

STUDENTS'
JOURNAL
OF
EDUCATION
AND
DEVELOPMENT

Issue 01, September 2014



Azim Premji
University

Students' Journal of Education and Development is published by Azim Premji University, Bangalore, India as an annual publication. Azim Premji University has a clear social purpose – to make significant contributions towards a just, equitable, humane and sustainable society. The University aspires to do this through the development of talent and the creation of knowledge which can facilitate systemic change in education and allied development areas. The roots of Azim Premji University lie in the learning and experience of a decade of work in elementary education by Azim Premji Foundation. It is the direct result of a purposeful philanthropic initiative.

In furtherance of Azim Premji University's mission, *Students' Journal of Education and Development* aims to serve as a forum where academic excellence within the university's students' community can be promoted. The journal's goal is to provide an open space for students of Azim Premji University working in the domains of education and development to sustain critical engagements and dialogues regarding relevant issues and debates in these areas. It aims to promote interdisciplinary and reflective work that can aid the current and future practices and engagements of the students of these social science domains. It is an initiative led by the students of Azim Premji University, and plans to primarily publish the work of students and alumni of this university; though contributions from students working in these areas in other universities are also welcomed. The journal is edited and published by students in consultation with faculty at the Azim Premji University, Bangalore and follows a double-blind review process. Discussions and responses to published articles are welcome. All communications to the journal should be sent at the following email address: **studentsjournals@apu.edu.in**

The content of this journal is licensed under Creative Commons, Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs CC BY-NC-ND.



STUDENTS' JOURNAL OF EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Editorial Collective (students and alumni of Azim Premji University)

Abhilasha N. S.
Arun Sivaramakrishnan
Avinash Kumar
Nomita Sikand
Ritika Chawla
Kritika Singh
Siddhant Nowlakha
Tejbir Singh Soni

Advisory Board

S Giridhar, Azim Premji University, Bangalore
Manoj P., Azim Premji University, Bangalore
Padma Nayar, Azim Premji University, Bangalore
Ramgopal Vallath, Azim Premji University, Bangalore

Faculty Mentor

Sailen Routray

A publication of Azim Premji University

Designed by Banyan Tree, Bangalore. 9845864765

Printed by SCPL, Bangalore - 560 062.

+ 91 80 2686 0585 + 91 98450 42233 www.scpl.net

CONTENTS

Editorial	01
Research Articles	03
Teacher Identities and Their Identity Work in an Alternative School - <i>Vijitha Rajan</i>	05
What Can Assam Learn from Sri Lanka's Health Achievements? - <i>Tejbir Singh Soni</i>	21
Perspectives and Practices	43
A Guide for the Non-formal Education of Migrant Labour Children - <i>Katherine Robinson</i>	45
Role of Organisational and Institutional Characteristics of Indian Public Schools and School Reform Efforts - <i>Avinash Kumar</i>	59
Notes	71
Language Development in a Peer Learning Environment - <i>Nalam Samvartika</i>	73
Becoming the Beloved: The Bhakti Movement's Quest for the Divine through the Secular - <i>Sanjana Shelar</i>	81
Classics Revisited	89
Maria Montessori's 'The Secret of Childhood': Understanding the Montessori Method - Genesis, Development and Critique - <i>Nomita Sikand</i>	91
Style Sheet	107

Academic Journals have for long played a central role in scholarly communities. They contribute towards building a collective knowledge base, validate the quality of research, and provide a forum for communication and exchange of ideas – which in turn accelerates the learning of the community as a whole by bringing together potential collaborators and by helping sustain and strengthen academic communities. The production and publication of scholarly literature though, has traditionally been seen as reserved for established experts and professionals in the field. Given Azim Premji University's mission of creating effective programmes of learning, research and advocacy in the domains of Education and Development, and in developing effective social-change agents; the *Students' Journal of Education and Development* (SJED) has been founded by Azim Premji University (APU)'s community of students with support and guidance from the institution and faculty with the following broad objectives to provide students an opportunity to participate in the process of generation and sharing of new knowledge: The journal hopes to encourage academic excellence within the students' community by bringing to fore and publishing outstanding academic work by students that reflect original thinking and research, and good quality academic writing. It also aims to provide students a supportive forum to share their academic work with a larger audience, and to help them develop skills which they can find useful throughout their careers (including but not limited to research, academic writing, reviewing, editing, and publishing). A further goal is to encourage collaboration within the students' body, and between students and faculty members, and to contribute to the creation and maintenance of an engaged intellectual community within the students' community of APU.

The journal will be published annually, a few weeks after the beginning of the academic year. It will be produced (including editing and refereeing) by students pursuing their Master's degrees in Education and Development at APU, and is primarily aimed at students pursuing postgraduate and undergraduate programmes in the two fields. While contribution is

technically open to undergraduates, postgraduates and academics from different institutions, preference for publishing will be given to students pursuing Masters or Bachelor's degree programmes in Education and Development, in Azim Premji University. Contributions are welcome throughout the year. All entries are peer-reviewed / refereed.

The publication of the first issue of *Students' Journal of Education and Development* has been a students-led initiative. An editorial collective and a project-team were first formed to coordinate the efforts. Contributions for the first issue were then invited from all students. In addition, faculty members were requested to nominate outstanding academic work by students for publication in the journal. Contributions were then double-blind peer reviewed by the editorial collective of students, and the final pieces were shortlisted for publication in consultation with the faculty mentor.

This issue of SJED has four sections – Research Articles, Perspectives and Practices, Notes, and Classics Revisited. The first issue carries two research articles; subsequent issues will carry a similar number of articles that critically engage with significant issues in education and development. The journal in its first issue also contains a section titled 'Perspectives and Practices' that carry contributions that engage either in perspective building on specific themes or are an aid to substantive dimensions of practice in the domains of education and development. The journal also proposes to carry in each issue a section titled 'Notes' that will feature shorter contributions that make forays into interdisciplinary areas in a reflective manner. Each issue will carry a section titled 'Classics Revisited' in which an educational or developmental classic will be revisited from the contemporary vantage point.

The editorial collective would like to sincerely thank all contributors. Special thanks are also due to the registrar of APU, S. Giridhar, Manoj P, Padma Nayar, Rahul Mukhopadhyay, Ramgopal Vallath, Sneha Kumari, SJED's faculty mentor Sailen Routray, and the project team members and students of the 2011-13 and 2012-14 batches of APU, for their sustained support in the publication process of the first issue of SJED.

The editorial collective, Students' Journal of Education and Development

Research Articles

TEACHER IDENTITIES AND THEIR IDENTITY-WORK IN AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

VIJITHA RAJAN¹

ABSTRACT

Teachers have their own personal and social identities. These identities interact, negotiate with each other in the struggle of forming a unified self. Organisational ideologies play a major role in the attempt of alignment of social and personal identities of teachers. This paper is the result of a study done in an alternative school in Gudalur District of Tamil Nadu that tried to understand the identity work done by the teachers. The strategies used by the teachers while doing the identity work are explored through observations and interviews with the teachers and the management. The findings show that majority of teachers are aligned with the organisational ideology, and, reinforce the assumption that ‘the organisation being a normative one, based on a social purpose, the chances of teacher alignment is maximum’.

INTRODUCTION

Every teacher has a personal identity - the identity that the teacher has constructed for himself/herself from the accumulation of previous experiences in life. They have certain understandings about their roles, responsibilities and capacities as teachers. Apart from this, each teacher has a social identity - the identity that the society or the institution expects the teacher to hold. The personal and social identities need not be a single unified concept, it can be more complex than generally assumed. When there is a conflict between the personal and social identities (which need not be the case always), the teacher has to do lot of ‘identity work’¹ to cope up with the school life. Understanding how teachers do this identity work will have great implications for the functioning and efficiency of the organisation.

The purpose of this study is to apprehend how different members of an organisation (an alternative school) align themselves to the ideology of the organisation, and to understand various strategies used by the members in order to attain this. What are the identity crises they undergo during this

¹*Vijitha Rajan is currently pursuing her MA in Education from Azim Premji University. She graduated from Regional Institute of Education, Mysore and worked as a secondary school teacher for two years. Her current interest is towards building a sociological perspective in understanding teacher identities and ‘drop-out’ identities. She may be contacted at vijitha.rajan@apu.edu.in*

process? Have they resolved the conflict yet? What could be the implications of some of these findings for the organisation?

Teachers may or may not create a stable identity after resolving the conflicts between their personal and social identity, if there are any. They constantly negotiate with their selves in order to achieve this stability. This struggle may also be reflected in the way in which they organise their day-to-day work in the organisation. The study tries to understand how the identity work of the teacher is influenced by the practices in the organisation, and how it is affecting the teaching-learning strategies adopted by the teacher. The role of authority structure and motivation in realising organisational goals is enormous, since it helps us realise the optimum conditions to create and maintain organisations with minimal ramifications and maximum efficiency.

1. Background and Context

The fieldwork for the study was done in an Adivasi school, functioning under Viswa Bharathi Vidyodaya Trust (VBVT) established in 1993. From 1996 the trust has started working explicitly for the children from Adivasi communities in the Gudalur block in Nilgiri District. Nilgiris is ethnically unique because of the presence of six so-called primitive tribes, namely Todas, Kotas, Kurumbas, Paniyas, Kattunayakar, and an agricultural community called Badagas, in the district. In the school where I visited there were children from the Kurumba, Paniya and Kattunayaka communities. Their secluded lives from the other cultural groups have made them socio-economically and educationally different.

The VBVT is a sister Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) of Action for Community Organisation, Rehabilitation and Development (ACCORD), established in 1985 in order to fight for the land rights of Adivasis. Vidyodaya, with community assistance, has been trying to establish a culturally appropriate curriculum in order to ensure good quality education for every Adivasi child.

ⁱⁱ The school has a very strong social purpose for its existence, as the school website states, “Our community has for long been at the bottom of the social, economic and political pyramid of society. But now we wish to throw off the feeling of powerlessness and hopelessness and assert ourselves through our children.”ⁱⁱⁱ”

The social identity in this report mainly refers to what the organisation demands from the teacher. What society thinks of the teacher is found not relevant in this context for two reasons - first, the organisational philosophy seems to be the guiding factor for the teachers here compared to what the

society thinks, and second, the Adivasi community is less informed and exposed to the idea of education itself. Even in case of non-tribal teachers, the demand of the organisation itself, compared to those by the society, seems to be the major social factor that influences their identity.

Since the school has a specific social purpose and follows a cultural curriculum, the perceptions, beliefs and identities of the teachers might be well-aligned with that of the organisation. And teachers may face less identity conflict. In that case, studying teacher identity in such an alternative curriculum school will help us understand how teachers align their goals and identity with that of the organisation and how the organisation inducts and aligns the members into the culture of the organisation.

2. Sample and Data Collection Methods

This study was undertaken by interacting with the teachers working in the Vidyodaya School, and by observing the teaching-learning processes. Sixteen of the permanent teachers (including teachers working in the Vidyodaya School and the SSA unit^{iv} associated with it), and 11 teacher trainees were interviewed. Thus, a total of 27 members (teachers and prospective teachers) of the organisation were interviewed and observed. The findings and inferences are based on the interactions with teachers and teacher trainees. The major data collection methods used were non-participant observation, and semi-structured interview.

2.1 Specific Questions in the Interview

I have tried to categorise the questions under three topics for convenience; but there are overlapping concerns across these three categories. During the research process questions were modified and rephrased wherever required.

2.1.1 To Understand Micro Interactions in Classroom

- I. How do you manage the situation when a child is not at all interested in learning?
- II. Why do you think some children respond better in the classroom?
- III. Are children naturally curious to learn and inquire?
- IV. Do you think urban children are more intelligent than rural children?
- V. When I worked as a teacher, I have seen many children feeling bored and sleepy in the class, what do you think is the reason for this?
- VI. What strategies do you use to resolve conflicts among children in classroom?

- VII. How often do you talk to children outside the classroom?
- VIII. What do you talk about with the child, other than academic issues?
- IX. What are the techniques you use to bring discipline in class? How do you manage 'naughty' children in class?
- X. What do you do when a child asks you something in the classroom which you are not sure about?
- XI. How do you motivate children to learn?
- XII. When a child approaches you with some personal problem, how do you resolve it?

2.1.2 To Understand Personal and Social Identity

- I. Why did you choose the teaching profession?
- II. What do you think is the role of an ideal teacher/ideal school?
- III. What are the challenges you face as a teacher in the society? How do other members of family or society look at the role of a teacher?
- IV. What are the expectations of the tribal community from you in terms of their children's education?
- V. Does your aspiration as a teacher match with the expectations of the community?
- VI. What is the influence of a teacher in a child's life?
- VII. How do you balance between your family life and professional life?
- VIII. What are the three things which you have found interesting/ challenging in your career?
- IX. What is important for a good teacher - skill, knowledge or attitude?
- X. How do you manage, when the school or the community expects you to do something as a teacher and you don't like to do that?

2.1.3 To Understand the Relation between Teacher and Organisational Goals

- I. What motivates you to work in this school or why do you chose to work in this school?
- II. What changes has the school made in you as a teacher or what are the inputs you have received from the school?
- III. Have you felt anytime that you could teach better in a 'normal' private school?
- IV. Why did you feel that way?

- V. How does the school management support you emotionally?
- VI. What are the features of the cultural curriculum in the school?
- VII. Do you think that the tribal children can survive in the outer world when they are exposed only to cultural curriculum?
- VIII. Do you think the Adivasi community is different from urban society?
- IX. Do you interact with the families of children?
- X. How do you think education will help tribal children?

3. Theoretical Perspective

The members of any organisation are guided by the principles and ideology that the organisation believes in. Though the members might have their own spaces for their independent actions, much of this relies on the nature of the organisation as well. The efficiency of an organisation largely depends on the way in which it holds its members together. Especially in organisations such as schools, where efficiency cannot be just determined by the quantity of outputs, it is important to understand the socialisation processes involved.

The perception of teachers “as ordinary employees, who are expected to do what the school’s authorities want them to do” or “as driven by the meaning of their work and actively pursuing better communication with students” as Madan explains, will have large impact on the identity work done by the teacher (Madan 2012). How well the identity of teachers can align with that of the organisations also depends on the strategies adopted by the organisation to facilitate the same. Especially when the teachers have to ‘reconstruct their identities’ (Woods and Jeffrey 2002), organisational strategies gain more significance. How does this reformation of identity in the organisation impact the teaching-learning process? Does a teacher continue to pursue one’s own ‘lion tamer’², ‘entertainer’³ or ‘romanticist’⁴ notion of teacher as explained by Hargreaves (1975) irrespective of the organisational ideology? Or does the socialisation in the organisation change those perceptions of teachers?

The interactions with the teachers brought out some patterns in the responses that could be broadly classified into six categories for the purpose of analysis.

²Lion tamer is the teacher who is very strict and thinks that the teacher is the expert. Such a teacher gets the child to learn by coercive methods.

³Entertainers are teachers who adopt a variety of teaching methods in order to make the children learn. These teachers do not believe in the natural curiosity of the learner.

⁴Romanticist teachers are the ones who give spaces for negotiations in the classroom, and trust the capabilities of children.

But one should see these variations as overlapping shades of the same continuum. Addressing teachers in this report as ‘lion tamer’, ‘romantics’ or ‘entertainer’ is done only as an approximation.

3.1 Self-reflective Teachers / Romantics

This category of teachers is very self-reflective. They have thought about life and its meaning well before they have become part of the organisation. They do not see any transition or identity crisis after coming to school because it was a deliberate choice to become part of the school, and to lead a reflective life as they had envisioned earlier. They do much less identity work in the organisation. They are actually not bothered about how society perceives the role of a teacher.

The ideology of the institution is directly linked to their head and heart. And hence they are able to make a third person analysis about their own activities and that of the organisation. This is reflected in their interactions with the children as well. They consider children as independent thinkers who are capable and responsible for their own learning. In the words of one of the teachers, “Anger is something which we create. You don’t get angry with the child, even if he does not learn because you are interested in the child and not just in the delivery of content. This is not idealistic; it is possible when one has an open mind.”

3.2 ‘Teaching’ - “something new in life”

These are teachers for whom teaching is/was the best survival option available. Most of the young Adivasi teachers who are undergoing rigorous, two-years’ long teacher training in the institution come under this category. Before coming here they were either at home or doing daily wage labour since they had very minimal formal educational qualifications. This is the first time they are understanding how a teacher should be, and they all have internalised the model of the teacher presented to them.

There is less identity work here, since, in the first place, there was no previous model of a teacher in their minds to have a conflict with. Moreover, because of all of their bitter experiences with their own teachers in school, they accept the present school philosophy with much more ease and comfort. The identity formation due to the impact of their own community members is very thin, because their communities are isolated from the mainstream communities, and, most of them are the first generation learners. What motivates them to work is the ‘community feeling’ towards the children of their own tribe.

3.3 Lion Tamer Model is the Most Efficient One, “but not now”

These are teachers who were working in other private schools mostly as ‘lion tamers’ before, and thought that to be the right role and responsibility of a teacher. They had never thought of changing the identity. But after coming to Vidyodaya they realised that the “the romantic figure” of a teacher gets more love, respect and trust from children by observing other teachers.

The shift to the new model of teaching is not a very difficult one. Less identity work is done though they struggled a little in the initial days. A teacher says, “Earlier I used to carry a stick in my hands everyday, but here in this school children sit on my lap. I never thought I would change so much.”

3.4 Identity Conflict in the Previous Work Places

This category has teachers who were working previously in other schools and were disturbed by those organisational ideologies. They could not find satisfaction in their previous work places, many being private schools. As one such teacher shared, “Here I feel it is my own school. I want to come to school everyday. We discuss with each other whatever problems there are.” Vidyodaya’s ideology is exactly what they expected from their job. Therefore, they need to do less identity work.

3.5 “I am still in identity crisis, but I can get along”

These are the teachers who have not changed their previous notions of a teacher as a ‘lion tamer’. They are really struggling to adjust to the norms of the institution like “no punishment”, “no silent, disciplined classrooms”, “flexible examinations”, and so on. Though they have not internalised the norms, they are not as reactionary now as they were in the beginning because the majority of the teachers are in alignment with the institution. One of them said, “They learn all cultural curriculum and all here, do you think they will remember the culture once they go out?”

They are doing enormous amount of identity work, but still feel ambiguous about this. However, there is apparent alignment to the ideology of the organisation. One of the teachers feels the following way: “Nobody scolds children here; the freedom given to children is too much. There are ways in which children should behave towards a teacher. In the beginning I used to tell this to all. But now I keep quiet, I just suppress my views. Every teacher believes that in the first batch of board examination children will do well. I will believe only after the results come.” This struggle could be seen in their classrooms as well.

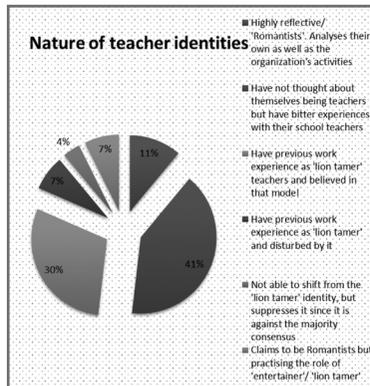
3.6 Real Alignment, but only “Apparent”

This group of teachers are only apparently aligned to the organisation like the previous group, since there is a vast contrast in their ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ classroom approaches. Though they categorise themselves as ‘romantic teachers’, the classroom practices which I have observed compel me to place them towards ‘lion tamer’ notion of a teacher.

The first four categories, which constitute 89% of the teachers, have undergone less identity crisis. They have formed a unified self-concept that is relatively stable at the present. The fifth category, which constitutes 4% of the teachers, seems to undergo maximum identity crisis. There is a sixth category of teachers that I found very difficult to understand. Though there is a contrast between what they say and practice, they are also equally committed to the organisation. This makes me assume that the contrast occurs without their knowledge, and because of the lack of self-reflexivity. Interestingly there seems to be high level of commitment amongst all the categories of teachers.

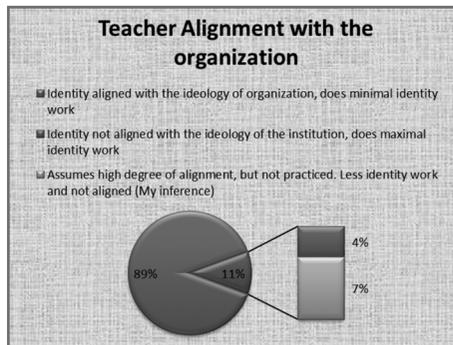
The everyday techniques in school used by the first four categories of teachers (who have “really” aligned their identities with the organisation) are more or less the same, and those used by the fifth and the sixth categories (who have “apparently” aligned) is similar. For example, teachers belonging to the first set smile when children answer back, change the topic when children get bored, explain to children again when they don’t do their homework, and respond in an unbiased manner to both fast and slow learners. But teachers in the second set get frustrated when children make noise, get angry when children don’t understand, label the slow learners, and so on. Thus, most of them believe that if a child does not understand the concept then the reason lies in the teaching strategies and not in the child herself.

Figure 1 - The Graphical Representation of Category of Teachers



The first four categories (89%) are aligned to what the organisation ideally envisages. Thus, in total, this is how the identities of teachers and their identity work looks like (see figure 2)

Figure 2 - Teacher Alignment with the Organisation



4. Organisational Strategies that Help Teachers Align

The school under study has been accredited as a study center by the National Institute of Open Schooling under the Open Basic Scheme, which enables the school to adopt a great deal of flexibility in organising teaching-learning experiences and in designing curriculum. This flexibility in itself is not sufficient to provide complete autonomy to the teacher. It also depends on the principles - formal and informal - of the organisation. According to my observations and interactions with teachers, the following are some of the features of the organisation that helped teachers align to the organisation and enabled them to form stable self-identities.

4.1 Peer Observation

One of the important procedures, as part of the selection process to the school, is peer observation. All the teachers invariably responded that it is by observing the classes of senior teachers that they internalised the model of teaching prevailing in the school. One teacher responded, “I saw this model working well with the children than the previous model of ‘strict teacher’ that I thought was most effective. Teachers get more love and respect from the children when they are not scared of the teacher and teachers are friendly to them.” Such models and peer culture is crucial in the socialisation process of any organisation. A large part of our perception when we enter any organisation is shaped by how others are oriented in the organisation and how committed they are.

