate that NIOS reaches out to rural learners, women, SC, ST candidates. See World Bank report pg 25.

Despite all these factors, the government system still remains a key player in providing SE, with over 60% of the total enrolment of SE being absorbed in government schools. The importance of the government school for children from disadvantaged sections simply cannot be denied. At present close to 77% of ST learners, 66% of Muslim students and 70% of SC youth access government schools, a large section of whom are girls. We also see a move away from government schooling to private schooling among upper caste Hindus and other religious groups, whose participation in the government system is down to 50%. This too strengthens the impression that economic well being results in access to 'better' schooling opportunities, which primarily lie in the private sector. A new segregation has emerged where quality in education has mistakenly become associated with privilege and increased spending, and aspirationally linked with the private sector. This has resulted in a lack of diversity in schools: students from particular class and caste backgrounds people particular schools. Consequently, government schools have become identified as those that provide low-cost education of low quality to the economically poor sections of society. If the government system seeks to not merely enroll but also retain learners, then it is critical that these hierarchies be challenged and acted upon, with the government setting the benchmark for quality. Therefore it is evident that the key to successful universalisation is not merely inclusion but the growth of good quality government schools.

1.2 LOCATION

Location is a key contributor in determining the degree and nature of disadvantage that communities experience vis a vis education. Histories of educational reforms and initiatives coupled with their access to development in specific regions overlaps to create a high degree of variations amongst states.

The Rural-Urban Gap

The rural-urban gap in attendance in SE is around 20 percentage points and this difference is brought home even more sharply if we see the NAR of rural children in the 14-15 year age group which is a mere 37.8 per cent. The difference between GAR and NAR indicates that there is a crowding of overage children that leads to improved points in the rural GAR. What also emerges is that growth in the number of students accessing SE is not in tandem with growth in the number of schools. Enrolment grew at 11% between 2006-7 and 2007-08, while SE schools grew at 1.5%. The growth in this level of education is resulting from a proliferation of schools, whose enrolment is predominantly drawn from urban areas.

At the same time Government schools do account for a large proportion of those enrolled, given their comparatively larger size and scale of resources. However, this situation possibly leads to high pressure on select government schools to take on the burden of increased demand in rural areas. Here double shifts can clearly not compensate for this

uneven development in supply which results not only in an overcrowding in government secondary schools (especially in rural areas) but also leads to poor families accessing the mushrooming private sector that is expensive.

Distance and Questions of Access:

We also see that distance to Secondary schools is greater in rural areas - close to 17% of the rural population has secondary schools located beyond 5 kms. If we disaggregate this on the basis of social groups, STs are the most disadvantaged, where close to 30% of the ST rural population falls within this category. Given that the majority of the ST population is rural, this is a critical factor in the low participation of the community in SE. Inaccessibility of schools combines with the economic realities of tribals in rural areas, resulting in a high drop-out rate for STs in elementary education itself. We see a move to self-employed agricultural work and casual labour at an early age: close to 25% of tribal boys and girls in the 10 to 14 year age group move into the labour force. In the 15 to 19 year age group, the figure is as high as 60%. The 11th and 12th Joint Review Mission of the SSA does place on record that efforts to bring in and retain tribal children continue to pose a challenge, since tribal and Muslim children record a high drop-out figure. We see a similar disadvantage among OBCs whose access is only marginally better than tribal learners. In the case of states like Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh we see urban areas too recording secondary schools at a distance of 5 kms and more.

In the case of SC learners we see a similar situation in the 15 to 19 year category, though it is important to point out that unlike STs, their access to schools is better. Only 15% of the population has a secondary school at a distance beyond 5 kms and their participation in elementary education is higher than STs'. However, in the age group that has a bearing on secondary schooling we see almost 48% in rural areas in the labour force. The demands of work, whether on their own land or as labour on land owned by others brings into play both issues of poverty, the nature of rural work performed by SCs/STs to intersect with poor provisioning of schools, to create a major axis of disadvantage.

Quality and Equitable participation:

A key issue that emerges in the context of rural areas is that of quality of the schooling experience. Residential hostels have formed part of the government's strategy to cope with the issue of remoteness and scattered populations in tribal / rural areas. The experience of Ashramshalas has shown that participation of communities is dependent on the quality of schooling and the nature of infrastructure. Sub-standard facilities provided by government and voluntary agencies have resulted in further exclusion.⁵⁸ This is in sharp contrast to the

⁵⁸ Position paper on Problems of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Children, NCF 2005 focus paper clearly points to this stating: We have detailed accounts of the appalling living and education conditions prevalent in Ashram Schools in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The problems highlighted include poor

response we see to the more recent intervention sought through the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyala Scheme,(KGBV) ⁵⁹ where girls from marginalized groups have not only participated, but pushed for an extension of the scheme to include not only Upper Primary but also Secondary completion. The demand that was generated resulted in the 11th Plan provisioning a scheme titled 'Incentives to Girls for Secondary Education'. The introduction to the scheme specifically mentions that the initial success of the KGBV scheme was encouraging and this had led to the formulation of the scheme. States like Andhra Pradesh took initiative and extended the KGBV till class 12. The KGBV example provides a window into the potential that exists in bringing rural boys and girls into SE, where the push for retention will emerge through good quality interventions.

In the case of Muslims we see a slightly different picture emerging vis a vis the rural-urban divide. While there is a significant rural-urban differential in terms of attendance, the gap between Muslims and other socio-religious groups was found to be higher in urban areas than in rural areas. We also see a lower participation amongst Muslim boys in proportion to their population in the 14 to 15 age group. As a matter of fact, girls recorded a high participation in proportion to their population. Engagement in self-owned proprietary enterprises, and skill-based work results in withdrawal of boys at an early age into traditional forms of apprenticeship. The RECOUP study on educational outcomes validates this: a majority of the skilled workers in the Muslim community acquired their training through unpaid apprenticeship or through learning on the job. ⁶⁰ A large proportion of the skilled workers in urban areas (26.7%) reported that they had not even passed class 8.

Inter-State Variations

Across virtually all indicators of demand for and supply of SE we see sharp if not steep differences across states. For instance in the case of Pupil Teacher Ratio we see states ranging from a PTR of 8 (Sikkim) to a PTR of 67 (Uttar Pradesh). When PTR is overlaid with Gross Enrolment Ratios we see another dimension emerge. States with low GER and high PTR are not in a position to take on the challenge that universalization will pose as their infrastructure is not functioning at a desired level of efficiency. Increased enrollment would only swell the PTR further, putting into question the quality of schooling that would be imparted. Similarly inter-state differences exist in terms of Gross Attendance Ratio with Kerala recording 116.4% and Bihar with 49.4%. The Gender gap too is not uniform, and while we see an increased participation nationally from 58 girls to 100 boys in 1997 – 98 to 77%, a decade later, it fluctuates widely. In states like Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh and

construction, overcrowding, alienating environment, inadequate numbers and quality of teaching staff, lack of regular inspection, and lack of basic facilities for the children such as toiletries, uniforms and fans. For girls, lack of personal safety serves as a major deterrent." Pg 17.

⁵⁹ The 11th JRM recorded that in the 2558 KGBV's that are operational, covering 1.97 Lakh girls in SC, ST and Muslim concentration districts 27% of girls belonged to the SC group, 29% to ST, 27% to OBC and 7% to Muslim.

⁶⁰ See RECOUP working paper 32 Educational Outcomes and Poverty, 2010. (Pg 42.)

Kerala the GAR for girls is above 90%, while it dips to below National Average in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar.

The availability of trained teachers is another axis of regional differentiation: not only the number of female teachers ranges from 18 women teachers in Bihar for every 100 male teachers to a higher percentage of female teachers in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Punjab, there is also a lack of trained teachers, which affects the quality of teaching. The North East is particularly impacted on this front with a sheer lack of teacher training institutions as mentioned in the section on teachers.

In the context of Muslims too, we see their participation as varying widely across the north-south divide. Hasan and Menon's study points to this, recording 'abysmal' educational status in the north, with attendance as low as 4.75% in H.S.E school in their sample size. The study underlines the fact that where ever commercial growth has benefitted the community (in states like AP, Karnataka, Maharashtra, TN etc.) its impact on educational outcomes vis a vis the Muslim community has been positive. This is evident in the motivation among Muslims to complete schooling and a burgeoning of Muslim educational societies in these states. This coupled with provision of free transport to schools, relaxation of norms in terms of distance and provision of Urdu language teachers and textbooks on the part of state governments has only complimented this process.

The overlapping nature of exclusion:

Along the axes of PTR, GAR, GER, Gender Parity we see particular states / regions intersect across all these indicating deficiencies along these multiple indicators. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal and North Eastern states like Tripura, Assam, Arunachal, Meghalaya are some examples of how certain chronic conditions of disadvantage are visible in the provisioning of SE.

Many of these states are also those where marginalized groups reside in high concentration and where the government school system dominates above others. As a result, it might be valuable to identify particular regions that suffer multiple-disadvantages and plan focused interventions and strategies that strike at the web that appears to exist between all these points for greater impact in these states.

1.3 SKILLS AND COMMUNITY

This brings us to another related issue which is the nature of skills that secondary and H.S.E imparts. As mentioned above, investments in SE are tied to family aspirations regarding certification and employability in the future. In the majority of marginalized communities, there is an early shift to participation in labour-related activities in both urban and rural

areas, particularly for young boys. The nature of economic participation is primarily labour intensive, with skills that do not fall into the domain of formal skills. SCs and STs are primarily located in construction, agricultural labour, land transport and personal (private) services. They are conspicuous by their absence in managerial and professional work. In the case of OBCs we see greater diversification in terms of employment. They record a higher presence in non-agricultural self-employed categories. However, their presence in the lower five MPCE group is significant (though less than SC, STs). As in the case of Muslims, self employment for OBCs does not immediately translate to improved economic status. Resource mobilization, access to credit etc prove to be immense challenges for marginalized groups.

However some interesting patterns emerge in the case of completion rates for Diploma courses - post H.SE - that provide a window to explore the nature of importance that skilling can add to marginalized communities. NSSO data shows that though the percentage of those enrolled in Diploma courses is extremely small, the completion rates are close to 98% for STs and equally high for SCs. Interestingly, ST Diploma graduates (male and female) in rural areas report higher employment than their SC counterparts. In fact STs who have completed Diplomas record higher employment than their ST graduate counterparts. It has implications for the direction of intervention in SE, which serves as entry point not only for higher studies but also for various and divergent technical education. From enrolment data, we have also noticed that many STs are coming back to further studies after completing a Diploma course. Many of them are likely to be simultaneously employed.

In the case of SC Diploma holders, Work Participation Rate (WPR) is high, a reflection of the small proportion pursuing higher education, but we see a drop in the WPR of urban SC Diploma holders. This might be an outcome of the quality and value of the Diplomas being pursued by the group.

The key learning from the above mentioned facts is that there is an urgent need to link skilling with education at the H.SE level. And this skilling needs to be responsive and informed about the nature of livelihoods that marginalized groups are involved with. Promoting and upgrading skills related to livestock, food processing, construction, transport and manufacturing need to be developed. This will create conditions for retention both at the secondary and H.SE level. Convergence between the Human Resource Development, Ministry and the Labour Ministry are key to linking H.SE with Industrial Training Institutes. Development of basic courses or foundational skills curricula at this level could be the key to ensuring retention in H.SE and a transition to ITIs at the Diploma level for a larger number of learners.

1.4 THE GENDER DIMENSION

The gender gap in SE is significant and varies across levels of education.⁶¹ In primary it is 4% and reaches 10% for 15 yrs and 17% for 18 year olds. Researchers have pointed to the starkness of the disadvantage that girls experience through a comparison between the completion and attendance rates between lower caste rural girls and urban upper caste boys. The difference is close to 40 percentage points.⁶²

Gender lies at the intersection of all the factors detailed above, be it poverty, the rural-urban divide, issues related to work, skilling and employment opportunities within particular social groups, along with its own complexities related to culture, sexuality and reproduction. Boys and girls are both impacted by these and while some of the challenges faced by communities are specific, they fall within an overarching patriarchal framework of how girls and their role within the community, family and the nation is imagined.

Parental literacy and women's work:

We have mentioned earlier that the majority of the communities in question record high female work participation with tribal women ranking highest among the female worker population in the country. The point to note here is that more than 60% of rural and 30% of rural ST households do not have any literate woman members, highlighting the fact that the bulk of female ST participants in the workforce have no formal education. SC women too record high participation in the work force, particularly in urban areas, second only to ST women. Here too literacy is an issue with the older population. This is an important issue as it has a direct bearing on participation of girls from these communities in SE. In her paper investigating the socio-economic determinants of school attendance in India for boys and girls between the age group 5-14 years, based on census data of 1981 and 1991, Jayachandran makes a positive link between higher rates of work force participation by women and its positive effect on school attendance for both boys and girls.⁶³ The argument being that high WPR provides women scope and potential to become active participants in public and civic issues. If schools become part of women's understanding of what denotes a 'desirable intervention' for their children then it can have the effect of enhancing both the provisioning and monitoring of school education. The other important observation that Jayachandran makes is that adult (parental) education is a significant factor in ensuring

⁶¹ As per the 2001 census, females constitute around 47% and males 53% of the adolescent population (age group 10-19). Not surprisingly the sex ratios in the adolescent age group are skewed in favour of males. The sex ratio among 10-19 years is 882 females for 1000 males, lower than the overall sex ratio of 933. It is 902 for younger adolescents aged 10-14 years and worrisomely lower at 858 for older adolescents aged 15-19 years.

⁶² See EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010 'Reaching the Marginalised

⁶³ See Socio-Economic Determinants of School Attendance in India by Usha Jayachandran :Working paper No;103 June 2002. Centre For Development Economics

participation in elementary education. However, this works in gender specific ways where adult male literacy has a higher impact on male child participation in schooling as compared to the girl child. While female adult literacy has a wider impact on attendance of children in schooling, its impact on girls' education within the household is significant.

This observation, though dated in terms of the period that it analyses, points to a significant learning over the last decade vis a vis interventions that have involved women from SC, ST and marginalised communities in engaging proactively with development processes through the formation of *Sanghas* and *samitis*/federations. The experience of the Mahila Samakhya Programme is a case in point, where women's *sanghas* and federations have been proactively involved in drives to bring not only their own daughters, but also other girls in the community into formal schooling, through enrolment drives, running Mahila Shikshan Kendras in order to bridge out-of-school girls into upper primary schools and mobilising girls from marginalised communities to enroll into KGBVs, etc. Wherever we see the active engagement of women in the community in the formal education system the retention and completion of elementary education by girls in these communities has been dramatic.

At the same time it is important to take note of what NSSO data indicates regarding the impact of high work participation among women in these communities. It also works in the opposite direction as is evident in the high percentage (15%) of rural ST girls moving into agriculture related work as early as 10-14 years, and increasing substantially to 57% in the 15-19 year age bracket. The demands of agricultural work and poverty work equally on ST boys and girls. For tribal households, the value of young women's labour is critically located in their contribution to agricultural work. We also see 20% girls engaged in domestic work.

Domestic work and education

This is markedly different from the situation of 40% of SC and OBC girls in the age group 15-19 years reporting domestic work as their primary activity - double that of ST girls. What we can possibly infer from these figures is that while domestic work impacts a major section of young women belonging to these communities - with young girls taking on survival and care-oriented work within the household in order to enable older women to move out and work - there are cultural differences that mark these communities. Sibling care starts early for girls in the SC and OBC community and records an exponential increase (possibly an outcome of early marriage and shift to marital household) where on becoming young mothers the focus is on performance of domestic chores.

