

Education for Rural Transformation (ERT)

*Good Practices from National and
International Perspectives*

Volume 1

From Theory to Practice

Edited by

Vinayagum Chinapah

Institute of International Education (IIE), Stockholm University



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Education for Rural Transformation (ERT)

Good Practices from National and International Perspectives, Vol. 1

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Report from the 3rd International Symposium Education for Rural Transformation (ERT), October 15-17, 2012 Vadodara, Gujarat, India

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is of utmost importance that in the journey towards rural transformation and the critical examination of current good practices and/or policies, innovative theoretical, conceptual and analytical frameworks; the voices among the rural poor, their perspectives and the impact on the social, cultural, ecological and economic sustainability of such practices are considered thoroughly. It is in light of the persistent challenges of the grassroots perspective that further advocacy regionally, nationally and internationally can be effectively pursued and disseminated.

The discourse on Education for Rural Transformation (ERT) has become increasingly developed and enriched with inspiring research, projects and initiatives. With this in mind, the organisers of the 2012 ERT International Symposium have created a platform within the broader theme of ERT, “Good practices from National and International Perspectives” held in Vadodara, India.

This book is one of two volumes, where ‘theory and practice’ of ERT is in focus in its eighteen chapters. The second volume, composed of fifteen chapters, focuses on ‘the schooling challenge’. Each chapter in both volumes reflect the opportunities and challenges that are evident in the path of transforming the lives and well being of rural people through education. The wide scope of definitions and conceptualization of “good practices,” and its application to ERT reveal the underlying differences which represent the true nature and diversity of ERT contexts.

On behalf of the Institute of International Education (IIE), Department of Education, Stockholm University, Sweden, the co-hosts, the M.S. University of Baroda and the ERT Team members, I would like to express my gratitude to all the distinguished guests, presenters, and collaborators for their valuable contributions to the discourse of ERT and specifically “good ERT practices”. This present publication is a result of the collected wisdom, experiences and insights of many. I would also like to thank especially the IIE editorial team members Mrs. Karen Ann Blom, Mrs. Patsy Åkeberg, Mrs. Sarit Grinberg Rabinowicz, Ms. Emily Williams and Ms. Snigdha Roy for their hard work in the finalising of this publication.

Professor Vinayagum Chinapah



Introduction

Education for Rural Transformation (ERT) Good Practices from National and International Perspectives

Vinayagum Chinapah, Karen Ann Blom and Khaleda Gani-Dutt

A great majority of rural population still languishes in extreme poverty and deprivation, and education has failed them utterly by not being relevant and adequate. As would be expected, the major concern of the rural poor is being able to produce enough for themselves and their non-farming compatriots, and improve their living conditions in terms of better nutrition, health care, education and other social services (Endris, 2012, p.358).

More than half of the world's rural people can be found in the most populous countries of India and China. It is through the lens of these two and other E-9 countries that good practices and lessons have been assessed and gleaned from the previous Education for Rural Transformation (ERT) Symposiums, the first one in Stockholm, Sweden 2010 and the second one in Chengdu, China 2011, respectfully. The in-depth comparative studies, both qualitative and quantitative, have provided much needed research in the attempt to reverse this phenomenon and embrace the dynamic possibilities of rural transformation through the vehicle of education. Collective information resulting from these researches, all point to the necessity to re-examine the role of education and learning as well as to re-evaluate present policies and priorities (both national and international) with regards to the perspectives of rural people.

These **ERT good practices** are what this 3rd International ERT Symposium in Baroda, India was focused and motivated by. All contributions (keynote addresses and symposium papers) have focused on existing good practices of ERT or ERT-related programs, projects or activities that have been well documented (i.e., described, evaluated and reported on the basis on empirical evidence in quantitative or qualitative nature or both) as well as innovative ERT theoretical, conceptual or analytical models for future data collection and analysis of good practices. It

is not enough to merely state what changes need to occur within governmental policies for ERT, but rather to observe and elicit further good practices within contextual bases. For example, Zhang, W. (2012), in the IIE-commissioned forthcoming book on ERT good practices from China, identified six possible perspectives from which these good practices could be viewed from, namely:

- 1) poverty reduction
- 2) skills training: including technical and vocational skills training, life skills training and the use of Information and Computer Technology (ICT)
- 3) capacity building of local community and lifelong learning systems
- 4) the spread of new concepts such as sustainable development
- 5) spiritual civilization building
- 6) women empowerment

(Source: Zhang, 2012)

Zhang (2012) disseminates several excellent ERT good practices established and implemented in China through the lens of these perspectives such as the following example.

- **Jade Polishing Plan** and subsequent **Seed Plan**: Women were empowered from grassroots to become leaders through which they train participants in the “seed plan”. The training is participatory, scenario-based and includes case-based pedagogy in order to engage women leaders, assist in the development and understanding of themselves, the concept of women leadership. Learn basic ICT skills, management skills, how to mobilize resources, interpret laws and regulations and design effective projects for their own villages (Zhang, 2012).

Similarly, Dave, S. (2012) in the same IIE-commissioned ERT publication, in this case good ERT practices in India, observes several initiatives set forth by the Indian Government in the attempt to achieve Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). Dave mentions several examples in depth that have been highly effective in reversing the deteriorating pattern of high drop-outs, challenge of absence due to migration, child labour, absence of the girl child etc. Innovative programmes deriving from **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**, India’s answer to Education for All (EFA) creates successful results that are child-centred, community and contextually based, and quality focused. Schemes that involve the focus to be given to these challenge areas are inclusive of:

- **Bridge Course Centres:** A programme to answer the challenge of students at risk due to migration (high absence rate or drop-out). Creates opportunities for students to repeat/attend a class for three months with the purpose to re-enter into the mainstream at the next standard class level.
- **The National programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL, 2003):** an amendment to existing scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Implemented in Educationally Backward Blocks concentrating in areas where female literacy is low and gender gap is above the national average. Model Cluster Schools are established under this scheme.
- **Model Cluster Schools:** includes learning with computers, film shows, reading materials, self-defence, life skills, riding bicycles, reading, games etc.
- **Community Mobilization:** inclusive of school repairing grants, school development grants, teaching / learning material grants, etc.
- **Ksjitij (Horizon):** the establishment of Libraries within schools to develop literacy and leadership qualities.

(Source: Dave, 2012)

The key to the success of such examples of excellent good practices derives from the ability of these initiators to think beyond the “rule of thumb” and effectively initiate innovative ideas developed according to the contextual needs and desires of the rural poor people themselves. Such good practices demonstrate the power of combining academic knowledge, innovation/creativity, and the reality of the rural contextual needs.

It is important to assess the quality and not just access to education in the rural, poverty-stricken areas with marginalized populations. Low quality education has been proven detrimental to the reduction of poverty (Millennium Development Goal [MDG] 2), social equity and inclusion, social coherence and political stability, while creating severe impediments for attaining the aim of Education for All (EFA) (Chinapah & Wang eds., 2012). Equitable education of quality is necessary to achieve success at an individual, regional and global level. In the process of examining education as an instrument for Rural Transformation, common challenges, hindrances and trends of these two pillars of education - quality and equity- must be addressed within the context of globalization and the local context.

This context of global interdependence, decentralization and the rapid development of civil-society organizations present opportunities; provided that the rural poor can influence institutions, policies and decisions that affect their lives and determine the benefits they draw from economic activity. Modifying such unequal power relations would contribute significantly to reducing poverty, thereby enabling disadvantaged impoverished producers, especially in rural areas, to develop their full potential to become the driving force of development (IFAD, 2003).

Additional ERT Successful Stories

The forerunning ERT International Symposiums (Stockholm 2010 and Chengdu 2011) both produced a plethora of good practices and overarching trends within the diverse and far-reaching issues examined. A few examples are as follows:

ICT: Information and Communication Technology towards the Obtainment of Education for Rural Transformation (ERT)

Wei & Qifu (2011) in their ERT Contribution entitled '*The E-learning Service System as a Model of Lifelong Learning for Rural Transformation: The Current Practices and Experiences in China*' closely examined the implementation of Learning Centres in various areas and found that although many regarded computers as a "gaming instrument" rather than an educational tool, several farmers within the Wulimiao area benefited greatly through the introduction and training received. Digital learning became regarded as valuable and information technology and subsequent distance learning was advanced within the rural community. Farmers were able to improve their economic status and knowledge through the practical and innovative measures taken in the exercise of e-learning systems. In addition, those migrant workers who took part in the digital learning project were able to develop career-changing skills and thus adapt to rapid urbanization of areas such as Beilun. Similar ERT good practices and implementation of ICT were found throughout China, India and many other countries in the move towards an increasingly knowledge-based economy (Wei & Qifu, 2011).

Anjali Khirwadkar and Praful Mogera (2011) wrote similarly on the ICT initiatives for Rural Transformation found in India. Their findings found that ICT literacy and access to ICT tools has tremendous potential to raise literacy and information literacy; bridge the gap between rural and urban populations; allow the building of capacities and improve quality of life; and facilitates towards the achievement of the MDG goals. Several successful practices were found inclusive of the e-Choupal services that reached more than one million farmers and the e-SEVA centres of Andhra Pradesh that launched self-help groups to economically uplift the poorest women within

India. The challenges they highlighted were the need for surveillance of e-governance and the necessity to bring further innovation; cost effectiveness and efficiency; the redesigning of ICT to aid in-service teachers; the development of basic ICT competencies for teachers; and the need for additional developmental research using case studies and community participation approaches (Khirwadkar & Mogera, 2011). “Learning for Farming Initiative” is a longitudinal study tracing the lifelong learning of farmers activities in Tamil Nadu, India conducted by a team of researchers (Thamizoli and Francis et al., 2011). Research found that mobile phones used as a tool for both educating and disseminating information resulted in the empowerment and strengthening of the livelihood of marginalised women. Women were able to strengthen their position in business consultations with financial institutions and other agencies increasing their social capital within the household and wider society. In addition, the project resulted in the strengthening and improvement of the sustainability of agricultural crops and goats (Thamizoli & Francis et al., 2011).

Balanced Development: Interactive and Inclusive Education a Necessity for Rural Transformation

In the desire and need for Rural Transformation, urban areas and the increasing population of migrant workers should not be forgotten. Several examples of innovative practices in the pursuit of balanced sustainable development for rural areas were presented.

Yu Lei (2011) provides detailed information in regards to the formulation, management and alliance of schools that constitutes the chain of schools between rural and urban areas. Lei reveals the success of collaboration and exchange of teachers, management and the strength of shared goals and training modules, resulting in the increased level of quality of instruction and a more equitable distribution of resources (Lei, 2011). Similarly, Zhaoyu Jia (2012) and Fumin Lei (2012) both describe a variety of projects implemented in Shuangliu County and Chengdu Municipality, in China respectfully. In Shuangliu, the projects were intended to optimize school facilities and capabilities; and promote equality and equity resulting in the reduction of disparity between rural and urban areas. This was conducted through a variety of projects inclusive of the establishment of education groups to relay and extend the quality of educational resources. These groups were sponsored by prestigious schools and established long term interaction and collaboration between teachers, management and other personnel of rural and urban areas (Jia, 2012).

Another ERT success story is the Wuhou District in Chengdu, China that encompasses both urban and rural areas. In order to address the widening gap between its rural and urban areas educational achievements, the decision was made to adjust the strategic plan to focus on the “bundling”

of urban and rural school development. This plan intended for rural teachers' quality, professionalism and teaching ability to increase through shared curriculum and experiences of other teachers. In addition the curriculum was reformed to modernize the teaching-implementation plan, placing emphasis on "informationalization" approaches to improve interaction and knowledge through effective teaching. The results in Wuhou District were positive, reducing the gap significantly to achieve the narrowest gap in the Chengdu research examination of 2005. In addition, Chengdu research examination of rural schools in 2009 resulted in average scores for math and English higher than those in urban areas. To ensure that these academic developments are balanced, the district implemented a quality-orientated project recently entitled "Happy learning, Excellent Education in Wuhou" focusing on students' mental and physical health (Lei, 2012).

Previous ERT Symposium Summaries and Recommendations (Stockholm, 2010 and Chengdu, 2011)

The inaugural symposium held in Stockholm, Sweden 2010, marked a collaborative initiative to critically examine the concept, policy and practice of Education for Rural Transformation. The aim was to undertake research in capacity building, share good practices, identify policy choices and determine workable programmes and priorities in varying contexts. China and India were the initial focus as more than half of the world's rural population resides in these two (E-9) countries with the intention to gradually include other developing regions of the world, increasing the varied and rich experiences shared. It was found that rural areas are of wide diversity and are in a state of transition due to the pressures of adverse consequences of rural economy, environmental issues, and rapidly increasing urbanization. Despite growing awareness, it was indicated that the 2015 MDG goals cannot be fully achieved partially due to the large proportion of rural people, particularly in developing regions, who remain deprived of quality and equitable education. Struggling to address the challenges of education a) access with equity b) quality and relevance and c) efficiency and accountability, developing countries have made some progress yet the aim of the 2015 education goals has remained eluded. Several papers were presented inclusive of: holistic system thinking; Education Development Initiatives; the assessment of children learning; disparity, deprivation and discrimination of educational provision for disadvantaged groups; the potential of e-learning and ICT; the importance of teachers and teacher support; balanced and integrated development of educational services; civil society role and participation; the role of higher education; vocational and skill development; adult literacy; and the importance of training and capacity development for food security and poverty reduction. The resulting recommendations regarded the urgency for "systematic research, academic studies and training and policy dialogue and

advocacy at the international, regional and national levels”. In addition, participation is to be broadened to include other regions and countries; collaborative research programmes, and an interdisciplinary group for guidance of research, an international post-graduate programme should be designed and implemented in addition to consideration of publishing a journal on ERT to further disseminate research (Ahmed, 2011).