4.2 Trust and Autonomy

Teachers are given maximum autonomy in deciding about their teaching plans, with flexible targets to complete at the end of the year. The organisation believes that the teachers are responsible and capable. There is no “chasing and firing” of the teachers to complete the syllabus. This gives the teachers a sense of belongingness to the organisation.

This autonomy is not just confined to the teaching learning process but is extended to the managerial aspects. Teachers discuss about every issue related to the organisation ranging from the learning difficulties of children to the fund raising for the organisation in a highly democratic environment. There is only a thin line of separation between the management and the teachers. Teachers are involved in all the decision making processes regarding the school. This model of ‘power’ between the management and the teachers is similar to the power equation between the teachers and the students.

Right from addressing teachers as ‘akka’ (elder sister) or ‘anna’ (elder brother) or in most cases ‘teacher’, there is a great deal of autonomy for the children. The teachers sit with the children on the carpet thereby trying to eliminate subtle power differences. Each child does the work at her own pace. The teachers helps each child separately and equally. This eliminates the conception of power being vested in the teachers’ hands.

The autonomy of children and teachers also results from the ways in which the organisation conceives and visualises knowledge. Knowledge is not seen as a separate entity that they have to strive for; instead it is perceived as being embedded in the everyday life of each child. In the words of one of the teachers, “Only after coming here, I realised that what is given in the textbook

is nothing but what is already there outside.” This kind of orientation has important consequences in the school as it ensures valuing the experiences and the worth of every child.

5. Identification with the Tribe

Since most of the teachers are adivasis, there is strong identification of teachers with their tribe. Teachers feel the need to work sincerely for the upliftment of their tribe. They have a strong commitment towards the education of each and every tribal child. The organisation is successful in passing on this spirit to non-tribal teachers as well. The learning process connects directly with the children because most of the teachers in the community speak in their mother tongue. The cultural curriculum strengthens this identification of the teachers with their tribe.

Every teacher believes that it is the teacher who fails when the child does not learn. All the teachers believe that different children learn differently not because of the innate differences among children but due to the differences in the background of the children, like ‘illiterate or insecure family background’, ‘lack of nutrition’, and ‘irregularity’. Thus, teachers have understanding about the personal histories of children since the community is closely linked with the school. This has helped in building an informal and fearless learning environment for the children, which might not have been possible with a group comprising only of non-tribal teachers.

6. Teachers Trying to Form Group Identity

Expressions such as “we don’t want any of our team members to resign”, “we all should go together for the trip”, “we all have same thinking”, “we don’t get into any conflict, because all of us think of the welfare of children”, were echoed several times in the school. Teachers seemed to listen to each other, discuss, and then decide the merit of any issue or problem. Sharing of responsibilities when some teachers are absent, and helping each other without hesitation was very obvious. Most of the teachers don’t see their personal and professional lives as separate. They don’t see any change in their behavior inside and outside the school.

Ninety six percent (except the fifth category) of teachers believe that they are in the right place. There is a great deal of emotional support that the teachers offer each other. There are some teachers who seem to have a better say in decision-making process but with mutual understanding and recognition from other teachers. This coordination prevents any informal groupism among the teachers.

7. Highly Reflective Management

The management of the organisation is highly reflective. It recognises the efforts of the teachers, and at the same time guides them towards the larger social purpose. It does not see the teachers who are not aligned as a threat but as an opportunity to improve its strategies. It shares power with the teachers, and no information is hidden from them. There are no symbols of power in the organisation like ‘separate office for the principal’, ‘teachers carrying stick’, or ‘special provisions and facilities for teachers or management’. The organisation is highly normative^v rather than coercive^{vi} or remunerative^{vii}. This is reflected not only in management- teacher relations but also in teacher-child relations.

8. Emphasis on Method rather than Content

The organisation values attitudes and dispositions of teachers than the content. This gives them time and space to develop content at their own pace. According to the management, teachers should be ready to unlearn and relearn, rather than ‘unwilling to change’; once a child finds it comfortable to learn with the teacher then a lot of self-learning can also take place. Although this is true for every child, this is particularly relevant in an Adivasi context. Because for them learning takes place incidentally during the socialisation of an individual into the culture, and not through the abstract signs and symbols of the textbook. The understanding of education as something deliberately planned for and provided to children through mediators (teachers) who can transmit knowledge is irrelevant in Adivasi community, as the emphasis here is on skills and content related to everyday practical life. This understanding of the community is passed on to every teacher during the orientation. Therefore, child-centered pedagogy, which many teachers have internalised in their identity, has its roots in the socio-cultural context.

One of the trustees (who is also teaching in the school) reflects in the Teacher Plus magazine (March 2013) of Azim Premji University as follows: “The teachers including tribal and non-tribal ones had to understand the complexities of the Adivasi way of life, their language, their customs. Education in the Adivasi system is a process of socialisation, and unless the teacher is able to establish a special rapport with the child, almost on a one to one basis, the child will not get involved in learning.”

9. Limitations of the study

I failed to understand the nature of identity formation and conflict of the sixth category of teachers since questions beyond the limits of what I have framed

would have intruded into their personal space. The sixth category of teachers believe that they are in the right place, that they work for the benefit of the organisation, that they internalise the larger social purpose but they fail to put those into practice. This does not seem to be deliberate. But what is worth noticing is that this 7% of teachers are part of the management and they seem to have more positional power (though not explicitly exercised). This could be one of the reasons that nobody questions them. Interestingly these teachers play a major role in orienting every new teacher to the organisational policy.

Though the conversation with most of the teachers was in Malayalam and Tamil, it has been translated verbatim into English while writing the report.

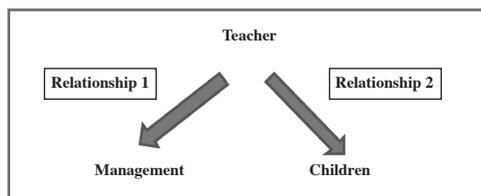
10. Conclusion

This study has looked at how an alternative school like Vidyodaya facilitates teachers to form stable identities, which makes their work, as well as that of the organisation, easy and productive. Vidyodaya being a highly normative organisation puts immense effort in helping teachers avoid identity conflicts. As a result, the majority of the teachers are satisfied with their jobs. The organisation values the teachers' efforts and creates a democratic environment to give space for everyone's voice. This shows that a careful mode of selection and socialisation can enormously decrease the investments (both resources and efforts) required for control in the organisations to pursue their goals.

The conception of an ideal teacher described by most of the teachers deviated from the traditional model. They believed that, 'there are variety of ways to teach a single concept', 'each child is unique', 'children fail to learn when they are scared', 'children are natural inquirers', and so on. The notion of professional identity is not assumed as rigid by them, but is seen as open to be reflected upon and modification. This vision of the organisation helps the teachers to form a unified holistic identity, which does not much separate their personal and professional identities.

The teacher has dual relationship in the school as seen in the figure below.

Figure 3 - Relational Structure



Eighty nine percent of the teachers maintained coherence and consistency in both the relationships (1 and 2 as shown in the diagram), and had established very stable identities. Four percent of the teachers could not internalise both the relationships in the way in which organisation demands, and are still in the process of identity work. Seven percent of the teachers accept the ideology behind relationship 1 but do not transfer the pattern into relationship 2. But they don't have identity crisis because of it, since they are not controlled by anyone as explained in the previous section.

One important implication of this study for the organisation is regarding the fifth and sixth category of teachers who have not internalised the ideologies of organisation completely. An increase in the number of teachers in both these categories in the future may lead to the formation of informal groups in the organisation. It would be ideal if the organisation can help the teachers modify their identities than suppressing them.

One of the teachers in the above categories responded to me in the midst of the conversation, "I saw your project questions put up on the notice board. The question in which you are asking, 'which teacher do you like?' should not be asked to children. They will obviously tell the name of someone who is very friendly with them. They think teachers who advise and punish are bad. But they are immature and their mind is unstable now. They will understand the value of such teachers when they grow up." This reflects the identity crisis that a conventional teacher can undergo in an alternative school where punishment is not considered a desirable thing.

Though there are numerous mechanisms in place to orient teachers, the organisation being a normative one, a small percentage of teachers are yet to settle their identity work. But the school allows each person to take his/her own time and to be reflective. At the same time, it also sees that there are no major deviations from the organisational ideology. The majority of the teachers, who have aligned, foster this process by establishing their group identity.

A major finding of this study is that there is prevalent prejudice about the beliefs and perceptions of rural teachers. When Vidyodaya can train the youth of the Adivasi community, who have not even completed their formal school education, into being highly reflective teachers, why can't this be done in other schools? Why do our schools still have teachers holding traditional beliefs about teaching, which is a major lacunae in the Indian education system?

Notes

- ⁱ Woods and Jeffrey (2002) explain the identity work done by primary teachers in the UK in order to resolve the conflicts between their social identity and personal identity. Teachers have engaged in identity work, characterised mainly by identity talk, and a number of emotional and intellectual strategies in trying to resolve dilemmas faced during transition from “the holism, humanism and vocationalism of the old Plowden self-identity” to “new assigned social identity signalled in the assault on child-centred philosophy” in the UK. In the process, teachers reconstruct their identities in order to cope up with the new situations.
- ⁱⁱ Visit the website of the school for more details, <http://www.vidyodaya.org/vbvt/>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Statement from the school website, <http://www.vidyodaya.org/vbvt/>
- ^{iv} SSA Bridge Course Residential Center for drop-out children in partnership with the government was started in July 2012. There is one more SSA centre run by the trust, in Kozhykandy, Srimadurai, which has been started in partnership with the SSA in August 2011.
- ^v In normative organisations, it is the norms of the organisation that motivate its members. In this case people give more importance to the quality of the work they do, and they feel greater commitment to the organisation.
- ^{vi} Organisations where coercive power is exercised and control is based on the application of physical means is ascribed as coercive power.
- ^{vii} Organisations that use material rewards, which consist of allocating some favours in order to recognise and appreciate the effort/outcome in terms of amenities or entities.

References

- Hargreaves, D. H. (1975). *Interpersonal Relations and Education*. London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Madan, A (2012): “Making Schools Work”, *Journal of Educational Planning and Administration*, Vol 26, No 4, 591-602.
- Ramdas, B (2013): “Adivasis, Education and the RTE Act”, *Teacher Plus*, March 2013, (<http://www.teacherplus.org/2013/march-2013/Adivasis-education-and-the-rte-act/>).
- Woods, P and B Jeffrey (2002): “The Reconstruction of Primary Teachers’ Identities”, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol 23, No 1, 89-106.





WHAT CAN ASSAM LEARN FROM SRI LANKA'S HEALTH ACHIEVEMENTS?

TEJBIR SINGH
SONI¹

ABSTRACT

The paper talks about the health status of Sri Lanka and Assam on three health indicators: Maternal Mortality Rate, Infant Mortality Rate, and Life Expectancy at Birth. It specifically debates about the lessons Assam, which has come up recently with The Assam Public Health Bill 2010, could learn from Sri Lanka's health achievements. Various causes that have contributed to better health status in Sri Lanka include social and historical factors, policy interventions, health system interventions, and health financing. There were several inter-related social domains on which Sri Lanka paid simultaneous or subsequent attention, for example, gender parity, literacy, poverty and inequality. This paper makes the point that it is not just policies addressing healthcare specifically, but various social sector initiatives that contributed to the better health status of Sri Lanka, and could be an input for policy makers and legislators in Assam.

INTRODUCTION

Health is one of the most basic services that play an enabling role for enhancing the richness of life. It has an impact on enlarging the freedoms which individuals enjoy. Importance of health can be gauged from the fact that three out of eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) address health directly. The concept of Human Development Reports (HDR), which came up in 1990 under the tutelage of Mahbub ul Haq and Amartya Sen, has its roots in considering people as the real wealth of nations. As was acknowledged by Haq, certain domains of development have long gestation period and might seem invisible, but progress on those counts is as necessary as economic growth. Some of them relating to health, such as, better nutrition and health services often go unnoticed. HDRs seek to measure development by combining the indicators of life expectancy, educational achievement, and income.

¹*Tejbir Singh Soni graduated from the Masters in Development Programme from Azim Premji University (APU), Bangalore in the year 2013. Currently he is working as a Knowledge Manager, Human Development Resource Group (HDRG), with Centre for Good Governance (CGG), Hyderabad. His interests lie in undertaking action research in the domain of human development and related public policies. Tejbir can be reached at tejbir.soni@cgg.gov.in*

This paper specifically discusses the health status of two regions - Sri Lanka and Assam. Although there should have been comparisons between two countries or two states, this article compares a country with a state in India; the rationale being a number of similarities between the two regions as stated below. The purpose of this paper is to acknowledge the factors that have contributed to better health status in Sri Lanka. It also discusses Assam's recent initiative of introducing "The Assam Public Health Bill 2010"^{xi} as a possible comprehensive healthcare initiative. It then goes on to ask whether there are some other inter-related domains that need to be reformed simultaneously.

This section would highlight the rationale for comparing Sri Lanka and Assam. First, on account of population, Sri Lanka has a population of 20,263,723, and further breakup yields that 48.5% of the population is male and 51.5% is female.ⁱⁱ Sri Lanka has gender parity, and the subsequent sections of this paper would support the fact that there are multiple reasons that have contributed to better health status in Sri Lanka. According to census 2011, population of Assam is 31,169,272 and further breakdown yields that 51.2% of the population comprises of males and 48.8% is female.ⁱⁱⁱ Second, both Sri Lanka and Assam have the majority of population living in rural areas. Approximately 80% of the population is rural in the case of Sri Lanka,^{iv} and in Assam the figure stands at 86%.^v

Third, Assam is the only state in India that has come forward with a bill to ensure health for all - "The Assam Public Health Bill 2010". It is on the same lines as is the case with Sri Lanka, which has universal and free healthcare since the introduction of universal adult franchise in 1931.^{vi} This move became the means of empowerment of majority of rural population, especially poor and women, so that they could demand for healthcare. Subsequently, the political economy of the island in the late 1950s fostered competitive populism between the left-of-center Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and right-of-center United National Party (UNP). Further, most of the incumbent governments have lost power since 1956. This has made the government more responsive to the needs of the citizens. Since 1988, there has been extensive devolution of government at the provincial level in Sri Lanka to check separatism, and such devolution has further improved access to and quality of healthcare.

Fourth, both regions share a common history of influential extremist movements, for example, United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) in Assam, and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka. The nature of conflict was different in the two regions; in Sri Lanka it was a civil war, and in Assam it was an insurgency movement. The civil war in Sri Lanka

was brought to an end in 2009.^{vii}

The first section of the paper discusses the achievements of Sri Lanka and India (including some southern states and Assam). The second section would try to explore reasons why Sri Lanka has a high health status in comparison to India in general and Assam in particular. The third section discusses some lessons for Assam with respect to policies. The fourth section sums up all the findings, and suggest the path that would lead to better health status for a state like Assam.

1. Some Achievements of Sri Lanka and Indian States, Especially Assam

Sri Lanka has performed better on the count of HDI value in comparison to India in general, and Assam in particular. As the table below mentions, there is a huge difference in the values if we compare it for Sri Lanka (0.658) and Assam (0.474) – the difference stands at 0.184 points. On this count India's HDI value is lower than that of Sri Lanka. However, states like Kerala come quite close to the HDI of Sri Lanka.

Table 1. HDI Indicators for Sri Lanka and Some Indian States

	Sri Lanka	India	Assam	Kerala	Tamil Nadu
HDI	0.658	0.504	0.474	0.625	0.544
MMR	39.3	212	390	81	97
IMR Total deaths / 1000 live births	9.47	46.07	58	12	28
(a) Male	10.44	44.71	56		
(b) Female	8.45	47.59	60		
4. Life Expectancy at birth (Yrs)	75.94	67.14	58.9	74.0	66.2
(a) Male (Yrs)	72.43	66.08	58.6	70.90	65.2
(b) Female (Yrs)	79.59	68.33	59.3	77.0	67.6
MPI	0.021	0.283	0.316		
IHDI	0.546	0.343	0.341	0.520	0.396
GII	0.419	0.617			

Sources. Sample Registration System (2011); UNDP (2011).

In achieving these targets Sri Lanka has outperformed India due to various reasons mentioned in the subsequent sections of the paper. India stands way below, and this is specifically true for Assam, which has amongst the worst figures of MMR in India.^{viii} Sri Lanka has already achieved the MDG set for reducing child mortality (MDG 4) to 30 by 2015.^{ix} The position of India in achieving MDG 4 is not very encouraging. Within India, the best performing states such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu have already achieved this target well before the deadline. But the figures for Assam are not promising, and it is categorised amongst states that are not performing well with its IMR being well above the national average.^x Assam needs to strengthen and shape its policies to achieve the MDGs.

Life Expectancy at Birth (LEB) is one of the indicators of health status taken into consideration by HDRs. Sri Lanka outshines India in this domain as well; Assam also compares very unfavourably with Sri Lanka in this regard. However, states such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu have a narrower margin of difference compared to Sri Lanka.

The 2010 HDR came up with inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI). Percentage loss of Sri Lanka on count of inequality is lowest at 17.1% in comparison to India's 32%. For Kerala it stands at 16%. However Assam's percentage loss due to inequality stands at 28% and is much higher in comparison to Sri Lanka.

2. Reasons behind Sri Lanka's Better Health Status

2.1 Health System Interventions

Health indicators largely contribute to the high achievement in HDI for Sri Lanka, with a score of 0.866 for health index. Education index is at the middle with a score of 0.694, and following it is the income index with a score of 0.552.

In terms of Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR), there have been significant achievements for Sri Lanka, which is a role model for countries like India in general, and for states such as Assam in particular. Some of the reasons for such a low MMR in Sri Lanka are a well-trained cadre of Public Health Midwives (PHM) which provides domiciliary care. PHMs serve a population ranging from 3000 to 5000, and they live within the local area. Their duties entail visiting pregnant women, registering them for curative care, and encouraging them for ante-natal checkups. PHMs undergo a professional training of 18 months, and they are under prompt supervision, the chain

of command being well integrated up to the medical officer. They act as a bridge between citizens seeking healthcare and the healthcare units. PHMs are the key to sustain confidence and satisfaction of the public with maternal healthcare services. Having a cadre of PHMs is the forte of Sri Lanka's strategy to bring healthcare closer to the people (Padmanathan et al 2003). The success of this can be gauged from facts such as 98% of births take place in public health institutions.^{xi} Skilled healthcare professionals, amongst whom 74% are doctors, attend more than 98% of births.^{xii} More than 95% of the women get anti-tetanus injections during deliveries.

There is very high use of ante-natal, post-natal, and obstetric care along with measures to control hookworm and malaria that have contributed to check anemia. The referral system is also quite efficient in Sri Lanka. With respect to vaccination and immunisation (except for measles), immunisation coverage is 100 percent. There is also a very effective continuum being maintained in Sri Lanka that has checked maternal mortality.

Taking into account the figures for maternal and child health in Assam, according to National Family Health Survey-3 (NFHS-3), the picture that comes forward is stated in the table below.

Table 2. Some Maternal Health Indicators for Assam

Key Indicators for Assam from NFHS- 2005-06	Residence		
	NFHS 3 (2005-06)	Urban	Rural
Mothers who had atleast 3 antenatal care visits for their last birth (%)	36.3	68.9	32.3
Birth assisted by doctor/nurse/LHV/ANM/other health personnel (%)	31.2	62.4	27.5
Institutional births	22.9	59	18.6
Mothers who received postnatal care from a doctor/nurse/LHV/ANM/other health personnel within 2 days of delivery for their last birth (%)	13.8	37.1	10.9

Source (NFHS 2005-06)

The political economy of healthcare in Sri Lanka can be gauged from the spending and policies that have been in place. Although most governments are reluctant to invest on healthcare since it has a long gestation period, its impact on several counts are not that visible, and it involves coordination with various ministries, this is where some of the policies of Sri Lanka have done wonders. For example, the National Nutrition Council, which was set up to uplift the nutrition standards of women and children in the country, has been working well due to synergies between the ministries of education, agriculture, environment, and trade.^{xiii}

There has been a well-integrated system of healthcare from the bottom of the pyramid consisting of cottage or rural hospitals, which take care of primary health and maternity care, leading to secondary hospitals that include district hospitals, going all the way up to the tertiary level of hospitals with specialist services, teaching services, and specialist maternity hospitals. There is also an optimal referral system in place, and the demand for services is also adequate.

2.2 Health Financing

The political economy of healthcare in Sri Lanka has been favoring substantial investments. Total expenditure on healthcare has been around 4% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from 2000-2008, which is almost half compared to global average of around 8%. Total expenditure on healthcare was close to 100 billion during 2005. Of the whole expenditure, government spending contributes for 46% and the rest 54% is being provided by private sector.

In India health is a low priority area and the investment in healthcare is barely above 1%. This fact itself explains that more than 70% of the spending on healthcare in India is out of pocket expenditure of which approximately 70% is spent on drugs.^{xiv} There are various suggestions for stepping up investments in healthcare as a proportion of GDP. The High Level Expert Group (HLEG) set up by the Planning Commission has recommended raising the investments in health to 2.5% of GDP by the end of 12th five-year plan. HLEG also recommended that public sector should be the foundation of health care reforms.

Health in India is a concurrent subject in which both the union government and the state government can legislate. Assam's allocation on health and family welfare increased from 6617.6 million rupees in 2009-10 to 8869 million in 2010-11.^{xv} This shows impressive improvements in investments in healthcare;

but, this still needs to be stepped up taking into consideration the prevailing levels of low achievements in health indicators. Although there has been an increase in allocation from 0.63% (2009-10) to 0.79% (2010-11), it would be ideal if it is further increased along the lines of Sri Lanka.

Although the out of pocket expenditure is quite low at 2% in Assam, this does not reflect the true picture. People in the state spend less on health due to low health seeking behaviour and poor availability of health services. As a result of healthcare spending, only 0.3% of Sri Lankan households are pushed below the international poverty line. In contrast, in India, due to low investments on healthcare, a large number of people fall below the poverty line as a result of their expenditure on healthcare. This is not just limited to poor families; this process impacts the middle class as well (Garg and Karan 2005).

2.3 Social Conditions

2.3.1 Inequality

The purpose of coming up with HDIs is to be informed of the domains in which specific countries are performing well, or not so well, and make a comparison amongst countries. It is a means to an end to help influence public policies and programmes, and empower citizens. HDIs ideally should pave the way from analysis to action.