This difference is partly affirmed, if we look at the nature of participation of ST girls in schooling in urban areas. Though only a smaller proportion of the ST population resides in urban dwellings, we see a high participation of ST girls in schooling (62.9% - even higher than ST boys), and relatively lower participation in the labour force. The domestic work component remains constant in terms of both rural and urban at 19%. While in the case of SC girls we see a marked lower presence in schooling. This might be indicative of distinct cultural differences regarding age of marriage, mobility and aspirations for employability that might be influencing this group of learners.

The gendered outcomes of quality:

The CORD study, through interviews with young, adolescent boys raises another issue in terms of the impact of poor quality educational experience for boys.⁶⁴ Given the freedom and mobility that they enjoy, boys are less likely to stay in an educational setting that is of poor quality. Therefore absenteeism is a concern and on completion of elementary school, many choose to drop out. Once they drop out, their re-entry into the system becomes difficult and many move into casual work. Boys are vulnerable in terms of poverty and poor quality education, which push them into cycles of migration, hard labour and unemployment.

For girls, their fragility in the SE stream is marked by the opportunity costs of educating them, particularly for poor families and, as pointed out earlier, the high costs of private tuition translate to boys rather than girls being prioritized. Young girls also confirmed that domestic roles and responsibilities, costs of education and marriage prove to be major factors in withdrawal from school. For girls, their primary concern about withdrawal from school was the limitation on mobility, and the fact of being tied to domestic chores. Quality of schooling did not emerge as a critical factor. Private tuition fee according to the study works against girls' participation in secondary education. For girls attending school is also an escape from the drudgery of daily chores and an opportunity to be mobile outside the home.

As part of its commitment to universalize SE, RMSA needs to focus on this large section of SC, ST and OBC girls who are presently engaged in domestic work. Strategies to address and mobilize this group require an engagement with women in these communities, involving them in the decision-making and monitoring of SE to have a positive impact on girls' attendance and retention. At the same time, young girls need to be directly mobilized

⁶⁴ See On the Brink of Adulthood: Glimpses of schooling and work in the lives of adolescents. A De, C. Noronha & M. Sampson - Mimeo CORD 2005.

so that they too can provide the push to complete secondary and HSE, as can be seen in the experience of the KGBV scheme. Quality of schooling is a key component too, as the indirect costs of private tuition fees impacts girls' participation more negatively than boys.

Marriage, markets and Mobility:

In the case of Muslim girls we see different factors at play. In the section on work we pointed to the early exit of Muslim boys from school in order to apprentice and train within familial or community-based networks. This has implications for girls' schooling. Hasan and Menon analyze this phenomenon and describe it as a 'process of ceiling' which is placed on girls' education within the community so as to make them marriageable.⁶⁵ In keeping with the norm of hypergamous marriage, educated girls need to marry more educated boys. While this is a norm across communities, they highlight its implications for Muslim girls 'where families downscale their (girls') education in order to upscale their eligibility to marriage to comparably educated boys.'⁶⁶ Given the negative (or stagnant) rate of growth in male participation in school education for Muslim youth of 15-19 age group,⁶⁷ the observation made in other studies, including the Sachar Committee Report, of Muslim male youth dropping out to seek/get employment, and the high rate (51% - 15% above the national average) of male WPR within the 15-19 age group, needs to be taken into account while strategizing for universalization within the Muslim community

While issues of puberty, early marriage, distance from school and safety cut across all communities, and not only the Muslims, the specific context of Muslim women and girls needs to be understood in terms of the nature of employment and work they are involved in.

Muslim women's labour is primarily skill-based, and the Muslim female presence is nearly three times the national employment proportion in manufacturing - this high rate prevails both in rural and urban areas. With such a work profile, when we talk about role of SE in retaining girls within school, we need to consider an integrated approach at the HSE level. Skilling in particular areas, as mentioned earlier, depending on local context can be a step towards improved probability of completion and increasing overall employability, which is crucial, especially in the case of girls, whose participation in the workforce generally increases with educational qualification beyond the crucial level of 'HS-plus'. For both boys and girls, this improved probability of completion (if perceivable) has a meaning.

⁶⁵ See Educating Muslim Girls : A comparison of Five Indian Cities; Hasan and Menon; Women Unlimited 2005

⁶⁶ Ibid.pp159

⁶⁷ NSS Report 521: pp 25-26

Studies also point to another reality, which is the low representation of educated Muslim men and women in government services, the police force, defence services, public and private sector companies and large-scale industries.⁶⁸ There is a mindset that emerges from this reality that de-motivates or limits the imagined outcomes of education that parents would have for their children.

Growing Up and Control:

In the case of young girls, the onset of puberty poses its own challenge in terms of mobility of young girls to Secondary schools, which might be an hour's walking distance from their place of residence. Security and safety are concerns that communities articulate as reasons why girls might drop out of school at the secondary level. The residential school provides a safe space. Discussions with community members in the Mewat region in Haryana reported withdrawal of girls from school following primary education as security concerns and mixed schooling prove to be major blocks.⁶⁹ Parents were unwilling to send their daughters to secondary schools that involved walking even a distance of three kms. Lack of transport facilities and poor connectivity, a high crime rate further added to insecurities regarding young girls. A visit to the KGBV being run at the [Mewat] district level revealed high demand and a long waiting list of parents seeking entry to the residential facility.

Therefore, we see twin processes at work in the context of girls accessing and completing higher education. The education system works against them with its inability to reach within reasonable geographical distance, moving towards private management with high tuition costs, absence of female teachers, poor transport facilities and security to reach the schools, etc. Quality works its way into the issue of equitable access, with young learners indicating the impact of non-comprehension in their decision to move out of the institutional space. All these factors impact girls more than their male counterparts. Additionally, belonging to specific social groups has implications that further exclude girls from these communities. Paid work, unpaid domestic work, marriage and mobility all bear on their chances of continuation and completion. Therefore we see a cumulative disadvantage emerging at each level of education: girls aspire / struggle with their multiple identities, constraining and limiting them specifically on account of their caste, class, religion and region.

The SSA experience of closing the gender gap through concerted efforts in the form of improving access of tribal and SC girls to school through better provisioning, hiring female teachers, providing scholarships and freeships, bridge courses as multiple entry points into

⁶⁸ See Empowering Differences; Political Actions, Sectarian Violence and the Retreat of Secularism in India's Muslims: pp 282-294; hasan, Metcalf and Ahmed; OUP 2007

⁶⁹ National Workshop organised by SSA on the Muslim Girl Child July 2010 in Haryana.

elementary education has elicited a positive response from the community. SE can learn positively and seek to provide a combination of quality interventions with improved infrastructure to bridge the gap.

2.1 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Community participation has been viewed as a key aspect of universalizing elementary education. Village Education Committees (VECs), School Development and Monitoring Committees, Mother Teacher Associations and Parent Teacher Associations – these are the multiple names within which accountability and voice of the stake holders is sought in Elementary Education. In a majority of cases, members to these committees are nominated and a key aspect of the work done by those committees is to manage the infrastructure related work in the school. While there are no comprehensive studies available on the nature, role and functioning of these committees (a study by NEUPA is forthcoming) we can draw on earlier work on the experience of school management committees set up during the DPEP phase and also the more recent observations regarding the functioning and role of these committees in the SSA Joint Review Missions. In a study undertaken by Ramachandran and Sahijee,⁷⁰ certain classic features emerge as concerns regarding the interface between the community and the school.

A detailed study of functioning VECs in six different states by Ramachandran and Sahijee demonstrated that while there was an assumption that community constituted a homogenous entity, local hierarchies asserted themselves in powerful ways. Either the local elites exercised influence through controlling participation and dominated in the decision making or then tussles emerged between powerful groups regarding who would have control over the committee.

Some committees also functioned in mechanical ways where a symbolic participation in formal events emerged with little engagement in the needs and challenges faced by the school. Many VECs were inactive, with members either residing far away or uninterested in the functioning of the school – as their own children went to private schools. In the rare instance that VECs engaged local activist groups and women's federations, the added value both in terms of pedagogic and infrastructural support was clearly visible.

The 11th JRM report illuminated various challenges in its comments on the various school management committees functioning in a particular state. Firstly, that the roles of or even the presence of different committees for different purposes is not clear; that the expectations of the committee for academic monitoring is unreasonably high; an important

⁷⁰ Vimala Ramachandran and Aarti Saihjee: The New Segregation – reflections on gender and equity in primary education, Economic and Political Weekly; No 17 Vol. XXXVII, 27 April-2 May 2002

observation was also the absence of women members in the SMCs, and also in some cases of parents from marginalized communities.⁷¹

As of now community participation in managing the infrastructural aspects of the school is the most clearly developed area of involvement. The role needs to extend beyond this, particularly in terms of impacting the quality component. Communities that are on the margins neither have the voice where they can demand or campaign actively for quality education and neither do they have the option of exiting to another school, thereby expressing their choice.⁷² As is evident from the JRM report, in and of itself the voice of women and girls is unlikely to emerge through individual committee members. Collective rather than individual assertions are necessary if committees are to be empowered enough to function in a context where there are multiple sources or points of power. Efforts to create voice translate to providing inputs to members and to create forums where both women and girls within the school have forums for discussion, reflection and action.

Mahila Samakhya, a government programme for education for women's empowerment that currently runs in 11 states, provides multiple programmes for the education of adolescent girls. These both provide a gender sensitive education that is engaging and relevant to the lives of poor and marginalized girls in rural areas, but also 'life skills' that enable them to confront the challenges of their lives and situations. Two strategies for residential, curriculum-based, gender sensitive education for rural girls are the Mahila Shikshan Kendras (MSK) and the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyalayas (KGBV).

A distinct part of the MS strategy is the involvement of the community in the mobilisation of and monitoring of school activities. This include, for example, building of collectives of rural girls (Kishori Manch) and for young girls and boys (Bala Sangham), where various issues relevant to the lives of young people, violation, rights and so on are discussed, norms discussed and questioned. In the context of girls' education specifically, forums such as the kishori manch have been spaces to confront various obstructions to education for girls. Struggles to not be pulled out of school, being supported by their peers to challenge norms and delay child marriage, gaining confidence and leadership to work with other young girls, bringing out newsletters, broadsheets, discussing issues of growing up and exclusion all provide voice to young girls and help them realize the transformatory potential of education in their lives. Girls cannot just be tied to the domain of

⁷¹ See THe SSA 11th Mid Term Review January 2010 pp 17. Chattisgarh State report

⁷² See Tilting at Windmills: Public Private Partnerships in Indian Education Today : Shailaya Fennell. RECOUP Working Paper 5. University of Cambridge. To understand how quantity and quality of education is impacted through consumer behaviour, where voice represents evidence of political responsiveness and exit devotes choice.

marriage and appropriate reproductive behavior. The school needs to imagine them in much more expanded ways than the community or family does.

These collectives also enable the creation of a second generation leadership, a group of young role models in the community, sensitive of structures of gender, class and caste, and who motivate others to take on opportunities for formal or non-formal education, as well as become more active participants of the community.

This is critical for SE, where we see a significant presence of private education providers. Despite the government's efforts in providing enhanced opportunities for learning, we see a perception existing within the parental community that private schools provide better quality education. The 12th JRM refers to this categorically and recommends that public campaigns be initiated to communicate and unpack this perception with school monitoring committees. This is also borne out by the CORD study which points out that in the Rajasthan urban sample, even though 70% of children were in private unaided schools, the pass percentage of children was similar or rather as low as that of children in Delhi Government schools. Still, within disadvantaged communities, we see an articulation of choice through their exit from the Government Schools or then by sending their sons to private schools and daughters to government schools. Government schools in the present context therefore, are catering to the most marginalized learners, in terms of social and economic categories. Therefore, quality issues are tied to equity concerns and it is important to create processes and forums for both members from disadvantaged groups and learners themselves to exercise their 'voice' within these spaces of public schooling.

2.2. DISCRIMINATION WITHIN SCHOOLS

The school as an institution is located in larger social realities, mirroring partly its existing inequities and hierarchies. Teachers, students and parents may carry assumptions, stereotypes or biases that determine the ways in which they interact with others. Schools are also spaces where these values, stereotypes can be questioned and new, more democratic ways of interaction and learning can be demonstrated. Values that promote diversity, inclusion and equitable ways of learning in larger groups is an arena that requires considerable work – in terms of how the everyday working and functioning of the school can be cognizant of these.

Discrimination in schools emerges from deeply entrenched hierarchical structures that carry the power of history, economic capital and social custom to strengthen their group. Inclusion must involve active steps against discriminatory behavior. An important point is that the forms in which discrimination exist may be specific to particular communities. The *Bordia Report* highlights the specific nature of discriminatory behavior that occurs with

children from SC, ST and Muslim communities.⁷³ Though these pertain to children in elementary education, the issues are by and large similar. According to the report this occurs at different levels. One is the discrimination faced by students vis a vis their teachers, the other is in relation to their peers and finally in terms of the management of schools and the system itself.

Children across class, caste, religion, gender and abilities face violence within the school. Corporal punishment is an area where despite the Supreme Court ban in 2000, incidents of stark violence and mental harassment leading to suicide have been part of newspaper reports with some cases being taken up at the national level by the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights. Public Hearings organized by Civil Rights groups have brought to the forefront stark cases of violence experienced by children in schools and hostels.⁷⁴

While research and documentation of this issue has been comparatively higher in the case of elementary education, the issue impacts the Secondary School sector critically, and in complex ways especially with the context of the high number of private schools, and the difficulty of ensuring action is taken against cases of violence. The recent case of Rouvanjit Rawla, a student of La Martinere for Boys, Kolkata highlighted that this issue concerns both public and private schools. However, the possibility of bodies like NCPCR and even state governments taking action becomes limited in the case of private schools given that they are managed by their own sets of rules and regulations.⁷⁵ Therefore, guidelines and norms need to be developed for all secondary schools. At present the Right to Education Act has resulted in the NCPCR developing specific guidelines for elementary schools so as to ensure that such violence be addressed as part of the implementation of the Act. The situation at the secondary level is more complex: while the guidelines (See Annexure 1) for Elementary Education can be extended to Government run Secondary schools, mechanisms for reaching out to private schools need to be ensured.

⁷³ See The Report of the Committee on Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan vis a vis the Right of Children To Free And Compulsory Education act 2009 pgs 21-26.

⁷⁴ A public hearing held in Chennai on 23rd January 2008 found that 'there were about 10 children who had committed suicide after being subjected to corporal punishment and more than 8 children subject to rape.' See Official D.O. No.CP / Public hearing / Chennai / 2007 / 3. Letter by NCPCR Chairperson Shanta Sinha to Dr. Poongothai, Minister of Social Welfare . See www.ncpcr.gov.in letters.

⁷⁵ In this case the NCPCR inquiry team found that the school board Rules conferred unfettered powers on the Principal allowing him to dismiss any student if he felt that they were not conforming to the schools values and vision. Also the school refused to take action against the erring teacher and principal, stating that the board they were affiliated to had the power to recommend action, not NCPCR. This observation is based on a conversation with Ms. K. Bhatta, head of the RTE division of NCPCR.