The following 2011 Dujiangyan International Forum held on August 7-8th, 2011 in Chengdu, China addressed several of the aforementioned challenges in regards to the quality crisis within education. Focusing specifically on balanced rural transformation, encompassing sustainable practices within local and global contexts, the Forum focused on promoting balanced development of education for rural transformation; education and training for rural transformation; and enhancing the level of internationalization of education (Chinapah & Wang (eds.), 2012). The objectives of the Forum were to share experiences and good practices; to provide empirical evidence for stakeholders and clarify their roles and responsibilities in achieving balanced sustainable development; and to reach a consensus for immediate action in empowering rural communities especially the rural poor for enhancing quality and promoting equity of education.

Those who presented papers raised several issues as well as many successful examples of good practice. Inclusive was the persistent question of quality and equity; the integration of development and rural transformation; addressing diversity of students; the critical questioning of data on Human Development; inclusive balanced development (chain schools); innovation; education communities; community learning centres; human resource development; skill and training development; vocational education; economic stability; professional development of stakeholders; improving learning achievements of disadvantaged students; management challenges and actions; psychological development; experiences from Africa, Tanzania, Namibia etc.; disaster preparedness; Education for International Understanding (EIU); and global education.

Pushpanadham and Panigrahi (Chinapah & Wang (eds.), 2012) highlighted the importance of skill development for sustainability and the ability to overcome future challenges in Rural India. Elaborating on several innovative programmes set forth by the Government of India, Pushpanadham and Panigrahi emphasized in the context swiftly paced economic growth, it is essential to provide the skill development required. In addition, the two authors recognized that despite concerted efforts, there remains significant potential for sustainable growth, in particular among youth and women who traditionally have been largely undervalued. This

overview among the many others discusses the remaining challenges for provides a contextual basis for the approaching 3rd International Symposium.

Intended Key Objectives and Expected Outcomes of the 3rd International Symposium

The ERT International Symposium in Baroda, Vadodara-India (2012), is the third in the initial series of international symposiums and expected to produce a synthesis of ERT good practices from experiences and empirical findings from previous symposiums as well as additional recently gathered research. Participants were challenged to identify existing ERT good practices of empowerment and concretely come to a consensus of the role of education in promoting rural transformation; action-orientated and tailored programmes and activities that can address the roots and causes of challenges facing the existing rural infrastructure, social and educational services; and further establish and nurture sustainable international cooperation and partnerships between researchers, institutions, organizations and nations.

International Symposium Format

The international symposium consisted of several sessions inclusive of keynote papers, panels of participant presentations and subsequent time for chaired discussions. Between presentations and discussions there were breaks for tea/coffee and lunch as well as a social gathering open to all participants.

Participants

The 3rd international symposium was both a continuation and summation of the forerunning symposiums. The symposium participants were internationally renowned educators, researchers, high-level policy-makers and practitioners from different parts of the world who joined together in the purpose of promoting further research, training, and capacity development in the field of ERT. Many of the invited participants had previously attended and participated in the two preceding international symposiums, which took place in Stockholm, Sweden (2010) and Chengdu, China (2011) respectively. As a result, this particular symposium had distinct significance in the level of discussion and familiarity of the subject.

Results & Recommendations

Results and Recommendations gleaned from Symposium participants and contributions were many. The following few key points were discussed at length and are proposed to be developed further in future ERT Symposiums and Forums.

- Some participants were critical of the lack of “authentic rural” voices—mainly those attending remain from academic and higher-level delegations. This is in danger of perpetrating the prevalent “white-tower” or “us” and “them” dichotomy.
- A good variety of individuals including a large international representation from around the globe. It was a shame that several participants had visa challenges despite the best efforts of organisers.
- It was interesting to see the wide variance of what each individual considered being “good practice”. This is something that Bhola; Chinapah & Blom; and Löfberg among others attempted to address and was further challenged by Marmar Mukhopadhyay in the final panel to develop further in future ERT Symposiums/Forums.
- Finally, it was proposed that the next ERT Symposium be hosted and held by Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

There are eighteen chapters in this current volume. The publication has been divided into two volumes as the contributions to the 3rd International ERT Symposium were excellent and add valuable insight into the current discourse of Education for Rural Transformation.

In **Chapter One**, Bhola discusses the idea and history of rural development in the Indian context from the era of colonization to present time through the holistic view of Systems Theory. The author asserts that the social processes like ‘Education’ and ‘Transformation’ are constant and never-ending, which are constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing every time. The development process gets fruitful results over the years; however, rural life remains under poverty, hunger, illiteracy and among all kinds of social backwardness. Caste, power and class are still active in Indian society that hinders rural development enormously. However, the government’s awareness about the improvement of disadvantaged groups is firming the Constitutional Acts to give them their rights; and public awareness is growing day by day in India, which can help fight against corruption in society and mobilize the development process.

Chinapah and Blom, in **Chapter Two**, demonstrate the role of education (formal, informal and non-formal) as the key to bring transformation into rural life by empowering and mobilizing the rural community as well as give assistance to build their capacity, self-confidence and improve their existing social and economical conditions. The authors focus on good practices on Education for Rural Transformation (ERT), which can only be successful by realizing the different aspects of good practices. They emphasize the fact that good practices that are innovative are successful in bringing transformation in rural reality and are important in the field of ERT as these practices make the way to be implemented in other contexts. The authors identify some practices of ERT conducted in India and China, which are considered ‘good’ because of their manner of bringing transformation in rural China and India.

The idea of Rural Transformation is integrated with good practices and it is also important to identify the determinants of good practices though it is not an easy task in real terms. Löfberg, in **Chapter Three**, aims to look further at the realities, defining and discussing the concepts - the knowledge and learning that take place while performing ‘good practices’. The author emphasizes the fact that without involving the knowledge and experiences of victim groups, whose life is under development and change, any

transformation of life is impossible. This concept is clear through examples taken from North East Brazil and Chile, where non-formal education (learn for others and sharing experiences) could enable rural transformation in concerning areas. The author raises some unsolved questions regarding the cause of marginalization of particular victims of society and of breaking environmental restraints that can bring change.

In **Chapter Four**, Qvarsell discusses the value of non-formal learning in the life of youth under the age of eighteen engaged in work or on the streets. This kind of non-formal education setting is the alternative way of learning and socialization for those particular young adults in rural and urban areas. This article illustrates the concept of ‘educology’, ‘affordances’ and ‘developmental tasks’ keeping relevance to the role of non-formal education for the working and street youths. These very groups may contribute with specifically relevant information to the knowledge production on conditions for socialization and learning as they are using their own experiences.

The traditional Indian society is now split between nuclear family and joint family with older members in the families being affected by the system subsequently as there is no strong policy for old-age life in India. Gandhi and Iyer in **Chapter Five** address the urgency of adolescent involvement in health promotion in rural India, which can improve the quality of life of aging and youth people and the whole society at the end. The importance of curricula reform by adding adolescent nutrition and elderly care in secondary and higher secondary level and making aware the community about the benefits of government schemes of old people are advocated by the authors. The paper cited a sample ‘Ashramshala’, a rural area of Gujrat in India, where tribal youth are educated to make them aware of healthy aging and strengthening a healthy relationship between the youth and the old. This citation creates the view of youth and old integration to bring rural transformation by health promotion.

Japan has undergone many transformations, especially after the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011. With the changing pattern of globalization, the concept of sustainability has changed and ‘Kizuna’ (relations/ties) between people and the global eco-system has got much attention in the field of rural transformation. The pro-ecological and post economical Japan is relying on strengthening the bond between people and the environment in order to bring a transformation in rural Japan without affecting the balance between the two. Cars, in **Chapter Six**, describes such a phenomenon by giving a clear insight of Education for Sustainable Development and three examples of good practices in this regard. The article analyzes the practices

drawn from Tohoku in Japan, where non-formal education has made the transformation by empowering people and by emphasizing people's emotional bond amid emerged post-economic, humanistic and ecological dimensions of society in terms of sustainability.

Rural communities in India cannot be uplifted without paying greater attention to them. Though the governmental efforts have already been made in previous times, the actual progress is active under the participation of different NGO's, voluntary organizations and corporate sectors. The progress is slow but on going. In **Chapter Seven**, Pandya and Maniar discuss the use of voluntary services in order to improve rural life by educating people through non-formal practices. The authors elaborate their ideas through three success stories of good practices.

In **Chapter Eight**, Mukhopadhyay states that the key to India's development is in transformative development of rural areas. Taking the case of the Udang Forum and its projects, he describes the role of teachers in rural communities and the strategies developed to achieve teacher empowerment with emphasis on capacity development. Besides the aspect of teachers, research on primary school attendance and dropouts reveal that there is much work that needs to be done for improvement. The School Improvement Programme (SIP) aims to reach out and bring back dropouts and focus on rural unskilled youth by developing vocational education and scholarships, as well as health programmes that build awareness in the community.

In **Chapter Nine**, Pushpanadham and Sindhi examine the empowerment of tribal women in the Gujarat state of India. They emphasize the benefits of education as transforming the rural/tribal communities and providing opportunities for skill development and training.

Singh, in **Chapter Ten**, draws the attention on the efficiencies of privatization of education in India using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The paper collects data by tracking 3000 younger children (age 8) in Andhra Pradesh, India since 2002. The research shows that in rural areas, parents' aspirations for quality education provoke them to enroll their children in private schools, however, social exclusion and gender discrimination still prevail in private education sectors.

A multi-prolonged strategic approach is required to deal with the problems of working children in India where socio-economic problem is deeply rooted in the society. Save the Children has undertaken a project accelerated in the state of Gujarat and Maharashtra in India addressing the issue of child labor, which is largely extended in those states especially in the agricultural sector. The victimized children are mainly migrated children,

who lack the right to basic education due to poverty and social exclusion. In **Chapter Eleven**, Ghoghari analyses the role Save the Children plays in getting back the migrated working children into basic education.

Wen Zhang describes the role of education in transforming living conditions in rural China, where educational interventions are successfully conducted. **Chapter Twelve** focuses on Education for Rural Transformation through investigating several successful education and training practices in rural China and examines the role of education in the process and to find out what changes occur through education.

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in India has been taken as a new strategy in social development and the generation of social capital. Through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) the government encourages the corporate sector to exercise their leadership in developing a social physical infrastructure. Pushapandham and Panigrahi, in **Chapter Thirteen**, appraise PPPs and CSR initiatives in India and provide few success stories to showcase CSR initiatives for rural transformation.

Fredriksson, in **Chapter Fourteen**, highlights the clear distinction in literacy skills between students in rural schools and in other schools within the same country or in other countries based on data from PISA 2009. The research shows that students in rural areas have the lowest scores in reading tests than students in large cities. The socio-economic background is one of the main factors that effects the test results, however, physical infrastructure, availability of schools and teacher insufficiency are other important factors that need to be addressed for improving learning skills of rural students.

The study presented by A. Choudhury, Subramanian, D. N. Choudhury, and A. V. Jayalakshmi in **Chapter Fifteen** depicts some good practices that have stories of success in terms of poverty alleviation conducted at Nandeshwari under Vadodara District of Gujarat and Morakolong under Morigaon District of Assam in India. This article considers the role of NGO's towards facilitating the creation of sustainable livelihood amongst underprivileged sections of the rural population through literacy campaigns.

Education has changed the everyday life of rural people in India after successfully inventing the District Education Project and Sarva Shiksha Abhijan by improving enrollment rates at basic education. Pradhan in **Chapter Sixteen** describes that a remote village of Odisha state in India named Kharsanmal, whose people mainly depend on agriculture, is enjoying a vast different and improved life in comparison to fifty years back.

In **Chapter Seventeen**, Gani-Dutt focuses on educational interventions that are important to adopt in rural India where a large section of women in society have ‘no choice, voice or choice’. Using qualitative methodology this paper examines the transformation in several villages at Araku Valley in Andhra Pradesh, focusing on ‘what works’ in the empowerment of women.

Education reform is the pathway of economic, social and political development of modern national states. In the final chapter (**Chapter Eighteen**) Gustafsson discusses the education system changing over time for the better skilled and modern knowledge based society as ‘best innovations are made by mistake’. Developing society will be benefited from an education system, which is flexible and movable rather than stagnant and rigid.

CHAPTER ONE

EDUCATION FOR RURAL TRANSFORMATION (ERT) IN INDIA, DIALECTICS BETWEEN THEORY AND IDEOLOGY; THE NATIONAL AND THE GLOBAL

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INTRODUCTION

It is hard to attribute meanings and purposes to such social processes as “Education” and “Transformation” as each in itself is in a constant, never-ending process of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction. Unsurprisingly, it is equally challenging to undertake boundary-setting of social formations, such as “Rural” and “Urban.” An additional complexity is added, in that these “social formations” and “social processes” are in continuous dialectical relationship of mutual shaping.