IHDI was framed to highlight the inequalities that get overlooked in HDI. This index specifically addresses the issue of distributional dimension of human development. IHDI is extremely relevant for South Asia where experiencing inequality is an everyday phenomenon. As it has been cited in various HDRs, HDI is 'potential' achievement whereas IHDI is 'actual' achievement.

The HDI value for India is 0.504 against global average of 0.624. However the loss due to inequality in India is 32%, which is quite high in comparison to global average of 22%. By comparing the inequality in the three dimensions of HDI in India and Sri Lanka the following picture emerges.

Table 3. Inequality Adjusted Human Development Index for India and Sri Lanka

Inequality Adjusted Human Development Index		
	India	Sri Lanka
Income Gini Coefficient	36.8	40.3
Loss due to inequality in life expectancy (%)	27.1	9.4
Loss due to inequality in education (%)	40.6	17.9
Loss due to inequality in income (%)	14.7	20.8
Inequality adjusted education index	0.267	0.558
Inequality adjusted life expectancy index	0.522	0.785
Inequality adjusted income index	0.433	0.442
Inequality adjusted HDI Value	0.392	0.579

Source. UNDP (2011)

Table 4. IHDI for India and Sri Lanka

IHDI for 2011					
	IHDI Value	Overall Loss %	Loss due to inequality in life expectancy at birth%	Loss due to inequality in education %	Loss due to inequality in income %
Sri Lanka	0.579	16.2	9.4	17.9	20.8
India	0.392	28.3	27.1	40.6	14.7
Difference		12.1	17.7	22.7	-6.1

Source. UNDP (2011)

Taking into consideration the above table, what can be seen is that in general there is greater inequality in India in almost all counts except income. It is important not just to focus on health policies but also on other interlinked social dimensions that impact development are prerequisites for improvement. Considering the IHDI for health within India, the average loss in this dimension due to inequality is 34% and for Assam this loss stands at 40%.

Figure 1. Loss in Health Sub-index due to Inequality: India and Assam

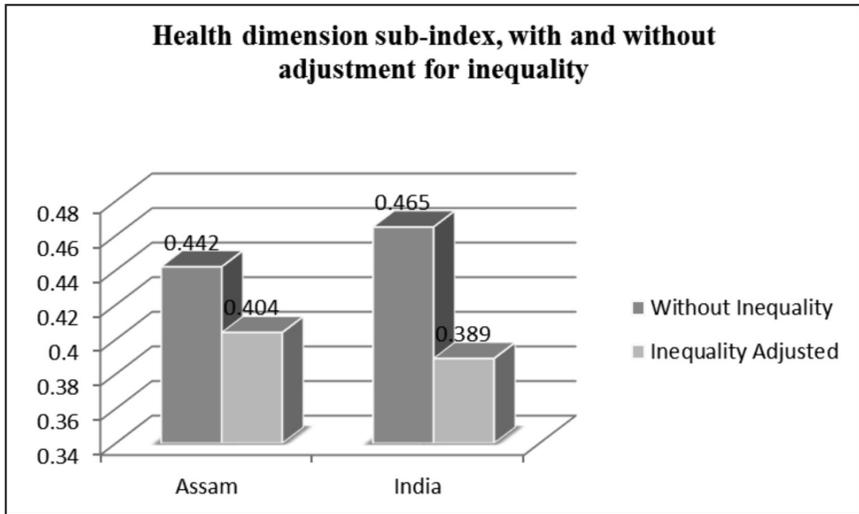


Figure 2. Loss in Education Sub-index due to Inequality: India and Assam

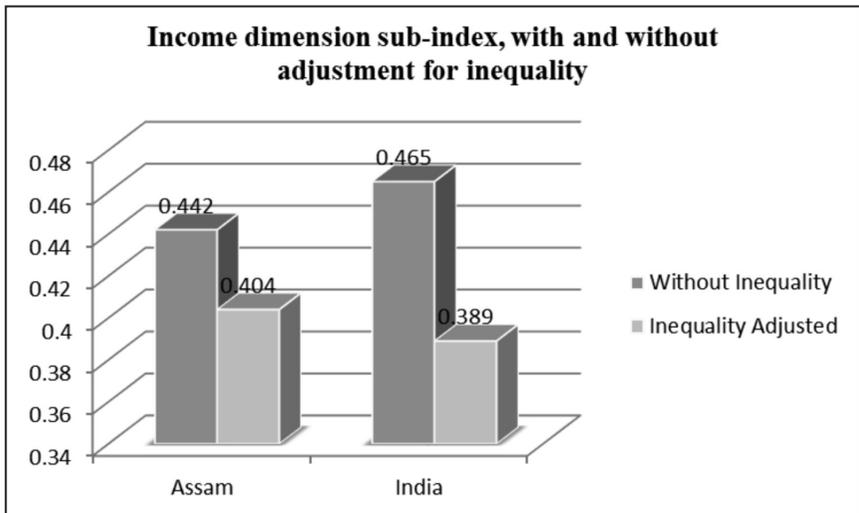
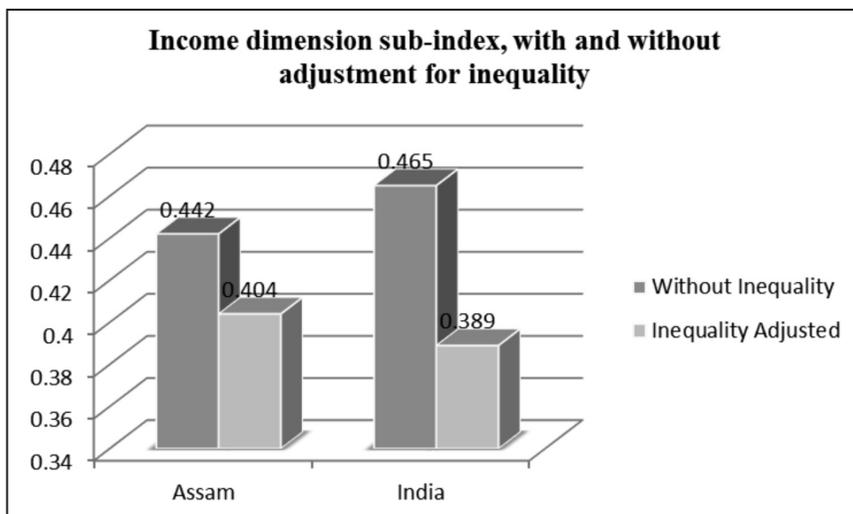


Figure 3. Loss in Income Sub-index due to Inequality: India and Assam



If we compare India's position with Sri Lanka in terms of inequality, India's position is grim. The three graphs presented above clearly highlight that within India the position of Assam is even worse on various fronts, especially related to the dimensions of health, education, and income. IHDI should be an indicator to policymakers that just coming up with structural policies related to the domain of health would not yield results. Rather, what is needed is to address other interlinked social issues such as inequality, and education.

2.3.2 Gender

One of the measures used to assess the existing inequalities is Gender Inequality Index (GII). It highlights 'un-freedoms' which women face related to three domains – reproductive health, empowerment, and labour markets. It's score ranges from 0 to 1, 0 standing for maximum equality and 1 standing for maximum inequality. Prevalence of these inequalities limits the choices and opportunities which women enjoy. The GII score for Sri Lanka is 0.565.^{xvi} This is relatively high in comparison to majority of countries in medium human development category. Although Sri Lanka performs quite well on maternal mortality and educational achievements of women, but the areas which have majorly contributed to this inequality figure are: low labour force participation of women (34.4%) and parliamentary representation of women (6%).

Table 5. Gender Inequality Index for Sri Lanka and India

Gender Inequality Index (GII) 2011									
	GII Value	GII Rank	MMR	Adolescent fertility rate	Female seats in parliament %	Population with atleast secondary education %		Labour force participation rate	
						F	M	F	M
Sri Lanka	0.419	74	39	23.6	5.3	56	57.6	34.2	75.1
India	0.617	129	230	86.3	10.7	26.6	50.4	32.8	81.1
Difference	0.198	55	191	62.7	5.4	-29.4	-7.2	-1.4	6

Source: UNDP (2011)

The above table highlights the inequalities or disadvantages that women face in India and Sri Lanka. Almost on all counts in the above table Sri Lanka outperforms India. If we take into consideration health indicators in the above table, we find that MMR in India is quite high in comparison to Sri Lanka. Further, within India, if we consider the case of Assam, we find that Assam has the worst MMR in India. According to Sample Registration System (SRS) 2007-09, MMR for Assam stands at 390 in comparison to the all India figure of 212. Although there are various reasons cited for this, insurgency in Assam is given as a major explanatory factor. Sri Lanka, which has had a similar history of insurgency compounded by civil war, has still performed exceptionally well in terms of health indicators. Therefore, in the case of Assam, it is difficult to accept insurgency as an explanation for its high MMR.^{xvii}

Although the north-eastern states in India enjoy a relatively better position on count of gender parity, Assam is the exception. Gender difference on account of work-participation in Assam is quite high at 29, which reflects the state of deprivation. According to the National Human Development Report (NHDR) 2001, Gender Equality Index for India is 0.620 for the 1980s and 0.676 for the 1990s but for Assam it was 0.575 in 1991, which highlights the fact that gender inequality in Assam is much higher compared to the national average (Planning Commission 2001).

Access to healthcare is influenced by not just economic reasons or supply-side factors, but also by gender-related issues. Gender disparity impacts access to healthcare. For example, the need for permission to go to the health centres and the concern whether there would be a female service provider at the

health center or not are factors that influence access to healthcare by women. Women in general have limited freedom of movement, and this is also influenced by factors such as, a) income and status of the women's household, b) distance to the healthcare center, c) age and marital status of the women, d) rural and urban setting, and so on. It has often been noted that on the first count if women approach the healthcare center and experience the absence of female health providers or drugs, her chances of revisit are bleak (NFHS 2005-06).

The table below highlights the access of three kinds of public spaces for women, including health facilities for some of the states in India.

Table 6. Access to Health Facility for Women

Percentage of women in the age group of 15-49, who are allowed to go alone to three public places (market, health facility, and outside the community).		
	Percentage allowed to go alone to all the 3 places	Percentage with a bank or savings account they themselves use
Assam	35.3	11.7
Kerala	34.7	27
Tamil Nadu	54.2	15.9
India	36.8	16.2

Source. NFHS 2005-06

2.3.3 Poverty

Poverty is one of the major factors that limit choices and opportunities that people enjoy. But poverty is not just limited to income and has multiple dimensions. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) highlights this broader dimension of poverty, which assesses poverty as experienced in three most basic dimensions – health, education, and living standards. The objective of introducing MPI is to address the paradox of poverty despite increasing income. MPI captures poverty by ten indicators. It talks about combination of deprivations that work to make life miserable for people. The criterion used to label someone as multi-dimensionally poor is that when she is deprived in combinations of indicators exceeding a weighted sum of 30% of the total deprivation. Sri Lanka's achievements on MPI are remarkable amongst SAARC countries. Its score on MPI is 0.018 and it has a multi-dimensional

poverty headcount index of 4.7% for 2009-2010. The score highlights the success of welfare programmes undertaken by the government.

Table 7. Multidimensional Poverty index for Sri Lanka and India for 2011

Multidimensional Poverty Index 2011 Sri Lanka & India						
	MPI Value	Head Count (%)	Intensity of deprivation (%)	Population Vulnerable to poverty (%)	Population in severe poverty (%)	Population below income poverty line (%)
Sri Lanka	0.021	5.3	38.7	14.4	0.6	7
India	0.283	53.7	52.7	16.4	28.6	41.6
Difference	0.262	48.4	14	2	28	34.6

Source: UNDP (2012)

The above table highlights poverty prevalent in India and Sri Lanka as calculated by MPI. It clearly shows the highly unfavorable position of India in comparison to Sri Lanka, especially in terms of the percentage head count where the difference stands at 48% and for population below income poverty line where difference with Sri Lanka is 35%.

Table 8. Multidimensional Poverty in Assam, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu

Multidimensional Poverty in Selected States of India						
Regions	Percentage of population	MPI	Incidence of poverty	Average intensity across the poor	Percentage of population vulnerable to poverty	Percentage of population in severe poverty
Assam	2.7	0.316	60.1	52.6	18.4	32.5
Kerala	2.6	0.051	12.7	40.2	22.3	2.1
Tamil Nadu	5.5	0.13	30.5	42.7	20.2	8.7

Source: OPHI (2011)

Taking into consideration the above table, it emerges that there is quite high incidence of poverty in Assam along with very high average intensity across the poor. The high percentage of population in severe poverty is of serious concern. This highlights the case where poverty impacts access to healthcare.

Table 9: Poverty Estimates in Assam and other States, 2004-05

Poverty Estimates in Assam and other States, 2004-05									
States	Combined		Rural		Urban		Estimates of Population Below the Poverty Line, 2004-05 (Planning Commission)		
	Abject Poor	Poor but not abject poor	Abject Poor	Poor but not abject poor	Abject Poor	Poor but not abject poor	Combined	Rural	Urban
Assam	23.1	36	25.7	35.2	12.8	39.4	19.7	22.3	3.3
Kerala	1.2	14	0.9	13.5	1.6	15.1	15	13.2	20.2
Tamil Nadu	13.4	32	11.8	33.2	15.2	30.6	22.5	22.8	22.2
India	20.1	31.6	23.4	33.4	13.3	27.7	27.5	28.3	25.7

Source: Planning Commission (2007)

Poverty has an impact on the utilisation of healthcare services. More than half of the children among the abject poor in Assam did not have a health card.

Table 10. Percentage of Births that Received Medical Assistance by Poverty Level of Households in the States of India 2005-06

Percentage of Births that Received Medical Assistance by Poverty Level of Households in the States of India 2005-06					
States	Abject Poor	Poor but not Abject Poor	Non-Poor	All	Ratio of Non-Poor to Poor
Assam	14	31.6	49.5	31	3.5
Kerala	100	98.1	99.7	99.4	1
Tamil Nadu	79.1	87.8	95	90.6	1.2
India	23.8	45.6	66	46.6	2.8

Source: Planning Commission (2007)

The above table shows that there is very low health assistance received by people who are abjectly poor in Assam in comparison to other states and the national average. There is an urgent need for Assam to step up on various

counts. This table specifically highlights that even after the provision of healthcare by the state, there are factors such as poverty, which limit the access to healthcare facilities.

3. Lessons for Assam

3.1 Access

In Sri Lanka most of the people have access to healthcare facility within five kilometers from where they live. On the same lines, Assam has come up with a unique concept by the name of boat clinics.^{xviii} These clinics specifically provide outreach services to isolated islands on the Brahmaputra River. Further, the Government of Assam has taken several initiatives to reach remote and inhospitable regions. For example, it has set up 50 riverine public health centers, provided boats with operation theatre facility, and has provided boat ambulances. The state government approached the North East Council with the purpose of setting up floating hospitals. The government is considering coming up with a policy measure to ensure that the doctors posted at rural regions stay where they are posted.^{xix}

Both Assam and Sri Lanka are predominantly rural, but Sri Lanka has relatively less rural-urban disparity. There are PHMs who live in rural areas, and provide domiciliary care to the people. But in contrast to that, we find a huge disparity in terms of the presence of health practitioners in rural and urban areas in India. According to Census 2001, there is a tenfold difference in the presence of qualified doctors in rural areas in comparison to urban areas. Whereas a qualified doctor caters to 885 people in urban areas, the figure of a qualified doctor per number of persons stands at 8333 for rural areas.^{xx}

There was a mid-level clinical cadre named “Licentiate Medical Practitioners” (LMPs), which was abolished after independence. These LMPs essentially had three years of training and comprised two-thirds of qualified medical practitioners in rural areas. Doctors did not fill the vacuum that was created by abolishing this cadre. This resulted in the absolute neglect of rural populations. However, Assam has come up with the policy that permits clinicians with around three years of experience to serve government rural health clinics.^{xxi}

Assam has also come with an executive order which mentions about compulsory rural posting of doctors. This essentially includes signing of bonds to ensure that after completion of the course the doctors would serve a rural healthcare unit for a certain period of time. This would address the issues of access and

quality for majority of the rural population.

3.2 Training

Special importance has been given to upgrading the skills of PHMs in Sri Lanka. Almost all the provinces in Sri Lanka have one regional training center where maternal and child health care training is being provided to PHMs to ensure that they provide quality services. They are being provided continuous professional development despite their posting in remote corners of the island.^{xxii}

In Assam, Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA), under National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), are provided with refresher courses via a radio programme. ASHA radio programme is developed in collaboration with All India Radio (AIR), and this programme is supposed to develop the knowledge and skills of the ASHA cadre.^{xxiii}

3.3 Policies Related to Behavioral Change

One of the strengths of Sri Lanka's policies has been its focus on behavioral modification of its citizens towards greater sensitisation to healthcare and to demand it from the state. This has shaped the focus of successive governments to prioritise social sector, especially for the weakest sections of the society.

To ensure that PHMs provide services in rural areas, Sri Lanka has adopted a policy named as “bonding mechanism”. Under this PHMs wish to serve the rural areas for a minimum duration in exchange of ensured scholarships for higher degrees, career paths, and monetary incentives. This strategy works specifically well for middle-income countries (Henderson and Tulloch 2008).

“The Assam Public Health Bill 2010” needs to empower citizens to demand for services and not just ensure the provision of services. It is essential that people are aware of the importance of healthcare. Experiences from Sri Lanka highlight the important role of not just the provision of public services (such as healthcare units), but also of empowering citizens so that they demand these services.

Although the focus should be on provision of public services related to healthcare of citizens, what needs to be kept in mind is that many other domains have impacts on the outcomes related to health. All these domains need to be either sequentially or simultaneously catered to through public policies.

4. Conclusion

So now the question arises, what can Assam learn from Sri Lanka's health achievements? The answer to this question is not just limited to policies related to health but needs inter-ministerial synergy, gender parity, high literacy, political willpower, and a sense of dedication towards improving the status of health.

First, Sri Lanka's achievements in healthcare are a result of various factors, which include cultural, social, and historical reasons. For example, high level of women's autonomy, relative gender equality, and a democratic system based on universal adult franchise are all relevant factors.^{xxiv}

Second, there is general consensus related to national priorities in the domain of social services that includes free and universal education, which has been there since 1947, and consequently a high level of female literacy.

Third, there are important policy decisions taken by the government which include an institutional mechanism for the training of public health midwives, emphasis on public financing with respect to health care, focus on in-patient care, and rejection of cost-recovery as a policy to finance healthcare. The work force is also trained and motivated, and enjoys prestige and respect in the society.

Sri Lankan government's commitment towards healthcare and achieving MDGs is visible from its policies, like "Mahinda Chinthana - Vision for the Future" and the Health Master Plan 2007-2016 based on "Strategic Framework for Health Department".^{xxv} There have been efforts taken by the government to strengthen democratic institutions, for example, Provincial Councils as a part of the policy of decentralisation. The policy orientation is inter-sectoral, and not just focused on silos related to health.

Fourth, presence of a strong network of health facilities and the referral system has been effective. Emphasis has been laid equally on western and indigenous facilities – the former were available within an average distance of 2.2 miles from every home and the latter within an average distance of 0.9 miles.

Fifth, most women in Sri Lanka are aware of the necessity of institutional deliveries due to higher level of literacy among women, and the relative equality that women had in the society. Consequently, there was greater demand by women for institutional deliveries, and supply from the system was also taken care of. In contrast, what we find in India is a lack of awareness of rights and entitlements. Usually what we find is that due to low levels of literacy and high incidence of poverty people either do not demand services

or accept sub-standard services.

As stated previously, health is one of the domains that are inter-ministerial in outlook and the need exists for proper synergy between the ministries. It is also one of the domains that can show improvements only after consistent efforts have been put in place over a period of time. Therefore, what is required is coordinated thinking and coordinated actions to reap synergies of interrelated policies, to achieve the broader aim of developmental effectiveness, and to ensure accountability and transparency.^{xxvi}

Developmental policies related to health, education, and other domains of the social sector should focus on four basic values as enunciated by UNDP – equity, efficiency, participation and empowerment, and sustainability. The key to Sri Lanka's success in terms of health status, as highlighted by indicators such as maternal mortality rate, infant mortality rate, and life expectancy, is not just restricted to interventions in the single domain of healthcare. It has been made possible by affirmative action in multiple domains such as education, gender equality, and universal adult suffrage. There has also been a sense of dedication towards improving health status, and a sense of pride attached to its achievement. This might be a result of empowerment efforts taken by the government.

What is observable from the above analysis is that if there exists gender inequality and low literacy in the society, then there might be low utilisation of services. Poor and rural societies generally do not prioritise access to healthcare, and ignore it, unless it is absolutely urgent. Most of the policies in Assam are sectoral in nature, and consequently have failed to address the multiple deprivations or disadvantages that poor people face. This calls for having a synergistic approach because in social sector most of the aspects of development are interrelated to each other, and neglect in any one aspect would hinder the achievement of results in the other. This is one of the reasons why Sri Lanka has a better health status compared to India in general and Assam in particular.