Another area of violence is the sexual abuse and sexual assault of learners in school. This is an area where considerable silence exists within schools and in the education community. The few cases that do come to light are covered in the national media as sensational stories, with rarely any follow-up of the outcomes of these cases. The shame and humiliation involved in such cases leads to either families avoiding charges, or the school as an institution guarding its reputation by handling the matter through private negotiations with the grieved parties, or then by denying the charges. Sexual Harassment Committees do perform a role but in the case of a criminal complaint being filed, the legal procedures rarely see the support of the school as an institution facilitating this process. Coverage by the media can be one but not the primary manner of confronting the issue of sexual violence in schools, especially in the context of SE and the fear of 'security' of girls, as well as in the changing urban landscape of mobile phones and internet. Orientation of staff and teachers on sexual abuse and sexual violence; interventions in the curriculum on issues of sexuality, are critical in strengthening school responsiveness to such cases.

Language and Identity issues

Languages are repositories of knowledge and culture and as a result intimately embedded in relations of power. As a result access or command over a particular language can make a difference in the way in which communities and individuals assert their own ideas and knowledge over others.⁷⁶ In the context of education, we see that the issue of tribal children learning in mainstream languages has been time and again referred to as contributing not merely to poor performance but also to the cultural alienation of tribal children. In elementary education efforts at producing material in local language (though limited) has been primarily seen as a means of creating a bridge between mother tongue and mainstream language.

The other concern has been with the inability of non-tribal teachers to speak and communicate with children from tribal backgrounds. The policy of teachers learning one tribal language has fallen off the education map a long time ago. The problem is further complicated with multi-lingualism as a lived reality in tribal areas. There is not one tribal language that needs to be prioritized but many that exist within a region and many do not even have a script. At the elementary level there is clarity in terms of policy regarding the need to develop materials, texts, train teachers etc who can teach in these languages.⁷⁷ However, for SE there is no clear articulation of what the approach to mother tongue needs to be. It is assumed that the learner with eight years of schooling will be well-versed in mainstream language.

⁷⁶ See Paul Brass in *Elite interests, popular passions and Social power in the language Politics of India* in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* Vol 27(3) pgs 356-365

⁷⁷ See The Report of the Committee on Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan vis a vis the Right of Children To Free And Compulsory Education act 2009 pg 24.

In the context of marginalized communities, often experiences of exclusion and the nature of disadvantage suffered are present in local dialects and forms of literature, specific to their region or community. All these are excluded from the domain of ‘what is worth knowing’ be it literature, social sciences or even the sciences.

In the case of Muslim children the absence of material in Urdu, lack of teachers who can teach in Urdu are only one part of the issue of provisioning. The other is the manner of representation of Muslims in textbooks and stereotypes associated with the community.⁷⁸ (This is true of tribal, though their construction or rather representation is trapped more in a romantic ideal of the tribal who is untouched by modernity). Research on textbooks shows the persistence of colonial constructions of India’s past both in literature and social sciences, which represents the Muslim as the *outsider* who was fought against by the patriots or nationalists.⁷⁹ This representation results in not only the construction of Muslims as the other but also in how the community begins to view itself. We see many of these attitudes emerge more explicitly at the middle school and the secondary level.

Moradabad

(This excerpt from Nirantar's ongoing research on Muslim women's education in UP and Bihar highlights some key factors related to the flow of government resources in education to disadvantage communities – here, Muslims. Not just this, it also points to the lack of data/information about the gaps in supply, which makes it challenging for the government to respond to specific issues of inequity. This is a substantial gap in the educational apparatus.)

Moradabad is among the districts in UP with the lowest literacy rates - 33.01%. SSA records (Annual Workplan and Budget, 2009-10, dist. Moradabad) show that the literacy rate rose from 30.9% in 1991 to 47.2% in 2001. The female literacy rate in 2001 is 30.77. According to the Status of Education Report for UP the role of public schooling is declining rapidly in UP whereas that of private schooling is increasing. This seems to be borne out by conversations in the field with people from diverse backgrounds. The general preference, even in the poorest working class neighbourhoods is for private schools. Thus, the largest numbers of schools in the state are the private unaided ones.

⁷⁸ CABE Committee on Regulatory Mechanisms for Textbooks and Parallel Textbooks taught in School outside the Government System 2005. See also Annexures on Curricula reform and challenges, p.124 .

⁷⁹ Ibid. pgs 64-69 and The study across five states shows how language textbooks still construct the idea of the good Muslim and the bad Muslim, where different personalities in the past prove their loyalty to the nation through dramatic and often violent resolutions. For instance Ibrahim Gardi’s loyalty to his Maratha king is established through a graphic description of his mutilation. Majority of these personalities are also always underlined as being deeply religious. History textbooks continue to represent national culture as emerging from Hindu traditions located in Ancient Indian history.

The government's direct involvement in education is mostly at the elementary level. Even expenditure on education is mostly on elementary school education, with secondary education taking second place in terms of expenditure. Only 10% of total education expenditure is being devoted to higher education. (Status of Education report). At the Inter and high school stage, while the government does run 11 government Inter colleges and gives aid to 84 private inter and high schools, it is the private unaided inter and high schools that are most in number, at 306. The enrollment data (Uttar Pradesh Education for All Project, 2008-09, Moradabad) available does not include a figure for Muslims but there is a figure for minorities - of a total of 1,54,616, 71,952 boys and 82,664 girls in classes 1 to 8(2008-09), the bulk of which is likely to be Muslim since there are fewer other minorities in the district.

One trend visible in schools in Moradabad is that female students decline as one moves from primary to higher levels of education. According to the District Inspector of School Office the enrollment figures for Moradabad district as on 30.09.2008 shows that number of girls in class X is 24,442 which drops to 10,774 in class XI. Female teachers also decline sharply in secondary education and perhaps, the two are closely connected. For many Muslim families, the presence of female teachers is an encouragement to send their daughters to school. There are no figures available for the number of Muslim female teachers but according to the officials, there are many, especially in the city area.

The Uttar Pradesh Ordinance No.20 of 1982 declared Urdu as the second official language in UP and there is an effort to promote Urdu in government schools. One Urdu teacher can be appointed in a school if there are a minimum of 10 students studying Urdu in a class or if there are a minimum of 40 Urdu medium students in the school. Even Hindu students study Urdu in many school and many of the Urdu teachers are Non-Muslims. They were sent for a special training for Urdu language. However, in these trainings priority is given to subjects like Maths, Science, Computer etc. But even in schools that are supposed to be Urdu medium, Urdu is largely taught as a language.

The Status of Education Report also reveals that the growth in the number of teachers has been much slower than the growth of government schools across UP. Although parateachers/shikshamitras have been recruited, the teacher pupil ratio is still at 1:52 in the state (down from 1:67). This is accompanied by very poor quality of teaching. (ASER report). Shabnam Parveen, a primary school teacher in Bilari block said that in her school there are about 150 children taught by 2 teachers and 2 shiksha mitras. "Now there is proper teaching going on in the school," says Shabnam, who has been teaching here for a few months, "Earlier, nobody would even come to the school."

SCHEMES IN UP

National Programme for Education Of Girls And Elementary Education (N.P.E.G.E.L)

Although NPEGEL has been in implementation in Moradabad since 2000, there are no figures available for how many Muslim girls have been enrolled and so, it is difficult to judge its impact. District level officials have little to say about it and there does not seem to be an understanding of how the scheme is to work or what the definition of a 'model school' is. Thus, although Moradabad's urban slums could easily qualify for the scheme, there is no clear presence of it. In Karula, for example, poor working class Muslim families continue to strive towards private schools. Even though, these schools charge a fee and provide a fairly poor education, the label of a private school is a sufficient lure.

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)

In Moradabad district, there are 16 KGBVs of which 13 are in rural blocks and 3 are in urban areas. Of these, 9 are run by NGOs and 7 by the government. At the KGBV, Nagar Kshetr, run directly by the government, of the 100 girls enrolled, 13 were Muslim, 47 were SC, 18 were OBC and 22 were in the general category. So, though the 75% reservation quota is being fulfilled, Muslim participation is low. This is also reflected in the all India figure for Muslim girls in KGBVs, which is only 7%. The residential aspect of the KGBVs is a problem for many Muslim families, say the officials. People are reluctant to send girls far away and the girls are also needed to contribute to the household work.

As a result, it becomes all the more incumbent on those who are formulating syllabi and curricula at the Secondary level to be aware of the challenges that exist and to engage with these issues both at the level of curricular reform and at the level of policy- can senior classes in their curricular promote diversity in less mechanical ways? Can they create the possibility of discussing inequality more actively rather than only didactically introducing the idea of equality? These are questions that need to be taken on as part of the quality-equity discussion at the national level. These are also equally if not more important for teachers and for formulating teachers training and finally for developing indicators that track how effective the development of citizenship among learners is operationalised.

SECTION 2: THE RMSA FROM A SOCIAL EQUITY PERSPECTIVE

Overall Observations

As part of its key mandates, the RMSA framework clearly states that it will work towards:

Providing access to Secondary Education with special reference to economically weaker sections of society, girls and the disabled, children residing in rural areas and other marginalised categories like SC, ST, OBC and educationally Backward Minorities (EBM).

In the objectives we see a coming together of quality and equity concerns with an emphasis both on the removal of barriers and the enhancement of intellectual, social and cultural learning.

The context and justification for the universalisation of Secondary Education is firmly located in the domain of moving towards a globalised economy, and the need for creation of a skilled, employable body of youth. The emphasis on moving the youth to the 'world of work', employability, jobs, opportunities and economic growth places a demand for higher order of education than that provided at the elementary level.

In this context – two issues that need to be addressed in the framework are:

- what exactly will the bridge from education to employability entail? What structural and curricular necessities does it imply for SE? What kind of opportunities and employment are visioned for the diverse group of learners, so that the justification of SE is as strong across gender, class, caste, religion, ethnic status.
- the comparative marginalization of the issue of preparing the learner to 'be a competent adult and citizen' – mentioned in passing in the framework. Deepening democracy and strengthening citizenship are objectives that flow from the vision of inclusion and universalisation of SE. The criticality of these two aspects for the inclusion of learners from marginalised communities into SE are immense and cannot be highlighted enough. In the event of this it might be worthwhile to look more closely at how the educational structure, planning, pedagogy and content will be impacted by this. The twin objectives – that of creating an employable mass of youth, and that of creating citizens - of the RMSA need to converge more meaningfully.

Strategy/Approach: Comments and Recommendations

Access is mapped primarily in terms of physical infrastructure regarding schools - the construction and availability of schools.

In addition to this, the approach also needs to take on board the question that differential access of groups to both private/state schools also exists in the domain of the social, economic, cultural and physical. The CABE Committee Report refers to this aspect clearly in the issue of how access is to be defined. Access includes providing

strategies to deal with obstructions that emerge with the specific location of learners. For instance a disabled learner might have a good functioning school within 5 kms, but may still not be able to reach it, or girls from particular communities may be involved in informal, home-based work and might opt out of Secondary Education. These enabling and disabling factors underlying access need to be more sharply articulated, including those related to the institutions of the family and community.

- ✓ A framework or guidelines need to be developed in terms of the nature of Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) PPP the RMSA will seek and promote proactively. The guidelines can put in place specific non-negotiables both at a state or national level: for instance, the number of schools that can be set up in PPP in rural and urban areas needs to be outlined as a policy guideline. Private agencies might prioritize areas of easy accessibility, resulting in urban areas gaining priority in such initiatives. A balance between urban and rural would be necessary, given that remote rural areas might require greater effort and allocation of resources.

There is also evidence to suggest that there is a gender based discrimination at work with respect to girls being sent to government schools and boys being sent to private schools. RMSA would need to track if such discrimination is being impacted through its interventions.

Quality is defined in the approach as related to the existence of basic infrastructure both in terms of the school and in terms of the availability of trained school teachers. Bridge courses in terms of enhancing learning and review of curricula are broad areas of emphasis.

- ✓ These are indeed, the starting points for ensuring that quality of secondary schooling is enhanced. At the same time it might be worthwhile to shift the provisioning aspect to the section on access and develop specific markers of quality that take on board the vision of inclusion of marginalized sections in acquiring high quality Secondary Education.
- ✓ For example quality markers can include tracking the number of SC, ST , Muslim boys and girls opting for Science and Maths in H.SE, performance of children in different subject areas, participation of learners (especially girls) from different communities in inter-school or district level events, regularity of inputs provided to teachers in terms of in-service trainings, workshops, regularity of meetings held with SMCs and participation of parents and community in SMC meetings etc.
- ✓ Kendriya Vidyalayas are among the most intensively resourced schools and it is heartening to see that they will set the benchmark for other secondary schools to

emulate. However, some clarity on how these norms are going to be followed/developed, in consultation with states needs to be undertaken.

Another critical area that is absent and needs to enter as an area of intervention to promote equity is the reformulation of teachers training. Preparedness of teachers to understand, appreciate and transact knowledge that emerges from the local context, linking it to larger concepts and practicing inclusive methods of teaching and learning, involve concerted efforts at building and developing the skills and perspective of teachers in this direction. Teachers need to be equipped such that they can transact a pedagogy that is learner centred, builds on the children's existing knowledge and is promotive of learners' access to information, critical thinking and equity.

It needs to be ensured that the extent and nature of participation of parents and the community within the school management committees and the village education committees is not limited to monitoring narrowly defined management functions. The engagement needs to extend to active involvement in planning and providing feedback to the system as a whole. In order to enable this the committees need inputs in order to clarify their own role and for school management. Committees need to include women from women's collectives and local NGOs.

Equity: An important aspect that the equity section in the framework takes on board is making available a range of facilities to learners from marginalized groups in the form of hostels, uniforms, books, scholarships, provision of facilities to disabled children.

- ✓ At the secondary stage economic, social and cultural differences assert themselves explicitly in terms of who seeks Secondary Education, who stays, who goes to which kind of school. As we have argued earlier, quality and equity are not independent of each other but are closely tied together. In the manner in which the quality section needs to integrate the equity vision, the equity section too needs to address issues of quality of provisioning more explicitly.
- ✓ There is a need to move beyond what has or is being denied to children and take on board how the functioning and working of the Secondary School can be oriented to strengthen social justice and equity. From the *hardware*, the system needs to respond to the *software* of education. This requires a further unpacking in this framework of how 'inclusive education' is being envisioned in all schools. Participation of children from diverse backgrounds, ensuring mixed classrooms; increasing representation of teachers from these socially excluded communities in Secondary Education, along with a reimagining of curricula to include the life world of children from diverse

communities as suggested earlier would be value added to both the component on quality and on equity.

- ✓ As stated above in the section on quality, shifts in attitudes of learners that are being enabled are an important measure of the quality of education. An important dimension of this is the extent to which information, understanding and attitudes related to equity are being enabled. This would include information related to entitlements such as government schemes aimed at marginalized communities, understanding the structural nature of inequity, etc.

Institutional Reform: If a major section of learners are going to come from families where they are first-generation learners then this will have implications for the planning, implementation and assessment carried out by related institutions.

- ✓ Building partnerships across institutions, be it NCERT, NUEPA, IASEs, NIOS, university departments of education is seen as a priority to study in order to research, implement and monitor programmes across institutions. However the challenge for Secondary Education is going to be in terms of the convergence or partnerships it can forge with different ministries. The integration with the Ministry of Social Justice, Minority Affairs, Youth Affairs, Women and Child need to be prioritized in order to strengthen the outcomes and rationale for universalizing elementary education in order to strengthen the outreach of RMSA to marginalized groups.
- ✓ The nature of capacity and perspective building for administrative and managerial cadre too needs to inform this reform process.