To handle these complexities of definitions, overlaps, interactions and interfaces, we require the Holistic view provided by Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968). Asserting that Systems Thinking, as a theoretical pre-assumption was “necessary but not a sufficient,” systems theory was elaborated into an Epistemic Triangle with three angles, those being: Systems Thinking, Constructivist Thinking and Dialectical Thinking (Bhola 1996, 2002, 2011b). It was also made clear that being Systemic was much more than being merely systematic.

History, of course, is prior, and neither theory nor ideology are created or practiced outside of history. Colonization by the West of the non-Western nations was historic, leading to the merger of national histories, written and oral. Globalization became the new buzz world.

GLOBALIZATION: THE SECOND SKY

Globalization can indeed be assumed to have been in process for centuries, coterminous with the process of colonization. For long, both the colonizers and the colonized were in a state of Immersion within the emerging phenomenon enveloping them. During the last few decades, however, we have inescapably become aware of the phenomenon of Globalization. Images of a “Shrinking Globe” and of the world community crowded into one “Global Village” are now part of popular discourses. Globalization -- the emergence of a whole, one-world system of shared values and structures in all domains – has been analyzed along multiple dimensions: cultural, social,

political, economic, technological and, of course, educational (O'Meara, Mehlinger, & Krain 2000; Burbules & Torres, 2000; Stiglitz 2002; Steger, 2003). The dominant ideology of political-economies of nations under globalization has been identified as Democratic Politics joined with Free Market Economy. There are, of course, multiple manifestations of both "democracy" and "free market."

Demography is Destiny

The Global Village that we live in today has a serious *population* problem. According to the United Nations population data released June 29, 2011 during the last half century, the global population was just below 7 billion. By 2050, it is predicted that the world population will reach 9.3 billion, with 97% of the people living in less-developed countries of the world (Bloomberg News, 2011). Fears of exceeding the "Carrying Capacity" of the Earth have, however, been pacified by "Green Revolutions" that have increased world food production manifold; and the ability to transport food across continents and beyond oceans has made famines quite unlikely. Yet the truth of "Demography is destiny" cannot be dismissed. Populations and the capacity to grow food or to pay for it when bought from far away are not spread uniformly among nations around the globe. Therein, resides a big problem.

CONNECTING THE GLOBAL WITH THE LOCAL: UNITED NATIONS AND AFFILIATES AS MEDIATORS

The bridges between the Global and the Local have been built by United Nations (UN) and the many UN affiliated specialized agencies. At the Apex, the United Nations has provided futuristic images of the New Global Order by proclaiming Declarations of Human Rights, and by asserting that Women's Rights are Human Rights. UNDP (United Nations Development Program), in the next step on the ladder provides vision and operational dynamism for management, institution building, and innovation (www.undp.org). Another UN Agency, UNRISD (UN Research Institute for Social Development), established in 1963, carries out research on socio-cultural dimensions of contemporary problems affecting development (United Nations, 2004). See also (www.unrisd.org).

At the more pragmatic level, the UN and UNDP have provided technical assistance by way of consultations to educate policy makers and development planners of Third World nations. Whenever necessary they have provided financial aid, directly or in cooperation with donor nations of the West, for carrying out *pilot* projects to test innovations and models of change in local contexts.

United Nations' affiliated agencies have also provided leadership and material aid in their particular domains of specialization. ILO (International Labor Organization), while protecting interests of laboring populations, has promoted "Fair Globalization" (ILO, 2008, 2011), and has promoted use of participatory strategies in rural settings (ILO, 1997). The World Health Organization (WHO), the public health arm of the UN, surveys the state of health of nations and, based on health statistics it collects, publishes annual Reports for national and international use. It has built surveillance systems to monitor the spread of epidemics and warns nations of their vulnerabilities to cholera, malaria, dengue fever, HIV-AIDS and several other diseases. Its interests are numerous, including: maternal health, child malnutrition, breast feeding, prevention of domestic violence, helping build latrines in rural and urban slums, environmental health, obesity and aging (www.who.int).

Understandably, in the Rural Development sector, FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization) has played, in its own domain, a most significant role in promoting appropriate development policies, plans and their implementation around the Third World covering such policy issues as: promoting new farming technologies and appropriate use of tools and fertilizers; role of Education for Capacity Building and Indicator Writing for Evaluation of Results (Atcharena & Gasperini, 2003; Acker & Gasperini, 2009; Sauvageot & Da Graca, 2007).

An offspring of FAO, The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), established in 1977, has gone all the way in changing rural conditions in the Third World – covering policy development, model building and helping to conduct projects on the ground. Water development projects, women's empowerment, income generation through market-oriented production of household food, participative natural resources development, restocking of herds and flocks, veterinary services; post-disasters emergency assistance, scaling up of micro-irrigations systems; micro-finance in rural areas– and Peace – have all gotten due attention. <http://www.ifad.org/governance/index.htm>.

Last but not the least, the Educational Banner has been unfurled and carried around the globe by UNESCO, emphasizing that without education no significant and durable change is possible in the development of nations; and that, in the Third World particularly, literacy of youth and lifelong learning by all adults was absolutely essential for them to avail the reservoirs of knowledge in print and for their linkages to the streams and rivers of knowledge now flowing in and out of the digital oceans (Bhola 2006b, 2009). An initiative directed especially to Education for Rural Development is UNESCO/INRULED (UNESCO-International Research and Training Center for Rural Development), established in 1994 and located in China, it pursues an international agenda (www.inruled.org).

THE BIRTH OF THE IDEA OF DEVELOPMENT: ITS IDEOLOGY AND THEORY

Yearnings for freedom were awakening in the colonies in the beginning of the 20th century. During the Second World War, “unwritten contracts” were beginning to be made between the colonizers and the leaderships in the colonies -- that promised independence if the colonies did help in the war effort of allied nations against the overwhelming Nazi onslaught in Europe and elsewhere. When the process of de-colonization did indeed begin, the colonizers promised not just to pack up and go home, abandoning the colonies to their own devices, but offered to help with both technical advice and materials resources in the grand project of eradicating ignorance, poverty, hunger and disease through the planned process of development. Critical thinkers have suggested that in reality de-colonization never came, what did come was neo-colonization, which was undertaken under the guise of technical assistance and development aid.

Ever Expanding Concept of Development

Nonetheless, an “Ideology of Development” was articulated and joined with a “Theory of Development” in this historical moment. Liberal democracy was to be central to the development. In its initial iteration, development was conceptualized as “Economic Development” using a growth model for wealth creation for the nation – not necessarily wealth for its peoples. The limits of the growth, however, were soon emphatically laid bare (Meadows, Meadows, and Behrens, 1972), and these limits were found impossible to neglect. The political, social, and cultural components were slowly added to the concept and practice of development. Education and technology were added in subsequent reconstructions of the concept of development. Development theory was rooted in systems thinking with eclectic methodologies of research and evaluation.

Sustainable Development: Sustainability of Human Environment Now Supreme

The most significant, expansive and abiding definition of development, namely Sustainable Development was first minted at a UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972 and now has been accepted almost universally. At the core of this concept of development is sustainability of the human environment. It is insisted that in all cases, contexts and conditions, development initiatives must include protection of the *Human Environment* as its goal. This ideal is utopian in that it challenges the idea of development in the Western mode and takes a moral stance of requiring acceptance of lowered expectations relative to today’s artificially inflated needs and recklessly extravagant standard of living in the West (Bhola, 2008).

Since the 1972 UN Conference referred to above, the concept of Sustainable Development has received considerable support from power holders at the highest levels of power all around the world. This is exemplified in the *UNESCO Newsletter* (UNESCO, 2006 quoted in Bhola 2008) which lists seven milestones in the development of the concept and the project of Sustainable Development:

(1) **1972**: UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm leads to creation of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP); (2) **1987**: *Our Common Future*, the report of the Brundtland Commission, popularizes the term sustainable development; (3) **1992**: Agenda 21 adopted at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro as the basis for measuring progress in sustainable development; (4) **1999**: Launch of the Global Sustainability Index, tracking corporate practices; (5) **2000**: The Millennium Declaration, adopted by UN General Assembly, defines “respect for nature” as a fundamental value and commits “to integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies”; (6) **2002**: The World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg promotes environmental protection, economic and social development as interdependent and mutually reinforcing; and (7) **2005**: The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) is launched to advance lifelong learning of knowledge, skills and values required for durable social transformation. (Listed in Bhola, 2008, pp. 15-17).

Sustainable Development: The Big Tent for an Extending Family

Sustainable Development continues *reconstructing* itself and expanding as long as policies and practices are indeed developed to achieve by now universally accepted development goals; and as long as the sustainability principle is not violated. Today, programs under the big tent include poverty eradication; inclusion of the excluded; women’s empowerment; health; and family planning.

Poverty Eradication Central to Sustainable Development

Development actions for poverty reduction and ultimately its total eradication need no justifications. It has to be realized that in some cases interventions for “Poverty Reduction” among the poor, and “Sustainability” of the environment in which the poor are living may be clashing. In such cases development for poverty reduction must yet proceed and compensations in behalf of environmental protection made within an expanded socio-geographic perspective that includes a larger cluster of communities, the surrounding sub-region, the whole nation and indeed all nations around the globe.

Inclusion of the Excluded: An Essential of Sustainable Development

Sustainability invariably seeks economic and social justice. This means an unalloyed dedication to the inclusion of the excluded by way of gender, class, caste, color, and ethnicity. India has the good fortune of having a constitution that affirms affirmative action in behalf of all the above mentioned groups as well as other weaker sections of the community such as tribes and indigenous peoples.

Women's Empowerment and Health and Family Planning Get Special Attention in Sustainable Development

Women's empowerment and health and family planning are inter-twined. Since the last United Nations Conference on family planning in 1994, family planning had been dismissed from the international discourses of development under pressure from some religious leaders and some rightwing politicians. This had led to the substitution of the new phraseology of "sexual and reproductive health" for the unpalatable old term "Family Planning." Yet not too much had happened. The Summit on Family Planning held on July 11, 2012 in London called by the British government and the Gates foundation – which is quite active in India -- offered \$4.6 billion and suggested that developing countries provide modern contraception – coils, pills, injectables, implants and condoms to women who want them. Equally importantly, they suggested joining women's own choice with accessibility of clinics in far-off places. If these goals are indeed achieved, more than half the number of women, as many as 222 million in the age group 15-49 in poor developing countries, who want or need modern contraceptives but cannot get them, could indeed be able to get them. The Grand Dividends of these interventions will be that millions of unsought abortions, hundreds of thousands of maternal deaths, still births and infant deaths will be hugely reduced (The Economist, July 14th, 2012).

Bill Gates, the philanthropist, who needs no introduction, regrets that the Millennium Goals (MDG) did not include the Goal "To have by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to basic sanitation." (United Nations, 2008) Under his "Toilet Challenge" he asked for "a toilet that costs less than five cents per user per day to operate, that requires neither a supply of clean water nor sewage infrastructure to take the waste away and that will generate energy and recover salts, water and other nutrients." The ultimate aim is to bring safe, affordable and "sustainable" loo's [slang for latrines] to the 40% of the world's population who lack access to basic sanitation. Within a year, three proposals had been received and given awards for their projects that have the promise to move their projects from conception to delivery" (THE ECONOMIST, September 1st 2012, p.10).

Some New Guests Welcomed under the Big Tent of Sustainable Development

Some prestigious *new* guests have recently been welcomed to in the big tent of sustainable development:

Development as Happiness

Citizens of the Mountain Kingdom of Bhutan have been fortunate in their Kings. Since the 1950s, these unusual sovereigns have been working on the transition from the absolute monarchy to a multi-party democracy, keeping peoples' interests above their own. In 1972, the King of Bhutan who then reigned over the Kingdom declared that "Development was Happiness" – of individuals, communities and nations – and that happiness is what we should seek as the goal of all development. First seen as rather mystical by some, the concept of happiness is now being analyzed using such variables as income, education, health, life-expectancy, economy, gender-equality, and sustainability. National Happiness Indices (GHP) are being developed and applied. (Wikipedia, accessed September 21, 2012).

The Real Wealth of Nations

The shift from Adam Smith's "*Wealth of Nations*" that has ruled economic discourses ever since it was proposed is now being re-conceptualized as "*The Real Wealth of Nations*." Economists had for decades remained settled on the Gross National Product (GNP) -- and then on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as indexes of national wealth. The new voices now exclaim: "But that is a measure of income, not wealth. It values a flow of goods and services, not a stock of assets." The United Nations has since published balance-sheets for 20 nations in a report overseen by Sir Partha Dasgupta of Cambridge University, U.K. that include three kinds of assets: manufactured, or physical capital (machinery, buildings, infrastructure and so on); human capital (the population's education and skills) and natural capital (including land, forests, fossil fuels and minerals)." Their ranking places Norway at the top, and Congo at the bottom of some 170 countries that were included. Norway was at the top, Congo at the bottom. Bhutan was lowly 141st but its aids were sky high!