Notes

- i “Assam Tables Bill to Make Healthcare a Basic Right.” *The Hindu*, 12 March 2010, Viewed on 24 December 2012 (<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/assam-tables-bill-to-make-healthcare-a-basic-right/article237129.ece>).
- ii “Census of Population and Housing 2011.” *Department of Census and Statistics, Government of Sri Lanka*, Viewed on 24 December 2012 (www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat/CPH2011/index.php?fileName=pop41&gp=Activities&tpl=3).
- iii “Assam Census 2011.” *Assam Online Portal, Government of Assam*, Viewed on 24 December 2012 (online.assam.gov.in/web/population-census).
- iv “Sri Lanka: Priorities for Agriculture and Rural Development.” The World Bank, Viewed on 24 December 2012 (web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/EXTSAREGTOPAGRI/0,,contentMDK:20273817~menuPK:548217~pagePK:34004173~piPK:34003707~theSitePK:452766,00.html).
- v “Census 2011: 86% of Assam’s People Live in Villages.” *The Times Of India*, 26 July 2011, Viewed on 24 December 2012 (articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-07-26/guwahati/29815992_1_rural-areas-literacy-rate-urban-population).
- vi “Sri Lanka Profile - Timeline.” *BBC*, November 23, 2012, Viewed on 24 December 2012, (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12004081>).
- vii Ibid.
- viii “Assam Records Highest Maternal Mortality Rate in the Country.” *The Hindu*, 5 March 2010, Viewed on 29 December 2012 (<http://www.thehindu.com/health/policy-and-issues/assam-records-highest-maternal-mortality-rate-in-the-country/article183147.ece>).
- ix “United Nations Millennium Development Goals.” *United Nations*, Viewed on 28 December 2012 (<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/childhealth.shtml>).
- x “Infant Mortality Rate Shows Decline.” *The Hindu*, 27 January 2011, Viewed on 28 December 2012 (<http://www.thehindu.com/health/policy-and-issues/infant-mortality-rate-shows-decline/article1130983.ece>).
- xi Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka (2009).
- xii ibid
- xiii Gunaratna, Gamini (2011): *National Council on Nutrition Established in Sri Lanka*, 14 January 2011, Colombo Page, Viewed on 14 December 2012 (www.colombopage.com/archive_11/Jan14_1295022400CH.php).
- xiv “Getting India’s Health Care System Out of the ICU.” *The Hindu*, 2 September 2012, Viewd 26 December 2012 (<http://www.thehindu.com/health/policy-and-issues/getting-indias-health-care-system-out-of-the-icu/article3850103.ece>).
- xv “Quick Review of Assam Budget 2010-11.” *Xaviers Foundation*, March 2010, Viewed 29 December 2012, (www.xaviersfoundation.org/Home/Quick_Review_AB_10-11.pdf).
- xvi The GII is based on Institute of Policy Studies computations using the latest information available, including the Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2009/10, which covers all three districts in the Eastern Province. Computations do not include the districts in the Northern Province due to the lack of data.

- xvii “Assam Records Highest Maternal Mortality Rate in the Country.” *The Hindu*, 5 March 2010, Viewed on 29 December 2012 (<http://www.thehindu.com/health/policy-and-issues/assam-records-highest-maternal-mortality-rate-in-the-country/article183147.ece>).
- xviii “Boat Clinic – Health Care for Marginalised Communities in Assam.” *Governance Knowledge Centre*, 2011, Viewed on 21 December 2012 (indiagovernance.gov.in/files/Boat_clinic_edited.pdf).
- xix “Special Health Scheme for Assam.” *The Hindu Business Line*, 12 December 2012, Viewed on 29 December 2012 (<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/states/special-health-scheme-for-assam/article4192187.ece>).
- xx “Anybody Ill Here and Seen a Doctor Yet?” *The Hindu*, 31 August 2012, Viewed on 26 December 2012. <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/anybody-ill-here-and-seen-a-doctor-yet/article3840964.ece>.
- xxi *ibid.*
- xxii “The Contribution of Public Health Midwives to Better Health in Rural Communities in Sri Lanka.” *WHO*, Viewed on 27 December 27 2012 (<http://www.who.int/workforcealliance/forum/2011/hrhawardscs28/en/index.html>).
- xxiii “ASHA Radio Programme under NRHM, Assam.” National Rural Health Mission, Viewed on 28 December 2012 (www.nrhmassam.in/asharadio.php).
- xxiv Goonasekera, Chula (2012): *The Island-Features*, Viewed on 20 December 2012 (www.island.lk/2008/05/31/features1.html).
- xxv “Country Cooperation Strategy at a Glance. Sri Lanka.” World Health Organization, Viewed on 21 December 21 2012 from (www.who.int/countryfocus/cooperation_strategy/ccsbrief_lka_en.pdf).
- xxvi UNDP (2011): *Empowered People; Resilient Nation: Situation Analysis and Emerging issues for India, 2013 and Beyond*, UNDP, Viewed on 20 December 2012 (www.undp.org/content/dam/india/docs/undp_india_sitan.pdf).

References

- International Institute for Population Sciences and Macro International (2007): *National Family Health Survey (NFHS 3), 2005-06, Volume I and II* (Mumbai: IIPS).
- Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (2011): *Country Briefing: India, Multidimensional Poverty Index at a Glance*, OPHI, Viewed on 29 December 2012 (<http://www.ophi.org.uk/policy/multidimensional-poverty-index/mpi-resources/>).
- Padmanathan I, J Liljestrand and J Martins (2003): *Investing in Maternal Health in Malaysia and Sri Lanka* (Washington, DC: World Bank).
- Planning Commission (2001): *Poverty in India*, Press Release, Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (2007): *Poverty Estimates for 2004-05*, Planning Commission, Government of India, Viewed on 29 December 2012 (<http://planningcommission.nic.in/news/prmar07.pdf>).
- Sample Registration System (2011): *Maternal & Child Mortality and Total Fertility Rates*, (New Delhi:

Office of Registrar General, India).

Suryanarayana, M H, Ankush Agrawal and K Secta Prabhu (2011): *Inequality Adjusted Human Development Index for India's States 2011*(New Delhi: UNDP).

UNDP (2011): *Human Development Report* (Palgrave Macmillan, New York).

UNDP (2012): *Sri Lanka Human Development Report 2012* (Colombo: UNDP).

Xaviers Foundation (2010): *Quick Review of Assam Budget 2010-11*, Viewed 29 December 2012, ([www.xaviersfoundation.org/Home/Quick Review AB 10-11.pdf](http://www.xaviersfoundation.org/Home/Quick%20Review%20AB%2010-11.pdf)).





Perspectives and Practices



A GUIDE FOR THE NONFORMAL EDUCATION OF MIGRANT LABOUR CHILDREN

KATHERINE ROBINSON¹

ABSTRACT

This paper provides a detailed guide for teaching out-of-school children basic linguistic, numeric and thinking skills in a contextually relevant manner. The guide has been put together for interested individuals living in Bangalore or other cities in Karnataka to provide basic education to out-of-school children living in their neighbourhood. It is easy to identify communities which could benefit from this, as they often consist of individuals working as manual labour who have migrated to Bangalore and other large towns from rural areas; and to offer nonformal classes for their children. This paper assumes a model that permits three two-hour classes per week. At this rate, it would likely take about four months to cover the content outlined below as Module One, the basic framework of which has been adapted from the curriculum used in the Azim Premji Foundation's Migrant Labour Schools.

“The result of teaching small parts of a large number of subjects is the passive reception of disconnected ideas, not illumined with any spark of vitality. Let the main ideas which are introduced into a child's education be few and important, and let them be thrown into every combination possible. The child should make them his own, and should understand their application here and now in the circumstances of his actual life. From the very beginning of his education, the child should experience the joy of discovery. The discovery which he has to make, is that general ideas give understanding of that stream of events which pours through his life, which is his life” (Whitehead 1929: 2).

1. Out-of-School Children in the Indian Context

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has produced a lot of information about issues of development around the world. In the UNESCO Institute of Statistics' publication on out-of-school children, we learn a lot about the issue at hand. Let us, however, first look at the term out-of-school child. According to UNESCO,

¹Katherine Robinson has a Masters in Education from Azim Premji University. She has also taught for close to a year at Namma Nalanda Vidyapeeta - a school run by The Concerned for Working Children, in Kundapur, Karnataka. She is presently working as an Educator at Amazeum, a children's science museum and family learning centre, in Bentonville, Arkansas. She can be reached at katherine.robinson@apu.edu.in

“out-of-school children of primary school age fall into two main groups with respect to their exposure to education. The first group consists of children who are yet to start school. The second group comprises of children who have dropped out before reaching the theoretical completion age for primary school” (UNESCO 2005: 26). In my experience in Bangalore, both in slum areas and in migrant labour communities, it is common to find both kinds of out-of-school children. As the world’s second most populous country, India has the highest absolute number of out-of-school children. “According to the MICS 2000 survey, almost 27 million school-age children in India do not attend school, or one out of four. India alone accounts for 23% of the global total” (ibid: 21). With statistics like these at hand, it is clear that an alarming number of Indian children are not getting the education deemed their basic right by the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child, and the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act of 2005, India.

This discrepancy causes one to ask why, when accessibility to government schools in India is relatively high, are there so many children not going to school. The UNESCO report mentions nine factors that have an influence on a child’s likelihood not to finish primary school: age, sex, place of residence, household wealth, orphans, parental education, caste, family size, and child labour (UNESCO 2005: 51-52). “In South Asia,” for example, “there are 129 girls out of school for every 100 boys” (ibid 36). Also, poor children in India are 3.4 times more likely to be out of school than richer children of the same age and area (ibid 43). Parental education can be seen as coming into play when we consider that “67% of all primary school-age children have mothers without any formal education,” while, “93% of out-of-school children have mothers without formal education” (ibid 51). With such stark risk factors, first generation school-going children often need a little extra support to be able to enter and succeed in formal schools. Nonformal classes are one way to provide that.

2. Background on the Context of Migrant Labour Children

According to the Human Development Report of Karnataka (2005), “Bangalore is supporting a large number of Information Technology based industries, which generate high-end, skill-based employment. There has been a significant increase in marginal employment in Bangalore as well, mainly due to construction activities. There is a large influx of migrant unskilled labourers to Bangalore” (Government of Karnataka 2005: 90). As an example, while the children at Epsilon Migrant Labour Schools, run by the Azim Premji Foundation, are largely from northern Karnataka, there are also

a significant number of children from other states in the school. Due to the continuous flux in these communities, it is difficult to track the movement of children. As a teacher for the children of these families, thus, there are several aspects of their lifestyles that will help one understand and work with them better.

First, it is important that you allow older children to bring their younger siblings with them to the classes. Older children, especially girl children, often take on the childcare responsibilities for their siblings. If they are not able to bring their siblings, some children from the community will not be able to come. During the class, you can let the small babies sit on their siblings' laps, which is generally not a problem. It may be helpful to develop other lesson plans for toddlers, as you will find their attention spans to be much shorter than their older siblings, making the discussions and some of the activities difficult. Some simple activities like building blocks and colouring pages can be helpful for constructively engaging children of 2-4 age group.

Next, you will have a better chance of enrolling children for your class if you select a location that is close to the construction site or labour-camp. Parents will be more willing to allow their children to attend if they can occasionally check on their children, especially during the first few meetings. You will have to balance between allowing parents to stop by and see what you are doing and allowing them to linger or try to participate in the activities. You might find it necessary to move the location of the class a bit further away after getting the parents' support. It is best to find a well-shaded and relatively flat space for the class.

A final thing to keep in mind is that your class is likely to be multi-grade and multi-lingual. Therefore, try to craft activities that are specific to the children in your group. Since one will not know how long each child will be there, before moving to some other location or site, one should also keep in mind that taking a traditional approach to organising curriculum is not as useful as it is in a typical school. It is best to arrange content based on the existing understandings and usefulness of new ideas to the particular children in your class. This will be further detailed in subsequent sections.

3. Goals and Objectives of the Curriculum

The primary goal of the following approach is to introduce children to education in a way that is inviting and accessible. The lesson plans given below assume that the children have had little or no formal schooling. In order to keep the children's interest and make the content relevant to them,

it is suggested that you use thematic lessons that integrate subjects with the hope of meeting children where they are. By dealing with themes that are related to the children's everyday life, the curriculum aims to engage children's natural curiosity to explore basic aspects of formal education. You may, at a later stage, also want to help your students enrol in the local government school if you find that their parents are open to the idea and the student has gained enough basic knowledge and discipline such that you think she would be successful at school. You can also mentor and tutor the student through that transition.

4. The Nonformal Education Approach

Your students will likely respond best to a class that is designed with careful but limited structure. This fits into the nonformal education domain, which is generally somewhere between formal and informal education. Nonformal education generally focuses on the learners' needs, uses the learners' prior knowledge as a resource, respects all members of the group and values them for their contributions, and stresses relevant activities and practical outcomes (Peace Corps 2004: 6-7). The chart below depicts some of these important differences in relation to formal and informal education.

Figure 1. Continuum of Education

Continuum	
	Formal (F) Nonformal (N) Informal (I)
Teacher/ Student dynamic	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"> F Pre-established hierarchy </div> <div style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"> N Equal partnership among facilitators and participants </div> <div style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"> I Learning may take place individually, or can be shared within a group </div> </div>
Environment	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"> F Classroom environment </div> <div style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"> N Learning setting is more casual and impromptu </div> <div style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"> I Learning may occur in any environment </div> </div>
Content	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"> F Determined by teacher or other authority </div> <div style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"> N Participants actively identify learning needs and methods, guided by a facilitator </div> <div style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"> I Determined completely by participants who assess own needs and identify solutions </div> </div>
Teaching/ Learning methods	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"> F Lecture primary source of information delivery </div> <div style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"> N Primarily participatory techniques </div> <div style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"> I Completely participatory methods; participants assess and reflect on their own learning </div> </div>
Teaching/ Evaluation tools	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"> F Formal test or "proof of learning" </div> <div style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"> N Formal tests are supplemented with students' application of learning within the community </div> <div style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"> I Learning is practical and related to real needs; applied in the lives of people within the community </div> </div>

Source: Peace Corps (2004).

Taking the nonformal approach to the classes will allow you to connect better with the children. As is generally known, children learn best when they are engaged in what they are doing and find it interesting - creating lessons that will speak to the children's curiosity is thus vital to being able to hold their attention without using coercive methods. A more interactive approach will also help the children ease into the idea of going to school.

5. The Thematic Approach

Though the curriculum used in Epsilon uses a traditional approach to time management in the school, by breaking content into subject-based time slots; it would be helpful to take a more integrated, thematic approach to meet our particular objectives here. The first reason for this is that these guidelines are intended for volunteers who may be interested in offering classes just a few times each week, instead of all day and everyday as in a traditional school and at Epsilon. The second reason is that children who are attending academic classes for the first time seem to be able to better grasp relevant and concrete themes rather than more abstract subject areas. The Nation Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) also suggests a thematic approach in its Syllabus for Classes at the Elementary Level. Outlining some of the benefits of this model it says, "Most primary school curricula working on an integrated approach (therefore) do not proceed with lists of 'topics' from different 'subjects' but instead propose 'themes' that allow for a connected and inter-related understanding to develop. This requires moving beyond traditional boundaries of disciplines and looking at priorities in a shared way"

According to James A Beane (Etim 2005: 3-4), there are four parts to curriculum integration:

1. The curriculum is organised around problems and issues that are of personal and social significance.
2. Learning experiences are related to the theme and are selected without regard to subject boundaries.
3. Knowledge is developed and used to address the organising centre instead of to prepare for texts or to accumulate specific facts.
4. Emphasis is placed on projects and activities that lend themselves to the real application of knowledge.

This fits well into the model of non-formal education as it attempts to address the children where they are, and engage them in the learning processes. The thematic approach allows one to wrap all of the subject matter content into

one two hour period while making the class more fun and interesting for the children.

6. Module Learning Objectives

Below is Module One of the Migrant Labour School Curriculum of Azim Premji Foundation. This content has been thoughtfully selected based on its utility and relatedness to the children in their natural state.

Table 1. Curriculum Module One

Mathematics	Kannada	English	Environmental Science
1. Shapes	1. Beginning reading	1. Names of persons, places, animals and things	1. Me and my family
2. Numbers (bigger/smaller, greater/lesser, before/after)	2. Beginning writing	2. This and that	2. My body
	3. Simple sentence construction	3. Here and there	3. Water in our daily lives
3. Place value	4. Learning Gunitakshara	4. Colours	4. Plants around us
4. Addition		5. He, She, It, They, You, etc.	
5. Subtraction		6. Action words	
		7. Position words (prepositions)	

7. Model Lesson Plans

To bring further clarity to how the topics within mathematics, environmental science, Kannada and English can be transacted through thematic lessons, I have provided examples of two lessons in Table 2.

Table 2. Model Lesson Plan

A Lesson from Week Four

1. Theme: Trees

2. Lesson Plan:

EVS:

- Talk about trees—what grows on them, what animals live in them, how do they grow.

Math:

- Teach the concept of less and more using the banana tree activity. Before the class, cut a chart paper in half and draw a large banana tree on each. Cut 20 bananas out of yellow paper. In the class, ask students to colour the trees. Then put two banana cut-outs on one tree and three on the other. Ask students which has more and which has less. Line up two stones in one row and three stones in another to help students visualize the concept (the row with three stones will be longer). Continue changing the number of bananas on the tree until you are confident that they have at least some understanding of the concepts of less, more and same. Continue to practice this concept in weeks to come.

Kannada:

- Teach Kannada letters ಂ and ಠ. Use slates to practice writing the letters.
- Ask students one at a time to come forward and talk about their favourite kind of tree.

English:

- Teach vocabulary: leaves, tree, green, growing using an interactive song.

Crafts and Activities:

- Colour banana trees during math lesson
- Ask students to draw a picture of their own favourite kind of tree in their notebooks. You may need to show them how to draw a tree if they are shy.
- Play ball and practice counting as you throw it around.

3. Preparation:

- Prepare banana tree activity
- Bring slates, notebooks, ball, and crayons

4. Resources:

Suggested Song for English Lesson:

<http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/songs/the-leaves-the-tree>

To refresh yourself on trees in India: See pippatrees.pdf at www.arvindguptatoys.com

Table 3. Model Lesson Plan

A Lesson from Week Eleven

1. Theme: Fish

2. Lesson Plan:

EVS:

- Ask students what they know about fish and if they have seen them. What colours, habitat, diet, and so on do they have?
- Talk with students about the importance of water and how many kinds of life it supports. You may also choose to talk about people who earn their livelihoods from fishing in India.

Math:

- Fish in the pond activity

Preparation: Cut out small fish and write a number between zero and 10 on each. Cut out a blue blob of paper to represent a pond. On the pond, write two plus signs and an equals sign on the pond leaving space for a fish between each. Cut out eleven cards to use as the sums and write number zero through 20 on them.

To play: One at a time, ask each student to draw a card and place it in the sum place. Then, ask the student to find three fish to place in the blank spaces that will add up to the number shown on the card. Continue until each student has participated. Be sure to read out each sentence before moving on to the next student (example: '4 plus 3 plus 5 equals 12'). You may choose to ask students to write these on their slates or notebooks.

- During the scale craft at the end of the lesson, review colours with students.

Kannada:

- Read the story "Rainbow Fish" in Kannada (read and translate ahead of time).
- Ask students one at a time to write words on a slate in front of the class which is related to the story, focusing on word and letter formation. Ask the student to explain their choice.

English:

- Teach the "Once I Caught a Fish Alive" song with action flashcards.

Crafts and Activities:

- Colouring sheets for “Rainbow Fish” story (may be best to show these images while telling the story then let the children colour them directly after the story).
- Scales on the fish activity

3. Preparation:

- Do a little research on life in the water or fisher (wo)men in India
- Print out colouring sheets
- Translate “The Rainbow Fish” story
- Cut out fish, pond and cards for fish in the pond activity
- Print out “Once I Caught a Fish Alive” song and action flashcards
- Cut out fish shape and multi-coloured circles for the scales for scale craft
- Bring glue sticks, crayons and slates

4. Resources:

Colouring Sheets: <http://www.coloring-book.info>

Scale Craft: See fish craft activity at <http://teacherweena.blogspot.in>

The Rainbow Fish: <http://www.fcrr.org>

Once I Caught a Fish Alive: www.teachchildrenesl.com

Water life reference: <http://animal.discovery.com>

8. Suggested Timetable

The diversity of the starting levels, and the pace of learning among the children of migrant labourers, make it difficult to outline a timetable. Nonetheless, below are some suggestions of ways to break down the subject content into themes. This is just to provide an introductory framework to work with. I am assuming here that there will be about three classes per week and that each theme can carry on for three classes.