Assessment is another arena that needs specific attention. *What we track is ultimately what we do and implicitly it is what we value.* The push in SSA towards getting children to school, efforts and monitoring systems tracked this successfully to impressive success in terms of its goals related to access. Enrolment drives, identifying out-of-school children, mobilising community all contributed to what was being tracked within the system. However, the question that the 12th JRM on SSA pertinently raised was 'It is important to think beyond 'access' to the question of 'access to what' (page 11 Key recommendations to address the four goals of SSA point 10).

- ✓ Monitoring and assessment formats need to address this in the development of indicators, target setting and information gathering. Additionally, the experience of SSA indicates that quality does not necessarily follow access in a stage-oriented process. Quality and thereby equity issues need to inform this process right at the start of the RMSA. The nature of data collection in SEMIS needs to be informed of this

perspective. The school level plan needs to convert equity and quality objectives into results which can be tracked through concrete, visible and applicable indicators.

The approach to assessment should be such that:

- ✓ There is a mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators. Qualitative indicators would relate to process and record ‘markers’ of change. Qualitative indicators are particularly important in the context of the equity agenda since conventional quantitative indicators fail to capture the views of learners, particularly from marginalized communities. Qualitative indicators developed need to be rigorous. They can be quantified where possible.
- ✓ Tracking access and quality as it relates to inputs is very important. Indicators are needed therefore for inputs and not only outputs and outcomes. For example in depth assessment of teacher training and an enabling environment for teachers needs to be undertaken.
- ✓ Assessment tools related to pedagogy and attitudinal shifts for both learners and teachers need to be developed. Such tools do not as of yet exist and will need to be developed – sufficient time and resources will need to be invested in this endeavour.
- ✓ Assessment should be used to provide feedback of knowledge and ideas for further planning and implementation, not just to sum up and explain performance and achievements;

Preparation and Planning

This section sets out in detail the process of preparing and undertaking baseline studies at the District level in order to create an understanding of the existing situation on the ground both in terms of what is the nature of provisioning required and the areas of specific focus in a district. It also lays out the map of change in terms of the nature of institutional and curricular reforms required. Some degree of capacity building is envisaged in the initial phase in order to ensure that data collection and the baseline studies are grounded in terms of the overall vision of the Abhiyan.

Planning draws on the preparatory phase (expected to last anywhere between four to eight months) to set into motion a core group at the district level that will provide an annual plan and a perspective plan. The first involves a detailed description of the targets and priorities for the coming year and the second sets out the roadmap to meet the overall objectives of RMSA. These plans will be consolidated and whetted at the state and national level. Selection and capacity building of those who are to be involved in this exercise will be undertaken. High

quality in the planning process is to be facilitated through institutional reforms and involvement of local communities. Guidelines for what a District plan must have and their procedure of appraisal are also set out in the framework. Supervision of activities, release of funds and financing pattern is set out in this chapter.

Observations and Recommendations

Overall the process of planning and visioning of a majority of activities in this section moves from the district to the state to the Centre.

Forums for reflection and analysis need to be planned for concretely if participation of SMCs, PRIs, local NGOs, self-help groups, women's organizations, retired teachers, and literary figures is sought. Mechanisms of sharing, accountability and feedback need to be developed in relation to the baseline studies, the plan and the perspective plan. The role of the school in the planning process also needs clarity. What is the kind of resource support they can provide, and how is school management accountable to the education system, the SMCs or the Panchayati Raj institutions?

- ✓ **Baseline/mapping exercise:** In this exercise for assessing 'needs', quality and equity indicators, it might be worthwhile to undertake Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in select villages/blocks where extreme inequities exist to develop the baseline. This exercise can also be undertaken in order to capture equity-based questions for inclusion in the baseline form being developed across the state. In this PRA, the team should include state-level functionaries and resource agencies, NGOs, women's groups, experts in particular subjects. This might set out the larger grid to understand the particular nature and reasons for exclusion in a district in relation to SC, ST, Muslim, disabled children and girls.
- ✓ **An orientation of the District team** would be necessary in preparation for the PRA.
- ✓ **This PRA will build skills and capacities of particular teams** to understand the nature of challenges in areas of extreme inequity and enable them to respond and provide inputs for district level teams.
- ✓ **The engagement of the group of resource agencies and experts** can be sustained in the form of a State Resource Group over the period of the Abhiyan for capacity building and other purposes. A National Resource Group (NRG) can also be established, drawing on people with considerable experience and expertise both in terms of issues of equity and quality who can vision and support the process of identifying needs and ensuring rigour in planning. The NRG should link with the State Resource Group to facilitate its activities, as

well as be involved in feedback (periodically) on implementation, facilitating external reviews etc.

- ✓ District level plans should include monitoring of inputs – in the form of training workshops, events, mobilisation of community etc.
- ✓ The process of setting up SMDCs (School Management and Development Committees) needs to align itself to the systems outlined in the Right to Education Act (2010).
- ✓ The process of constitution of SMDCs needs to be located in the experience of setting up village education committees. As part of the representation from the community, women who are active in village level leadership and from marginalized communities must be prioritized in constituting the SMDCs. Apart from women in PRIs, women (especially SC/ST) from sanghas or samitis must have space within the structure of the SMC and a voice in the secondary school structure. Jathas and melas as engagement in community level women's forums need to be key strategies to begin talking to the community and to understand their aspirations and expectations from Secondary Education.
- ✓ Orientation of the SMC on issues of quality and equity in secondary school needs to become a key component of state plans. Civil society organisations, Mahila Samakhya programme and women's groups can partner with the state.

School Infrastructure, Learning Resources, Teachers and Quality Improvement

The infrastructure section details the nature of infrastructural guidelines for the upgradation and setting up of Secondary Schools and suggests norms that are closely tied to the Kendriya Vidyalaya norms. The quality section focuses on the areas where the mission will intervene to add value to the nature of learning and teaching within the Secondary School. Quality clusters around development and management of MIS systems, curriculum, availability and enhancement of learning resources through the creation of positive learning spaces, support through counselors, reform of testing mechanisms and capacity building of both teachers and educational planners and administrators.

Observations and Recommendations

Given the paucity of research and writing on Secondary Education in India, the baseline and micro studies, in addition to the SEMIS data, will be a major contribution to building an understanding on Secondary Education. It might be worthwhile to initiate longitudinal studies on the nature of impact of secondary and HSE on first generation learner in terms of impact on work opportunities and the benefits of education to marginalized communities.

Broad observations and recommendations on the areas of curricula reform, adolescent education and teacher education are discussed below. More details on challenges and possible innovations are attached as annexures (p. 120 onwards)

Curricula design and formulation

The RMSA in passing mentions curricula reform as a tool for increasing the quality of education. The significance and scope of this engagement in the content of education needs to be expanded considerably. If the secondary school curriculum is to be reformed on the basis of the transformative goals put out in NPE 1986/1992, as well as the curricular principles set out in NCF 2005, there need to be systems for impact assessment of these reformed curricular at the state level. Certain concepts and frameworks of subjects need to be unpacked in the context of an inclusive and equitable framework for Secondary Education. What are the core values of these subjects – how do issues of social equity, development of citizenship, leadership, building confidence to participate in the public sphere – fit into existing or reformed curricula? Parameters to assess curricular reforms will enable States to make meaningful changes in their curricula. The transformative potential and the role of curricula in building skills, citizenship and in breaking away from stereotypes related to identity, region, gender etc can be set out as a quality objective in curricular reform.

The RMSA framework provides spaces for innovative ways in which to make secondary school education accessible and relevant to different groups. The provisioning of revised science and math curricula which is located in local realities as well as laboratories at all schools has the potential of addressing issues of inequity in terms of choosing and coping with these subjects. Additionally, the introduction of arts and crafts education, and ICTs opens up new spaces and opportunities for learners from different backgrounds. In this context, some concrete areas of concern and focus should be:

- ✓ *The need for an integrated approach to the inclusion of local context across disciplines.* Local context in the domain of language, existing oral traditions, local histories, geographical contexts (human and physical) and last but not the least local technologies and the daily use of science all demand a place in the curriculum. This requires planning, content development, in consultation with community and state-level resource persons, in terms of how local knowledge and practices link to language, social science, science, art etc. Some exemplar modules need to be developed at the state level for district level use. Monitorable benchmarks can be developed for inclusion of a particular percentage of locally developed or district or state-specific material in curricula.
- ✓ *Contextualising ICT education:* While promoting ICTs it is critical to vision the forward link for these pedagogies and innovative resources in the curriculum. Who has access to them in the school space, and how do they become relevant to the life world of the poor, rural, marginalised learner? Is the quality and approach to training impacted by the social location of the learner? How can we open up new avenues and opportunities through ICTs? Opportunities for rural journalism,

print, radio, broadcast, computer operators, skills for monitoring of local development etc need to be opened up. These linkages should be made explicit in the curricular framework itself. ICTs can also play a role in making available academic resources to both teachers and learners in an interesting and live manner. It can be of particular significance in supporting the teaching of English. These ICT learning packages must be located in the world of the learner.

Recommendations on Curricular Reform Processes

- ✓ Prior to any review of curricula, there should be discussions at the state level to reflect on the nature of subject teaching. Have there been changes or new areas opening up in the discipline, according to which inclusions or re structuring needs to happen? What are the contemporary needs and issues to be included in the curricula?
- ✓ Certain process guidelines should be developed for textbook review and reform. This should involve academics, teachers, activists, local artists etc. The NCERT process of writing text books post NCF can be used to create process guidelines for other states.
- ✓ Process of textbook reform be rigorous and open to peer review by a committee of senior academics, educationists and development workers.
- ✓ New curricula material to be introduced along with capacity building inputs for teachers on the perspective and content of the new books, and guidelines as to how the new material can be used
- ✓ Quality of the material, as well as its impact and transaction too to be monitored, through independent research, classroom observations, FGDs with learners and teachers
- ✓ Curriculum development in states with significant SC / ST populations needs to incorporate aspects of their crafts, knowledge, skill systems, and language as an integral part of subject-specific knowledge. At the secondary level the inclusion of subaltern writing in regional languages can provide positive and rich ways of linking languages spoken or the Lingua franca dominant and that taught in the school. Translations of both oral and written literature are another significant step that SE curricula development needs to take on board.

Adolescent Education Programme/ Guidance and Counselling

Given the age group of learners in Secondary Education both AEP and guidance and counseling acquire considerable importance. Not merely 'adolescent' or 'life skills' education, but the entire secondary education system (including access, infrastructure, content and school environment) needs to adopt a positive approach to adolescence. How best can the framework help to create a group of young people that is aware of social, cultural and

economic inequity, and develop its agency in transforming this? Curriculum content and learner counselling cannot be seen from the perspective of crisis management of adolescents. The Framework is also not clear as to the exact role of the counselor. Are they career guidance personnel or are they also to double up as counselors who will deal with the emotional issues of adolescents? Will they be also handling children with special needs? The integration of these issues and concerns both in the In-service training of teachers and that of School principals is a welcome step but needs to be thought through. If interventions are being made in the emotional world of the adolescent, they need to be careful as to not be judgmental and moralistic of young people's concerns and queries.

- ✓ The approach to adolescence within educational curricula should be positive, recognizing the linkages between identity, self confidence, well being and empowerment. It should enable adolescent learners, particularly girls, to understand the importance of countering shame and fear with respect to the body, in terms of the ability to report sexual violations and diseases linked to parts of the body that are sexualized.
- ✓ The conceptualisation of 'life skills' in adolescent education should be more holistic, including skills that prepare young people to be active citizens and potential leaders
- ✓ The educational curricula should address diversity, and seek to be political, building an indepth understanding of 'why' social norms – these may be relating to class, caste, gender and/or sexuality - are the way they are and why those who are seen to be challenging these norms are sought to be punished.
- ✓ The curricula should include or be complemented by spaces and fora for adolescents to raise issues pertinent to their lives, to question and challenge their circumstances, and to develop the agency to confront them. RMSA must commit itself to building such forums for young girls and boys to interact and participate in building their own understanding of their rights, entitlements and role as a citizen.
- ✓ Teachers trainings to adopt some of these strategies for teachers
 - building understanding of gender & sexuality
 - skills of empathy / non-judgment / listening.

Teacher Education

Teachers are invariably the missing link in terms of substantive change in quality and equity within the school space. Without sufficient capacity building, they locate concerns of gender, equity and caste in the domain of formal inclusion of learners from marginalized groups or then look at these as attitudinal changes that need to be made. The link with curricula or pedagogy is not clear to them. An integrated, interdisciplinary course on understanding equality / equity and its relationship to society and development of self in the context of schooling needs to be included in the formal training of teachers as a specific paper; for in-

service teachers it can be developed as an intensive one month rigorous course facilitated by NCERT, NEUPA, University departments of education and other resource agencies.

- ✓ An immediate revision of the teacher education curricula, incorporating compulsory components on building understanding on inclusion, equity and equality, social structures in the context of school
- ✓ The period of in-service training to be visioned as a multiplicity of inputs which follow a structured progression in terms of concepts and skills. The curriculum for teacher education should develop an understanding of what transformative education, or ideas of inclusion and equity imply not only for the learner but also for teachers.
- ✓ Trainings need to make clear connections between disciplinary subject content and issues of equity.
- ✓ There should be greater research on teachers' own understanding related to issues of equity, the realities of school/classroom processes, so that more effective models of training can be developed.
- ✓ Planned orientation of teachers on acts such as the SC/ST Act, Disabilities act, Sexual Harassment Bill etc needs to take place
- ✓ Teachers to be a part of curricula reform, as well as policy formation processes.
- ✓ Teacher education programmes need to build teachers' skills for CCE – since assessment in the form of reflection and 'higher order thinking' is not part of their training.

Orientation of Education planners and Administrators

The SSA 12th Joint Review Mission underlines the importance of building a sense of ownership and initiative to help solve local problems at the level of the school and not merely report it to higher authorities. The CABE Committee report on Universalization of Secondary Education too underlines this and recommends a six-month distinct training for headmasters / principals in order to improve both professional skills and perspective of those who are expected to take informed decisions within the school. As a long-term objective, it might be worth putting such a course into operation, planned and designed in collaboration with NUEPA. Certification of such courses might motivate teachers to seek admission in such courses

Special Focus Groups

In the planning section and also in this section there is a commitment to mainstreaming of gender issues and to ensure that all activities of the Abhiyan are gender inclusive. Special Schemes, provision of female teachers, transportation and hostel facilities are key strategies to pull adolescent girls into the secondary school. Education of Children belonging to SC/ST communities is oriented towards contextualization of curriculum, participation of communities

in SMC, bridging cultural difference, supplementing learning through teaching support , hostels scholarships and mobilization of community etc. Improved monitoring, incentives, remedial teaching are the primary strategies that the RMSA lays out.

Observations and Recommendations:

The substantive inclusion of special groups will emerge if the planning, implementation and monitoring of the RMSA is a participatory process, involving voices of parents and community members especially from socially marginalised groups. Participation and inclusion then expands from the school, to the broader context and environment in which RMSA must function. Most of the observations and recommendations in terms of the participation of 'special focus groups' therefore centre on building a voice and a stake for the community, and especially of those on the margins, in Secondary Education. Another important point is that different categories of marginalisation – gender, caste, class, tribe, religion etc – also intersect, and so it is not possible to have a very sectoral or compartmentalised approach to the mainstreaming of marginalised groups.

The creation of a congenial atmosphere in the school is mentioned in this section, with no elaboration as to what this might entail. The quality and culture of the school are key components in creating the 'push-out' -factor' and this needs to be articulated more sharply.