By using such a measure, America's real wealth amounted to \$118 trillion in 2008, over 10 times its GDP that year, but its personal wealth per person was lower than in Japan. All this deserves a pause for thought. Using 1990 as a benchmark, Germany increased it human capital by 50%; and China increased its manufactured capital by 540%. Many of the services that the environment provides such as clean air and water, forests and greenery are shared as "The Commons" and cannot be measured. But the attempts to measure the various assets of nations yet constitute a useful thing to do.

“Inclusive or Comprehensive Wealth” data on the ten selected nations is shown below for comparative purposes:

**The Balance Sheet of Wealth
Inclusive Wealth**

<u>Country</u>	<u>2008 in Trillion Dollars</u>	<u>1990-2008 Growth (%)</u>
USA	117.8	0.7
Japan	55.1	0.9
China	20.0	2.1
Germany	19.5	1.8
Britain	13.4	0.9
France	13.0	1.4
Canada	11.1	0.4
Brazil	7.4	0.9
India	6.2	0.9
Australia	6.1	0.1

It is important to be mindful of the fact that of “Sustainable Development” and the “Real Wealth of Nations” now called *Inclusive/Comprehensive Wealth* are not at cross-purposes, but in complete harmony with each other (The Economist, June 30th 2012- See also: <http://www.cnngo.com/explorations/life/united-nations-annor>).

FROM IDEOLOGY AND THEORY TO POLICY AND ACTION ON THE GROUND

Equipped with understandings of the general, by adopting systemic thinking, i.e., holistic thinking (Bhola 1996, 2002, 2011), we now turn to the specific challenges of planning for actions on the ground in all the different sets of contexts and conditions.

A MODEL FOR PRAXIS IN THE FUTURE

Putting Education to work in the challenging task of development, in our case, rural transformation – which is an emphatic more passionate rendering of comprehensive development – we require a tool for modeling rooted in tested social-scientific theory and which is amenable to both quantitative and qualitative for data collection and research, required for innovation and change and for measurement of results.

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**Model for Planned Action:
 Policy into Practice**

←---- **General Framework of Political Economy of a Nation** ----→

V V

Policy Processes of:

Formulation – Implementation --Mobilization – Evaluation

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Agents and Adopters; and Configurations of Planned Change:

Planner		Objectives		Adopter
System	X	of Change	X	System

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The Logic of Action:

Dialectics between the Structural and the Instructional

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In the following, we elaborate on the various components of the Model above:

1. General Framework of Political Economy of a Nation

United Nations and its affiliated agencies, since they represent all of their member nations, some 200 of them with a huge variety of political systems, to make sure that they do not offend any nation, simply exclude any *direct* description or discussion of political systems in their discourses. Some *indirect* influencing is of course embedded in the very choice and design of programs promoted by United Nations. The political elite in individual nations must, however, understand the nature and structures of the Political Economy of their particular nation, to undertake intelligent action.

2. Perspectives on Policy and on Policy Processes

The concepts of policy, planning and implementation have undergone serious articulations and elaborations during the last half century or more, accelerated by the new preoccupation with designing and implementing development initiatives in the Third World. From a naive conception of “policy as proclamation” by the power elite, policy was found to be dialectic between crass politics and cold logic embedded in collective social scientific knowledge which was not possible to completely disregard (Braybrook & Lindblom, 1963/1970). Later Fisher and Forrester (1993) noticed an “argumentative turn” in policy and then came to include the policy arguments in behalf of feminists as well.

A holistic perspective on policy offered by Bhola (2003) suggested that we look at all the policy processes at the same time, covering the analytics of all of the processes from formulation to implementation, to mobilization of beneficiaries, and of those who will bring those benefits to them. It will have to be understood that policy processes do not proceed sequentially and in one pre-determined direction. Indeed all these policy processes all mutually interactive. It is possible that policy makers sometimes would formulate policy statement with modest expectations because of known lack of resources to implement policies. In other cases, they may decide to limit themselves only to policies which can be evaluated to surely claim policy successes.

3. Agents and Adopters; Configurations of Planned Change

The widely tested CLER Model of Planned Change and Development (Bhola, H.S., 1988) will accommodate the complexities of undertaking planned change, as elaborated herein. It is essential that to plan change, we look at both the Planner System and the Adopter System, and at the objectives of the total plan. Again, neither the planner nor the adopter is always going to be one unified uniform social entity. Each in itself may be a configuration of entities such as individual, groups, institutions and sub-cultures, networked through linkages formal, non-formal and informal, in turn, embedded in larger social-political-cultural configurations, within a particular bounded social space. They may not even be resonating all to one same environment, but too many different environmental canopies; and may have available to them different resources – conceptual, informational, material, institutional, of personnel, and of time.

4. The Logic of Action: Dialectics between the Structural and the Instructional

Using a Logic of Action means dealing, on the one hand, with activities involved in policy implementation with understanding derived from the dialectic between theory and ideology that inform both policies and plans. On the other hand, it requires that all action plans and strategies are born within the second dialectic, between the Structural and Instructional.

Understanding and Acting on the Structural

Whatever needs to be done systematically, and with expectations of continuity, needs appropriate systemic structures. This may mean creation of permanent or temporary structures where none exist; or simply strengthening what exists and interfacing them appropriately, with each other. Building the needed competencies and skills of role incumbents within these structures would be necessary.

Providing and Honing Instructional Components

In some settings of development, particularly, of rural development, the instructional may mean not just schooling, but also providing literacy skills to men and women involved in farming and farm-related occupations (Bhola, 2009). In other settings establishing schools for children may be needed. The elementary school, of course, is one of the oldest and enduring structures within the education sector. But new needs may also mean establishment and upgrading of middle schools; higher secondary schools; colleges and universities; technical and vocational schools; technical colleges and institutes comparable to other higher education institutions; and professional colleges to train teachers, and trainers of teachers, engineers, artists, architects, and medical Doctors.

Top-down or bottom-up approach in any development effort including rural transformation is indeed a false dichotomy. In the real world, making choices is not an either/or question, but it is often and-or situation. Both top-down and bottom-up approaches in togetherness will be necessary. Policy formulation and its elaboration will be mostly a top-down process. Selling policy to the peoples, and mobilization their efforts on the ground, in pursuit of policy, will have to be bottom-up, linked to grassroots.

THE CASE OF INDIA

When the British left India in 1947, after some 250 years of rule, they did not leave a clean slate behind. They left deep marks on the common Consciousness of the peoples, and on India's polity and future history. In regard to the Rural/Urban situation, the Urban won great victories, but the Rural India continued to be in neglect. Calcutta (now Kolkata) set up in 1690 by a member of the East Indian Company, later vied with London as the biggest metropolis in the British Empire. Madras (now Chennai), Bombay (now Mumbai), Allahabad and Lahore, were well known cities. Half a dozen Indian Universities, all fruits of British initiatives, aspired to become like universities of London, Oxford and Cambridge. The British left other legacies as well. Though Thomas Macaulay, the great propagandist in service of the British, was disliked for his talk of the Blessings of the British, the British Raj did have its blessings – the English Language became the grand instrument of unification of India, and the Indian intelligentsia came to be connected with the European Enlightenment. The trains, telegraph, and police and an administrative class (Indian Civil Service) that the British introduced was to help them to maintain their own hold on the empire, but it also prepared ground for all progress in all aspects political, economic and social life of India. This legacy has since permeated all history of India's progress, and after independence in 1947, made possible the big leaps in planned development (Speare, 1965; Darwin, 2012).

The Rural Won No Victories

Rural India in comparison remained a dismal reality. What the people already knew and leaders like Mahatma Gandhi cried over, was decried over by rural sociologists both from inside India (Dube 1955) and from the outside of India (Lewis 1958). Dube in his book, *Indian Village* (1955), talked of the terribly unjust social relations prevailing in rural India where those without land were complete non-entities. The untouchables were the lowest of the lowly and were treated most unjustly, indeed cruelly. They could be harnessed for free menial work, expected to behave correctly towards those of higher castes, and dare not give any opinion on village matters.

Oscar Lewis, an anthropologist and theorist of culture, in his book, *Village Life in Northern India* (1958) talked sensitively of then prevalent religious and caste taboos. Hunger, poverty, undernourished and weakness together so burdened the poor farmers that they did not have the stamina to even perform the tasks of harvesting their own tiny plots of land. Children and expectant mothers were particularly vulnerable. Lack of transportation, kept them from exploring any income-generating activities outside the village. There was also social confinement that isolates them inside “Corporations of 100 villages each.” These were the boundaries of their private worlds: they even chose spouses for their children from one or another of these villages, and have seldom if ever traveled beyond.

India’s Community Development Movement: Attempting to Transform Rural India

The commitment to serve the rural and poor, emphatically reinforced by Mahatma Gandhi did bear fruit, and began to compete with the Ideology of Modernization based on industrialization practiced by Prime Minister Nehru. Gunnar Myrdal in his *Asian Drama* (1968) captured the various aspects of community development as manifested during the first two decades (1947-67), representing some twenty years of the program’s life (Myrdal, 1968).

I. Community Development Movement Formally Proclaimed

The government’s program of “Community Development and Agricultural Extension” under Union Minister S.K. Dey was well-intentioned, and was supposedly meant to be rooted in a larger policy frame seeking changes in all aspects of village life generating a cumulative process of rural uplift -- raising productivity, improving health and education, and thereby improve quality of life. Importantly, efforts were to be made to improve attitudes towards work and life in general, as lived in rural India. It was considered

important that community development program promotes people's awareness of their responsibility in the planning and implementation of projects in their communities.

As implemented during its active life from 1954 to 1961, the program did make impressive gain in its coverage. It was indeed a nationwide program that did create a network of new institutions and new roles to promote commitment and action for development at various levels, from the center, to state, to district, to Block and down to the village level. It deservedly won the attention and praise of development workers throughout the developing world and of donors in developed nations.

At the prime of its existence, community development blocks had come to be established throughout the country, and some 500,000 villages had indeed been covered. However, what was gained in breadth_came at the cost of depth. The program included "every good thing" without any hope of generating strategic connections between parts. During its early years special attention was given to agriculture, but with relative neglect of the social and economic correlates of the program.

2. Critiques by Scholars and the Political Elite

Gunner Myrdal (1968, page 257, 273) commented that India made a successful beginning of independence – with one of the world's most progressive constitutions (Government of India, 1950); an excellent balance between the legislature and the judiciary; and a planning commission (also established in 1950) to complement the administrative structures of the state. The army was indeed junior to the civil state, and the Indian administrative service (established on the model of Indian Civil Service created by the British) was in fact non-politicized. However, the parliamentary democracy was not really solid. Indian independence, however, was transfer of political power without a revolution. The power at the center beamed no farther than central and state Parliaments. Peasant landlords, merchants and money lenders continued to rule the roost. Structures of politics, economy and society were left untouched.

The "Great Expectations" from the community development program did not fully materialize. In real life settings, the existing structures dividing communities by clan, caste, class and assets remained untouched. Power of traditionally superior authorities, kept people down where they were before. Weaker sections and the excluded – women and lower castes did not gain much. The already well to do, gained much more even in projects of water and sanitation. Those who already had more gained more, even under so-called land reform. Literacy, the well-known instrument of transformative change got no attention. Dube, the author of *Indian Village* (1955), returned to study the consequences from the community development in his second

book *India's Changing Villages: Human Factors in Community Development* (1958), and was quite a bit dismayed, noting that "there was one doctor per 6,300 of the population, but most of these were concentrated in urban centers; in village India, it was estimated, there was one doctor for 25,000 people. Low nutritional standards and unsanitary and unhygienic conditions prevailed."

John P. Lewis (the other Lewis!) in his book talked of a "Quiet Crisis" (1962), also criticized the community development program for the "village fetish in Indian thought and the air of ineffectiveness" prevailing generally. He believed that main reason for this was that the "reform effort centering its focus on rural reaction on their own terms and their own ground, at their point of greatest resistance" (p. 150). After some two decades of life. Rural development seemed to have lost to the "industrial revolution of India", based on coal and iron, now the central project for modernization of India.

3. The Green Revolution in India

India's Green Revolution of 1963, credited to Dr. Norman Borlaug, with shared credit to M.S. Swaminathan of India, was green in a different sense than Green revolutions of today that seek to maintain sustainable development to keep human environment protected. India's Green Revolution was about increased food production through the introduction of high-yielding varieties of seeds for different food crops which then required increased use of chemical fertilizers as also of water for irrigation. Results were amazing as productivity increased four-fold.

Rural development as such was not on the agenda of India's Green Revolution, but its consequences for rural development were truly immense and far-reaching. The Green Revolution did indeed change the rural scene in India in ways more than one. Among the positives can be counted are the modernization of farms, and significant rises in farmers' incomes. The Green Revolution soon became a global phenomenon with world-side consequences. There was an unprecedented increase in production of food world-wide, leading to self-sufficiency in many developing countries. Among other gains were the new infrastructures that emerged; and diversification of local economies in countries that experienced the Green Revolutions. Among the negatives discovered later were: Huge monocultures, resulting from reduction of genetic diversity of plants; use of energy-intensive chemical fertilizers and poisonous pesticides that hurt the health of humans as well as the soil. All this meant serious environmental damage. There was a serious political-economic effect – the tendency towards family farms disappearing, and large-scale farms taking over, creating a new landless class (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_ReEvolution_in_India).