Table 4. Lesson Schedule

Week One	Week Two	Week Three	Week Four
<p><i>Theme: Butterflies and Caterpillars</i></p> <p><u>Maths:</u> Shapes</p> <p><u>EVS:</u> Me and my surroundings</p> <p><u>Kannada:</u> My name</p> <p><u>English:</u> My name is..., good morning, good night</p>	<p><i>Theme: Family</i></p> <p><u>Maths:</u> Before/ after, Review shapes, Teach colours through crafts</p> <p><u>EVS:</u> My family</p> <p><u>Kannada:</u> Continue working on names, include parents' names, work on word/ letter recognition</p> <p><u>English:</u> brother, sister, mom, dad</p>	<p><i>Theme: Houses and Animal Habitats</i></p> <p><u>Maths:</u> Bigger/ Smaller,</p> <p>Introduction to counting, Review colours</p> <p><u>EVS:</u> My family, my house and my village; animals habitats</p> <p><u>Kannada:</u> Name of villages, talk about letter formation</p> <p><u>English:</u> I am from..., Open and close..the window/ door</p>	<p><i>Theme: Trees</i></p> <p><u>Maths:</u> Less/ More, Concept to numbers</p> <p><u>EVS:</u> Trees</p> <p><u>Kannada:</u> Teach ಎ and ಠ, start working on presentation of complete sentences.</p> <p><u>English:</u> Teach plant vocabulary, teach action words: jump, dance, sing, write, read, etc.</p>
<p>Week Five</p> <p><i>Theme: Birds</i></p> <p><u>Maths:</u> Counting 0-10</p> <p><u>EVS:</u> Creatures that rely on trees</p> <p><u>Kannada:</u> Teach ಎ and ಕೆಂಪೆ, continue asking children to present ideas in clear sentences.</p> <p><u>English:</u> Review action words</p>	<p>Week Six</p> <p><i>Theme: Bees and Flowers</i></p> <p><u>Maths:</u> Written numbers 0-10</p> <p><u>EVS:</u> Plants, flowers, bees</p> <p><u>Kannada:</u> Teach letters ಹೂ, ಮ, ಜೇ, ನ, Talk about pronouns (ನಾನು, etc).</p> <p><u>English:</u> Teach 'this' and 'that'</p>	<p>Week Seven</p> <p><i>Theme: Fruits, Vegetables and Dried Fruits</i></p> <p><u>Maths:</u> Counting 0-20, Shapes</p> <p><u>EVS:</u> How fruits/ vegetables grow? Healthy eating.</p>	<p>Week Eight</p> <p><i>Theme: Elephants</i></p> <p><u>Maths:</u> Written numbers 0-20</p> <p><u>EVS:</u> Elephants and face</p> <p><u>Kannada:</u> Teach ಅ, ನೆ, ಕೆ, ವೆ, ಮೂ, ಕೆ, ಣೆಣು, ಗ, ಳು, ಬಾ, ಯೆ. Talk about possessive words (ಗಣಿ, ಅವನ, ಅವಳಿನೆನು, etc.)</p>

		<p>Week Seven</p> <p><u>Kannada:</u> Teach ತರಕಾರಿ, connecting ಕಾ to week five and ರ and ರೌ to week four. Teach ಹ and ಣ್ಣ and ಒಣ್ಣೆ.</p> <p><u>English:</u> Teach fruit and vegetable vocabulary</p>	<p>Week Eight</p> <p><u>English:</u> Review 'this' and 'that', teach colours</p>
<p>Week Nine</p> <p><i>Theme: Cats—Big and Small</i></p> <p><u>Maths:</u> Place value</p> <p><u>EVS:</u> Cats, tigers, lions</p> <p><u>Kannada:</u> Review letters with focus on writing. Talk about action words (ನೌಗತ, ಔಟ್, ಹಾಡುಹೇಳು, etc.).</p> <p><u>English:</u> Review colours, review action words</p>	<p>Week Ten</p> <p><i>Theme: Human Body</i></p> <p><u>Maths:</u> Place value</p> <p><u>EVS:</u> Body parts, keeping healthy</p> <p><u>Kannada:</u> Use sentences to talk about the body. Teach ತಲೆ, ಲಿಗ್, ತೋಳಿನ, and ಹೊಟ್‌ಟಿಯ to add to face vocabulary.</p> <p><u>English:</u> Teach parts of the body (eyes, ears, nose mouth, legs, head, etc.), review 'this' and 'that'</p>	<p>Week Eleven</p> <p><i>Theme: Bodies of Water and Boats</i></p> <p><u>Maths:</u> Introduction to addition</p> <p><u>EVS:</u> Bodies of water, boats</p> <p><u>Kannada:</u> Talk about sentence formation, review week</p> <p><u>English:</u> Teach position words (up, down, above, below, etc.), Review fruit and vegetable vocabulary</p>	<p>Week Twelve</p> <p><i>Theme: Fish</i></p> <p><u>Maths:</u> Simple addition</p> <p><u>EVS:</u> Fish, sea life and fishing</p> <p><u>Kannada:</u> Start writing sentences</p> <p><u>English:</u> Review body vocabulary, review position words</p>

Week Thirteen	Week Fourteen	Week Fifteen	Week Sixteen
<i>Theme: Rain and Weather</i>	<i>Theme: Water and Us</i>	<i>Theme: Frogs, Turtles and Snakes</i>	<i>Theme: Our World</i>
<u>Maths:</u> Addition, Review shapes	<u>Maths:</u> Introduction to subtraction	<u>Maths:</u> Simple subtraction	<u>Maths:</u> Addition and subtraction
<u>EVS:</u> Monsoon, rain, drought	<u>EVS:</u> Uses of water	<u>EVS:</u> Frogs, Turtles, Snakes	<u>EVS:</u> Maps and introduction to geography
<u>Kannada:</u> Continue with sentences	<u>Kannada:</u> Teach Gunitakshara	<u>Kannada:</u> Teach Gunitakshara	<u>Kannada:</u> Teach Gunitakshara
<u>English:</u> Teach here and there, teach weather vocab (sun, rain, wind, etc.)	<u>English:</u> Review here and there, review vocabulary that is difficult	<u>English:</u> Teach English numbers 0-10, teach 'is' and 'are'	<u>English:</u> Practice making sentences

9. Conclusion

I worked with a group of out-of-school children near my apartment on a weekly basis, for about six months. The enthusiasm that has grown for the class has been significant. At first, children were sceptical and fewer than five children were willing to come to our class. Others simply peeped around doors to see what we were doing. Now, we have over 20 children in regular attendance. They absolutely love to do craft projects of any kind, so we try to centre many of the activities on art. While the parents of the children in my class are not yet willing to send them to school even with my offer to help them with the arrangements, I am confident that the interest in learning the class has sparked in the children is important. As you start your classes, remember to keep things simple and listen carefully to the needs of the children and the community. The more everyone becomes familiar with you, the better chance you will have in getting them to be responsible for any school supplies you give them, for getting their attention and respect during the class and for taking them further away from their settlement. Both in terms of academics and behaviour, you should expect to see small changes after just a few weeks. When children get into the right patterns with respect to the class, they will likely be learning more - even if they play around sometimes. You will have to be patient in order to create a warm, interesting and supportive community.

As everyone becomes increasingly comfortable with one another, you will begin to see the children shine.

References

Etim, J (2005): *Curriculum integration K-12: Theory and practice* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America).

Government of Karnataka (2005): *Human Development Report of Karnataka*, Government of Karnataka, Viewed on 5 April 2012 (www.isec.ac.in/shdr_kar05.pdf).

Peace Corps (2004): *Nonformal Education Manual. Information Collection and Exchange Publication No. M0042*. Washington, DC: Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research, Peace Corps. [Retrieved from http://files.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/library/M0042_nfmanual1.pdf]

Government of India (2009): *The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act*. New Delhi: Ministry of Human Resources Development. [Retrieved on 10 June 2014 from: http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/free_and_compulsory_NEW.pdf]

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (2005): *Children Out of School: Measuring Exclusion from Primary Education* (Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics).

United Nations General Assembly (1959): *Declaration on the Rights of the Child*, United Nations, Viewed on 1 May 2012 (<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/resources/child.asp>).

Whitehead, A N (1929): *The Aims of Education and Other Essays* (New York: Macmillan).





ROLE OF ORGANISATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN SCHOOL REFORM EFFORTS

AVINASH
KUMAR¹

ABSTRACT

Despite decades of political rhetoric, intermittent and well-intentioned efforts to reform the education system, and substantial investments, the Indian education system, continues to deliver less than satisfactory results. This paper argues that one of the key reasons for this is that the organisational and institutional characteristics of the Indian public schools constrain rather than aid school reform. It begins by delineating some of the key features of effective schools and schooling systems and then compares them with the existing characteristics of the Indian public schools - bringing out the contrast between the two. In doing so, it also builds a case that efforts to develop an effective schooling system must necessarily address and reform the organisational and institutional characteristics of public schools in India.

INTRODUCTION

Since its independence about 65 years ago, India has made some significant strides in improving its education system - the overall literacy rate, for instance, has risen from around 12% in 1947 to 74% in 2011; and starting with 2,09,671 primary and 13,596 upper primary schools in 1950-51, by 2004-05 the country had established a network of 7,67,520 schools at the primary level and 2,74,731 schools at the upper primary level (Nayaka and Nurullah 1974; Census of India 2011).

However, the Indian education system continues to face some stern challenges. Despite decades of political rhetoric, intermittent and well-intentioned efforts to 'reform' the system, and substantial investments, less than 60% of Indian students, for instance, reach high school, and less than 50% graduate. And the quality of education - especially in its public schools, where a vast majority of its student study - continues to be significantly poor when compared to developed and major developing nations.

¹*Avinash Kumar works at Wipro where he manages an initiative called Wipro Applying Thought in Schools (WATIS), which partners with civil society and other organisations to build capacities in school education reform in India. Previously, he has worked as a programme manager in a media company, and has also been part of an educational start-up. Avinash has a Masters degree in Education from Azim Premji University and a Bachelor's degree in Engineering from Visvesvaraya Technological University. He can be contacted at avinash.kumar@apu.edu.in*

It has been suggested that one of the reasons for the indifferent state of public schools may be that their organisational and institutional characteristics constrain rather than support school reform efforts. In this paper, thus, I will discuss this claim in the context of public schools in India. Before we start with the main discussion, however, it would be relevant to delineate the essential characteristics of 'school reform'. Therefore, I will begin the essay by drawing on existing school effectiveness research, and listing some key characteristics of effective schools and school districts. Thereafter, in section three, I will note some of the important organisational and institutional characteristics of Indian public schools; and finally, I will discuss whether these characteristics can be seen as supporting or hindering the reform-efforts, and conclude.

1. School Reforms: Important Characteristics

Whether the organisational and institutional characteristics of our public schools are conducive, to reform efforts or not, clearly and substantially *depends on the features and objectives* of the reform efforts. The issues of what comprises a school-reform effort and what exactly should be its objectives continue to be contested; however (as a discussion on this topic is beyond the scope of this brief analysis), for our present purpose it may be assumed that the objective of a school-reform effort would be, ultimately, *to improve the effectiveness of the school*, broadly defined. And since, public schools must necessarily be a part of a larger system, it will be further assumed, that a reform effort would seek to not just confine itself strictly to the school, but also look at reforming (at least) the schooling system of its district.ⁱ

In a seminal study published in 1995, titled *Key Characteristics of Effective Schools: A Review of School Effectiveness Research*, Sammons sought to provide "an analysis of key factors likely to be of relevance to practitioners and policy makers concerned with school improvement and enhancing quality in education" (Sammons 1995: 3). Some of the key (interdependent) factors or correlates identified in this review were: (i) professional leadership, (ii) shared vision and goals, (iii) supportive working environment, (iv) focus on teaching and learning, (v) purposeful teaching, (vi) high and uniform expectations; (vii) positive reinforcements, (viii) keeping track of progress, (ix) pupils rights and responsibilities, (x) home-school partnership, and (xi) learning organisation/ staff development.

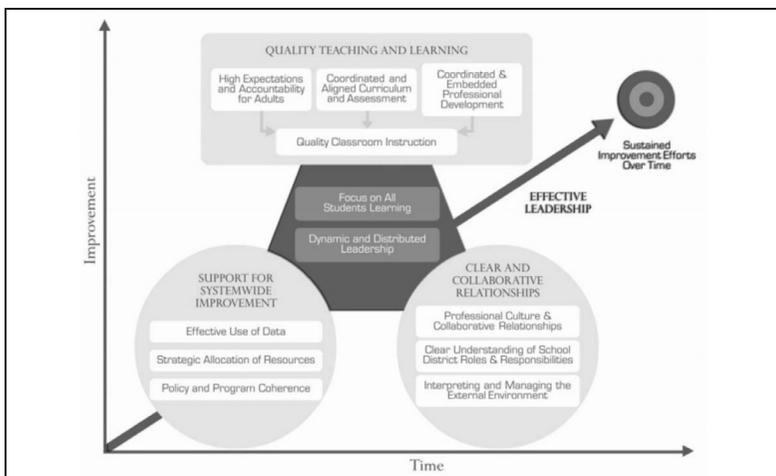
Another review in 2007, titled *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*, came out with a remarkably similar list of characteristics of improved public elementary schools, whose students "achieved at higher levels than their demographic characteristics would predict" (Shannon and Bylsma 2007: 2).

These features included (i) a clear and shared focus, (ii) high standards and expectations for all students, (iii) effective school leadership, (iv) high levels of collaboration and communication, (v) curriculum, instruction and assessments aligned with state standards, (vi) frequent monitoring of learning and teaching, (vii) focused professional development, (viii) a supportive learning environment, and (ix) high levels of family and community involvement.

These central characteristics of an effective or high-performing public school, one may reasonably assume, also give us an indication of what a ‘reformed’ public school might look like. As mentioned earlier, however, from a systemic point of view it is important that an effort to reform individual schools also takes into account the features of the larger system, of which the schools are a part.ⁱⁱ Let us now, therefore, turn our attention to some of the primary features of improved school districts.

In the study *Characteristics of Improved School Districts: Themes from Research* (2004), Shannon and Bylsma identified 13 themes or characteristics of improved school districts, on the basis of a review of over 80 research articles. They grouped the 13 themes into four categories: (i) quality teaching and learning, (ii) effective leadership, (iii) support for system-wide improvement, and (iv) clear and collaborative relationships; and presented a conceptual framework to express the relationships of these themes and categories to each other (Shannon and Bylsma 2004). This is represented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 - Themes and Characteristics of an Improved School District: A Conceptual Framework



Source: Shannon and Bylsma (2004).

The rectangle on the previous page represents the overall focus of improved districts: quality teaching and learning - which, in turn, comprises of four interrelated themes: (i) high expectations and accountability for adults, (ii) coordinated and aligned curriculum and assessment, (iii) coordinated and embedded professional development, and (iv) quality classroom instruction. At the heart of quality teaching and learning lies the expectation and understanding that “everyone in the educational system will support student learning” (which becomes the ‘focal point’ of the effort) and moreover, this understanding is supported by on-going professional development focused on the learning needs of students (Shannon and Bylsma 2004: 3). The top rectangle is based on a trapezoid that “symbolises the central role leadership plays in district improvement efforts” and “the two circles, like wheels that keep the improvement efforts on track and moving in a positive direction, encompass support for system wide improvement and clear and collaborative relationships” (ibid 4).

To sum up our discussion till now - we thus see that there are some common features which are repeatedly highlighted in studies as characterising effective / improved schools and schooling sub-systems such as a schooling district; which may be summarised as follows: (i) high levels of collaboration and communication among staff within school, which both supports and is supported by a shared vision and focus, (ii) clear focus on learning of ‘all’ students, (iii) professional and distributed leadership, (iv) supportive learning environment and focused professional development, (v) system-wide coordination and alignment of efforts, and (vi) high levels of family and community involvement.

Table 1 - Sorting the 3 Sets of Characteristics of Effective Schools into 6 Groups

High levels of collaboration and communication within school, supporting and supported by shared vision and focus	Supportive learning environment and focused professional development	System-wide coordination and alignment of efforts
Shared vision and goals A clear and shared focus	Supportive working environment Focused professional development	Effective use of data Keeping track of progress

Clear and collaborative relationships	A supportive learning environment	Strategic allocation of resources
Professional culture and collaborative relationships	Coordinated and embedded professional development	Policy and program coherence
High levels of collaboration and communication	Learning organisation/ staff development	Curriculum, instruction and assessments aligned with state standards
	Positive reinforcements	Sustained improvement efforts over time
		Interpreting and managing the external environment
		Clear understanding of school and district roles and responsibilities
		Coordinated and aligned curriculum and assessment

Clear focus on learning of all students	Professional and Distributed Leadership	High levels of family and community involvement
Focus on all students learning	Professional leadership	High levels of family and community involvement
Focus on teaching and learning	Effective school leadership	Home-school partnership
Purposeful teaching	Dynamic and distributed leadership	
High and uniform expectations from students		
High standards and expectations for all students		
Quality classroom instruction		

In the next section, we will look at some of the institutional and organisational features of the Indian public schools; and thereafter we will discuss if and to what extent these features may support or constraint school- reform efforts, based on the outlines of an effective school which we have drawn in this section.

2. Institutional and Organisational Features of Indian Public Schools

2.1 Public School: For the ‘Masses’

Some of the central characteristics of the Indian public schooling system can be best understood by tracing their historic origin. Following Macaulay’s (in) famous minutes in 1835, Bentick decided to encourage *English education among urban, upper and middle class Indians*, primarily to gain their assistance in the Company’s revenue and judicial work. The elites received the elementary education in better run private schools and could then move on to state supported institutions for secondary and higher education, which were based on the western pattern and knowledge. The elementary system, for the ‘masses’, on the other hand, was poorly funded and managed, and rested almost entirely on the reform of existing indigenous schools. This was when the foundation of a “city-centered system of English education for the dominant caste elites, as well as the prioritisation of higher education and neglect of primary education,” which exists to date, was laid (Sharma 2000).

2.2 Stress on Inspection

In 1841, less than a decade after the first 46 vernacular zilla schools were established, an ‘inspector’ of schools and colleges in Bengal, Bihar and Assam was appointed. The state’s attempt to improve the elementary schooling system was limited to superficial measures, such as scholarships and grants-in- aid to existing indigenous schools, which was in turn heavily dependent on inspection of such schools. In what was called the Coimbtore method, for instance, inspecting school masters would provide assistance and sell books to those teachers in indigenous schools “who were willing to be inspected regularly” (Sharma 2000). The school masters could also make grants to the schools he found performing satisfactorily (ibid).

Thus, on the one hand, the colonial government substantially supported western style education in English for few urban elites by setting up and funding secondary schools and institutes of higher learning, and on the other hand, it neglected the elementary education for the masses - merely attempting to

improve the already existing indigenous schools by inspection, examination, grant-in- aids, and some example setting and training. This inspection system of public schools, then set, was to become, and continues to be, one of the central features of school administration in India.

2.3 Education Administration and Planning

After independence, while on the one hand a large number of state sponsored elementary schools were established, on the other hand the “framework of an inspection system that had developed in quite another context, i.e. of private, indigenous schools in which the government sought to maintain standards” was retained (ibid). Moreover, the education and inspection system continued to be staffed by ‘generalists’ with little professional training in the field.

Though attempts were made to develop institutional expertise in educational planning and administration at the national level, leading to the setting up of National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) - now National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), neither this institute nor other universities developed/offered a pre-service course in educational administration or management. The state level equivalent of NIEPA were not set up either - which meant that capacity in educational administration was very limited at the state level, even though, managing the public schools was largely in the hands of the state governments.

Similarly, the addition of Block Education Officer (BEO) at the block level, which had the potential of reinvigorating the public schooling system, did little more than add another layer in the existing inspection system. And the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) led to the creation of parallel structures (State Project Office, District Project Office, Block Resource Centre (BRC), and Curriculum Resource Centre (CRC)). And their non-alignment with the existing structures of the education department often led to: “(i) lack of role clarity on primary responsibilities (e.g. the BRC-CRC structure has been appropriated for administrative work rather than academic mentoring); and (ii) multiple reporting structure (e.g. BRC is required to report to DDPI, DIET Principal, Deputy Project Coordinator and BEO; which compromises his academic responsibilities in favour of administrative responsibilities” (Mukhopadhyay et al 2009: 5).

Thus, to summarise this sub-section: (i) structures that had evolved for very different purposes and in different contexts are being used in independent India for the administration of public schools, and (ii) lack of proper

education administration and planning often leads to non-aligned efforts and inefficiencies in the system.

2.4 Teachers' Training and Professional Development

State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) institutions, which are considered to be the most important organisations for pedagogic inputs at the state level, were originally set up in 1964 and were involved in large-scale in-service teacher training, revision of curricula and textbooks. However, they did not offer pre-service courses, or encourage rich contacts with student-teachers, and support their research in substantive ways (Sharma 2002). After independence there was also a substantial growth both in the number of DIETs which were set up “to be autonomous, accountable institutions of excellence, with the intention to improve the quality of training and support provided to enhance the quality, competence and character of teachers” (PRIA, 2002: 3).

However, in many states the SCERTs and DIETS have ended up becoming a part of the state education departments, and in most states there is “mobility between the administrative and academic positions and as a result there is a continuous tendency to move into administrative positions from academic positions . . . and devalue any efforts to build institutional capabilities” (Mukhopadhyay et al 2009: 7). This, in turn, has meant that despite their supposedly autonomous status, the SCERTs have been “*overburdened with administrative functions that conflict with [their] academic focus*” (ibid). And as regards the DIETs, studies have pointed out concerns such as “lack of inter-linkages with other subordinate academic structures (i.e. the BRCs and CRCs); inadequate technical and specialist capacity of personnel recruited/deployed to the posts; non-alignment of internal structure and functions with expected roles; and lack of adequate resources” (ibid 10).

As a result of these institutional and organisational shortcomings, the teachers of the Indian public schools are often inadequately trained (poor pre-service training at DIETs or teacher training colleges), and are often lacking in basic professional competencies, which are difficult to overcome because of low quality in-service training.

2.5 Central Authority, Control and Decentralisation

The decentralisation which we see in education in independent India continues to be characterised by the split between responsibility (which was transferred to the lower level) and authority (retained at the higher level), introduced in

the British era (circa 1870). For example, though some states have handed over the responsibility of the functioning of schools and appointment of teachers to elected bodies at the district, block and panchayat levels, these bodies have not been vested with the authority to take important policy decisions or raise financial resources as per their needs (Sharma 2000).

The *Primary Education and Panchayat Raj Institutions* study in 2002 reported that “most panchayats were not clear about functions they are expected to perform, were often unaware of their powers, a majority did not get official communication, and that most gram panchayats were functioning as implementing agencies for infrastructure schemes from the education department. With respect to teachers, they had only nominal roles, with control largely vested with the education department. Thus they could supervise teachers, but no action could be taken. They could complain about teachers, but if these complaints went unheard, they would usually get disillusioned and stop complaining” (PRIA, 2002).

2.6 Bureaucracy and Hierarchy

The Indian public schooling system is also a massive, bureaucratic structure. In the state of Karnataka, for instance, nearly *half* of all government employees are in the Department of Education. And as with many bureaucratic structures, the education departments are also heavily hierarchical. As Mukhopadhyay et al (2009) remark, “This relates to both the programmatic relation between the states and the center, and to the internal hierarchy of any state department. Such a structure...prevents *the adoption of implementation approaches that are local and/or emerge from the needs elicited from lower level institutions and their functionaries. Both innovations and critical voices...are ignored in blue-print driven top-down implementation*” (ibid). This, they argue, results in the state objectives of participatory planning, bottom-up approaches, flexibility accorded to institutions and programmes to adapt to local specificities to remain confined to plan documents, vision statements, and evaluation reports.

3. Discussion

To recall our discussion in section two, some common features which characterise effective and improved schools and schooling sub-systems are : (i) high levels of collaboration and communication among staff within school, which both supports and is supported by a shared vision and focus, (ii) clear focus on learning of ‘all’ students, (iii) professional and distributed leadership, (iv) supportive learning environment and focused professional development, (v) system-wide coordination and alignment of efforts, and (v) high levels of

family and community involvement.

Now, if we were to contrast these features of effective schools and schooling systems with some of the key characteristics of the Indian public schooling system, we would notice that many of the characteristics of the latter may not be conducive to school-reform efforts. For example, 'high levels of collaboration and communication' among staff is encouraged by an organisational structure which is less hierarchical. The Indian education system, however, took on a hierarchical structure and 'inspectional' character since its origin in the 19th century and it continues to remain so even today. Even within a school, the relationships between staff is usually multi-tiered (head teacher, senior teachers, junior teachers, and administrative staff) and the difference in position is (often expected to be) clearly acknowledged. Similarly, the various administrative and even academic layers (such as the DEO, SCERT) tend to see their role as 'assessors' or 'inspectors' rather than coaches and facilitators.

One of the fallouts of the hierarchy in schools is that collaboration and communication (or 'innovations and critical voices that can meaningfully feed into existing approaches, programmes and plans') becomes difficult communication and collaboration development of a common vision, and its realisation, is difficult to achieve.