Girls

Enrollment of girls at the secondary stage of education and their retention is a complex task as girls at this age are particularly vulnerable both to economic constraints that result in families prioritising their sons' education in a situation of limited resources. In addition to this they also experience a heightened control over their mobility and access to public spaces with gendered norms governing with greater effect their life options. Marital and reproductive realities kick-in in a powerful way for many adolescent girls. Therefore, gender is not merely an issue involving figures related to enrollment and completion. It involves an engagement with the community in multiple ways- understanding their socio-economic and political realities. As a result, rather than develop a piecemeal strategy a holistic strategy can have an impact on different categories of excluded groups simultaneously.

- ✓ The community must be institutionally involved in efforts to retain girls from marginalized sections in school. There is considerable experience to show that the active involvement of Mahila Sanghas and local women's federations has a positive and long term impact on promoting girls education in an area. Continued support is necessary to keep girls in school and it is through the active participation and inclusion of these samitis and sanghas that push out of girls has been dealt with both at the level of the family, community and also the school. It is important to underline here that these samitis must not merely be seen as mobilisers, primarily responsible

for bringing girls to school and to motivate the community but that they be empowered through an active role in the SMC.

- ✓ Gender sensitization of SMCs and PRI institutions is a necessary input if the active participation or a meaningful representation of women in the SMCs is to take place. Gender inputs must form a part of the process of review of school plans or reporting to the SMC.
- ✓ The development of forums for adolescent girls is another positive process that has built the voice of girls within their families and community to demand or aspire towards their own learning and access to education.
- ✓ Public meetings to share the impact of RMSA can be organized, in which girls, teachers, SMC members can speak and share their experience of school, the nature of learning and activities. Girls can showcase their learning, putting up stalls. This too will create synergy and confidence in the community regarding the quality and accountability of the school to its stakeholders. This can be organized on an annual basis.

Children with Special Needs

- ✓ Access is crucial, but greater engagement and empowerment of disabled learners must be simultaneous. Inclusion into mainstream implies better teacher training, necessary resources, greater participation in the curriculum, culture and community of school setting.
- ✓ There should be a focus on increasing relevance of curriculum for learners with disabilities. In terms of textbooks, inclusion of disability needs to be from the perspective of a social marginalization that needs to be addressed and engaged with, instead of being merely an issue of interest and empathy (in the form of success stories for instance. See Curriculum Reform section)
- ✓ Curriculum should build in aspects of democracy, citizenship - awareness and confidence building, increasing the ability to become part of social groups, to develop new relationships, including with the state, and to access information about rights and entitlements
- ✓ Secondary Education needs to provide a smoother transition into work, not be limited to, but acknowledge the importance of economic independence for learners with disabilities
- ✓ Access to benefits/entitlements should be transparent. There should be collaboration between State and NGOs, more information available in the school – the school to be a resource for access to a range of welfare and entitlements

- ✓ Here too training of teachers – both specifically on issues of disability and other trainings

Other Groups

- ✓ Increasing and strengthening the provision and quality of hostel schemes, is an excellent and much needed strategy for bringing learners, especially girls from marginalized communities into schools.
- ✓ This section recognizes that cultural and linguistic factors contribute significantly to the exclusion and under-performance of tribal learners. Multi-lingualism is a lived reality for the learners and the education system can draw on the learners to create and generate material in their own languages. Given the huge backlog that exists in terms of the availability of reading and writing material in these languages at the secondary level, the community of learners can facilitate this process far more efficiently. Projects in specific schools can be undertaken and such reading material or academic material can be created. Special units can be created in the SCERTs that can be given specific responsibility of facilitating this process and also of translating texts from one language to the other.
- ✓ With regard to Muslim learners, there needs to be more and better quality documentation to understand their educational situation and needs. A majority of Muslim children study in government schools and it is cultural, quality and discrimination issues that are to be tackled here. Efforts need to be made to ensure that teachers own understanding and bias towards cultural differences be part of the efforts to include and retain Muslim learners in Secondary Education.

School as a safe, discrimination free space

‘Safety’ is an important issue and needs to be seen at multiple levels, and multiple contexts – gender, class, caste, ethnicity, language, dis/ability and so on. If Secondary Education is to be inclusive, especially of ‘vulnerable’ groups which easily fall out of the system, the issue of safety and discrimination must be addressed. Teachers in their attitudes and practice might be discriminatory towards learners from such communities. Young people might experience discrimination also within the school from their peers. At the level of management and systems - be it admission or the application procedures for scholarships; or curriculum and pedagogy, the nature of representation in text books, or use of mainstream languages of power - the exclusion operates at multiple levels. Schools need to be seen as ‘safe spaces’ or then ‘zero tolerance zones’ for discrimination on these counts. In relation to girls, it also needs to be highlighted that cases of sexual abuse, rape or assault are either silenced or then caught in bureaucratic legalese, which discourages action on the part of the parents.

At present, the RMSA framework does speak of a Grievance Redressal mechanism - but this is limited to the placing of a register in the school, in which complaints can be written up with an action taken column. Though the effort is to ensure a quick action on complaints, many issues of discrimination are complex matters and it might not be possible for parents to go and write a complaint. There needs to be some thinking on how schools are going to be made safe spaces for young learners, develop guidelines for norms of behavior that teachers and school administration need to follow, mechanisms of sharing these with the students, SMCs and the parent community.

Recommendations on strengthening the grievance redressal system in SE

- ✓ Awareness building of the rights of children and learners in the school needs to be actively built into the curricular process. Teachers too need to be informed of different legislations like the SC/ ST Act , Sexual Harassment Bill and guidelines, Sexual Assault Bill etc as they might also be at the receiving end of discriminatory or abusive behavior themselves.
- ✓ Timely handling of complaints and documentation is desirable. The involvement of women's collectives – sanghas or samitis – in raising issues of discrimination and violence should be institutionalised, electing representations to the SMCs. Appointment of an Ombudsman, instead of depending on internally appointed Grievance Redressal officers, will have a positive effect on promoting non-discriminatory behavior in schools. The Ombudsman will strengthen the State machinery in taking prompt and effective action.
- ✓ At the State level, a clear and unequivocal message needs to be sent to the districts that discriminatory behavior will not be accepted in schools. Campaigns, posters and celebrations of events like Ambedkar Jayanti, Women's Day, Human Rights Day etc can be promoted.

MANAGEMENT

This section lays out the roles of the National Mission and the Executive committees at the nation level in implementing the programme and the nature of the state mission authority for RMSA. It proposes, at the state level, integration with the department of Rural Development and its rural employment programme for infrastructure development. It seeks in the governing council a range of members from NGOs, social activists, PRIs, teachers' unions. It also sets out the nature of the SMDC. The latter is to be constituted from parents, teachers and principals, subject experts, PRI members, representatives from marginalized communities and education department officials etc.

Comments and Observations

- ✓ A range of public-private partnerships are being mentioned, including with NGOs, as well as in the context of ICTs – in the areas of research and evaluation, as well as capacity building.
 - ✓ Certain guidelines should be put into place in terms of the nature and objectives of Public Private partnerships, particularly where organisations or institutions that are commercially invested in these areas. That the needs and interests of learners from marginalized communities are being met must be monitored in these partnerships.
 - ✓ The mandate of the academic subcommittee covers a wide range of issues. The committee is constituted of parents, students and experts – some or all of which may not be in a position to manage a mandate that spans academic quality, as well as equity related concerns, monitoring and supervision and so on. It is also not clear how the role of the academic subcommittee is distinct from the SMDC.
 - ✓ Teachers must be more actively involved in the functioning of the academic subcommittee.
 - ✓ The identification of gender and equity as a separate unit works on the SSA pattern of compartmentalising equity issues from other domains which are equally invested in equity and gender – even planning, as pointed out earlier is critically located in addressing these issues. Each unit should report on equity and quality indicators.
 - ✓ The process of setting up SMDCs (School Management and Development Committees) needs to align itself to the systems outlined in the Right to Education Act (2010).
- Wherever schools cover both Elementary and Secondary sections, a single committee - the SMDC - be set up to take on the role of monitoring and development of the school. Where the Secondary School is a standalone institution, mechanisms governing the SMDC at the elementary school level should inform the functioning of the SDMC. It might be more efficient for the education system to follow a common system across elementary and secondary school.
 - The SDMC as well as the other sub committees mentioned would require support from local and district level experts, as well as NGOs. Specific trainings and inputs could be organised for members of the SDMC in order orient and strengthen their capacities. A module or modules be developed including issues related to gender, discrimination , equity in addition to building a broad understanding of monitoring and tracking systems.
 - District level plans should be developed and shared with SMDC and PRI members to build their stakes in the RMSA interventions.

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ANNEXURES

A 1. Details of schooling efficiency as evident from NSS Household survey, 2007-08⁸⁰

	% attend ing	% attend ing <8	attend ing 8	attend ing beyon d grade 8	% not attend ing	neve r enrol led	ever enroll ed & dropp ed out	drop ped out befor e com pleti ng grad e 8	dropp ed out after compl etin g gr 8	drop ped out after comp letin g beyo nd gr 8
age14- 15 years	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Total	71.36 %	11.85 %	15.15 %	44.36 %	28.64 %	8.49 %	20.04 %	15.63 %	2.70%	1.71%
Boys	74.61 %	12.18 %	16.53 %	45.89 %	25.39 %	6.54 %	18.75 %	14.79 %	2.31%	1.64%
Girls	67.62 %	11.46 %	13.55 %	42.60 %	32.38 %	10.75 %	21.52 %	16.59 %	3.14%	1.79%
SC	65.62 %	13.90 %	15.37 %	36.35 %	34.38 %	10.54 %	23.77 %	18.56 %	3.60%	1.61%
ST	59.15 %	16.24 %	15.07 %	27.85 %	40.85 %	12.26 %	28.58 %	23.98 %	3.20%	1.40%
OBC	72.04 %	11.50 %	14.48 %	46.06 %	27.96 %	9.21 %	18.63 %	14.14 %	2.65%	1.85%
Muslim	54.85 %	13.46 %	11.86 %	29.53 %	45.15 %	15.59 %	29.06 %	24.26 %	2.94%	1.86%
Gen cat Hindu	86.27 %	8.39%	17.23 %	60.65 %	13.73 %	2.53 %	11.14 %	7.87 %	1.68%	1.58%
Non- Muslim rel minoriti es	80.59 %	6.54%	15.65 %	51.94 %	19.41 %	4.46 %	14.92 %	11.74 %	1.97%	1.21%

⁸⁰ Reproduced from Estimation provided in the forth coming document Status of Secondary Education Participation in India: An Analysis of NSS 64th Round Data by Deepa Shankar, South Asia Education, The World Bank 2010, pp 15 & 16.

MPCE Q1	61.12 %	14.23 %	14.14 %	32.75 %	38.88 %	11.39 %	27.34 %	22.74 %	2.74%	1.86%
MPCE Q2	67.74 %	13.30 %	16.12 %	38.31 %	32.26 %	10.27 %	21.95 %	17.45 %	2.93%	1.56%
MPCE Q3	69.19 %	11.98 %	15.53 %	41.69 %	30.81 %	9.59 %	21.20 %	16.56 %	2.95%	1.69%
MPCE Q4	77.10 %	10.69 %	14.93 %	51.47 %	22.90 %	6.15 %	16.54 %	12.16 %	2.55%	1.83%
MPCE Q5	86.99 %	7.46%	14.65 %	64.88 %	13.01 %	3.13 %	9.77%	6.17 %	2.02%	1.58%

A 2. Details of schooling efficiency as evident from NSS Household survey, 2007-08⁸¹										
age16_17										
Total	54.71 %	1.92%	2.37%	50.42 %	45.29 %	8.68%	36.4 4%	19.59 %	6.31%	10.5 5%
Boys	59.14 %	2.06%	2.49%	54.59 %	40.86 %	6.35%	34.3 5%	19.14 %	5.60%	9.61 %
Girls	49.50 %	1.75%	2.24%	45.51 %	50.50 %	11.43 %	38.8 9%	20.10 %	7.14%	11.6 5%
SC	47.76 %	2.30%	2.77%	42.69 %	52.24 %	10.44 %	41.7 2%	25.07 %	7.08%	9.57 %
ST	42.59 %	2.51%	3.58%	36.50 %	57.41 %	14.30 %	43.0 9%	28.03 %	5.25%	9.82 %
OBC	53.75 %	1.96%	2.41%	49.39 %	46.25 %	9.35%	36.6 8%	18.10 %	7.03%	11.5 5%
Muslim	40.50 %	2.57%	2.37%	35.57 %	59.50 %	16.14 %	42.5 6%	26.70 %	7.23%	8.64 %
Gen cat Hindu	71.17 %	1.27%	1.77%	68.14 %	28.83 %	2.71%	26.0 8%	10.91 %	4.54%	10.6 3%
Non-Muslim rel minorities	64.98 %	2.78%	3.44%	58.75 %	35.02 %	5.59%	29.2 3%	16.26 %	3.93%	9.04 %
MPCE Q1	40.78 %	2.44%	2.92%	35.42 %	59.22 %	11.58 %	47.4 0%	28.63 %	6.72%	12.0 5%
MPCE Q2	46.63 %	2.00%	2.57%	42.06 %	53.37 %	11.10 %	42.1 9%	23.66 %	7.41%	11.1 2%
MPCE Q3	51.27 %	1.88%	2.16%	47.23 %	48.73 %	9.98%	38.6 7%	21.23 %	5.74%	11.7 0%
MPCE Q4	61.10 %	2.10%	2.57%	56.44 %	38.90 %	6.50%	32.1 9%	15.25 %	6.72%	10.2 1%
MPCE Q5	76.06 %	1.09%	1.57%	73.40 %	23.94 %	3.60%	20.0 5%	8.09%	4.72%	7.24 %

⁸¹ Reproduced from Estimation provided in the forth coming document Status of Secondary Education Participation in India: An Analysis of NSS 64th Round Data by Deepa Shankar, South Asia Education, The World Bank 2010, pp 15 & 16.

A 3

1: Attendance rate by gender

Panel A: 2004/5
2004/5

Change: 1999/2000-

	All-India	Boys	Girls	All-India	Boys	Girls
Age 6-11	85.1%	86.9%	83.0%	21.9	20.4	23.5
Age 12 - 14	80.2%	84.8%	75.0%	11.5	10.8	12.0
Age 15-18	47.9%	52.7%	42.3%	4.8	3.4	6.6
Total	73.1%	76.3%	69.6%	14.2	13.0	15.8

Panel B: 1999/2000
1999/2000

Change: 1993/4-

	All-India	Boys	Girls	All-India	Boys	Girls
Age 6-11	63.2%	66.5%	59.5%	4.1	3.1	5.3
Age 12-14	68.7%	74.0%	63.0%	2.5	0.5	5.5
Age 15-18	43.1%	49.3%	35.7%	2.4	1.3	4.1
Total	58.9%	63.3%	53.8%	3.6	2.3	5.3

Panel C: 1993/4

	All-India	Boys	Girls
Age 6-11	59.1%	63.4%	54.2%
Age 12 - 14	66.2%	73.5%	57.5%
Age 15 - 18	40.7%	48.0%	31.6%
Total	55.3%	61.0%	48.5%

Source: NSS, rounds 50, 55 and 61.

The attendance rate for an age range is the proportion of children of that age range that report attending school

at the time of the survey.

Changes are percentage point differences.

Figures weighted using NSS sample weights.