RE-INVENTING RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

Today, we see no lack of leadership in India for development, including rural reconstruction. The Indian constitution may be the only one that required affirmative action on behalf of the poor, the disadvantaged, and the excluded; and expected the courts to enforce the social and economic rights as part of affirmative action. Indeed, the law has become the super estate among the three estates. This partnership between the constitution and the courts has brought about wonderful results: Despite serious problems with enforcement, 84% of benefits have gone to the poorest two-thirds; Indian law already promises to the people right to education, health and paid work; Right to equal education has pushed first-grade enrolment for girls by 10% a year, and brought 2 million children into school lunch programs. In December 2011, the cabinet approved the “Right to Food” bill that would give two-thirds of the Indian population a right to cheap food. Whether it would be enforceable is another matter!

India’s Planning Commission ever since its inception in 1950 (<http://planningcommission.nic.in>) has been preparing Five-Year Plans to guide Government policy, include policy on Rural Development. The Twelfth Five Year Plan 2012-2017 to take effect soon, promises an average annual growth of 8.2 per cent, and identifies infrastructure, health and education as three thrust areas. This Five-Year Plan like those before it will be implemented by various union Ministries at the center and by appropriate departments at the state level. The Union Ministry of rural development is responsible for translating Planning Commission’s vision in practical plans for implantation and evaluation of results. It started the Integrated Rural Development Program of India (IRDP) back in 1978 and has since gone through various updates and expansions. Several other Union Ministries contribute to the rural development mission.

Lay of the Land: The Meanings of Urban and Rural

Defining Rural and Urban

The Indian Census Bureau (<http://censusindia.gov.in>) in 2011) defined an Urban Unit (or Town) as any place with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board, or a notified town area committee, etc. known as statutory town. Alternatively, to qualify as urban would need meeting the criteria of a minimum population -- numbering 5,000; density of population of at least 400 per square kilometer; and at least 75% of male workers mainly engaged in non-agricultural pursuits. Conversely, rural area to be so defined would need population below 5,000 and the density of population of less than 400 per square kilometer. Further in such areas at least 75% of the males of the working population would be engaged in agricultural pursuits.

Related with the preceding, a rural community is defined as a small aggregate of families who reside in close physical contact within a locality, share common interests and are mostly engaged in agrarian sectors.

The Dynamics beyond Definitions

In 2008, the United Nations proclaimed that the human species living on this Earth had crossed a historic threshold when more people were living in urban areas than in rural areas. The “Urban Age,” demographers surmise had arrived. By 2025, two-thirds of mankind will live in the cities; and by 2050, three-quarters of them would be city-dwellers. India as we write is predominantly rural, with 600m of its 1.24 billion still relying directly on agriculture, but it is bound to change.

The future change scenario for India, as reconstructed by S.S. Tarapore (2012) in a recent paper is truly dismal. He quotes statistics to inform that during the decade of 1999-2000, the proportion of agricultural and allied activities in India’s GDP went from 28.4 per cent down to 19.4 per cent; and during (2001-10) there was a further decline down to 14.4 per cent. Such declines he states reassuringly are experienced by many developing countries during their development process. But it is troublesome in the Indian setting since 70 per cent of the Indian population still lives in rural areas. The current distribution of income between the rural and urban sectors pushes migration from rural to urban areas, especially to metropolitan centers. Lack of infra-structures in the cities cannot accommodate the newcomers who swarm to already crowded slums. The problem is further accentuated by the crude birth rate per thousand of population – 23.7 in rural areas and 18 in urban areas – that augurs an overwhelming urban-rural dialectic (Tarapore, 2012).

India’s Countryside Today

“Countryside” may be a more appropriate label for the “Rural.” in India today. The dialectic between the Urban and the Rural in India is highly dynamic. The urban and the rural are visibly encroaching on each other, losing any sense of clear boundaries. Successful people in urban areas or those receiving handsome remittances of money from their children abroad, are building “urban islands” in the countryside, with spacious palaces studded with modern amenities -- off the electricity grid, running on privately owned diesel powered generators. These big enclaves in the rural areas have brought urban ways of living and tastes to the rural people to see, and to envy and to crave for. The rural populations living in extreme poverty, and looking for any income they can make, have invaded the cities and created slums where the rural and urban meet, huddled in hundreds of thousands of Jhuggi-Chaupari’s. New conceptualizations and categories need to be invented to capture the realities of the new of what has been

called “Rurbanization” by the Chief Minister of Gujarat. Indeed, new projects designed for development have to deal with both the rural and the urban, assuming the yin-yang relationship of each with the other.

LOGIC OF ACTION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

The theoretical perspective of the Epistemic Triangle (Bhola, 1996) that informs our definition, description and discussion in our discourse, suggests that reality out there is best understood in terms of the systemic, the constructivist, and the dialectical. It will, therefore, be fruitless to search for a model that could serve as a master key to open all locks -- a formulaic approach based on clear cause-and-effect connections. In the real world, there are more than one agent seeking change – the state and the civil society, and institutions secular and sacred – that do not always pull in the same direction. Categories and definitions overlap. For instance, “Rural Transformation” may include a whole array of categories: Rural Development and Urban Development; development of Deserts, of Hilly Regions and Coastal Regions. Other developmental categories subsumed may be Women Development, Adolescent Development, Child Development; and development of members of Tribes, of the homeless sleeping in the streets; Scheduled Castes, and Untouchables; and some others. Finally, and most importantly, initiatives and interventions will have unexpected consequences; the best of intentions may sometimes cause hurtful happenings.

The Structural and Instruction Dialectic in the Context of Rural Development in India

The State is more often than not the source of important structural initiatives and interventions. We begin with the *Structural Initiatives* and interventions undertaken by The Central Government of India during the last few years. These initiatives are not listed in chronological order, but along a rough and ready order of scope and significance: from the “General-Pervasive” to one limited to “Specific-Sectors.”

Human Rights

Human Rights are fundamental to any Development. Rural Transformation will be meaningless if all it ensures is escape from poverty and access to creature comforts.

Right to Education (RTE)

Universal Elementary Education was on the constitutionally supported agenda, but it is now declared to be a fundamental right by a Constitutional

amendment; and an “ambitious national program for universal elementary education has been launched with the goal of all 6-14 age children successfully completing eight years of elementary education by 2010.” Already changes are being mooted to include provisions for sports education as part of an updated RTE.

Right to Health: Health Missions for Rural (2005) and Urban (2012) Areas

The Right to Health is another fundamental right. Big strides have been made here. India already has in place a National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) which was launched in 2005. Now as part of the 12th FYP, it is proposed to convert the current National ‘Rural’ Health Mission into ‘National’ Health Mission to provide health care facilities to urban people as well. As part of this expanded vision, essential medicines, in their generic form, will be provided free to the needy through public health institutions in a phased and time bound manner. The government would endeavor to increase both Plan and Non-Plan public expenditure at the Center and the States levels, together adding up to 2.5 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) by the end of the 12th Plan (GOI Daily Newsletter, Volume 04, Issue, 314).

A cluster of initiatives and interventions with emphasis on the rural have been undertaken, as for example, the following:

Promise of Food Security: The National Food Security Bill, soon to be Law

The Right to Food is an old idea. Three decades ago, India-born, Amartya Sen, Oxford University Professor and Nobel Laureate had suggested that most direct cause of famine was not shortage of food but economic inequalities which deprived the poor of resources to buy food they needed. This idea was not implemented as quickly as it deserved to be. No wonder that famines occurred most often in poor developing countries which had meager resources to undertake structural changes to provide food security.

“Development is Freedom” indeed.

In our times, several initiatives are afoot both at the national and international levels to provide food security to those in need. A UN report on the right to food and extreme poverty has suggested “the need for global social security fund of last resort to enable every country howsoever poor, to provide guaranties for its citizens against catastrophic events that exhaust their resources needed for survival” (<http://www.africafocus.org/docs12/-pp;aksi> Committee on World Food Security, <http://www.fao.org/cfs/en/>).

India has had a Food Security Initiative of its own. The Indian Food Security Bill as enacted in 2011 will provide a legal entitlement to cheaper food grains to over half of India's 1.2 billion people: 75% of rural population and 50% of urban households will have the right to 7 kg of food grains per person per month, at the rate of Rs.3.00 per kg for rice, Rs.2.00 per kg for wheat and Rs.1.00 per kg for coarse grains, to the priority beneficiaries. In general this would mean that the poor will be provided at least three kg of food grains per person per month at half the minimum selling price. In addition, rations or cooked meals to children under 14 years of age, the destitute, including women and persons on the margins of society, will also be ensured. (http://government.in/site/food-security-bill-be-tabled-Thursday/utm_source=newsletter-e).

National Livestock Policy 2011/12

Related to the above, the Central Government has proposed a National Livestock Policy to increase cattle population in the country. The proposed livestock policy aims at providing food and livelihood security to cattle farmers to improve their socio-economic status. It also aims at ensuring a clean environment for cattle farmers for themselves and their herds.

Right to Work – For the Rural People (MG-NREGA)

Right to work is an assumed, though often unfulfilled, right in all societies today. In India, unemployment is high among the productive age of 15-35 in urban India; but in rural India employment opportunities are almost non-existent. To redress the situation in rural areas, a beginning has been made with Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MG-NREGA), the most ambitious scheme of social protection in India. Every rural household has the right to 100 days of work a year – improving village infrastructure such as irrigation system. In 2009, some 50 million households signed up, slowing migration from poor to rich regions.

NREGA now sanctified with reference to Mahatma Gandhi and called MG-NREGA, has since been handed over to Panchayats who will decide what employment activities will be chosen for support. Problems remain. The critics lament that not everyone demanding work can get it; and wages are paid late and sometimes not at all by corrupt middlemen. To avoid the seeping of corruption, some states have decided to pay wages to workers by direct deposit to their Banks by electronic transfers. The government is also now requires that MGNREGA accounts must be audited annually by chartered accountants to get fresh installments of funds.

Adhaar: New Identities for the Poor and Landless by Identity Cards

Once again we return to an initiative that is “General-and-Pervasive” with extremely significant and nation-wide consequences. The National Identity Cards – called Aadhaar, a unique 12-digit identification number given to residents of India, when it becomes available to all citizens of India, could indeed prove to be super agents of transformation of India society, urban and rural. By giving all Indians a Personal-Social Identity where half the population currently does not have one – because they do not have regular homes and, therefore, no home addresses. Because of that, they do not have mail delivered to them, nor do they have access to postal banks where they could deposit their savings, howsoever small. As of now they have to depend on intermediaries to receive their benefits from the state, and too often get swindled and defrauded by them. The GOI daily Information newsletter of July 2, 2012 – reported that Aadhaar will soon provide state pensions, wages to workers, and scholarships to students. Rural wage earners under the MG-NREGA scheme are the first on the list to get their benefits through Aadhaar. Ultimately, Aadhaar will enable the poor living on land receive “**Property Titles**” for the property they have owned for generations.

Bharat Nirman: New Infrastructures for Rural Development

An impressive effort in this regard was an initiative of the Government of India which was time bound and was implemented in partnership with state governments, and Panchayati Raj Institutions during 2005-2009. The Initiative named “Bharat Nirman” was committing huge investments in irrigation, all-weather roads, rural housing, rural water supply, rural electrification, and rural telecommunication connectivity beginning with telephones. The expectation was that these investments in rural infrastructures would unlock the growth potential of rural areas. Much more needs to be done. While the poor in rural India have been provided much needed welfare, they have not been empowered enough to be able to control either education or policing.

The rural future does look hopeful. A recent document from government sources in India (GOI, 2010) presents an overview of developments in rural India during the last two decades or more, thus:

Rural landscape of India has been radically transformed altogether by policy initiatives of the government and people’s movements at the grass-root levels especially during the period 1988-2009. Notable among these changes are the increasing vibrancy of Panchayati Raj Institutions, resulting from the Constitution Amendment (73rd); the emergence of the model of Self Help Groups (SHGs) that operate through collectives; and

the massive new organizational capital being created through work collectives for workers under NREGA and other collectives like JFM groups etc. These groups provide scope and mechanism for convergence and can sustain the efforts made by literacy campaigns. Newspapers, TV, Cable and mobiles have played a major role in connectivity, accessing information and interaction, thus creating a literate environment within the family and village (GOI, 2010).

FOCUS ON EDUCATION FOR RURAL TRANSFORMATION

Educating Decision Makers

Even officials at the highest decision-making level within policy and administrative structures need training for acquiring personal capacity in such areas as policy development, institution building, and organizational behavior. Planners, practitioners and evaluators need to acquire skills in design and usage of Management Information Systems (MIS's) that can store both quantitative and qualitative data in their MIS's.

India has a large number of universities, spread all over India, as well as specialized institutions, such as (1) National Agricultural Universities – among them, the agricultural Universities, there is one located in Ludhiana, Punjab. India has attracted international attention for its research and development. The Hyderabad National Institute of Community Development was world famous at one time. The Rural Institute of Udaipur, Rajasthan is one among those many prestigious institutions.