Another related characteristic is that of 'supportive learning environment and focused professional development'. As earlier noted, the institutional characteristics and capacity (especially of those institutions tasked with pre-service and in-service training and professional development) of the Indian education system leave much to be desired on this front. Moreover, the hierarchical nature, stress on inspections, and lack of effective collaboration and free communication also *precludes the formation and sustenance of meaningful communities of practice* (or professional learning communities).

Similarly, 'system wide coordination and alignment of efforts' as well as 'clear focus on student learning' is significantly dependent not only on collaboration and communication, but also on extensive capacity building with regards to educational administration, planning, and pedagogy. A dearth of good institutions (state-level equivalents of NUEPA or university run courses) in the Indian education system, which are capable of taking on this task, would negatively impact educational reform efforts. Furthermore, the development of professional and distributed leadership, is contingent on (i) effective professional training of the educational leaders (such as head teacher) as 'administrators', and (ii) capacity building among the staff (as 'distributed'

leadership cannot work in the absence of properly trained and supported staff) - which, as already noted, is often of indifferent or poor quality.

Finally, the split between government schools (for the ‘masses’) and private schools (for the ‘classes’) makes it difficult to create and sustain the pressure on the public schooling system to provide good education for ‘all’. And though there has been a lot of stress on decentralisation and many responsibilities have indeed been handed over to local communities, high levels of family and community involvement can come only when, with a shift in responsibility, there is a concomitant shift in authority. Most communities have very limited powers with regards to issues such as recruitment, training or even accountability of teachers who teach their children. Over time this can, as mentioned earlier, lead to a sense of powerlessness and disinterest in the affairs of the school.

It must be mentioned here that we do have some notable examples of reforms in Indian public schools and schooling systems. Programs such as DPEP, SSA, and the effective use of CRCs and BRCs in certain districts, are some examples of changes at relatively large scale. Some other examples are Hoshangabad Science Teaching Programme in Madhya Pradesh, in which middle school teachers met at the block level to discuss academic issues, leading to the development of specialised training, activity based textbooks etc. Lok Jumbish in Rajasthan is another such example credited with evolving unique styles of planning and management which provided autonomy to block level committees comprised of educators, voluntary workers, locally elected representatives, teachers, administrators and parents. As Sharma suggests, while the success of such efforts - in engaging with a part of the public schooling system and even modifying them to an extent, “may not be easily applicable to large state owned school systems as they are, they do offer very important insights into what is possible” (Sharma 2000).

However, having compared the characteristics of effective schools and schooling systems with the institutional and organisational features of the Indian public schools and schooling system, I have attempted to show how, at a large scale, many of the features of the latter constrain rather than encourage school improvement efforts. Taking these facts into consideration may thus be critical to the success of present and future reform efforts.

Notes

- ⁱ While the schooling-system is decidedly multi-layered and every layer may influence the other layers to lesser or larger extent; it may be argued that the layer which perhaps has one of the most significant impacts on the performance of a school, is the one directly above it - i.e. the district subsystem (which would include the 'block' sub-system in the Indian context) Centre for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2006).
- ⁱⁱ Section two is based on studies conducted in Western countries; and the author acknowledges that their outcomes may not be fully relevant in Indian contexts. However, a lack of similar large-scale studies on the subject in India, make the cited studies some of the best sources that we presently have.

References

- Centre for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2006) *Research Brief: Characteristics of Improved School Districts: What are the factors that can improve school districts?* Washington, DC
- Nayaka, Jayant Pandurang and Syed Nurullah (1974): *A Students' History of Education in India (1800 - 1973)*, (Bombay: Macmillan).
- Mukhopadhyay, Ramkumar and A R Vasavi (2009). Management of elementary education structures and strategies. *New Delhi: NUEPA*.
- Participatory Research in Asia and Partners (2002): *Primary Education and Panchayati Raj Institutions*, New Delhi: Participatory Research in Asia
- Sammons, Pam (1995): *Key Characteristics of Effective Schools: A Review of School Effectiveness Research* (London: B & MBC Distribution Services).
- Sarva Siksha Abhiyan. Retrieved on 7 August 2012 from <http://ssa.nic.in/news/girls-education-in-india-achievements-since-independence-press-release-wednesday-january-23-2008>
- Shannon, G S and P Bylsma (2004): *Characteristics of Improved School Districts: Themes from Research* (Washington: Washington State Department of Education).
- Shannon, G S and P Bylsma (2007): *Nine Characteristics of High-Performing Schools: A Research- Based Resource for Schools and Districts to Assist with Improving Student Learning* (Washington: Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction).
- Sharma, R (2000): Decentralisation, Professionalism and the School System in India, *Economic and Political Weekly* 35 (42): 3765-3774.
- Vasavi, A R and R Mukhopadhyay (2008): Learning Loss and the Education Bureaucracy, *India Together*. Retrieved on 7 August 2012 from <http://indiatogether.org/edubabu-education>



Notes



ABSTRACT

According to psychologists, children need to learn and understand phonology, semantics, grammar, and pragmatics in order to use language to communicate with others around them. Various theories have been proposed to explain how children achieve this. Though none of the theories may be able to give the exact account of how language development takes place, each provides a different perspective which could influence the teaching-learning practices adopted in schools. In Windmill, a school for the children of migrant labour in Bangalore, peer learning is used as an integral part of pedagogy to help children with language development. In the following paper, I have explored how language development takes place in a peer learning environment in the light of some of the theories proposed for the same.

I chose this as the topic of my study as language plays an important role in the overall development of a child. Children socialise in their surroundings with the help of language skills that they develop. According to Vygotsky, language and thought merge together. Therefore, language also helps children in cognitive development; it aids them in organising and problem solving (Shaffer and Katherine 2009). Also, a peer learning environment, where children with different linguistic competencies engage with language as a group, could be an interesting place to foster both language acquisition and language learning.

1. Theories of Language Development

A number of theories have been proposed for language development in children. Skinner in his book *Verbal Behaviour* (1957) proposed that language development takes place in children by imitation and operant conditioning. According to him, children learn language by imitating others around them. Also, adults reinforce and coax children to use grammatically correct

¹*Nalam Samvartika is currently pursuing an M.A. in Education degree at Azim Premji University, Bangalore. She has worked with an IT company for two years prior to this. She has also volunteered to teach English to children from low socio-economic backgrounds under the aegis of a non-profit organisation, Bhumi. The above paper was written as part of her field study during the second semester of her Master's course. Nalam can be reached at nalamsamvartika@gmail.com*

sentences. But this theory does not account for ‘wrong’ words like “goed” innovated by children (Berk 2009). Bandura proposed a modified version of this theory, positing that children have an innate capacity for abstract modelling. Therefore, they imitate and generalise the rules that they hear. This is the reason for the innovative mistakes that children make. Adults who converse with the children also help children learn language by using simple grammatically correct child directed speech called *motherese*. Adults also repeat the grammatically incorrect sentences uttered by children after expanding and correcting it. This is called expanded imitation (Crain 2011).

Chomsky proposed the nativist theory. Chomsky believed that “linguistic accomplishments of the ordinary child are too great to be explained in terms of any kind of input from the environment” (Crain 2011: 354). He used the term Language Acquisition Device (LAD) to explain the innate ability of children to acquire language. He believed that language development is independent of development of other forms of cognition. Piaget opposed this view, proposing that language development is related to other general cognitive development. He believed that children can construct knowledge and argued that language development in children is more dependent upon the child’s own efforts, rather than on genetically controlled factors (Crain 2011).

Opposition to Chomsky and Skinner also came from Social Learning theories. These theories describe language development in terms of both information processing and social interactions. Information processing theories suggest that children acquire language by applying general cognitive capacities which are not necessarily tuned for language development. The statistical capabilities of the human brain help analyse and recognise separate words in fluent speech. They help detect patterns of words which are used together and therefore learn grammar. However, they also argued that social interaction is necessary along with these information processing strategies. Children learn language due to the motivation they get from the desire to communicate meaningfully with others. Bruner, an interactionist, explained that adults facilitate language development in children by using scaffolding strategies such as introducing words during play, expansion and recast (Berk 2009). He insisted that language is acquired through use and participation, through the motivation that children get due to the intention to share narratives with others. They need to understand what, how, where, to whom and under what conditions they should say something. However, there is also an innate propensity, a readiness to make meaning and interpret the social world in children (Bruner 1990).

In my study, I tried to understand the various teaching-learning practices of language that were followed in Windmill school. I have analysed the beliefs that the teacher holds about language development while devising and practicing a particular method in the class.

2. Method of Study

Classroom observations and teacher interviews were the two main methods that I used in my study. I observed the Kannada and English classes conducted in the school. In the English classes that I attended, all the children aged more than six attended the same lesson. However, the learning outcomes desired for different children were different. In the Kannada class, most of the classroom activities required group work. Depending on the activity, planned student groups were formed by the teacher either with children with similar competencies or with different competencies.

After every class, I also discussed with the teacher about the activity conducted during the class. We discussed the objectives of the activity, and how the activity would help in achieving the objectives. Each activity conducted had different learning objectives for different children.

I also sat down and conversed with the children during their free time. They read out stories from books in their class library. I used this time to analyse how motivated the children were to learn, and to understand how interested they were about their classes.

3. My Learning from Language Learning-Teaching Practices in Windmill

The language teaching-learning practices in Windmill drew various aspects of different theories. For instance, no grammar rules were explicitly ever mentioned to the students. This was noticed in both Kannada (mother-tongue) and English (a foreign-language) classes. English is a language, which is not used in their social context, thus, it has “poverty of stimulus” (Crain 2011). Still children were able to form sentences like “One mouse coming to play”, “The lion open the eyes”, “Elephant going on road”, etc. These sentences show that children did assume that sentences in English would also have a subject, a verb and an object. This supports Chomsky’s theory that children have an innate ability to hypothesise about universal grammar rules.

In the English class, all the children above the age of six attended the same lesson. For instance, in a particular class, the story of the “Thirsty Crow” was played to them on the computer. The story was narrated in English using

pictures. Some children with higher English competency repeated the story in English with the teacher's help. After listening to the story being recited by these children, children with lower English competency narrated the story in Kannada. This was followed by discussion amongst the children. I observed that while the same lesson is being taught, certain children learnt vocabulary and some other children, who are already conversant with vocabulary, learnt comprehension and grammar.

After the activity, when I discussed it with the teacher, she told me that the activity was also intended to build in children the confidence to converse in English. While the children with higher competency in English use the language themselves, other children listen to them. These children pick up grammar and vocabulary from the others. Here, the teacher seemed to come from an interactionist perspective. While she believed that the children have the innate propensity to make meaning of the context and understand structural concepts of language, she felt the necessity to place them in a social space.

However, the school also used behaviouristic principles of imitation and coaxing. For instance, children were sometimes divided into mixed competency groups in their Kannada class. Each group was given a story book. The children with higher competencies read out sentences from the book and other children repeated after them. This exercise was done to help children gain reading skills and understand sounds. At times, children with lower levels of competency were asked to read. Children with higher levels of competency corrected them when they went wrong.

A group of four children who are good in Kannada were asked to write a story on their own. The four children discussed with each other and wrote down a fifteen-line story. The teacher then discussed with them and corrected the mistakes in grammar. He also replaced a few colloquial words in the story with more formal ones. He then asked each of them to work individually on extending the story further. Following this, children discussed with each other to combine the four different endings that they had written into one coherent one. During the entire process, children actively conversed, debated and argued. This taught them the nuances of spoken language. Such activities require higher order thinking and active involvement with language. Therefore, this method caters to triarchial intelligences namely, practical, creative and analytic as described by Sternberger (Mukunda 2009).

The above activity employs principles of constructivism, Bruner's Language Acquisition Support System (LASS), and social interactionism. Some time was

given for each child to work on the story himself/herself, during which they tried to retrieve their own existing linguistic knowledge, and to present it in a creative and interesting way. Also, following individual work, children discuss their work among themselves. They also try to evaluate each other's work and get the best out of everything they learnt. During this process, expansion and recast is done very often. Also, each child tries to contribute to the story that is created by the group. This keeps their motivation high to interact and communicate with others.

The teachers write songs and sentences in English and Kannada on chart papers and display them in the classrooms. The material for these charts is carefully selected or created by the teachers to maintain coherence with the lessons conducted in the class. Children stand in groups around these charts when they have free time and read from them. Generally, children with higher competencies read out from the chart and the younger ones repeat after them. As children read these charts, they learn new words, and their sounds and usages. They construct knowledge on their own by trying to make connections with the new words encountered and the lessons taught in their class. They identify repeating patterns. The teacher is not directly involved in "teaching" from the charts. This technique draws from the information processing theory.

A number of English story books are placed in the classrooms. During some assembly sessions children sit in groups and read a story together. The books generally have number of pictures depicting the story. As the children read the story, they try to interpret the story with the help of the pictures and their own vocabulary. They guess the meanings of the other words in the book. Thus, in this process, children build knowledge on their own by interacting amongst themselves and with the books. The teacher's role lies primarily in selecting and distributing story books. This activity draws from a constructivist paradigm.

Children are also grouped and assigned tasks to clean the school campus, buying food items from shops, etc. The school conducted a magic show and an art workshop for the children on one of the weekends. The school encourages the children to communicate with people who come from a different social context. Providing such an environment enhances language development. Children try to communicate with others and understand them. In such contexts, I noticed that children with higher competencies spontaneously used techniques like expansion to help children with lower competency.

The school is able to provide quality language learning environment to the

students as it takes into account the perspectives put forth by different theories for language development. It employs not only behaviouristic and constructive techniques but also humanistic ones. The way student groups are formed by the teachers shows that the latter not only knew the language competency of each child but also their character traits. It is ensured that each group has a child who can manage and control the others. Special care is taken to ensure that children with learning difficulties are placed comfortably.

4. Conclusion

I conclude my paper by mentioning the limitations of my study and the implications of my study for educators. In the above study I have concentrated mostly on speaking and reading. However, listening, and writing are also integral for a holistic language development in a person. The study could not include these aspects due to the constraint of time.

According to the school, language has to help children acquire more knowledge or get information, to express their thoughts and emotions, think about other things, and also in interaction with others. In a peer learning environment, children are placed in an environment which is similar but less complex than the real world outside the school. This simpler structure with adult scaffolding provides impetus to the child in his/her efforts to acquire language.

The way in which the same stories were used to teach different things to children with different competencies by making children learn from each other, is a good way to handle multi-grade classes which are very common in India. The material created by children with higher competency levels could also be an interesting resource to teach children with lower-level competencies. Such materials provide them stories from their own context that they can connect to easily. It can also motivate them to critically analyse and discuss with their seniors, further increasing their language skills. Such use of the material also motivates the older children to work harder, as they know their work is being put to use.

A healthy peer learning environment, which promotes cooperation over competition and orients children towards mastery, also provides children with confidence and motivation to learn and use language. In a peer learning environment children feel free to use the language. They take steps to gradually improve themselves on the language front. They develop the practical aspects of communicating and discussing with others, and therefore, build the confidence to do the same even outside the school. This is especially true in the case of a foreign language. Since children understand the practical

benefits, they internalise this extrinsic motivation. However, the school should also work towards keeping the motivation levels high by planning activities that are challenging yet achievable for the children. For instance, in Windmill, since children are more proficient in Kannada, activities for teaching Kannada require children to do a greater amount of higher order thinking. However, the activities for English are simpler.

References

Berk, L E (2009): *Child Development, 8th edition*. New Delhi: PHI Learning Private Limited.

Bruner, J (1990): *Acts of Meaning*. London: Harvard University Press.

Crain, W (2011): *Chomsky's Theory on Language Development*. New Jersey: Pearson.

Donaldson, M (1987): *Children's Minds*. London: Fontana Press.

Mukunda, K V (2009): *What Did You Ask At School Today?* New Delhi: HarperCollins.

Shaffer, D R and K Katherine (2009): *Developmental Psychology: Childhood and Adolescence*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.





BECOMING THE BELOVED THE *BHAKTI* MOVEMENT'S QUEST FOR THE DIVINE THROUGH THE SECULAR

SANJANA
SHELAR¹

The *bhakti* movement transformed people's relationship with god. The abstract god of the Upanishads, the distant, fearsome gods of the Vedic times, the god that told you how to lead your life in the Bhagavad Gita - all these vanished. They were replaced by a god so personal you could scold him, plead with him, flirt with him, abuse him, and love him. And all this could be done in the language you spoke every day, instead of Sanskrit. It brought god closer to his *bhaktas* than ever before. The *bhakti* movement began in Tamil, and extended over the centuries through the other Indian languages, changing both the literature of those languages and the landscape of religion in India forever.

Some of the most beautiful poetry and music came from the *bhakti* tradition. It is still alive today in Indian dance and music of the classical, folk and popular traditions. In many ways, it is an inescapable part of the language of the home, of the mother tongues we all learn first. The *bhakti* songs are songs that sing children to sleep, and the stories of the poet-saints and their gods are stories that we grow up with. Part of the reason why this literature speaks to us is because it takes the transcendental relationship between human and god, and transcribes it into a language we can all understand – the language of earthly love in all its forms.

In this paper I will discuss three pieces of *bhakti* writing. The first is a portion of *Hymns for the Drowning*, Tamil poems by Nammalvar, translated by A.K. Ramanujan into English. The second is a collection of Kannada *vachanas* written by Akkamahadevi, and the third is the *Gitagovinda*, written by Jayadeva in Sanskrit and translated by Barbara Stoler Miller.

Nammalvar wrote his *Hymns for the Drowning* in around the 8th century of the Common Era. In Nammalvar's poems, the lover is a young woman, and the beloved is Krishna. Some of the poems are in the voice of the young

¹Sanjana Shelar has a Masters degree in Development from Azim Premji University, and a Bachelors degree in Hispanic Studies. She can be reached at sanjana.shelar@apu.edu.in

woman, and others are in the voices of the people close to her – her mother or step-mother, her friend, or her husband. In the poems, god is at once an all-powerful deity and a tender, playful lover. The soul's quest for enlightenment is equated with a lover's desire to be one with the beloved, and the lover's total identification with her beloved is a metaphor for the soul's oneness with the divine. Some poems make this connection literally, like the following one.

"I'm the earth you see," she says.

"I'm all the visible skies," she says.

"I'm the fires,

the winds,

and the seas," she says.

Is it because our lord dark as the sea
has entered her and taken her over?

How can I explain my girl

to you who see nothing

but this world?

(Ramanujan 1993: 72)

In the poem, though what is being said is metaphysical, the form is secular and familiar. Rather than making it a discourse about god's power, Nammalvar has given his words a familiar form, the fearful fretting of a loving mother over her air-headed daughter. The poem above is one which is pretty straightforwardly religious. However, there are other poems which, if one did not know the beloved was Krishna, could be read as completely secular love poems. A good example is the following one.

Is that you, little bird?

When I asked you to go

as my messenger to the great lord

and tell him of my pain,

you dawdled, didn't go.

I've lost my looks,

my dark limbs are pale.

Go look for someone else

to put sweet things

in your beak,

go now.

(Ramanujan 1993: 52)

Birds as messengers of love is a common motif in secular literature about love, so if one were to remove the phrase "the great lord", the poem above

could very well be a girl complaining about how far away her lover is. Her suffering, her paleness, her beauty wasting away – all these are things that are common to secular poetry as well. Nammalvar here has taken common motifs easily recognised by listeners and used them to speak of god. In doing so, he has given them new meaning, creating metaphors where once only images existed, and making the images all the more beautiful and poignant.

The soul's yearning for god, so beautifully expressed in the poem, is placed in counterpoint to the bewilderment of the world when it comes to religious devotion. The opposition that Nammalvar must have faced in his quest for god is translated into poems that speak from the point of view of anxious and querulous mothers (as in the poem above). Yet aside from these somewhat serious emotions, there is also playfulness and intimacy, two emotions that would have been unthinkable in the context of man's relationship to god before the advent of *bhakti* tradition. Longing and awe, even identification with god, are things that existed in religious expression before *bhakti*. The religious transformation came with the introduction of the secular aspects of love – shyness, quarrelling, playfulness, scolding, and others – into the depiction of divine.

The poems that express these emotions are some of the most accessible poems Nammalvar has written. They continue to be danced and sung to this day, like this one.

Look here:

being naughty,
grabbing our dolls
and doing wild things
won't get you anywhere;
we know you
from old times,
how can we stand your pranks,
your airs?

There are any number
of lovely women,
queens of the three worlds;
so don't torment
this plain crowd.

Such stuff is childish,
even for you.

(Ramanujan 1993: 22)

The poem makes reference to Krishna's playfulness, to well-known stories of the pranks he played on the cowherd-girls in Vrindavan. The speaker in this poem becomes one of those girls, scolding Krishna but also flirting with him. The poem allows the singer be playful in the eyes of god, at the same time that it acknowledges the deep intrinsic relationship between the soul and god ("we know you/ from old times"), and expresses the unworthiness of all human beings in front of god ("don't torment/ this plain crowd").

Thus Nammalvar's poems become vehicles for people to connect with god on a deeply emotional level, very different from the intellectual or ritualistic connections that they had before. His poems were some of the first of the *bhakti* tradition. By the time we come to Akkamahadevi in the 12th century CE, the writing has become much more personal and therefore all the more compelling.

Akka's poems are addressed to Shiva, whom she calls Chennamallikarjuna. A K Ramanujan translates this as "lord white as jasmine". In her poems, Akka writes with clarity, precision, and astounding lyricism. Unlike Nammalvar, who uses the persona of a young woman in love as a metaphor for the devotee, Akka writes as herself. Her relationship with god is deeply personal, completely direct and without pretence. She sees Chennamallikarjuna as her husband and lover both, and addresses him as such. She waits for him, and in one of her *vachanas*, begs him to come and be her bridegroom. "Come, man, come, you pearl of goodness, after having bathed in turmeric powder,/ Having put on golden ornaments and dressed yourself in silk" (Dabbe and Zydenbos 1989: 43). In another, she tells her listener that she has dreamt of Shiva as "a mendicant with short braids of hair and shining teeth," (ibid 43) coming to her in her dream.

A lot of her imagery, however, is nowhere near as innocuous as that in the *vachanas* above. Many of the *vachanas* are downright disturbing, like this one. "Take these husbands who die,/ decay, and feed them/ to your kitchen fires!" (Ramanujan 1992: 11). Akka's poetry is not strictly love poetry, either. Her love for Shiva is absolute, so much so that she cares little for the rest of the world. She has little use for adornment, and in fact in her daily life she went about completely unclothed, covered solely by her long hair. A lot of her poems are scathing indictments of worldly life and of the way human beings, especially men, view it.