A3

2: Attendance rate by sector

Panel A: 2004/5
2004/5

Change: 1999/2000-

	All-India	Urban	Rural	All-India	Urban	Rural
Age 6-11	85.1%	88.9%	84.0%	21.9	18.8	22.8
Age 12-14	80.2%	86.2%	78.3%	11.5	7.3	12.9
Age 15-18	47.9%	60.4%	43.5%	4.8	3.4	5.6
Total	73.1%	78.9%	71.4%	14.2	10.8	15.5

Panel B: 1999/2000 Change: 1993/4-1999/2000

	All-India	Urban	Rural	All-India	Urban	Rural
Age 6-11	63.2%	70.1%	61.2%	4.1	-1.8	5.7
Age 12-14	68.7%	78.9%	65.4%	2.5	-1.7	4.0
Age 15-18	43.1%	57.0%	37.9%	2.4	0.0	2.7
Total	58.9%	68.1%	55.9%	3.6	-1.1	5.0

Panel C: 1993/4

	All-India	Urban	Rural
Age 6-11	59.1%	71.9%	55.5%
Age 12-14	66.2%	80.6%	61.4%
Age 15-18	40.7%	57.0%	35.2%
Total	55.3%	69.2%	50.9%

Source: NSS, rounds 50, 55 and 61.

The attendance rate for an age range is the proportion of children of that age range that report attending school

at the time of the survey.

Changes are percentage point differences.

Figures weighted using NSS sample weights.

A 3

3. Attendance rate by community

Panel A: 2004/5

Change:

1999/2000-2004/5

	All-India	High caste Hindu	Schedule Caste	Muslim	Scheduled Tribe	All-India	High case Hindu	Scheduled Caste	Muslim	Sch Tril
Age 6-11	85.1%	88.7%	82.2%	79.2%	77.5%	21.9	20.9	2.3	23.3	22.1
Age 12-14	20.2%	85.1%	75.3%	72.2%	66.8%	11.5	10.0	13.8	13.7	15.1
Age 15-18	47.9%	54.1%	39.3%	37.2%	34.2%	4.8	5.2	4.5	5.5	4.3
Total	73.1%	77.5%	68.6%	65.7%	63.7%	14.2	13.4	16.0	15.6	16.1

Panel B: 1999/2000

Change:

1993/4-1999/2000

	All-India	High caste Hindu	Schedule Caste	Muslim	Scheduled Tribe	All-India	High case Hindu	Scheduled Caste	Muslim	Sch Tril
Age 6-11	63.2%	67.8%	57. %	55.9%	54.9%	4.1	2.0	6.5	1.3	9.5
Age 12-14	68.7%	75.1%	61.5%	58.5%	51.1%	2.5	2.8	6.3	1.0	1.6
Age 15-18	43.1%	48.9%	34.8%	31.7%	29.9%	2.4	4.1	5.2	2.3	5.0
Total	58.9%	64.1%	52.6%	50.1%	47.6%	3.6	3.0	6.4	1.5	7.0

Panel C: 1993/4

	All- India	High caste Hindu	Scheduled Caste	Muslim	Scheduled Tribe
Age 6-11	59.1%	65.8%	51.4%	54.6%	45.4%
Age 12-14	66.2%	72.3%	55.2%	57.5%	49.5%
Age 15-18	40.7%	44.8%	29.6%	29.4%	24.9%
Total	55.3%	61.1%	46.2%	48.6%	40.6%

Source: NSS, rounds 50, 55 and 61.

The attendance rate for an age range is the proportion of children of that age range that report attending school at the time of the survey.

Changes are percentage point differences.

Figures wighted using NSS sample weights.

A 3

4. Attendance rate by wealth quintile

Panel A:2004/5

Change : 1999/2000-2004/5

	All-India	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	All-india	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
Age 6-11	58.1%	79.0%	84.4%	86.8%	89.1%	92.6%	21.9	27.2	23.0	19.4	16.0	13.1
Age 12-14	80.2%	170.9%	76.9%	81.6%	87.0%	92.2%	11.5	19.9	13.3	9.4	7.8	2.8
Age 15-18	47.9%	30.7%	40.4%	48.5%	55.9%	72.1%	4.8	6.1	7.7	7.8	5.4	2.1
Total	73.1%	64.9%	70.7%	74.3%	77.8%	85.6%	14.2	18.8	16.2	13.6	10.6	7.2

Panel B:1999/2000

Change : 1993/4-1999/2000

	All-India	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	All-india	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
Age 6-11	63.2%	51.8%	61.4%	67.4%	73.1%	79.5%	4.1	6.1	5.3	1.8	3.0	4.1
Age 12-14	68.7%	51.0%	63.6%	72.2%	79.2%	89.4%	2.4	3.9	3.8	2.3	1.9	3.8
Age 15-18	43.1%	24.6%	32.7%	40.7%	50.5%	70.0%	2.4	-1.3	0.3	1.8	5.3	5.9
Total	58.9%	46.1%	54.5%	60.7%	67.2%	78.4%	3.6	4.7	4.1	2.4	4.0	4.6

Panel C: 1993/4

	All-India	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
Age 6-11	59.1%	45.7%	56.1%	65.6%	70.1%	75.4%
Age 12-14	66.2%	47.1%	59.8%	69.9%	77.3%	85.6%
Age 15-18	40.7%	25.9%	32.4%	38.9%	45.2%	64.1%
Total	55.3%	41.4%	50.4%	58.3%	63.2%	73.8%

Source: NSS, rounds 50, 55 and 61.

The attendance rate for an age range is the proportion of children of that age range that report attending school at the time of the survey.

Changes are percentage point differences.

Figures wighted using NSS sample weights.

A3

5. Attendance rate, detailed disaggregation

Panel A: 2004/5

	High Caste Hindus				Scheduled Castes				Muslims				Scheduled Tribes			
	Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural	
	Boys s %	Girls s %	Boys %	Girls s %	Boys s %	Girls s %	Boys s %	Girls s %	Boys s %	Girls s %	Boys s %	Girls %	Boys %	Girls s %	Boys s %	Girls s %
Age 6-11	93.3	91.4	89.4	85.6	86.8	80.3	84.3	79.3	81.7	83.9	79.9	75.1	84.4	88.8	80.9	72.3
Age 12-14	92.7	90.6	88.8	76.1	82.8	75.0	82.0	66.1	73.4	76.4	73.7	68.0	79.8	76.9	73.4	56.8
Age 15-18	69.9	68.6	55.1	40.8	50.6	42.3	42.3	30.7	42.4	41.1	41.5	27.7	54.0	57.0	39.5	23.0

Panel B: 1999/2000

	High Caste Hindus				Scheduled Castes				Muslims				Scheduled Tribes			
	Urban %		Rural %		Urban %		Rural %		Urban %		Rural %		Urban %		Rural %	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Age 6-11	75.5	71.0	69.5	62.1	66.0	59.8	61.2	51.9	66.5	63.4	55.4	47.8	66.3	62.2	59.6	57.0
Age 12-14	86.9	82.0	78.0	64.9	77.9	66.7	66.9	50.1	67.0	62.4	59.3	51.3	77.5	67.5	54.6	41.0
Age 15-18	67.5	61.2	50.6	32.8	49.1	40.9	39.5	22.6	39.4	34.8	34.8	21.1	55.4	42.8	35.1	19.0

Panel C: 1999/2000

	High Caste Hindus				Scheduled Castes				Muslims				Scheduled Tribes			
	Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural	
	Boys s	Girls	Boys s	Girls s	Boys s	Girls s	Boys s	Girls s	Boys s	Girls s	Boys s	Girls s	Boys s	Girls s	Boys s	Girls

Age 6-11	76.4	75.6	68.2	55.8	65.5	59.2	54.9	42.5	67.4	63.2	53.6	45.1	60.4	60.6	50.8	36.
Age 12-14	87.4	84.6	76.7	55.1	78.6	65.9	63.7	35.6	67.6	58.7	64.1	43.5	80.9	66.3	55.9	37.
Age 15-18	66.4	60.1	47.5	24.8	46.8	37.9	35.5	14.4	41.9	27.8	32.6	16.4	52.6	40.7	29.8	14.

Source: NSS, rounds 50, 55 and 61.

The attendance rate for an age range is the proportion of children of that report attending school at the time of the survey.

Figures weighted using NS sample weights

A 4

1. 10-14 years SC

	rural male	Rural female	Rural persons	Urban male	Urban female	Urban persons	Total person
SE in agri	3.6	3.2	3.4	0.2	0.3	0.2	2.8
SE other	0.7	0.8	0.7	1.3	1.6	1.4	0.8
Salaried (agri and non-agri)	0.5	0.1	0.3	2.9***	0.4	1.7	0.5
Casual lab	2.7	2.5	2.6	1.4	0.7	1.1	2.3
Seeking emp.	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.6	0	0.3	0.2
Sub total in LF	7.6	6.6	7.2	6.4	3.0	4.7	6.7
Study	83.4	72.3	78.3	86.7	78.1	82.5	79.0
Attending domestic duties, and collecting/gathering materials of domestic use together (92, 93)	0.6	11.4*	5.6	0.3	11.1	5.6	5.5
Others including begging/prostitution	7.9	9	8.4	6.5	7.4	6.9	8.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

15-19 SC

	rural male	Rural female	Rural persons	Urban male	Urban female	Urban persons	Total person
SE in agri**	13.4	13.6	13.5	1.1	1.0	1.0	10.7
SE other	5.1	3.5	4.4	6.9	4.6	5.9	4.7
Salaried (agri and non-agri)	3.5	0.9	2.4	16.2^^^	3.9	10.7	4.2
Casual lab	33.8^^^	15.1^	25.4	14.7^^^	3.9	10.0	22.0
Seeking emp.	3.6	1.0	2.5	8.8	1.8	5.7	3.2
Sub total in LF*	59.5	34.1	48.2	47.6	15.1	33.3	44.8
Study	36.1	27.5	32.3	49.3	41.5	45.8	35.3
Attending domestic duties, and collecting/gathering	0.9##	36.8^^	16.9	0.5	40.9^^	18.3	17.2

materials of domestic use together (92, 93)							
Others including begging/prostitution	2.5#	1.4	2.0	2.4	1.9	2.2	2.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

A4

2. 10-14 ST

	rural male	Rural female	Rural persons	Urban male	Urban female	Urban persons	Total person
SE in agri**	7.0	9	7.9	1.6	1.0	1.3	7.2
SE other	0.2	1.0	0.6	0.4	1.0	0.7	0.5
Salaried (agri and non-agri)	0.0	0.0	0.1	3.8***	0.6	2.2	0.4
Casual lab	3.7	5.2	4.4	1.5	3.1	2.4	4.2
Seeking emp.	0.4	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2
Sub total in LF	11.6	15.2	13.2	7.5	5.8	6.6	12.5
Study	77.6	64.9	71.8	88.1	84.6	86.3	73.4
Attending domestic duties, and collecting/gathering materials of domestic use together (92, 93)	1.2	11.3*	5.9	0.8	4.9	2.9	5.6
Others including begging/prostitution#	9.2	8.4	8.8	3.1	3.2	3.1	8.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

15-19 ST

	rural male	Rural female	Rural persons	Urban male	Urban female	Urban persons	Total person
SE in agri**	24.3	26.3	25.3	6.9	2.1	4.8	22.6
SE other	2.1	2.3	2.2	7.0	2.8	5.1	2.6
Salaried (agri and non-agri)	1.9	0.9	1.4	11.2^^^	3.8	7.9	2.3
Casual lab	29.9^^^	27.4^	28.7	15.1^^^	5.9	11.0	26.4
Seeking emp.	2.3	0.6	1.5	3.3	0.2	1.9	1.6
Sub total in LF*	60.5	57.5	59.1	43.5	14.9	30.7	55.4
Study	36.2	22.9	29.8	52.6	62.9	57.2	33.3
Attending domestic duties, and collecting/gathering materials of domestic use	1.2	18.5^^	9.5	0.3	19.2^^	8.8	9.4

together (92, 93)							
Others including begging/prostitution	1.9#	0.9	1.4	3.2	2.7	3.0	1.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

A5

Source: Sachar Committee

**Distribution of Workers in Each Socio-Religious Categories by Enterprise –
Type in Rural and Urban Areas, 2004-05, (All Workers aged 15-64 years)**

	Hindus	Hindus	Hindus	Hindus	Muslims	Other	All
Activity Status	All Hindus	SCs/STs	OBCs	UC	Minorities		
Urban							
Informal Sector	76.9	78.5	82.2	71.4	92.1	76.4	79.9
Formal Sector	23.1	21.5	17.8	28.6	7.9	23.6	20.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Rural							
Informal Sector	87.7	88.1	89.9	82.8	94.2	88.1	88.9
Formal Sector	12.3	11.9	10.2	17.2	5.8	11.9	11.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

ANNEXURE 6

Corporal Punishment Guidelines

The Supreme Court banned corporal punishment for children on December 1st, 2000 when it directed the State to ensure 'that children are not subjected to corporal punishment in schools and they receive education in an environment of freedom and dignity, free from fear.'

Furthermore, Section 17 of the RTE Act also bans corporal punishment.

In the last three years the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has received several complaints of corporal punishment taking place in schools across the length and breadth of the country. In response NCPCR has framed guidelines for dealing with violence in schools in a sustained and systematic fashion so that incidents of corporal punishment in school do not result in tragedies.

1. At the School level:

- a. Every school, including hostels, JJ Homes, shelter homes and other public institutions meant for children must have a forum and Child Rights Cell where children can express their views. Such institutions could take the help of an NGO for facilitating such an exercise.
- b. A box where children can drop their complaints, even if anonymous has to be provided for in each school.
- c. Monthly review and action on the complaints received through the drop-box.
- d. SMCs/Child Rights Cells are to be encouraged to act immediately on any complaints made by children without postponement of the issue and wait for a more grave injury to be caused. In other words the SMCs need not use their discretion to decide on the grievousness of the complaint.
- e. Parents as well as children are to be empowered to speak out against corporal punishment without any fear that it would have adverse effect on children's participation in schools.
- f. Review of teaching practices in the school and a revision of service rules for teachers in light of the spirit of child-centred education embodied in the RTE.
- g. Denial of increment to teachers who inflicted corporal punishment on the students.
- h. Accountability of the School Board in the functioning of the school. This calls for greater engagement of the board in matters related to child

rights.

2. At the Block Level:

- a. Conduct meetings for all the school headmasters on corporal punishment and to convey to them that serious action would be taken against the school as a whole on any act of violence on children in the state.
- b. Regular meetings of Block Education Officers, Cluster Resource Centre staff on the importance of protection of children's rights and against corporal punishment in schools and to issue instructions to them that they would be held accountable for any instance of violation of children's right and corporal punishment in school.
- c. To instruct every school headmaster to hold a general body meeting with all parents of the school as well as school management committees or parent-teacher associations on the NCPCR guidelines and the procedures to be adopted for protecting children and their rights in schools.

3. At the District Level:

- a. An orientation programme and regular meetings with all District Education officers on child rights and the Right to Education Act. They must be informed about their responsibilities with regard to complaints redressal of RTE Violations in general and corporal punishment in particular.