Education for Mobilization of the Masses in their own Behalf

Separate statements on National Policy of Education (NPE) have been promulgated by the Government over the years. In 1968, the first NPE statement was promulgated by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi; and the second, in 1986, by her son, then Prime Minister Rajive Gandhi. The NPE of 1986 was modified in 1992 by Prime Minister Narasimha Rao. In 2005, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh adopted a new policy based on “Common Minimum Programs”.

A document published by the Government of India in 1998 included the National Policy on Education of 1986 as revised in 1992, as well as reproduced the text of the earlier National Policy on Education, 1968 for ready reference (Government of India 1998). No separate chapters are dedicated to the subject of Rural Development/Transformation or to Rural Education as such, though need for rural education remains part of the concern. For instance, it was noted with satisfaction that since the adoption

of the NPE of 1968, “more than 90 per cent of the country’s rural habitations now have school facilities within a radius of 1 kilometer” (paragraph, 1.5).

Greater attention to science and technology and to building of values of secular democracy and economic and social modernity was shown as well while at the same time wishing to keep indigenous values alive and well. There was a clear understanding that “The rural areas, with poor infrastructure and social services will not get the benefit of trained and educated youth, unless rural-urban disparities are reduced and determined measures are taken to promote diversification and dispersal of employment opportunities (paragraph, 1.12).

Gender disparities were a special concern. Girls were not to be condemned to the study of “domestic science” and other unchallenging curricula. Universal literacy (within a framework of life-long education) was to be pursued, and women were to be given special attention in related programs of Adult Education, and Non-formal Education.

Research Supports the Eminent Role of Education for Rural Transformation

In a scholarly article on the subject of economic growth and rural poverty in India, the authors, a trio of economists, put the role of education in rural transformation in a balanced perspective, suggesting that to reduce rural poverty, the Government of India should consider making additional investments in rural road construction and in agricultural research. Education, they found, had the third largest marginal impact in rural poverty alleviation and in promoting productivity growth (italics added). Other investments including irrigation, soil and water conservation, health and rural and community development have only modest impact in economic growth and poverty alleviation “per additional rupee spent” (Fan, Hazell & Thorat 2000).

Instructional Interventions Education to Serve the Rural People

The name of the game in education is the transmission and inculcation of appropriate knowledge – Cognitive, Affective and Skills-oriented, needed by all those engaged in the grand project of Education for Rural Transformation from the political elite themselves, through policy makers, planners, implementers, and evaluators, down to field workers who finally engage with the leadership of Panchayas, as also with members of village families (GOI: National Knowledge Commission 2006/2007). At the top of the hierarchy, it will be more of re-orientation through discussion and dialog, and capacity building (Bhola 2007). When it comes to motivating, mobilizing and preparing the excluded masses on the ground, it will have to

be “dialogic action” (Freire, 1970), more often than not in the context of literacy groups (National Literacy Mission 1999, Bhola 2006a, 20006b, 2009).

A Hoped for Dividend from International Meetings

The “International Symposium on Education for Rural Transformation (ERT) -- Good Practices from National and International Perspectives,” that was held in Baroda, Gujarat, India during October 2011 had assumed that borrowing and lending of good practices is both possible and desirable between and among nations. Learning from the experience of others is indeed a virtue both at Individual and National levels (Phillips and Ochs, 2004). However, borrowing and lending are not simple processes of copying and getting copied. All “Good Practices” are indeed rooted in the context of time and place of their practice. That means that for borrowing and lending of policies and good practice those must be unpackaged and re-packaged – with due adaptations in each shift of context. We know that even the most admired practices, such as Bangladesh’s Grameen Bank and Brazil’s Bolsa had to be adapted to be adopted in other contexts and conditions.

ABOVE AND BEYOND THE BEST LAID PLANS

Above and beyond these well-laid policies and plans, and well-meant actions on the ground, truly amazing, and authentically transformative movements of Global scope and consequences continue to unfold.

Internet as the Super Connector

Since August 1991, when the first World Wide Web was launched by Tim Berners-Lee, then at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), the world has transformed itself into something never even dreamed of, not even in science fiction. Who knew that one day there will be innumerable websites clouding the space above, and computers to access them, at will? Who knew that we would be able to carry a whole office to the library or to the corner Coffee House -- and that the Smart-phone will make it possible for any person standing in one corner of the globe to talk to another person in another corner of the world? Who could have imagined the wireless, the e-mail, the cell phone, music downloads, and video streaming?

Have Phone, Will Call

Connecting across villages, cities, countries and continents is no more an idle dream. The cell phone is the tool, and the spoken word – now also the written Text – can be used communicate and to create virtual communities.

The cell phone is not a rarity anymore. As *The Economist* of June 18th 2011 wrote,

India has almost 600m active mobile phone subscribers – about one for every two people, including babies. Some sources claim India already has 929.37 million cell phones! It also has among the lowest prices anywhere, and a home grown, world class operator, Bharti Airtel. India’s mobile phone industry inspires great hopes. Many see it as vital to the nation’s development: a way of bypassing obstructive bureaucrats and bringing services to the masses, from mobile banking to accurate crop prices. Already a third of subscribers are in rural areas (The Economist, June 18th 2011).

Technology and Terminology

The new technology of the cell, by itself won’t do, if the spoken words are not understood. Thereby, language could impose limits. In a country like India with its 800 or more dialects, limits imposed by those several languages would be severe. There is good news, however. Hindi spoken by more people than any other Indian language is slowly but surely in the process of becoming the national language. Bengali, Gujarati, Tamil and some other Indian languages are acquiring the status of “Regional” languages. Finally, English which has acquired the status of a “World Language” is not ‘foreign’ to peoples of the world, and especially not to Indians. At least 1% of Indian people, that is, 130 million of them can speak, read and write English. Those who do know English – or other widely spoken languages – can as multipliers of communications. Those billions of conversations that take place, thanks to these technologies are no longer merely personal chit-chats. They now include the communications both social and political import, creating virtual communities of the like-minded. This has brought about what is now called a “Social Media Revolution.”

Social Media Revolution

The cell phone as a vehicle of social media has now been able to mobilize activists of nations to chase out dictators, and to demand economic, social and political justice for the peoples. The “Arab Spring” has brought liberation to peoples of Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya and freed them from the clutches of dictatorial regimes. Of course, the cell phone could play an equally important role in the mobilization of the rural masses in their own behalf. In its more mundane uses, it could and indeed has brought development to backward rural and the urban areas, without waiting for the roads to be built, and rails to be laid first. Distances used to be the bane of those in rural areas: children could not go to school, farmers could not take

their produce to the market, not learn about prices, emergencies could not be reported nor advice received from specialists. The cell phone can now serve as an effective tool of ameliorations. The cell phone can receive information from a central source and enable “transactional communication” between buyers and sellers, and lenders and borrowers. Mobile Banking has made it possible for all who care, to open an account and avail of various other banking services.

Of course, we should be careful not to be carried away. The social media cannot bring rural transformation without good old agriculture extension workers who walk on foot or ride their bicycles to spread needed knowledge and skills. And health extension workers to bring the newest knowledge made available by the latest medical advances. We would need trained mid-wives, and health assistants to provide inoculations against the scourges of small pox, polio, malaria and tuberculosis. Vaccines exist but commitment to action to make those remedies accessible to guard against Measles, Mumps, Rubella, is missing. Diarrhea continues to kill some 1.5m children every year.

Fortunately, India’s planners have gone beyond the miracle of the cell phone and working on other wonders offered by the ICT. India has already kicked off a “Mega-Project to Connect All Villages with Broadband” to enhance inclusive growth in the country and strengthen the economic activity in rural areas. Projects to highlight use of Information Technology, to promote production and use of “Solar Energy” in rural India, is yet another breakthrough.

FACING THE MORAL HAZARD

It is indeed saddening that we are today witnesses to the continuing tearing apart of the moral fabric of peoples on a global scale. Institutions and roles – sacred and secular -- that were once considered sanctified today have rotting to the core. Neither teachers nor preaches, nor healers are any more trustworthy. As the “Transparency International Indices of Corruption,” show few of the nearly 200 nations of the world come completely clean. Others are hopelessly corrupt, among them India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Nigeria, and several others. Scandinavian nations seem to be welcome exceptions (Transparency International at <http://transparency.org/>).

In India corruption has a long history going back to the pre-Independence period. The present nexus between politicians, bureaucrats and criminals, however, is hugely frightening. Plans to eradicate poverty from the land are defeated as two-fifths or more of the welfare allocations from the center are stolen by politicians and bureaucrats on its way to villages and city slums. The dreams encoded in the Indian constitution of an India that would be democratic, prosperous and just seem to have become

improbable. Yet, the second decade of the new millennium gives hope. A public awareness of corruption is emerging, helped by public media. In 2011 India saw an anti-corruption movement lead by Anna Hazare that was reminiscent of Gandhi non-violent civil resistance movement. Harare demanded a “Jan Lokpal Bill” that would create custodians of moral action on the part of all, from the police man on the street to the Prime Minister in his high chair grand office. At the more mundane level, technology is being harnessed to the task of taking the intermediaries out of the process of cash transfers and distribution of food rations to those for whom they are intended. Unique identity cards based on an individual’s biometric data are being issued that would enable beneficiaries to open personal post office or bank accounts to which cash grants can be send. Already, 215m of these cards have been issued. Within two years the database is expected to include 600m. Complexities remain, but this is a big step forward on all accounts (The Economist, November 10th 2012, pages 41-42).

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CHAPTER TWO

EDUCATION FOR RURAL TRANSFORMATION (ERT) GOOD PRACTICES

MYTH OR REALITY!

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INTRODUCTION

Education for Rural Transformation (ERT) has gained international importance in the discourse about how the majority of the world's poor can further improve their quality of life through aggressive but concerted efforts that put the emphasis of an education and learning (formal, non-formal and informal) that principally, if not solely, address the needs, hopes and expectations of the rural majority poor. The instrumental use of education as a vehicle for empowerment and mobilization in this transformative process has been extolled for the ability to build capacity, raise self-confidence and increase interaction / participation in social and economic changes (Acker & Gasperini, 2009). Agencies (inclusive of government, non-government and trans-government) from all regions of the globe have increased in awareness and attempts to mobilize against the disintegrating circumstances of abject poverty, unsustainable agricultural practices, increased urban migration, rising abandonment of agriculture based employment, the threat of food shortages, human trafficking and child-labour practices.

Larger economies and populations have emerged as acute sources of both demand and supply of agricultural products. Countries such as China, India and Brazil are actively involved in demonstrating examples of good practices and the interconnectedness of rural and urban areas while adjusting to the continual redefinition of 'rurality' and the implication it carries for poverty reduction (International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD], 2011). "*In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in agriculture as the key driver of development and poverty reduction*" (IFAD, 2011, p.2).

Over seventy percent of the world's poor are represented in the rural populations. There remains, regardless of advances in acknowledgement, increased research, and interconnections, vast disparities between those who live in urban and rural areas. This discrepancy of equity and quality remains a monumental challenge for nations to achieve sustainable development as a

whole and specifically in rural regions. This challenge to effectively transform societal and cultural tiers is intensified by the increasing technology (modernization / industrialisation), the lack of social services and the sheer numbers of illiterate (out-of-school) children and adults.

Moreover, the overarching global and national challenges of fighting poverty and building the sustainable future cannot be met unless the problems facing the rural majority in the developing countries are effectively addressed (UNESCO INRULED, 2012, p.3).

The transformation of rural areas in emerging economies is happening in a context of rapid globalization, making any change in an individual economy interactive with the rest of the world. This raises questions as to how transformation policies and programmes can best be tailored to respond and be reactive to both the domestic and international trends. This is where examples of “good practice” can have strong significance as if one can recognize the “good practices” and emulate them, adapting to varying contextual situations than the “tailored” practice is more accessible.

Education in order to be transformative requires contextual sensitivity. Education in all its forms is contributory to a valuable life, a right for all individuals in their development. Education cannot be viewed only from a “schooling” perspective but should be considered from the “learning perspective”. Despite the decreasing amount of “out-of-school” children there remain a startling number. In 2010, 61 million children were out of school. Of those 61 million, “47% are expected to never enter school. A further 26% have attended but left school, and the remaining 27% are expected to enter school in the future” (EFA GMR UNESCO, 2012). In order to address this still large issue, it is important that “good practices” especially in contextual areas that are more receptive to non-formal education techniques. It is within this context that “good practice” has gained favour, as in other research areas, to become a strategic phrase utilized by many researchers to describe the transformative process enabling individuals both young and old to obtain education in some form, thus facilitating economic, social and personal mobility. Despite the frequency of use, the definition of “good practice” remains vague. Moreover, often what is described as “good practice,” in actuality could be perceived as “good innovation,” designed worthy in purpose, yet short-natured in vision. In addition, irrespective of continued solicited research surrounding “good practices” in Education for Rural Transformation (ERT) poor quality and incomplete research has resulted.

What is the criterion for “good practice”? How can one account for and measure impact? In the evolving ERT framework, do these practices result in effective (transformative) change? Is there continuation and sustainability of practice for communities that continue beyond a set period of time, or are the examples given truly more myth than reality?