You have come seeing the beauty
Of rounded breasts and the fullness of youth, brother.
Brother, I am not a woman!

Brother, I am not a whore!
Brother, seeing me again and again
For whom have you come?
Look, brother, any man
Other than the lord who is as white as jasmine
Is a face I can't stand.

(Dabbe and Zydenbos 1989: 41)

Akka's manner of writing often takes traditional imagery of love poems, like the "rounded breasts and the fullness of youth," and turns it on its head. There is nothing prudish about her poems – in that sense, her words reflect her deeds. Her *vachanas* shock and provoke in their disdain for social norms and their palpable longing for the divine. Her words are a raw appeal to god, and she is willing to accept any hardship in her quest for union.

The ascetic imagery of many of the *vachanas*, and her own life's story, in which she gave up everything, including clothing, in her quest for Chennamallikarjuna, perhaps reflect the nature of the god she worshipped. Shiva is portrayed usually as an ascetic and a mendicant, unlike Vishnu who is seen in his avatars as someone who lived in this world and enjoyed it. Akka's love, therefore, is deeper the more she denies herself worldly pleasure. In one poem, she expresses this desire to forgo everything so she can attain Shiva.

Make me beg, lord, stretching out my hands and not missing a house;
Make them not give anything when I beg, lord;
If they give anything, make it fall to the ground, lord;
If it falls to the ground, then before I pick it up
Make a dog come and pick it up,
Lord who is as white as jasmine.

(Dabbe and Zydenbos 1989: 42)

In the above *vachana*, the intensity of love she feels for Shiva as Chennamallikarjuna is portrayed by the vivid images she evokes. Secular love has its own imagery of deprivation, where a girl wastes away, not eating, not sleeping, as she pines for her beloved. But Akka takes this imagery to a wholly new level, not allowing the listener to become complacent.

The vividness of Akka's writing draws readers in even today. The lyricism of sound in her *vachanas* only adds to their impact. The few that I have heard recited to me had me riveted, even though I could not understand quite a bit of what was being said. The sounds alone were captivating. This experience was somewhat similar to hearing Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda* being sung. The words rhymed and flowed, meant to be sung right from the time they were written.

Listening to them, we were reminded of the fact that most of the literature that we were reading had been written to be recited, sung, danced and acted. It made us feel how much we were missing when we just read the words – which were by themselves beautiful and rich beyond compare, especially in Jayadeva’s work.

The *Gitagovinda* combines the frankness of Akka’s words with the ornamentation of Nammalvar’s poems, creating a world that is both intimate and intricate. The songs in the *Gitagovinda* are written from the point of view of Radha and Krishna, the ideal lover and the ideal beloved, or the perfected soul and the perfect god. The relationship is described in all its complexity, in all the moods of love - separation and longing, anger, fear, and jealousy, playfulness and intimacy, eroticism and joy. Each song has its own raga, its own tala, and each song is meant to be danced in devotion to Krishna.

The beauty in the *Gitagovinda* is that we hear both the devotee and god, but in a manner totally different than the one, say, in the Bhagavad Gita. In the *Gitagovinda*, Krishna does not give advice or direct human affairs. Instead, he speaks as a lover, as attached to his beloved as she is attached to him. He curses himself for letting Radha leave. “Damn me! My wanton ways/ Made her leave in anger” (Miller 1997: 82). God, in Jayadeva’s poem, is not some difficult to attain ideal, as he is in both Akka’s and Nammalvar’s poetry. Instead, he is as close as anyone can possibly be, as human as the rest of us. He is divine not in spite of his human qualities, but perhaps because of them. In Jayadeva’s songs these very qualities are elevated to the highest art. The human emotions are perfected to their essence, and this is what is portrayed as divine.

In this sense, it is only through experiencing these emotions as deeply as Radha does that we, the listeners, can attain the same position in Krishna’s arms. “If your heart hopes to dance to the haunting song of Jayadeva,/ Study what her friend said about Radha suffering Hari’s desertion” (Miller 1997: 87). This instruction at the end of the eighth song is repeated in different forms throughout the *Gitagovinda*. The *sanskrit* of the *Gitagovinda* is not complicated with obscure grammar, and the form of the songs follows those from the commonly spoken languages. Besides, these songs were designed to be danced to, so the listeners had not just the words but also visual representation of the words to guide them. Above and beyond all that, however, is the sheer intensity of the emotions in these poems, made even more intense by the music. So, even though the *Gitagovinda* was not written in the language of the common people, it is possible to see how they could have followed Jayadeva’s injunctions.

To this day, Jayadeva's words have not lost their power. Even though they were written in the 12th century CE, they continue to be danced and sung to this day, in pretty much the same musical format that he gave them. They continue to be performed in devotion to Krishna, especially in the place where Jayadeva most likely wrote them, in Puri at the Jagannath temple. They are a major part of every Odissi dancer's repertoire, gaining their place by the depth and variety of the emotions that they express. So it is that one of the most intensely erotic, intensely human pieces of writing has also become one of the most highly revered expressions of divine love.

This duality I think encapsulates what the *bhakti* tradition is about. God in the *bhakti* tradition is not divine because he is removed from human life. Instead, he is divine because he is the one who has perfected the human emotions. His devotees, to be close to him, need not lose their humanity or their frailty. Instead, they can approach him through their emotions; make him their friend, lover and confidant. He will be whatever they wish him to be because he loves them just as much as they love him. What they must strive for is a perfection of their love, which is ultimately what Nammalvar, Akka and Jayadeva are all writing about. The world may interfere in their relationship with their god, but they must leave the world behind and immerse themselves totally in love. It is then that god becomes the lover and the devotee the beloved, and the secular love of man is transformed into the divine love of god.

References

- Dabbe, V and R Zydenbos (1989): "Akka Mahadevi" Manushi Special Issue: Women Bhakta Poets. New Delhi: Manushi Trust (Jan.-June, 1989): 39-44.
- Miller, B S (1997): *Love Song of the Dark Lord: Jayadeva's Gitagovinda* (New York: Columbia University Press).
- Ramanujan, A K (1993): *Hymns for the Drowning: Poems for Visnu by Nammalvar* (New Delhi: Penguin).
- Ramanujan, A K (1992): "Talking to God in the Mother Tongue", *India International Centre Quarterly*, Number 50-51-52, (January-June 1989), 53-64.





Classics Revisited



MARIA MONTESSORI'S 'THE SECRET OF CHILDHOOD': UNDERSTANDING THE MONTESSORI METHOD - GENESIS, DEVELOPMENT AND CRITIQUE

NOMITA
SIKAND¹

The childhood shows the man,
As morning shows the day.
– *John Milton, Paradise Regained*

ABSTRACT

With advocacy for “constructivism” and child-centered education never stronger in curriculum reform and policies (National Curriculum Framework 2005) in the country today, the understanding of Maria Montessori’s philosophy of childhood and education must be studied. This is based on the belief in the child’s creative potential, her drive to learn, and her right to be treated as an individual. With this in mind, I undertook a study of “The Secret of Childhood” by Maria Montessori to understand the genesis and development of the Montessori method, which is the main focus of this paper. A few other questions needed to be answered. Despite being a popular method worldwide, what prevents it from attaining mainstream status? Montessori schools are largely looked upon as alternate schooling in India. What are the resistances to or criticisms of the Montessori Method? For this, a dip into the history and critique of Montessori schools has been also attempted.

1. About Maria Montessori and the Early Influences on Her¹

Maria Montessori (1870-1952), an Italian physician and educator, was a humanitarian best known for her philosophy of education. As a woman in the late 19th and early 20th century, she faced gender discrimination both while pursuing educational studies and later, while spreading her views on education in the USA. Her visits to asylums for children with mental disabilities in Rome were fundamental to her educational work. The 19th century physicians and educators, Jean Marc Gaspard Itardⁱⁱ and Edouard Seguinⁱⁱⁱ greatly influenced her work. They used sensory exploration and

¹Nomita Sikand studied MA in Education at Azim Premji University. She has also been a teacher to middle school children for seven years before that. During the course of her studies in education she developed an interest in literacy studies. She is now exploring the areas of reading and writing instruction through teacher development in literacy. She is also actively engaged as a Resource Person with the Student - Academic Support Kendra at Azim Premji University, which houses the Writing Centre. She can be contacted at nomita.sikand@apu.edu.in

manipulatives in their work with mentally and physically disabled children in developing self-reliance and independence in them by exposing them to physical and intellectual tasks.

Using these ideas, during her two years as co-director at the Orthophrenic School, for training teachers in educating mentally disabled children, Montessori developed methods and materials which she would later adapt to use with typical children.^{iv} Montessori's work, developing what she would later call "scientific pedagogy", continued over the next few years.^v *The Secret of Childhood* published in 1936, speaks of her conceptualisation of childhood, the rights of the child, education for the child and role of education for a better society.

2. The Secret of Childhood: Nature of the Child and Conflicts in Development

With rapid progress in industrialisation, at the turn of the 19th century there was a rise in consciousness along with better standards of living - both child care and education received an unprecedented attention (Montessori 1936: 3-7). Montessori acknowledges Freud's contribution but finds psychoanalysis not appropriate for child analysis or treatment of psychotic conditions. Montessori suggests that the child must be observed in relation to conflicts within her environment. This she says is of two kinds. The first is superficial and easy to cure, the psychosis as a result of conflict between child and the environment. The second she warns is far deeper - the impact of conflict between child and adult. What is this conflict?

2.1 *Spiritual Embryo*

A child at birth has a spiritual existence intact and delicate – thus the analogy of a spiritual embryo is made. The development of the spiritual embryo depends on its natural growth, with no interference with the psychic instinct. This instinct directs it in its interaction with its environment to "fulfil a cosmic mission for the conservation and harmony of the world" (Montessori 1936: 13-17). Montessori illustrates using vivid examples of many creatures, like the metamorphosing butterfly, where this internal development is evident right from the egg through developmental stages culminating in the adult butterfly. However, in the real world, there is little awareness of this "internalised" development as essential for the health of the child.

She states that we have moved away from natural settings and the artifice imposes on the child many stimuli detrimental to her growth right from

birth - sharp lights, enclosed rooms cut-off from fresh air, heavy clothing, and so on. In the Indian context we may argue that this is less so. However, child-care is hugely deficient and in urban areas, imitating the artificial living imposed by industrialisation, we are slowly moving towards a similar situation. Montessori even states that post-natal care needs greater attention and sensitivity to the birthing trauma that the child faces. Like animals in the wild, a slow adjustment to the world not only serves as a period of the child's awakening but also the awakening of the psychic nature of motherhood and likewise of fatherhood.

2.2 The Adult is Accused

The awakening of the inner design in the child by which she gains control of all faculties and regulates them in her interactions with the environment continually maintains her sovereignty. However, adults repress the natural psychological growth of the child by both conscious and unconscious errors. The adult runs the risk of seeing himself as infallible, one that the child must model herself on and thus any deviance must be corrected. We cancel out the child's personality. This must be averted.

Montessori urges that the adult endeavours to reveal her unconscious mind and its errors to herself for the sake of the child and humanity. This she assures is fascinating and elevates one to a higher understanding. The modification of the adult – a release of the unconscious – a release from psychosis is the first liberating step for the child. Egocentrism, viewing the child in relation to one's own experience and judging every action through the position of being the child's creator is averted. Instead, the discovery of the child's unconscious as the source of the child's potential must be the focus.

2.3 The Natural Child

Montessori uses Hugo de Vries' explanation of '*sensitive periods*' (Montessori 1936: 33-41) as a transitory animating impulse of 'readiness' in the child. Each psychic passion places him in greater relationship with the world, each conquest intense and bestowing power. For all this to happen, a varied and favourable environment for growth is required. The child will interact, grow and direct her interest. From confusion arises a distinction, which will result in activity. For example, developing speech readiness takes place in stages not as a continuum. The child first emits sounds, moves to blabbering, then to syllables, and soon to words, phrases and sentences, finally resulting in speech. This clearly shows a pre-determined and internalised directive quality of learning and acquisition.

If ignored, controlled or stopped in its natural conquest, the child loses the chance forever and this brings about boredom and inaptitude in the child. Case studies of children kept in denial of human company have shown limited ability in developing full speech capacities in later childhood. We see these deprivations also manifest as violent reactions, opposite to a response to stimuli which results in doing and entering a state of calm. The unknown psychic health can grow and blossom or be deformed, stunted or impaired if the background is one of functional disharmony and despair.

2.4 Essential Features of the Environment

Montessori lays stress on the concept that the environment must provide adequate multi-sensory stimuli to the child for her natural psychic development. She identifies care as one of these factors. She defines it as being vigilant for indications of need. No grandiose preparation is required; the child must be assisted through her development, and at her pace. She will indicate the what, when and how of her need. *Orientation through order* in the environment is essential. Children up to two to three years seek order and tend to restore it if upset. In the next stage beyond two years they look toward an inward orientation, for example, the relation of different parts of her body, their position and movements, what gives her comfort of body is good, and what does not make her agitated. This phase is marked with an attention to detailing.

2.5 Constructing Knowledge

The child is not a blank slate or empty vessel waiting to be filled but is in possession of inner sensibilities, making mental images based on her own interest. Thus reasoning develops as a result of self-directed interaction with the environment. Adults must be aware and not quick to judge every aberrance, puzzling manifestation as a whim of the child but as a psychical inner process of making meaning, in today's parlance of 'constructing knowledge' for herself. Ever so often the child might be in conflict with the adult's interpretation and inaccuracy with respect to the way she differently perceives events. This, says Montessori, is the reason the child and the adult do not understand each other.

2.6 Adult-Child Conflicts

As children become more self-reliant they begin to interfere in the order of the adult's world, like invaders. Adults revert to the defence of their territory and space and take on the 'socialisation of the young'. This is the first source

of conflict that takes place between a child's innocence and her parent's love. Children are 'kept away from sight', 'put to bed', 'seen and not heard'. Parents or teachers, says Montessori, must not use the dominating position they are in but curb it and take cues from the child, in guiding it towards a healthy development. *Sleep* must be self-directed and not enforced. Children must be allowed to *explore and walk* at their own pace and come into their own physical being. The two milestones of physiological development – *walking and speech* have got to do with movement. It is important to remember that these are *self-determined and self-attained* too.

Likewise the hand and brain are linked. The hand is the executive organ of the mind and documents thoughts. The child through grasping and feeling tries to integrate the outer with inner and must not be hindered. Both speech and activity result from imitation, different from mindless copying. This acquired knowledge comes out of the relation of adult and child. *Purposeful activity* is what every child seeks to undertake and is essential for her formation of ego and confidence. These tasks are the beginnings of understanding of work-life, for example opening and closing doors, drawers, jars, etc. *Rhythm* too is innate. The clumsy, stilted attempts cause adults discomfort and they seek to 'help' the child, thus interfering with her development of work and rhythm. Such useless assistance is the first roots of '*repressions*' and can do immense harm to the child.

2.7 Adult Substitution

According to Montessori, adult substitution is the final blow to a child's autonomy. Substitution is the imposition of the adult's personality and mannerisms on the child, so that the child no longer acts of her own will but the adult acts through her. A child who is integrated will spend time deliberating and mastering one task before moving to another. A child who is not integrated will move randomly from one task to another without thought or deliberation – demonstrating no inner discipline or coherence.

2.8 The Importance of Movement

The denial of activity clearly indicates the blindness to the '*unconscious*', and the moral and intellectual development remains stunted. The sense organs are the mechanisms for the enjoyment and appreciation of stimuli by the ego. If there was no ego, the sense organs would be rendered useless. Similarly, if the ego is unable to translate its desires into actions through the mastery of movement, its unity will be disconnected. We can accuse many schools today of this crime!

2.9 Intelligence of Love

The child develops through an intelligence that interacts to perceive and understand, and develop oneself with love. A love that determines intensity, that sees the unseen, which perceives differently, is the spiritual beauty and morality behind the “intelligence of love”.

3. The Secret of Childhood: Role of the Educator and Education

Montessori speaks of a radical revision in child psychology which has till now looked at the outward aspects of the child. It must now direct its gaze at the environment within which she grows. The adult environment is not a life-giving one with obstacles and defences and deforming efforts making the child a victim of suggestion. A cry of joy is growth and realisation; a tantrum is an utterance of disharmony or non-realisation. Montessori looks at the role of the educator and of education in the positive development of the child – one that frees the child of this conflict (Montessori 1936: 103- 114).

3.1 Liberation or Discovery

When the child’s potential is unravelled without hindrances, it leads to discovery, liberation, and an unravelling of the inner psyche. Thus, the role of an educator (adult) is to provide an unhindered environment and she must adjust herself to the need of the child.

3.2 Spiritual Preparation

The educator must cultivate a moral order by preparing oneself to discover in the self defects that may prove obstacles in relation with the child, instead of seeking defects and tendencies to change in the child. Do not aim for perfection but train, seek guidance, and learn. ‘Seven Deadly Sins’ that must be avoided are anger, pride, avarice, sloth, lust, greed, and envy. However, Montessori speaks of the first two being the most necessary to purge.

Anger is authoritative and tyrannical and on young, defenceless children can be accusatory resulting in the child feeling deformed and oppressed. Educator must strip himself of tyranny and pride.

Thus was defined a multi-sensory environment of opportunities for the child, a “lesser” role and authority for the educator, and the recognition of the child with rights and having potential.

4. The Secret of Childhood: Genesis and Discovery of the Montessori Method

Montessori education is characterised by an emphasis on independence, freedom within limits, and respect for a child's natural psychic development. One may describe it as a method for human development through learning and teaching (Montessori 1936: 115-143).

4.1 How it originated

In 1907, when called upon to supervise the development of poor, illiterate workers' children in a tenement in order to prevent them from causing harm, Montessori began classes with a feeling of doing something momentous and says it soon showed that she like Aladdin "had a key in her hand that opened treasures!" The first Casa Dei Bambini was launched.

4.2 The Environment

Everything fitted within the easy reach of every child and was made to child-like proportions. Pleasing, clean and clinical (at first) with the age-related sensorial equipment that had been previously developed in a cupboard. There was order and function for free movement and independent work.

4.3 Lesser Educator

The teacher recruited was the porter's daughter and was briefly trained in the use of equipment and was asked to have the highest respect for the child's personality.

4.4 The First Children

The children of the first batch of this make-shift 'asylum' were between 3 and 6 and were tearful and fearful during their first day at school. They were shown the equipment and explained how to use them. Each was assigned a task and given equipment accordingly.

4.5 Lessons Learnt

Repetition of exercise, engagement and self-construction: Anything taught with careful detail was an exercise that was repeated many times over, till own satisfaction was attained - appearing rested and satisfied as if some inner voice was assuaged.

Order: Children preferred to restore things to their place themselves. The younger children were more exacting in their orderliness.

No to toys: Children preferred to use equipment that was involving and that they were able to construct meaning out of. Play is inferior to more urgent tasks that they do in developing themselves.

Free choice, independence and autonomy: In the absence of the teacher, each chose their activity and sat down to work. They preferred to choose than be allotted work. There was no indiscipline but work executed in an organised, disciplined manner.

Rewards and Punishments: The system of rewards and punishments had to be shelved as the children had no need for them. They were intrinsically motivated to work and needed no external prodding. On the other hand, any indiscipline had its cause in an inner conflict which had to be resolved accordingly. An opportunity to gain expertise and practise mastery over their faculties needs no reward or punishment.

Silent exercise: The children preferred to work in silence with complete focused attention; work was worshipful activity and conducted in a similar manner.

Refusal of sweets: Children avoided irregular food at odd hours if they were involved with the labour of self-development. The involvement of labour in learning was what gave them satisfaction.

Sense of dignity: The children had their own sense of dignity and will try and portray their best. Every visitor was greeted carefully with manners, each worked in their silent deliberate manner, and acted on requests with quiet confidence.

Spontaneous discipline: Despite ease and freedom of manner, children displayed an extreme sense of discipline and spontaneity. Surprise visits were received with equanimity, and on one occasion the children opened the school and sat down to work on a non-working day with no teacher or adult supervision.

Writing as communication: The alphabet symbol and sound connections were made when the alphabets were taught using cut-outs of sensory material. Children soon discovered they could make words and then sentences. The progression was self-directed. They made meaning of the symbols by connecting with them according to their own needs. They began communicating in writing on their own. This was almost cataclysmic. After the first child began, the rest followed suit.

Reading came later: Discovery that reading communicates ideas and stories followed next, and this developed interest in reading and in books. Until then

students showed no interest in books.

Healthy minds: The once sickly children were restored in health and vitality. What the mentally malnourished environment had done to them was quickly reversed with an exposure to an enriched environment.

5. The Secret of Childhood: Implications for Curriculum

Based on this first concrete experience of ‘educating’ normal children, Montessori established the basic principles of her methodology – to educate, cultivate and assist. She focused on ‘seeing the child, not the method’ and ensured that the child developed naturally, without hindrances. A suitable environment, a ‘lessened’ negative role and spiritual humility of the teacher, along with the supply of alluring sensorial scientific equipment, would ensure the right stimuli for the child’s natural integration and development (Montessori 1936: 144-158).

The various lessons learnt made her incorporate the following features – space and plan for individual work, time for repetition of exercise, free choice, analysis of movements, silence exercises, good manners in social contacts, order in the environment, meticulous personal cleanliness, sense education, writing isolated from reading and prior to reading, reading without books, and the discipline of free activity.

Further, this led to the abolition of rewards and punishments - the A-B-C method of alphabets, collective lessons as a rule, programmes and examinations, toys and greediness, special high desk for teacher, and the control of error within adult educator. This helped in ensuring the essentials for maintaining the vital eagerness of students.

Using the above methods and working with orphans of the Messina earthquake who were severely traumatised, she soon found they gained normalcy and happiness and vigour. Similar was the case with well-to-do children who were highly distracted and disinterested in the beginning till they found involvement in something challenging. This was the defining moment of a new attitude to work – single-minded focus that allows one to integrate the inner psyche with the outer environment. This she termed as “*True Normality or Normalisation*” – a “*Conversion*” from continuous repression to normalcy after involvement in work and discipline, with sympathy for others.