4. To the State Govt:

- a. All children are to be informed through campaigns and publicity drives about Section 17 of the RTE Act which bans corporal punishment. It should clearly mention that children have a right to speak against corporal punishment and bring it to the notice of the authorities. They must be given confidence to make complaints and not accept punishment as a 'normal' activity of the school.
- b. Putting into place systems and structures in all schools so that matters related to discipline and punishment are dealt with in a continuous and comprehensive fashion by all concerned – students, teachers, school management and parents – and do not result in tragic outcomes. For this, mandating child right cells in schools is recommended.
- c. Ensuring the implantation of the Right to free and Compulsory Education, including Section 17 that prohibits all forms of Corporal Punishment by taking firm action in cases of violation.
- d. Drafting State Rules / Guidelines for the implementation of Section 17 of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act.

5. To the Centre:

- a. Drafting Model Rules / Guidelines for Section 17 of the RTE Act and disseminating them widely.**
- b. Sending out appropriate messages on the seriousness of the issue of corporal punishment as a violation of the Right of the Child to Free and Compulsory Education.**
- c. Undertaking widespread publicity of the RTE Act including the prohibition on corporal punishment.**

ANNEXURE 7: THE SCHOOL AS A SPACE FOR INCLUSIVE, QUALITY EDUCATION

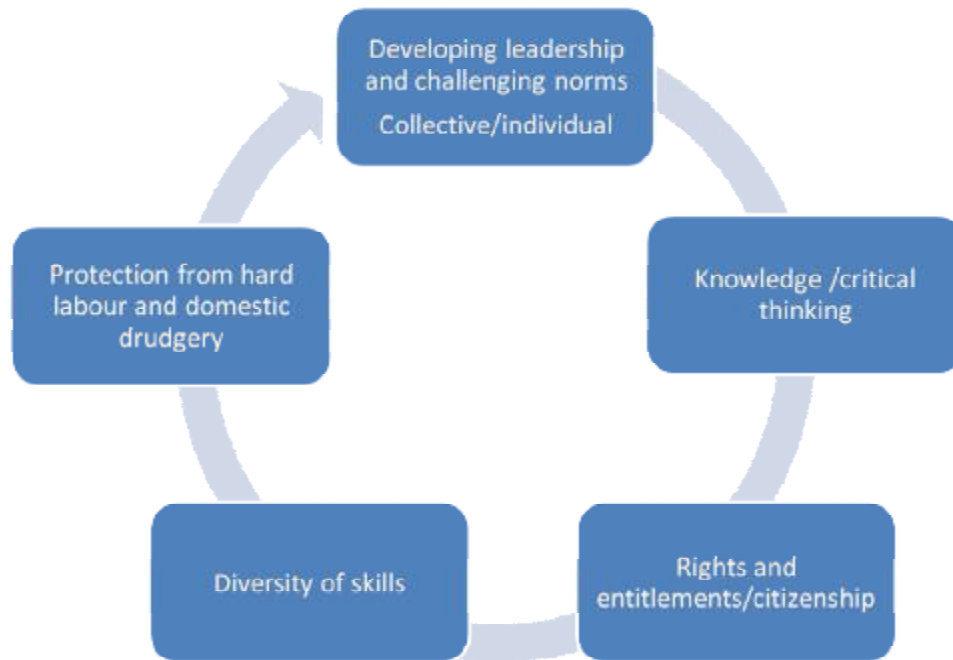
The secondary school phase is a challenging one, for a variety of reasons detailed in other parts of this report. Here we discuss factors related to the accessibility of the space of the secondary school for various groups of learners, and how these impact on the quality of education. Issues pertaining to different needs and contexts of socially marginalized groups, the phase of adolescence, safety, teacher training and curricula content are flagged as determining how inclusive, or of what quality the education can and should be.

7.1 EDUCATION OF ADOLESCENTS

The years of Secondary Education (14-18 years) are critical years in the development of self identity, in the generation of confidence to navigate adulthood. These are years of change for young persons, and not just physical change, but coming into their roles as young citizens. These are also years of poor retention rates, for a range of reasons.⁸² In the recent past, adolescent education has become an area of concern for the state and private players. Control over youth people's lives and bodies is seen as necessary to prevent exposure to 'risks' like sexually transmitted diseases, drugs, alcohol, teenage pregnancy and so on. Further, the idea of 'life skills' in the context of globalization becomes the moulding of 'disciplined' adolescents who can 'manage their time' and lives to the most productive end. The underlying theme in most adolescence education curricula is that this is a period of crisis and trauma, which is to be confronted with fear-based disciplining of the minds and bodies of young people.

There is a need for curricula to see this important phase in more positive terms, and see the potential of providing a more empowering and enabling education to young people, which develops skills and capacities and the agency to actively participate in processes of citizenship. Secondary Education, or adolescence education can be visioned, therefore, as below:

⁸² 'Lack of accessible middle schools in rural areas, unimaginative curricula, dysfunctional schools, disinterested teachers, early entry into the work force due to economic reasons, social attitudes and expectations... For adolescent girls the additional reasons are – the burden of sibling care, early assumption of domestic responsibilities; physical and sexual insecurity; early marriage; distance from schools; absence of female teachers and parental education levels'. (Report of the Working Group on Adolescents for the Tenth Five Year Plan, GOI, June 2001)



If approached in this way, 'adolescence education' becomes a powerful way in which aspects of democracy and citizenship can be communicated to young people. Within the space of the secondary school classroom, and in forums created beyond it, the potential of discussing and developing a collective understanding of citizenship is possible. Young persons must have a sense of their entitlements, be aware about violations at the individual and the social level, and the role of their voice and action in resisting injustice and bringing about change.

The recent *Adolescence Education Programme – Training and Resource Materials* (NCERT, September 2010) has addressed several of the problems of the earlier AEP material. Instead of addressing shame and fears related to the body and growing up, the earlier material tended to reinforce the sense of shame and fear. While it did address gender based discrimination at a conceptual level, it did not do so in a manner that could be effectively related to lives of adolescents. The material was highly problematic in terms of how it addressed issues of sexuality, linking it strongly to the need for reproduction and maintaining existing social systems.

The 'Guiding Principles of Adolescence Education' formulated in the process of revising the earlier NCERT material focus on a positive, non judgemental and transformatory approach to AEP. A prescriptive framework of AEP violates key principles of education, which is not meant to be prescriptive.

'The program should empower young people through participatory, process oriented, non-judgemental approaches

that build on the experiences of learners, and provide them with opportunities to think critically, analyze, and infer learning rather than being prescriptive.'

'Adolescence education should be strongly oriented towards the transformational potential of education, based on principles of equity and social justice, rather than having a status-quo orientation.' (NCERT, 2010, p. 6)

Thus, the recent NCERT material sees adolescence as a period of positive change and energy, which can be tapped to develop potential leaders and change-makers at the community level and beyond. For this, young people have to understand themselves and the world around them, have the confidence and ability to ask questions, challenge normative structures, find creative and new ways around challenges both individual and social.

Innovative initiatives in the development of curricula for adolescents have developed over the last decade. These curricula centre the notion of the transformatory potential of a relevant education that draws on values of social justice for adolescents. The programmes for adolescent education are necessarily multi-pronged, involving innovative curricula, skill or vocational training inputs, as well as the creation of spaces – '*manch*' - for adolescents to voice their concerns and feel a sense of agency to make change happen at the level of community and beyond. These involve the generation of an empowering sense of what it means to be a citizen, and the access to information, entitlements and agency that this implies.

The learnings emerging from these programmes is that while innovative and learner centred curricula is necessary as part of Secondary Education, other empowering processes need to be simultaneously put into place. The importance of spaces and forums where young people feel like they can have agency and can voice their concerns cannot be understated. These programmes also show that disciplining and fear-based approaches are not the way to work with young people, who are eager to take on proactive leadership roles. In terms of adolescent girls, we also see that it is important to take on board issues relevant to them - of mobility, discrimination and violation, and the need to create role models who take their education and 'life skills' in new directions.

INNOVATIONS/IDEAS FROM THE FIELD

Doosra Dashak is a project for adolescent education and leadership, based in 5 districts of Rajasthan, that has introduced a holistic approach to education of youth people between the ages of 11-20 years. The programme integrates education with the issues relevant to learners' lives, their social and ecological environment. The

project uses the strategy of a four-month long residential educational programme, as well as structured continuing education interventions, and a curriculum designed with special focus on health, gender, and leadership development at the community level. The programme also involves training in income generation activities, since it was seen as necessary to link education to livelihoods in young people's lives. For instance, Doosra Dashak has initiated work to raise awareness about and link up with rural employment guarantee schemes like NREGA, so that youth do not have to migrate to other states for subsistence employment, and can thus complete basic levels of education at the same time. The curriculum developed has a holistic approach to the 'development of the total personality' of adolescents, including thematic areas such as health, science, human rights and civic awareness, the inculcation of life skills and substantive concerns of health/reproductive health. The broader objectives of the programme were to facilitate a process of leadership development amongst adolescents at the community level, enabling them to analyse their own contexts and respond to them to become catalysts for social transformation. The strategy of the residential camps brings learners across gender, class, caste and religious communities to learn and live together, challenging structures of inequity at the level of curriculum, pedagogy and learning environment.

7.2 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES

Over the past decade and more, the issue of integrating/including learners with disabilities into the education system has been increasingly discussed. The RMSA framework acknowledges this as an important issue in the provision of equitable and inclusive education at the secondary stage. The question is how this inclusion – like other issues of inclusion of marginalised groups – moves from being formal, and primarily in the domain of access and provisioning, to being substantive, making available quality Secondary Education that is inclusive of the needs and realities of disabled learners.

Below are some issues of concern about 'inclusive' education for the disabled:

Disability as a social axis of marginalisation

- There needs to be a change in the perspective of disability from remedying, normalizing and rehabilitating learners – to seeing them as a valid group within a plural classroom. The issues to be addressed, therefore, are in the structures that make it difficult for disabled learners to be in education, rather than how *they* cope with 'normal schools'. How are we accommodating difference? What are the ways of integrating piecemeal

efforts at inclusion into an education that actually is transformative for different groups?

- School organizational structure, arrangements, lack of attention to detail, seating arrangements, unsupervised activities, poorly planned timetables that focus on outcomes instead of repercussions on children's experiences – are all aspects of the school space that can exclude disabled learners. However, for inclusion to happen at the level of structure and not rhetoric, multiple indicators must come into play - school setting, materials, curricula, pedagogy, evaluation.
- Frameworks for education for disabled learners are more often than not viewed in terms of humanitarianism and utilitarianism, and thus can be instrumental and patronizing. What about the transformative potential of education? What about the right of education, to become an equal citizen? The ranked notion of ability/normativity is intrinsic to our school system – obstruction to it being truly inclusive, egalitarian and equitable. There needs to be an understanding [in curricula and pedagogy] that education provides the means through which disabled people are eventually able to participate in the production of a body of knowledge that reflects their own experiences, interests and ways of knowing

7.3 CURRICULA REFORM

The Mandate of the RMSA is to provide an inclusive, equitable, quality education to all. In this section we try to link the aims of the RMSA – specifically to do with equality, equity and quality issues in Secondary Education – in the context of the content of education.

Developing a vision for an inclusive curriculum

The Secondary Education Curricula goals must bring forward a richer, fuller educational experience bringing together the cultural and linguistic, the social and scientific together with a vision to building citizenship. A truly inclusive and equitable education moves the young adult from 'formal' citizenship to substantive citizenship. The school, and school curricula becomes a site where ideas of democracy and active citizenship can be operationalised. The secondary curriculum must therefore aim to enhance capabilities of all young people – and especially those who have systemically been denied the rights of citizenship - to become conscious, proactive citizens. An empowering, transformative education thus must:

- i) Promote self –recognition, a positive self image and self actualization
- ii) Stimulate critical thinking
- iii) Deepen understanding of structures of power, including gender, class, caste etc
- iv) Enabling access to resources, specially to an expanding framework of information and knowledge
- v) Developing the ability to analyze the options available, and to facilitate the possibility of making informed choices
- vi) Developing and reinforcing the agency of girls and other socially marginalized groups to challenged structures of power and take control of their lives

Some pointers across disciplines

In the context of secondary curricula, in terms of syllabi, textbooks and assessment, there is increased formalization along disciplinary lines at the secondary level. Subject teaching becomes more distinct, defined and abstract and learners are viewed to be capable of handling concepts that are beyond their immediate environment. Progress from one section to another hinges on increasing the amount of information being provided to the learner. Building concepts and skills through the upper primary, secondary and H.SE levels is rarely practised in the development of content. Elementary Education preoccupies itself with building basic skills while Secondary Education looks towards preparing for higher education. The transition at Secondary Education needs to be planned systematically. The space, time and emphasis that Elementary education can possibly provide to bring the context and experiences of the learner into the classroom demand creative and informed selection in the secondary stage. Secondary and H.SE Curricula also suffers from an isolation from new research, ideas and concepts that are current in University / Higher Education. Even teachers training courses or in-service workshops do not take on board this aspect. Finally, and significantly, Secondary Education culminates in the first major external assessment, in the form of the Board exam. For a majority of learners and teachers, the second year of Secondary Education becomes virtually focused on preparing for this.

A desired outcome of curricular reform is that ‘we make quality and social justice the central theme of curricular reform’ (pg 9, NCF 2005). In the sections below, we list the challenges of taking on this form of curricula reform, as well as concrete recommendations along disciplinary lines at the secondary level.

Challenges in Curricula Reform – Achievements and Continuing Constraints

Three states have revised their curriculum following the NCF 2005 patterns keeping in mind the new exemplar material produced by NCERT. Over ten states follow the newly revised NCERT textbooks. This is no mean achievement, as states have initiated more child-centred and inclusive material in their teaching-learning and supplementary materials. However certain problems persist and these need to be taken on board while evaluating and assessing the quality of curricula reform at the secondary level.

- The focus on inclusion of marginalised groups has resulted in strategies like the 'add and stir' approach, where images or references are added into textbooks yet no significant revisioning or restructuring of the curriculum takes place. Socially relevant 'topics' are added on to syllabi with no framing or integration of issues such as caste, gender, religion etc in the teaching of Social Science, Science or Language.



[see for example this visual (from a West Bengal English textbook), 'including' members of 'all' communities]

- In the context of disability too, which has been a deep concern in recent educational policy documents, and especially in the RMSA, the inclusion remains a tokenistic, representational one without integrating the specific issues into the wider curriculum. The idea of diversity or heterogeneity of learners is limited when 'inclusion' of different kinds of learner is marked in special ways. The representation of disabled people in the textbook is almost always as superhuman, heroic. In the English textbooks, for instance in Tamil Nadu – disability becomes an object of interest and empathy, instead of a social marginalization that needs to be addressed and engaged with; a category of difference and also oppression. Laudatory stories of larger than life figures like Stephen Hawking or Christopher Reeves (the 'real' superman) are included; or then didactic stories of mothers of children with disabilities and how they coped - always strong, smiling, resilient - with the experience. The social context of

disability is never explored in terms of how community, family and institutions view disabled persons; instead, personal virtue, integrity and determination is what is focused on. What is reiterated then is disability is an individual condition to be bravely countered by individual heroism, instead of questioning the social conditions that lead to marginalization of the disabled.

A Woman Achiever

Malathi Krishnamurthy from Karnataka lost the use of both her legs, having contracted polio at an early age. But she persisted in her efforts at taking part in competitive sports and won several medals and awards.

They say it is not easy to play with weak limbs. But Malathi has changed all that. She has won 110 gold medals in wheelchair races!

10 பெண்ணே! உன்னால் முடியும்.....