ERT A BRIEF HISTORICAL TIMELINE

In order to understand Education for Rural Transformation (ERT) and how “good practice” corresponds into this specific research space, it is imperative to understand the contextual history. Hence, this section gives way to a brief yet comprehensive historical timeline to aid in understanding the progression and the increasing necessity for “good practice” to be highlighted as an integral contributor.

In **2001** a report was commissioned by INRULED entitled “Education for Rural Transformation: Towards a Policy Framework” the terminology chosen “transformation” was key to the perspective taken in the context of rural communities changing role in the ever-evolving national and global contexts (UNESCO-INRULED, 2001). “Transformation” was intended to be pro-active, positive and education was seen as “the” vehicle. The concept does not deviate from the traditional “Education for Rural Development” core idea but rather seeks to convey this fluctuating contextual process of change and need for sustainability of material, knowledge and human resources (UNESCO-INRULED, 2001; Chinapah, 2012; UNESCO-INRULED, 2012). The report found that education could enable individuals who lived in rural areas to become better equipped, increase their capacity to adapt and expand their choices in this changing environment. This included those who were the most disproportionately represented and / or considered such as those marginalized minorities, indigenous groups, women and youth.

Additional research conducted by McClymont (1975), Khan (2006) and the Institute for International Educational Planning (IIEP) has fixated solely on Former Education’s relation with rural people (Chinapah, 2012). While other researchers such as Reinhold (1993) and Amaedzo (2005) mainly concentrated on micro-studies involving a single innovation or programme. Few researchers looked beyond the surface to explore the deeper roots and causes, the challenges and possible solutions for the challenges of the rural poor (Chinapah, 2012). It is in this context that the Institute of International Education (IIE) began to construct a long term research initiative to address this gap and challenges.

The Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet) ERT Research Project 2009

The Institute of International Education (IIE) has championed the cause of International and Comparative Education (ICE) since its founding over 40 years ago by then Head Professor Torsten Husén. IIE has consistently charted a course that combines research and practice to the very core of the institution and its activities. The research on Education for Rural Transformation (ERT) at IIE was inaugurated in 2008, with the compilation of an ERT Expert Group led by Professor Vinayagum Chinapah, current Head of the Institute of International Education, at the Department of Education, Stockholm University in collaboration with team leaders from the two initial focus countries. From China, Professor Zhou Nanzhao and Professor Li Wang of INRULED and the China National Institute for Educational Research (CNIER) and from India, Dr. Pushpanadham Karanam from the Maharaja Sayajirao (MS) University of Baroda, Vadodara. This Expert Group since its inauguration, has expanded and advanced its circle of influence through the invitation of internationally renowned scholars, researchers, high-level policy-makers and practitioners from around the globe to contribute, collaborate and promote further research, training and capacity development within the theme of ERT (Chinapah, 2011). With the assistance from the Swedish Research Council (VR) a three-year comparative research study on “Education for Rural Transformation- Cases of China and India” was launched, in January, 2010.

The research study aims to comprehensively assess the current situation, challenges and trends, while raising awareness, advocate for necessary educational reform as well as to seek and identify good practices that empowers and practically addresses the needs of the rural. The comparative study is based on empirical data collected from the two initial focus countries, China and India. These countries were chosen based on their populous nature (belonging to the E-9 Countries), in addition to the countries’ active response to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) aspirations. The Chinese and Indian Governments have both designed and implemented strategic, socially inclusive policies and programmes addressing the MDG that from a holistic perspective is linked to the process of rural transformation for human development. Regardless of these initiatives, both China and India continue to face challenging contexts. As a result the “so-called belief in education for development” (Chinapah, 2011) continues to be a myth for the majority of rural populations in the E9 countries (Inclusive of Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, China, India and Pakistan).

The inaugural symposium held in Stockholm, Sweden **2010**, marked a collaborative initiative to critically examine the concept, policy and practice of Education for Rural Transformation. The aim was to undertake research in capacity building, share good practices, identify policy choices and determine workable programmes and priorities in varying contexts. China and India were the initial focus as more than half of the world's rural population resides in these two countries with the intention to gradually include other developing regions of the world, increasing the varied and rich experiences shared. It was found that rural areas are of wide diversity and are in a state of transition due to the pressures of adverse consequences of rural economy, environmental issues, and rapidly increasing urbanization. Despite growing awareness, it was indicated that the 2015 MDG goals cannot be fully achieved partially due to the large proportion of rural people, particularly in developing regions, who remain deprived of quality and equitable education. Struggling to address the challenges of education in a) access with equity; b) quality and relevance; and c) efficiency and accountability, developing countries have made some progress but yet the aim of the 2015 education goals has remained eluded. Several papers were presented inclusive of: holistic system thinking; education development initiatives; the assessment of children learning; disparity, deprivation and discrimination of educational provision for disadvantaged groups; the potential of e-learning and ICT; the importance of teachers and teacher support; balanced and integrated development of educational services; civil society role and participation; the role of higher education; vocational and skill development; adult literacy; and the importance of training and capacity development for food security and poverty reduction. The resulting recommendations pointed at the urgency for “systematic research, academic studies and training and policy dialogue and advocacy at the international, regional and national levels”. Further, participation is to be broadened to include other regions and countries; collaborative research programmes, and an interdisciplinary group for guidance of research, an international post-graduate programme should be designed and implemented in addition to consideration of publishing a journal on ERT to further disseminate research (Ahmed et al. 2011).

2011 was a monumental year; it was the first time that seven billion people inhabited the planet and the first time in recorded history that the urban population surpassed those who lived in rural areas (Population Reference Bureau, 2011). In this context the 2011 Dujiangyan International Forum held on August 7-8th, 2011 in Chengdu, China addressed several of the aforementioned challenges in regards to the quality crisis within education. Focusing specifically on balanced rural transformation, encompassing sustainable practices within local and global contexts, the Forum focused on promoting balanced development of education for rural transformation; education and training for rural transformation; and

enhancing the level of internationalization of education (Chinapah & Wang (eds.), 2012). The objectives of the Forum were to share experiences and good practices; to provide empirical evidence for stakeholders and clarify their roles and responsibilities in achieving balanced sustainable development; and to reach a consensus for immediate action in empowering rural communities especially the rural poor for enhancing quality and promoting equity of education (Chinapah & Wang (eds.), 2012).

Those who presented papers raised several concerns as well as some examples of good practice. Included were the persistent question of quality and equity; the integration of development and rural transformation; addressing diversity of students; the critical questioning of data on human development; inclusive balanced development (chain schools); innovation; education communities; community learning centres; human resource development; skill and training development; vocational education; economic stability; professional development of stakeholders; improving learning achievements of disadvantaged students; management challenges and actions; psychological development; experiences from Africa; disaster preparedness; education for international understanding (EIU); and global education.

In **2012**, UNESCO-INRULED presented a publication on “Education and Training for Rural Transformation: Skills, Jobs, Food and Green Future [sic] to combat Poverty”. The publication focused on the increasing nature of rural individuals abandoning former agriculture-based occupations to pursue employment in urban areas. The report describes various initiatives put forth such as the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) proposed adaption of the Global Employment Agenda (GEA). This promises increased employment opportunities, increased wages, lowered food costs and increased demand for employment, resulting in “an overall efficiency of markets” (ILO, 2008, as cited in UNESCO INRULED, 2012, p.8). Despite the fact that close to 90% of all rural employment in developing countries is agriculture / farm-based work, INRULED stated that “agriculture alone cannot alleviate rural poverty” (UNESCO INRULED 2012, p.9). The report criticises the limited nature of the single focus of enrolment rather than capacity and skill building.

It is with this historical context that we examine closely good practices. Why are these so crucial to the Transformation movement in rural and other areas and how can they effectively be implemented while remaining sensitive to local and current situations?

THE PURPOSE AND CALL FOR GOOD PRACTICES

There is some consensus that identifying, communicating and facilitating the transfer of practices that have successful results in one area to another is logical. Rather than “re-inventing” organisations, practitioners and communities have recognized the value of learning from others’ “mistakes” / challenges and gaining from others’ successes. There is a stipulation however, that in order to truly learn from others’ “mistakes” there requires an adaption not only of the previous “mistakes” / challenges but in addition a recognition and sensitivity to the new context / environment. No one practice corresponds to all situational contexts.

“Good practice” when utilized in some research has consisted more of contextual descriptions and the selection of practices without identifying or describing the underlying theoretical framework. It is of extreme importance to acknowledge the theory behind what “good practice” is, to critically analyse how practices are being selected. Are these selected practices beneficial to a larger population? In the ERT case, who and what is/are being “transformed”? Is there transformation occurring on multiple levels or only superficially? How can one measure the impact that is occurring? Is the impact only on the immediately involved or is there a “ripple” effect encompassing the larger society? Is that impact measureable? These are crucial issues that ERT addresses in the recent IIE commissioned ERT research in India and China.

As aforementioned, standard models can be used in similar cultures and adapted to be culturally and socially sensitive to local and current situations. This reinforces the initial IIE ERT research project’s decision to select specifically India and China both as populous (E9), expansive countries which contain within a vast array of varying situations of both rural and urban nature. Both countries encompass wide socio-situations that, in some cases, are extreme. As a result of this wide variety, the logical conclusion would deduce with the wide range of experience, several “good practices” could be gleaned and a larger selection of people/communities/countries would thus, have the opportunity of identifying their own good practices, or learning from and implementing a similar practice which could be more easily adaptable to their situation.

Regardless, the amount of data and research conducted in the past years, there remains an alarming rate of poor quality/ incomplete research surrounding what is meant by “good practice” and what model can be useful to measuring such. That is not to say, there has been no examples nor only poor research but rather it is intended to point out a gross neglect to the fundamental theoretical foundations needed. As such, this paper attempts to both transparently define the process of “good practice” while providing substantial, concrete examples.

GOOD PRACTICES DEFINITION

To begin to understand what is meant by “Good Practices” it is essential to include in the definition what it is not. This paper overtly defines “good practice” and perceives such as a mechanism through which further practice should be guided and inspired to surpass. “Good practices” sustainable by definition should address relevancy, efficiency (a demonstrable effect on improving quality of life and/or addressing challenges), effectiveness (inclusive of public, private and civic sectors of society), impact, accessibility (all society), and sustainability (socially, culturally, economically and environmentally) (UNICEF, 2009; UNESCO INRULED, 2012). Tuominen et al. (2004, cited in Stenström and Laine, 2011) defined “good practice” as shown in the following Box.

These definitions differ from the recent argument for “**best** practice” in that “good practices” accentuate identification and the possibility for transference/ adaption from one place to another rather than identifying the solitary “best” exemplar.

Box 1: “Good Practice” Definitions

1. Functionality

- Good practices can be anything which works fully or partly; they can be useful sets of functions which generate learning.
- Good practices have worked well elsewhere; they have been proven to be good and they have led to good results.
- Good practices are outcomes which can be transferred elsewhere as functional sets.

2. Processes

- Good practices stand for advantageous methods which help to achieve the objectives defined for an activity, open up avenues of action, and make a company more profitable.**
- Good practices include the same elements as benchmarking even if the associated data collection procedures are more research-based.

3. Innovativeness and Transformability (Adaptability)

- Good practices are innovative. They create opportunities to introduce new procedures and approaches.
- Good practices are associated with successful projects.
- Good practice can be turned into new practices. Good practice includes elements needed in problem-solving, in which case it can be transformed (adapted) to suit different situations.

** Please note that although this particular definition is very market based, there is relevance and applicability to non-market/economic situations. In terms of education it could also be perceived as good practice allows for a wider range of individuals to have access to knowledge that is relevant and quality-based among other possible definitions.

Source: Adapted from Tuominen et al. (2004) & Veselý (2011)

GOOD PRACTICES VS. GOOD INNOVATIONS

Good Practices unlike good innovations, contains within its definition, a longevity that allows space for transformation to occur in incremental steps. Thus, allowing for the planning, implementation and reactionary adjustments to be made in order for the community’s needs and best interests are to be met. In good innovations, there is good intention, often strong support from financial donors and too often than not an “expiry date.” Even if the innovation is often well supported in the beginning, by the end of the projected timeframe the community is often left to continue the initiative on their own without the additional funding.

Initiative, by definition, is “an introductory step” (Merriam-Webster, 2012) or “an important action that is intended to solve a problem” (Macmillan Dictionary, 2012) indicating a stopped action, a beginning of something that has an end solution. This “stopped action” or “end solution” implies that once the desired result/goal is achieved the initiative goes no further. “Practice”, on the other hand, is inherent in definition of a continuation of activity, a repetitive action that is done to increase relevance, effectiveness and improve/maintain the action’s proficiency (Merriam-Webster, 2012).

The importance to recognize that while “good practice” on paper may look like a feasible “solution” may have an adverse impact, or not address the needs or desires of the local community. It is important to assess also the perceived impact and desires of the local stakeholders. As Veselý (2011) so aptly states, “*what is and what is not ‘good practice’ also depends on the context: ‘good practice’ in one setting may not be ‘good practice’ in another setting*” (p.106), it is imperative to thus then recognize the importance of adaption to the local context, needs and desires.