6. The Secret of Childhood: Psychosis and Malaise in Society

Montessori attributed psychosis in man and malaise in the society to a single cause. These deviations are born out of *man’s egotism* in the disguise of love,

which manifests as obstacles in the path of natural growth of the spiritual embryo. Beginning with an intense engagement with outer manifestations, in a serene and content manner, internalisation and growth of the spiritual embryo resumes. These psychological barriers manifest externally in society in many ways - barriers of clothing for the skin from air; barriers of walls between families and community; barriers of language, gender, and nations (Montessori 1936: 159-189). Some signs of psychosis are mentioned below.

6.1 The Dependent Child

A child that is denied her own inner harmony seeks approval and happiness from other sources and depends on others for her sense of fulfilment. *Possessiveness* – borne of a hunger to feed the spirit; the child looks towards the environment for this fulfilment. If impeded in her activity to develop the self, she seeks and possesses material things in her hunger to feel spiritual attainment. Thus attaching and detaching the self to possessions in rapid succession. Thus emerges *competition and division* within man and possessions – the root of all destruction. The *power of craving* is a conquest of snatching at things.

6.2 Inferiority Complex

An inferiority complex emerges as ‘things’ are shown more importance than the child. The child itself is diminished, and not shown the same consideration as an adult is shown, by being expected to follow every adult whim or fancy. The child feels the discontinuity and inferiority of her own decisions and actions and no longer has the dignity to be responsible - her actions previously ridiculed leave her with a sense of impotence.

6.3 Fear

Fear is less seen in normalised children. Children are more tuned to dangerous situations and apt at dealing with them. Normalisation prevents them from running into danger by recognising the signs and dealing with it.

6.4 Adaptation (or Camouflage)

In society, adaptation (or camouflage) to convention is often used and clothes sincerity – a normalised child is integrated and does not use deceit or adaptation to conventions. This involves clarity of ideas, union with reality, freedom of spirit, active interest in meaningful pursuits and instils ‘reconstruction’ of the sincere soul.

Repercussions on a physical healthy living are many. Gluttony, disease and inflictions due to repressions afflict the society, and have become a major social concern. A freer and normalising environment produces a healthier child and hence a healthier ‘normalised’ society.

7. The Secret of Childhood: The Natural Instinct of Man to Work

7.1 The Instinct to Work

The Montessori method identifies independent, free work at the centre of its curriculum design. Gandhi, Dewey and Tagore all recognised that the development of the child and oneness with her environment was through productive work – Dewey speaks of “learning by doing”, though he had reservations on Montessori’s method (Dewey 1902). They all believed that work as a result of inner instinctive impulses becomes fascinating, irresistible, raises man above deviations and inner conflicts. The urges that are liberating and unifying burst forth and humanity progresses in a positive manner. This can be seen in the work of discoverers, great artists, scientists and craftsmen (Montessori 1936: 193-219).

7.2 The Conflict of Work

The environment of the child has moved from a natural to a restricted, artificial one. The work of the parent and the work of the child both are essential but unmatched.

7.3 The Adult’s Task

This refers to the social, collective and organised adult work. Natural laws of division of labour, and production of more with least effort expended, are normal. These laws are replaced by laws that are self-serving and stratifying. Division of labour becomes seizing work; least resistance turns to making others work while one rests, and so on. The child is considered an extra-social being and thus relegated to different areas for socialisation, away from the adult world. Yet the child is dependent on the adult for everything.

7.4 The Child’s Task

The child’s task is even greater, says Montessori. It is the task of producing the adult. As she integrates and develops, the child grows into an adult of her ‘own’ making. The adult is more excluded from this world than the child from the adult’s. The adult might perfect the environment but the child perfects

being 'her own'. Each the master in her own, yet dependent on the other.

7.5 Tasks Compared

Both adult and child need work and for each, work has its ends. The man works towards a definite goal while the child works for work itself – a factor of an inner need, a psychic maturation - following the hidden law in the spiritual embryo. Contrasting with adult work, the child does not follow the law of least effort but expends great effort in achieving her inner spiritual growth (through repeated action until the integration is achieved). In contrast, in the adult world, the attachment to outer manifestations leads the adult to lose herself and her health to it. The child's work is not exploitative. It is to be carried out on its own, for its own development.

Sensitive periods are likened to examinations through the different stages progressed. The *guiding instincts* hold the key to life, while adult life explains the hazards of survival (adaptation, struggle, competition, self-preservation). Guiding instincts seen in nature are the inner sensibilities involved in the preservation of life and intrinsic to it. Montessori questions how the human adult, who dominates its environment has become so disconnected with the very rhythm of nature that it lays obstacles in the natural integrated growth of its own offspring?

8. The Secret of Childhood: A Case for Peace and Education for Peace

We have understood how an adult disconnected from nature and the self, hungers for power and acquisition. On the other hand, a *normalised* child emerges from an environment that allows her natural explorations to persist and is directed inwardly towards an attainment that was meant to be. For a better society, we have to *normalise* people as the world today is made of people whose childhood has impeded their growth in a normalised manner. Montessori seeks for this improvement in education that assures the normalisation of the child. Or every development or tangible means of progress has the potential to be used as a means of war and destruction, as we see today (Montessori 1936: 220-232).

The parents' mission must be to protect the child from obstacles in development, accusations, insults and punishments during her development into a normalised adult. The rights of the child to grow and develop unhindered, to be protected from insult, injury and punishment must be protected both for the welfare of children and society. The salvation of man lies in the salvation of childhood.

Maria Montessori finally appeals for a preservation of the innocence and protection of the child's unhindered development.

9. Growth of Montessori Method around the World and In India

With the success of Casa Dei Bambini, Montessori's work began to attract the attention of the international world. Montessori education was adopted in public schools in Italy and Switzerland. Montessori schools opened across other European countries and were planned for countries in Asia, the United States, and New Zealand. In 1913, the first International Training Course was held in Rome and a second in 1914. Montessori conducted a number of training courses and established centres across the world in subsequent years.

After attending her training in Rome, students across India had started schools and promoted Montessori education since 1913. The Montessori Society of India was formed in 1926, and *Il Metodo* was translated into Gujarati and Hindi in 1927. By 1929, Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore had founded many "Tagore-Montessori" schools in India. In the year 1939, the Theosophical Society of India extended an invitation to the 69-year-old Maria Montessori. During her years in India, Montessori continued to develop her educational method of "cosmic education" for children aged six to twelve years, which emphasised the interdependence of all the elements of the natural world. This work led to two books: *Education for a New World* (1946) and *To Educate the Human Potential* (1948).

Between 1939 and 1949, Maria Montessori conducted sixteen Indian Montessori Training Courses, thus laying a very sound foundation for the Montessori movement in India. These courses led to the book *The Absorbent Mind* (1949), in which Montessori described the development of the child from birth onwards and presented the concept of the "Four Planes of Development". She travelled to Pakistan in 1949. She was nominated six times for the Nobel Peace Prize. Montessori died of a cerebral hemorrhage in the Netherlands in 1952, at the age of 81.

10. Other Philosophies of Education and Criticisms of the Montessori Method

Montessori's pedagogic thought finds resonance with other thinkers, philosophers and psychologists of education, like Rousseau, Dewey, Gandhi, Tagore, and Piaget (Ginsburg 1988, 256-258). All speak of the right of the child; the intrinsic value of work in the integration of the child and the

universe, which brings about the harmony in both individual and society; and the role of the teacher in guiding the child. Rousseau's views on education had greatly influenced the works of both Seguin and Itard, whose works in turn, as stated earlier, had greatly influenced Montessori. She was most convinced of Seguin's argument that if working with challenged children could produce positive results then an education system that was radically different "held the potential for human regeneration" (Zell 1997:7). And just as Montessori expected the 'educator' to purge herself of the evils, so did Dewey and Gandhi expect in the teacher the highest form of ideals in manner, thought and practice (Kumar 1993).

John Dewey also makes a strong case for the autonomy of the child just as does Montessori. "Let the child's nature fulfill its own destiny.... The case is of Child. It is his present powers which are to assert themselves; his present capacities which are to be exercised; his present attitudes which are to be realised" (Dewey 1902: 31). Dewey held admiration for her practice and expressed his solidarity with her concept of liberty of the child. However, Dewey had reservations about the Montessori method. More balanced than any American educator of the time on the Montessori method, Dewey wrote a critique in his essay "Freedom and Individuality" in 1915 (Zell 1997: 44-46). The areas where he strongly raised reservations were on the greater reliance on materials for sense training and the "contrived" activities that resulted. This greatly differed from Dewey's view of "real world" learning. Secondly, in Dewey's vision the teacher held a greater directional role than the "lesser" teacher in Montessori's classroom. Thirdly, he differed with the extent of the "natural unfolding and innateness" in the learning process. While Dewey raises these objections, one clearly sees a match in each of these conceptualisations. What differs is the praxis of the concepts between Dewey and the Montessori methods.

Montessori was met with both interest and criticism from very strong quarters in the United States where she was unable to sustain a strong presence. William Heard Kilpatrick, an influential progressive educator, was dismissive and critical of her work in his book titled *The Montessori Method Examined* (1914), which had a broad impact. Critics spoke of her 'feminist' approach as being 'sentimental', the method as being too reliant on sense-training, outdated and rigid with little social interaction. "Being female, foreign, working class, non-Protestant was enough to pose serious problems Montessori was all of these things" (Zell 1997: 28). She was unable to establish a strong leader to take her ideas forward in United States and moved her attention to other parts of the world, including India.

11. The Resistance to Becoming Mainstream Schooling

Montessori schools carry the tag of being elitist even though the pedagogy promotes the notion of social equalisation. Clearly, the costs of equipment and the setting up of the environment as envisaged by Montessori require larger pockets. That coupled with the cost of trained teachers makes the schools beyond the reach of the poorer majority. Further, though the method is well researched and established, most Montessori schools cater to children below the secondary school stage. The Montessori method clashes with methods of standardised tests and examinations followed in the current school system. These have been practical obstacles in the spread of Montessori schools in different parts of the world.

12. Conclusion

As a pedagogy, the Montessori method restores the child to the forefront of the education system, allowing the learner to “construct” her learning – internalise her inner psyche with the outer environment, to make meaning of the world around her, and develop into a person more attuned to the world around her. Putting our faith and confidence in the centrality of the child’s innate aptitude to learn requires a leap of faith.

Further, the expense of setting up a Montessori school provides a point of resistance. The equipment, development of adult attitudes, and change in definition of learning - all require substantial intention, effort, and time. While the integration of the Montessori method bodes well with the spirit of the NCF 2005, the current system will have to be turned over on its head to accommodate it. Completely alien to tests and certifications, how can such a system fit into the bureaucratic world of today?

Notes

- ⁱ Indian Montessori Centre (2011): *Maria Montessori - A Biography*, The Official Website of the Indian Montessori Centre, Viewed on April 2012, from : <http://indianmontessoricentre.org>.
- ⁱⁱ “Jean-Marc-Gaspard Itard.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2012, Viewed on 4 April 2012 (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/297902/Jean-Marc-Gaspard-Itard>).
- ⁱⁱⁱ “Edouard Séguin.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Viewed on 4 April 2012 (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/532753/Edouard-Seguina>).
- ^{iv} “Maria Montessori.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Viewed on 4 April 2012, (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/390804/Maria-Montessori>)
- ^v **Written Works:** Montessori wrote extensively on pedagogy and conducted anthropological research and was qualified as a free lecturer in anthropology for the University of Rome to lecture in the Pedagogic School at the University. Her lectures were printed as a book titled *Pedagogical Anthropology* in 1910. Some of the other works written by her are Montessori’s *Methods in Il metodo della pedagogia scientifica* (1909); *The Montessori Method* (1912), *The Advanced Montessori Method* (1917–18), *The Secret of Childhood* (1936), *Education for a New World* (1946), *To Educate the Human Potential* (1948), and *The Absorbent Mind* (1949).

References

- Dewey, J (1902): *The Child and the Curriculum* (Chicago & London: The University Of Chicago Press).
- Ginsburg, H P (1988):” Cognitive Development to Adolescence” in H P Ginsburg and K R Sheldon (ed.), *Piaget and Education: The Contributions and Limits of Genetic Epistemology* (East Sussex, UK: The Open University) 256-258.
- Indian Montessori Centre (2011): *Maria Montessori - A Biography*, The Official Website of the Indian Montessori Centre, Viewed 7 April 2012, (<http://indianmontessoricentre.org>).
- Kumar, K (1993): “Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869–1948)”, *Prospects: The quarterly review of education*, 23(3/4), 507–517.
- Montessori, M (1936): *The Secret of Childhood* (India: Orient Longman).
- NCERT (2005): *National Curriculum Framework*, NCERT, Viewed on 3 January 2012, (<http://www.ncert.nic.in/rightside/links/pdf/framework/english/nf2005.pdf>)
- Whitescarver, K and J Cossentino (2008): “Montessori and the Mainstream: A Century of Reform on the Margins”, *Teachers College Record*, Vol.110(12): 2571–2600.
- Woolfolk, A (2004): *Motivation in Learning and Teaching*, 385.
- Young, A (2007): “Minority Students in the Montessori Classroom” Senior theses, Trinity College.
- Zell, S K (1997): *Characterizing the Conversation: A Historical Review of Maria Montessori’s Visits to the United States 1913-1918*, Theses, Department of Teaching and Learning, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.



Style Sheet

We request authors to follow the guidelines in the style sheet as listed below.

This will help reduce processing times of articles that have been accepted for publication.

House style

- For the main text, use Times New Roman, 12 point, 1.5 line spacing.
- For notes, use Times New Roman, 11 point, single line spacing. Set the alignment as “left”.
- Use British and “-ise” spellings (labour, centre, organise).
- Use double quotation marks for quotations, and single marks for quotations within quotations.
- Indent quotations of more than four lines, without quotation marks.
- For quotations from other publications, always provide page number(s) for the quotation.

Abbreviations

- Abbreviations including those in common use (BJP, US, BCCI, L&T), are spelled out at first occurrence, as in

Among recent recommendations of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are

- Less familiar ones should be used only if they occur more than once within an article, and the terms must be spelled out on their first occurrence, as in

The benefits of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) are familiar to many.

This includes omitting the periods used after initials standing for given names, as in **G K Chesterton, J Krishnamurti.**

- No periods are used with abbreviations that appear in full capitals, whether two letters or more, as in **BBC, CITU**, and acronyms, as in Nasa, Nato.
- The general guideline is no periods even with abbreviations that appear in lowercase letters, as in am, pm.
- No space is left on either side of an ampersand used within an initialism. Avoid using ampersands in running text unless they are within initialisms such as R&D, Texas A&M.

- While abbreviating academic degrees, the current trend is to omit all periods within them, as in **PhD, BA**.
- Company names are best given in their full forms in running text, though such tags as Ltd and Inc may be omitted unless relevant to the context, as in **Brooks Brothers was purchased and later resold by Marks and Spencer**.
- No periods are used after any of the International System of Units symbols for units, and the same symbols are used for both the singular and the plural, as in **kg, cm, m**.
- Note that a unit of measurement used without a numeral should always be spelled out, even in scientific contexts, as in **We took the measurements in kilometers**.
- Avoid using abbreviations for two-word names as far as possible. Some may be unavoidable such as the **US** or **UP**, but where it is part of government bureaucratic or journalistic usage such as **PM, CM, DM, SC** or **HC** do avoid abbreviations.

Numbers

- The numbers from one to nine must be spelled out while every number that is more than nine is written in numerals.
- However, very large round numbers, especially sums of money, may be expressed by a mixture of numerals and spelled-out numbers, as in **The population of India is now 1.2 billion**.

Crores/Lakhs versus Billion/Million

If large numbers have to be written out using numerals, when discussion values please follow the Indian numbering system when the discussion is on India:

Rs 11,22,35,567 (ie division in crores, lakhs and thousands), or Rs 11.22 crore.

Where other units are involved, authors could use the billion/metric system, even in discussion of India. However, the preference would be for the Indian system of crore/lakh:

2,34,000 hectares (2.34 lakh hectares)

Or 234,000 hectares

Where the discussion is of a non-Indian issue or the currencies are of non-Indian values, then the preference would be for the standard international system:

\$ 34,234,000 or \$34.234 billion
134,567,000 tonnes or 134.57 million tones

It is most important that authors do not switch from one system to another within the same article.

Please ensure that either the Indian terms (lakh, crore) or the Western ones (million, billion) are used consistently within an article.

Percentages are always given in numerals. Use the symbol % instead of the words per cent, as in

Only 45% of the electorate voted.

Simple fractions are spelled out, as in **She has read three-quarters of the book.**

- Years are always expressed in numerals unless they stand at the beginning of a sentence.
- Decades are either spelled out (as long as the century is clear) and lowercased, or expressed in numerals, as in the **1980s and 1990s.**
- Dates should be in the form of **9 March 2007.**

Use an en dash rather than a hyphen between numbers denoting pages and dates.

Capitalisation

Be economical in the use of capitals.

- Capitalisation used with headings and titles of articles and books capitalises all words except articles (e.g., a, an, the, etc.), prepositions (e.g., as, in, of, to, etc.), and conjunctions (e.g., and, but, for, or, etc.).
- Although proper names are capitalised, many words derived from or associated with proper names (**brussels sprouts, board of trustees**), as well as the names of significant offices (**presidency, papacy**) are lowercased.
- Civil, military, religious, and professional titles are capitalised when they immediately precede a personal name, as in **Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said at the meeting that...**
- But titles are normally lowercased when following a name or used in place of a name, as in **The prime minister speaking at an informal meeting said...**

- Titles are normally lowercased when following a name or used in place of a name, as in
In an interview, the prime minister said ...
- Titles denoting civic or academic honours are capitalised when following a personal name, as in **Lata Mangeshkar, Bharat Ratna**.
- The full names of legislative, deliberative, administrative, and judicial bodies, departments, bureaus, and offices, and often their short forms, are capitalised, as in the
United Nations General Assembly, the Parliament of India, the Lok Sabha, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Supreme Court.
- While the names of ethnic and national groups are capitalised (**Aborigines, the Jews, the French**), designations based loosely on colour (**black people**) and terms denoting socioeconomic classes or groups (**the middle class**) are lowercased.
- *All caste, tribe and community names to be capitalised.*
- The names of political groups or movements other than recognised parties are lowercased, **anarchists, independents, communists, but the Communist Party of India**.
- The full names of associations, societies, unions, working groups, inquiry commissions, meetings, and conferences are capitalised, **as in the International Olympic Committee, the Indian Red Cross Society**.

Tables, Figures

Headings should be placed above each table/figure and should follow this format:

Table 1. Asset Ownership by Household Category
Figure 5. Communication Flows

Notes and sources should be placed under each table/figure.

Column headings in tables should clearly define the data presented.

In-text citations

Use the author-date system for citations.

Even if you put information in your own words by summarizing or paraphrasing, you must cite the original author or researcher and the date of publication. You are also encouraged to provide a page or paragraph number; check with your instructor to see if page numbers are required.

- Works cited in the text should read thus: **(Brown 1992: 63-64); Lovell (1989, 1993)**.
- For repeat citations: eg **(ibid 75)**
- For groups of citations, order alphabetically and not chronologically, using a semi-colon to separate names: **(Brown 1992; Gadgil and Guha 1994; Lovell 1989)**.
- Use “et al” when citing a work by more than two authors, but list all the authors in the References (unless there are six authors or more).
- To distinguish different works by the same author in the same year, use the letters a, b, c, etc., **Besson (1993a, 1993b)**.

References

All works cited in the text (including sources for tables and figures) should be listed alphabetically under References, on a separate sheet of paper.

- For multi-author works, invert the name of the first author only (**Gadgil, M and R Guha**).
- Use **(ed.)** for one editor, and multiple editors.
- When listing two or more works by one author, use --- (19xx), such as after Swann (1967), use --- (1974), etc, in chronologically ascending order.
- Indicate (opening and closing) page numbers for articles in journals and for chapters in books.
- Note that italics are used only for titles of books and names of journals. Double quotation marks are used for titles of journal articles, book chapters, dissertations, reports, working papers, unpublished material, etc.
- For titles in a language other than English, provide an English translation in parentheses.
- Use endnotes rather than footnotes.

The location of endnotes within the text should be indicated by superscript numbers.

For sources which have insufficient details to be included in the Reference, use endnotes (such as interviews, some media sources, some Internet sources).

See the following for style and punctuation in References.

Books

- Wordsworth, William (1967): *Lyrical Ballads* (London: Oxford University Press).
- Watson, S and K Gibson, ed. (1995): *Postmodern Cities and Spaces* (London: Macmillan Press)

Contributions to books

- Elson, D (1996): “Appraising Recent Developments in the World Market for Nimble Fingers” in Chhachhi and R Pittin(ed) *Confronting State, Capital and Patriarchy* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press) 35– 55.

Journal and other articles

Helleiner, Eric (2006): “Reinterpreting Bretton Woods: International Development and the Neglected Origins of Embedded Liberalism”, *Development and Change*, 37(5): 943– 67.

Poniewozik, James (2000): “TV Makes a Too-Close Call”, *Time* 20 Nov: 70– 71.

Conference papers

- Doyle, Brian (2002): “Howling Like Dogs: Metaphorical Language in Psalm 59.” Paper presented at the annual international meeting for the Society of Biblical Literature, Berlin, Germany, 19– 22 June.

Unpublished dissertations and theses

- Graban, Tarez Samra (2006): “Towards a Feminine Ironic: Understanding Irony in the Oppositional Discourse of Women from the Early Modern and Modern Periods,” Dissertation, Purdue University.
- Stolley, Karl (2002): “Towards a Conception of Religion as a Discursive Formation: Implications for Postmodern Composition Theory”, PhD thesis, Madras University.

Online resources

Always indicate the date that the source was accessed, as online resources are frequently updated or removed.

Website

Felluga, Dino(2003): Guide to Literary and Critical Theory, 28 November, Purdue University, Viewed on 10 May 2006 (<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory>).

Page on a website

“Caret.” Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia, 28 April 2006, Viewed on 10 May 2006 (<http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Caret&oldid=157510440>).

Article in a web magazine

Bernstein, Mark (2002): “10 Tips on Writing The Living Web.” A List Apart: For People Who Make Websites. No 149 (16 Aug). Viewed on 4 May 2006 (<http://alistapart.com/articles/writeliving>).