மங்கையராய்ப் பிறப்பதற்கே நல்ல மாதவம் செய்திட வேண்டும் அம்மா" என்றார் கவிமணி. ஆம். இன்று பெண்ணாய்ப் பிறந்ததற்கு பெருமை படுகிறோம். புகழின் படிகளில் ஏறி வெற்றிக்கொடியை நாட்டிக் காட்டுகின்றனர்! பெண்கள். சாதனைகளைக் குவிப்போம் என்று சவாலிடும் பெண்கள் அணி, அணியாய் வந்து கொண்டே இருக்கிறார்கள். இவர்களில் இந்தப் பெண்ணின் சாதனை மிகுந்த வியப்பை அளிக்கிறது.

சாதனைப் பெண்

ஜூலை 22. கர்நாடக மாநிலத்தைச் சேர்ந்த மாலதி கிருஷ்ணமூர்த்தி உடல் ஊனம் முற்றவும் போலியோ தாக்கியதால் இருகால்களும் செயலற்றவர் போல நிலை எவ்விதும் தளது விடா முயற்சியால் பல போட்டிகளில் பங்குப் பெற்று தங்கப் பதக்கங்களை அள்ளிக்குவித்தவர். அவருடைய சாதனை வாழ்க்கையை ஒரு செய்தி இசைக்குப் போட்டி எடுத்தார் நிருபர் நேயன். அதைச் செய்தியாக்கி அவர் தம் இதழில் இவ்வாறு விவரித்துக் கூறுகிறார்.



கை கால்களில் வலிமை கொண்டோர்க்கே விளையாட்டில் வெற்றி எளிதல்ல என்பர். கால்களில் ஊனம் கொண்ட மாலதி அதையும் மாற்றி விட்டார். சக்கர நாற்காலி ஓட்டப் பந்தயப் போட்டிகளில் பங்கேற்று, நூற்றுப் பத்து தங்கப் பதக்கங்கள் குவிப்பு, வியப்பு மேலிடுகிறதா! இது மட்டுமன்று!

[see for example this lesson from a Tamil language textbook on hardwork and success of a woman who has lost her legs to polio]

- Another concern is the manner in which textbooks consciously or unknowingly reiterate stereotypes and bias towards religion minority communities. They replicate communal ideologies, that draw on history, myths and selective religious texts to construct problematic identities of entire communities. The CABE committee too pointed to this aspect of certain text books sharing. Narrow polemics leave unexplored whole areas of composite culture, syncretism and ideas. Most disturbing is the propaganda against minority religions. Such

passages violate historical fact, deny India's composite culture, endorse caste hierarchies eschewed by our constitution and mobilize a culture of violence that disregards the law. This is the area demanding the most sustained intervention, with implications also for value education and the representation of Indian realities."⁸³



15

THE DELHI SULTANATE

The period between A.D. 1206 and 1526 in the History of India is known as the **Period of the Delhi Sultans**. As many as five ruling dynasties dominated the scene during this period. They were those of the Slaves, the Khaljis, the Tughlaqs, the Sayyids and the Lodhis. We have already studied in the earlier chapter how the Turkish rule or the Muslim rule in India began. Muhammad Ghori defeated Prithviraj Chauhan in

the Second Battle of Tarain. Jaichandra, ruler of Kanauj, had supported Ghori in the hope of getting some reward. Instead, in A.D. 1194, Ghori attacked Kanauj and killed Jaichandra. Kanauj was also annexed. The empire of Ghori now extended from Afghanistan to Ganga-Yamuna Doab upto Varanasi. Varanasi was also plundered and a large number of temples were first looted and then razed to ground.

[see for example this lesson from a privately published middle school History textbook, depicting the violent and merciless attack of Delhi by a series of 'Muslim rulers']

- Concepts of social justice, equity and equality remain in the domain of social evils ' or 'social problems'. Syllabi or textbooks rarely integrate these into the teaching of social science or language or even science as part of disciplinary knowledge. As a result they remain tied to a superficial understanding of reforming society rather than understanding deeper social relations or structures.

⁸³ CABE Committee on Regulatory Mechanisms for Textbooks and Parallel Textbooks taught in School outside the Government System.

Linked to this is the way in which revised curricula of Civics and Geography include certain social categories – women, SCs, tribals etc – primarily while discussing development indices, which need to be instrumentally paid notice to, to improve the nation's developmental profile. There is a virtual exclusion of all these categories in the discussion on other key areas of the disciplines, even in the discussions on Human geography!

Position of Women

IN OUR ANCIENT scriptures due respect has been shown to women. At the same time, we also have examples in which they have not been treated at par with men. Over a period of time, women have come to be treated very badly in our country.

Till recently their activities were confined to the household. They were expected to prepare food for the family, look after children and remain obedient to the master of the house for all their lives. Conditions still remain more or less the same in villages and small towns. Majority of our women folk still lead a pitiable life.

"Sati" is a crime against women and humanity



Steps Taken for Women's Upliftment

1. A law helped abolish Sati in 1829.
2. The Widow Remarriage Act was enacted in 1856.
3. The Sarda Act, which was enacted with DR Muthulakshmi Reddy's help banned child marriage.
4. Women's education was given importance.
5. A 1956 act granted women equal rights in ancestral property.

TNTC Class 8

[Excerpts from Civics books at the national and state level, depicting the inclusion of women as 'social problem']

A good way to see how textbooks reiterate inequitable structures in society, or provide learners no way in which to understand them, is the depiction of labour

in the textbooks. In a majority of language and Social Science textbooks labour is invisibilized: there is a devaluation of manual labour, or for that matter domestic labour. The contribution of the unorganized sector or subsistence economies based on intensive labour are absent in geography, civics or even literature and language. This critical domain which constitutes the life world of the learners from poor, SC, ST families – is rarely seen in school textbooks, which are located in a largely aspirational, middle-class milieu. As, Scarce has pointed out from his study on West Bengal textbooks, education is seen to be representing and promoting middle-class interests, despite claims to the contrary made by both central , and Left-dominated governments. The nature of labour performed in urban towns and kasbahs is similarly invisibilised, or romantised as a complementary service that just happens to be performed by the poor or marginalised communities.



Here is a step by step process of how it is done :

1. The first step the designer takes is to choose a particular theme or concept. Whatever the season (fall-winter or spring-summer) the colours, silhouettes, lines, style features that dominate the particular season must be kept in mind.



2. Based on the design the size specification of the product is deduced.



3. Patterns are cut on cardboards according to size. Consumption of leather is calculated from patterns and leather is sourced and procured.



4. Patterns are placed on the hides or skins and panels are cut (This helps to avoid wastage).



5. Fabrication (stitching) is done and surface ornamentation or treatment executed according to the instructions of the designer.



6. The product is given a final finish which includes thread-cutting, cleaning and polishing.

Conclusion : Thus we see that the world of leather is an exciting one dominated by interesting textures, styling cuts and finishes. There is ample scope for being creative in this profession.

[this excerpt from a West Bengal English textbook shows the invisibility of processes and people involved in labour for example in the leather industry]

In conclusion, curriculum reform that is mandated to bring about more inclusive teaching learning material needs to be vigilant about nature of representation of socially marginalised groups and the possible offshoot of this. Mere mechanical representation or increase in the head count of images, characters or

representations of women and girls, tribal personalities or national heroes who belong to SC communities can risk new stereotypes being created, without understanding the context of social inequities. For example romantic visions of tribals as one with nature, as recognisable through their dress, dance and craft sustains them in a fixed context, despite diverse and swiftly changing realities. As a result, this attempt at 'inclusive' falls far from its objective, and the inclusion of realities of learners from different contexts becomes a purely descriptive exercise, instead of widening the content and relevance of educational content. What is necessitated is the inclusion of content that provokes questioning of norms and structures, that provides new and unstereotypical images for learners to engage with and learn from.

Some issues concerning Language Education

At the secondary level, the issue of language becomes a greater challenge, and non-comprehension or non-addressal of these challenges makes language learning boring and difficult for secondary level learners. The language classroom and the language textbook is the site for the generation and reproduction of social, cultural, economic structures of power. At the secondary level, drawing on different languages and realities, and sharpening analytic skills to understand structures of power within language – how gender, class, caste, religious realities work and are reproduced - can be an important way of communicating ideas of social justice and inclusion to learners.

- The mother-tongue and regional languages function as media in secondary school to strengthen communication – between learners, learners and teachers, and to clarify concepts within disciplines.
- Textbooks and other teaching-learning material, as well as teachers and teacher educators have the potential to make links across languages taught at the secondary level, and across disciplines, so as to strengthen organically the language, analytic and conceptual skills learnt across. Especially at the secondary level, when the distance between learners' lives and realities, and the content of education is wont to increase, language can become an important bridging factor.
- In areas with a plurality of local languages, and especially in tribal areas or areas with minority population, teachers can have a role in bringing in the linguistic realities and registers of their areas, and also in developing supplementary language teaching-learning material that draws on these rich multi-lingual resources.

- If English is to be a skill necessary for the adolescent, readying for the world of work, the 'standalone' approach to English teaching needs to be revisited. The English curriculum needs to come closer to the local/mother tongue language curricula, as well as integrated into other subjects, like science and social science. Pedagogical innovations need to be thought out – like teaching with ICTs, the internet, mobile phones – films and songs, bringing the engagement of the learners' own worlds with English into the classroom for discussion, and thus making it 'meaningful' for the learner.
- Translations from local/regional languages, especially for 'mainstream' language teaching like Hindi and English, should be a central part of language teaching-learning material at the secondary level. Local literature, oral literature should be sourced and made available in 'mainstream' languages so these languages are made relevant and live for learners from different backgrounds. A translation unit should be set up within SCERTs to facilitate this.
- Teachers to undertake small researches in languages, especially endangered, local and tribal languages. This research should be a part of in-service teacher training, and contribute to curriculum reform processes.

Social Science Education

The approach in the social science curriculum at the secondary level, when the amount of information and concepts increases substantially, is to provide a holistic and interdisciplinary understanding of history, geography, civics/political science, economics, that connects the past to the present and future, and that enables the young adult to become an aware, analytical and empowered citizen.

- The curriculum should be the starting point for an inquiry into social structures, history and geography. Teaching-learning material and pedagogy should push learners to connect the processes and content in their textbooks with the world around them, what they learn from their families and neighbourhoods.
- Inclusion should not be limited to superficial introduction of visuals and case studies, or development 'problems'. The curriculum should attempt to shift the perspective of knowledge – of history, geography, economics – to the standpoint of those at the margins, women, tribals, minority groups, to understand social processes from various points.
- The curriculum should be open ended, and not depend on rote-learning of facts. Instead, assessment should be of the questions and inquiry stimulated

in the minds of learners; the ability to question norms and structures and see the spaces for transformation in social processes.

Science Education

The RMSA framework has rightly positioned science education at the secondary level as a focus area for inclusive and equitable education. Besides from inequity of provisioning, the degree of specialisation at the secondary level, as well as the complicated conceptual understanding required makes science education inaccessible to a range of learners, especially girls, poor and rural learners, and others from social marginalised backgrounds.

- The gap between the elementary and secondary school, and the secondary and H.S.E science curriculum should be minimised. There should be a focus on locally significant experiments and projects to explore and verify scientific concepts of increasing difficulty.
- A move away from rote learning to greater creativity in science teaching-learning, as much co-curricular and extra-curricular interventions, like science fairs, projects and laboratory work, exposure visits to be incorporated into science teaching. Research on new areas of science, as well as into science pedagogy at the secondary level to be made a part of science teacher education.
- If science education is to be inclusive and equitable, science curricula and teaching learning material should be as inclusive of different realities – geographical, gender and class based, caste and ethnicity based – as possible. There should be a move to make science and its application relevant to all learners, and open further education and employment possibilities up, not merely to boys and privileged groups. The applicability of science and technology in areas like agriculture, forestry, dairy, crafts, building/construction should be a substantive part of the curriculum.

Mathematics Education

Given the secondary school mathematics curriculum is one of increasing burden, complexity and abstraction, the abiding problems in mathematics teaching-learning intensify at this stage. Another crucial issue at the stage of secondary mathematics is to be as inclusive of learners who are seen as outside of the domain of math teaching-learning – girls, SC/ST learners etc. This means that maths curricula and classroom pedagogy should be conscious as not to marginalise these learners, or their learning styles, and to make the subject as relevant as possible to their lives.

- The Math curricula should be relevant to learners' lives and experiences, and include content that is meaningful for them. This involves the teaching of math concepts that seem important to different groups of learners.
- Problem solving should not be standardised, but individual methods of arriving at a solution should be appreciated and accepted, towards the higher aims of cultivating clarity of thought and logical reasoning in learners
- The math curricula should engage learners of all social groups – especially those kept at the margins of math teaching-learning, like girls and SC/STs. It should be activity based so as to allow and accommodate different ways of understanding concepts and linking them to learners' own contexts.
- The structure and language of math curricula, its various components and content areas should be cohesive and coherent to learners. Often the language and the complicated nature of math problems make it difficult for learners to grasp the concept or the value behind grasping certain mathematical processes.

7.4 TEACHER EDUCATION

To meet the aims of a Secondary Education that provides equity and quality, beyond a range of requirements of vision, infrastructure and content - teacher empowerment is crucial. If, as the NCF 2005 says, curricula is to be seen as inclusive space, beyond textbooks and into classroom processes that enable learner and her educator, the role of teacher in bridging social inequities, in making education a critical instrument of transformation – is key.

Consistent challenges in teacher education

- Updating of teacher education programmes is extremely critical. While there is an acknowledged need for a revised curriculum for pre-service training of teachers, increasingly the focus has been on in-service training to meet increasing demands on teachers. Orientation to new curricula objectives, content, methods of evaluation should be part of these in-service trainings.
- According to SSA, 20 days in-service training annually is mandated for elementary teachers. These follow the cascade method, where SCERTs formulate teacher training modules, and DIETs train teacher educators who go on to train teachers. Studies show that the more the distance in planning and preparing for trainings from the teachers themselves – the less effective the training. The trainings are thus a ritualized activity, with barely any scope for contextualizing content, using innovative methods, or getting feedback from teachers. There is therefore a concern around the quality of teacher

training at the level of delivery and level of content of pre and inservice training

- Programmes centre rote learning, even in terms of philosophies of knowledge, development, education etc , instead of critically engaging with them. The teacher education courses lack opportunity for observation of learners, classroom space, teachers etc. rarely question their own preconceptions. Models like the revised B.El Ed curriculum need to be followed in the revisiting of B. Ed course content.
- There is a lack of involvement of teachers and teacher educators in designing educational objectives and strategies; also in policy implementation or monitoring – teachers therefore lack motivation to be leaders or transformative agents

INNOVATIONS: THE B.EL.ED CURRICULUM

The B. El. Ed, a specialised programmes to equip elementary school teachers, was evolved from a rigorous process of work with teachers, experts, academics. This rigour reflects in the design of the course. Unlike most current B/ Ed programmes, the B El Ed doesn't provide frameworks to be used as concept of knowledge, but as tools to be applied to analyse and intervene in social realities. It centres:

- the need for student-teachers to engage with children directly, rather than study about them. Thus psychological study of child development is read in engagement with the pluralistic social and political fabric in which children grow up, and paralleled with enquiry into contemporary social issues.
- the need for teachers to probe the relationship between school and society, knowledge and power, etc, not through texts but through projects that make them analyze their own 'positions' in society . The curricula thus moves away from universalist understandings, to engaging with current social issues and issues of equity in the context of the teacher him/herself. Engagement with all theory needs to begin with teachers own location and experience
- the need to move away from the idea of education as banking – to education as social, participatory, a dialogic process.