CURRENTLY KNOWN ERT GOOD PRACTICES

It is with this diagram (Figure 1) of the process of good practices that some known ERT good practices are examined further. This process can be seen in the exemplar practices gleaned from various sources including the previous two ERT International Symposiums in Stockholm and Chengdu respectively. One such example can be observed from the Commonwealth of Learning Study on “Learning for Farming Initiative” (Thamizoli et al. 2011) in Tamil Nadu, India. Regardless of the title including the word “initiative” it is indeed a good practice. This is proven by the fruit produced in the multitude of adapted reproductions in various other contexts and countries.

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) worked with VIDİYAL a non-government organization (NGO) in the southern portion of India beginning in 2008. Building upon VIDİYAL’s 20 year partnership with Vidivelli a women’s self-help group, the L3 Farmers programme was inaugurated. Initially, the programme consisted of approximately 300 women who were representative of the “poorest of the poor” (Commonwealth of Learning [COL], 2012, p.8). The literacy was low as even among those women who attended primary school the rate of illiteracy was relatively high. The average income of the area was recorded greatly below the recommended level of US\$1.25 a day/ per person. In addition, women were generally disempowered, receiving limited rights to property and employment, with domestic violence highly prevalent. The programme emphasized the current (historic) knowledge and employment / occupation of raising goats as this was what that the Vidivelli members expressed interest in; improving their knowledge of modern rearing techniques and

how to run a profitable business. The programme description highlights the “benchmarking” taken place by the COL and VIDİYAL, the initial stages of “good practice.” The contextual background of the area as well as the needs and desires expressed by the local stakeholders were considered greatly important and the foundation of the programme’s content.

The L3 farmers Programme is based on a collaborative framework including the farmers (the women), research/educational institutions, ICT providers and banking institutions. Launched in 2009, the programme revolved around a heavy emphasis of participation and self-directed learning through the use of technology specifically the mobile telephone (COL, 2012). As mentioned previously the initial stage was assessing the needs of the community. The second stage was training, developing materials in the local languages and developing a business model founded on goat-rearing. This was developed by the educational/research institutions in consultation with the farmers. Next business planning conducted over the course of a year was implemented. Obtaining loans from the Indian Overseas bank based on Vividelli’s proposal for Rs. 12 million for 300 women. This loan was intended to be utilized to purchase nine female goats and one male buck in addition to one mobile phone for each member. The credit and legal ownership belonged to the women themselves while, the management and marketing decisions are a conjointly decided at the monthly Vividelli meetings. The women were sent audio/voicemail messages on the mobile phones, each approximately 60 seconds, three to five times a day relaying information on modernized goat rearing practices (inclusive of feeding, deworming, vaccination for various diseases such as foot and mouth, mating etc.) as well as additional information on marketing practices. The Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University assist in developing these messages to ensure quality and up-to-date information. Additional workshops on how to use the mobile phone and the different functions are made available at the initial outset of the programme and throughout. The final stage of the process is the sharing of experiences. Each month the Vividelli members assemble to discuss business issues, both the challenges and success. They discuss both with each other as well as allow for leaders of the programme to assess the current context and success rate, enabling for adaptations and modifications to be made if necessary. It is interesting to note that this programme utilized mobile phones as a vehicle for learning distribution. Often when Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is discussed and researched for learning/education purposes, the focus is commonly placed on computers and internet accessibility. The mobile phone is interesting in the respect that it is relatively less expensive, portable, one does not necessary need much pre-knowledge/instruction to utilize it and one does not need to be text literate as seen in this programme as the messages were all audio based.

The programme has resulted in the women in the area becoming more empowered with both the knowledge of the mobile phone, greater effective goat rearing practices, and business and enterprise information. The goats when compared with those owned and reared by individuals not involved in the L3 Farmers Programme, were healthier (outliving and producing healthy offspring) and received a higher rate at market. The women also were able to negotiate with the banking institutions to the extent that the following account was reported.

An officer from a financial institution visited VIDIAL and “complained”, that the women from the initiative, have started arguing on issues such as interest rate, repayment terms etc. while visiting the banks. He quoted one incident that one illiterate woman challenged him regarding the difference between the prescribed interest rate of the Reserve Bank of India and prevalent rates in the local banks. He was surprised that an illiterate woman could talk such issues and humorously “warned” VIDIAL not to develop such questioning spirit among the poor women (COL, 2011, p.19).

During the past two consecutive International ERT Symposiums, the call has remained for “good practices” to be shared with the purpose to assist other rural areas and communities. The more these “good practices” are discussed and explained in depth with the analysis of the impact on the local stakeholders, the resulting challenges and successes, the wider the range of communities that are able to connect and adapt a practice to their own situational context. There has been much discussion of theory, overviews of the situation but only a few have relayed practices that are replicable to myriad situations. The following are some examples of what could be comprehended as “good practices.”

Wang (2011) describes the Agriculture University of Hebei (AUH) in China and the good practice of performing demonstrations in farmer’s households and in villages to effectively transmit knowledge and technology information. The three stages of development Wang identified were:

1) **The farmers:** many had very low awareness, interest, and education level, thus they were resistant to new techniques. As a result, the AUH staff introduced very simple techniques that required less investment from the farmers yet still yielding better results. This caused in an increase in farmers’ motivations to learn more.

2) **Model households:** these were adopted in some villages, there was as seen in the first stage – a large degree of wariness towards new techniques. The AUH staff recognized this and thus chose key individuals (generally those who were better educated and those who were in the “public eye” such

as those on the village committee). The success of these key individuals allowed for a change of attitude and an increase of acceptance of new techniques.

3) **Demonstration Communities:** after the initial success from the previous two stages, whole communities were selected where varying new techniques specifically for the local environment could be demonstrated.

Wang (2011) emphasized the potent of utilizing demonstrations for such techniques, "*demonstration is a particularly powerful method to use with farmers who do not read easily*"(p.49) recognizing the importance of varying abilities and the possibility of learning despite illiteracy or low literacy in rural areas. He highlighted as well, the reinforcement of professors and staff that travelled and stayed with the farmers in the rural areas rather than staying on campus. The continued integration of research and teaching established a long-term cooperation between the university and the rural communities.

In the process of "good practice" AUH has effectively assessed the situation, designed a programme of demonstration, trained individuals and groups, implemented the first stage of training the farmers and then returned to assess the situation. Realizing that there was success in the first stage AUH did not claim completion of the task but rather chose to build on the initial success and expand to the second and later on the third stage. The adaptability of this model of "good practice" is mentioned by the comparison to Charles Darwin University (CDU) in Australia. Wang (2011) mentions the regional centres' (run by CDU) ability to serving those sparsely populated and remote areas while maintaining cultural diversity and sensitivity to local conditions. This allows for the dissemination of knowledge to regions that may not be accessible or have access to information readily elsewhere.

Similarly, Wei and Qifu (2010) discuss a project led by the Central Radio and TV University, Zhejiang University, Tsinghua University among others that established seven demonstration sites in five provinces, allowing communities to access information and digital resources. The description of these demonstration sites however, lacked in detail of contextual nature in addition to how the demonstration site was adapted to the needs and desires of the community. Sujatha (2011) describes four intervention programmes intended to address the challenge of tribal areas in India: Ashram Schools, Centre for Educational Development of the Tribes (GVVKs), Mabadis, and Gurukulums. She gives the descriptive of each project and the proceeds to account for the Impact of each. This is refreshing as often reports of such programmes remain solely descriptive with some empirical data. The Impact

description reveals how the communities were transformed, while allowing for the possibility for other similar communities to envision the adaptation for their own situation.

The Second International ERT Symposium, the Forum, held in Chengdu, China, also put forth some examples of “good practices”, more than the previous symposium yet from a relative perspective out of 31 chapters, very few papers contained within them examples of “good practices” that have the possibility of being reproduced or adapted to another contextual situation for the purposes of transformation. Yu (2012) provides a detailed account of the formulation, management and alliance of schools to form a “chain” of schools model. This model allows for the increased equitable distribution of both human and material resources between rural and urban schools. Similarly, Zhaoyu (2012) describes a similar situation in Shangliu County, recognizing through the implementation of a variety of projects based around this similar structure of sharing a balance between rural and urban schools, the disparities were reduced significantly. Li (2012) gives a comprehensive example of the similar “chain school” model applied by the Yandaojie Primary School Education Chain. The number of “reincarnations” of this particular model, the adaptability it has proven in the success in all three “chains” verifies this model to be “good practice.”

Likewise, the Community Learning Centres (CLC) model described both by Zhiyong Qi and Wen Zhang (2012a) and in the Special Issue Report (Zhang, 2012b) for varying areas of Rural China, showed evidences that this model is also another “good practice.” This model consists of four components or pillars: a training centre, a library, a development centre and a cultural activity centre. The focus is on participatory-learning and communities are intrinsically involved. In the Liushao county and Lianhe County (Zhang, 2012b, pp.43-47) a unique local model was developed. This model included training for rural teachers; modern agro-technologies and a variety of courses for community members inclusive of basic “life skills” and literacy. The cultural activity centre is especially instrumental in rural areas of ethnic minorities, assisting in the preservation and promotion of local and traditional culture. The impact is recognized in the empowerment of rural people, cultivating human resources, improving overall quality of life and promotion of ethnic/minority cultures. The CLC are an attractive “good practice” in that the longevity of each centre allows for the continuation of transformation. Positively, this “good practice” is adaptable and specific to each community it is built in. Alternatively, however, the price to build such a collection of centres is costly in consideration of the resources needed this is a deterrent in impoverished areas. Even with grants or additional funding from outside agencies the challenge is sustaining and maintaining the quality of resources available for the community.

In the recent commissioned Special Issue Reports by the IIE, respectively Zhang (2012b) and Dave (2012) explore several Good Practices in China and India through different lenses of perspective. Zhang (2012b) gives clearly outlined examples of practices describing in detail the implementation and impact. Focusing on several key areas, the report divides “good practices” into thematic areas inclusive of poverty, skills-training, capacity, sustainability, culture, and empowerment. It is from this angle that the efforts put forth in China in the efforts towards reducing the disparities between rural and urban areas, as well as increasing the sustainability and quality of life in remote areas. Some examples, among many, are briefly presented here.

The Dew Programme

The Dew Programme focuses on the context of poverty stricken individuals and is paired with the “Sunshine Project” that has a wider focus inclusive of rural migrants. The Dew Programme is funded by the Chinese Government and is implemented through demonstration bases a total of 2323 bases covering a wide geographic area. The programme encompasses five steps: enrolment, training, job placement, follow-up management and finally the distribution of funds. This is conducive with the criteria set for “good practice” set earlier, the initial survey of contextual challenge-poverty, the design of the programme, the training of individuals, the implementation and assessment are all built into this framework. Zhang explains that this model is adapted to varying contextual situations as seen in the following Table. Hubei was the province who was the first to initiate the Dew Programme to see how it has been adapted is an excellent example of “good practice.”

The Mother School in Dayi County

This model of good practice acknowledges the contextual challenge of the cycle of malnutrition, morbidity, reduced learning capacity and mortality in rural areas. Mother School in Dayi County of Chengdu is one of the examples addressing this issue. In the Longhua community the programme was inaugurated. In the initial class more than 60 families and expectant mothers attended. Teachers from the bilingual kindergarten taught about early childhood education, nutrition, children’s growth and development and school preparation. This community is one of the four demonstration sites disseminating this information, each adapted to the individual contextual needs of the surrounding community. There is a variety of implementation to choose from so participants are able to adapt and individualize training even further (for example, parent-child club, door-to-door service, consultation service, online guidance etc.). This continual cycle of assessment, training, provision and implementation reflects the “good practice” cycle. This

programme impacts positively local communities, enabling children and families from rural areas to receive the same opportunities and resources as those who live in urban areas.

In addition, Zhang (2012b) reported that the resulting Impact of this programme revealed that “workers who have received training earn 300 to 400 Yuan more than those who have not” (Zhang, 2012b, p.20).

**Table 1: Diverse Models for Diverse Needs:
Five Varying Approaches**

Hubei Province	Hunan Province	Guizhou Province	Heilongjiang Province	Chongqing Province
The Network Model	The Work-Study Model	The Three Contracts Model	The Branding Model	The Extended Model
Building a syndicated regional training network	Cooperation between schools and businesses, the programme provides work opportunities while also eradicating the challenge of trainees losing their income if taking on full-time studies	Training bases and department of poverty alleviation, training bases and trainees; and training bases and enterprises. Each signs a contract that specifies the responsibilities and protects rights and interests of each respectively	Cultivates a competitive labour force such as ‘Yian Children’s nurse’ the brands have become famous and thus the trainees have become well-received by the market.	Adapted the programme from a short-term training programme to a medium and long-term training. Raising also subsidies so trainees are able to prepare the poor population for non-farm work.

Source: Zhang, 2012b

Equally, Dave (2012) emphasizes the importance of local contextual situations and effectiveness for all stakeholders involved. Dave specifically investigates the Indian State of Gujarat, narrowing to the Talaja Taluk of the Bhavnagar District, identifying several practices being implemented. For each practice descriptive details as well as stakeholders’ perspectives and results observed. Several programmes were discussed and many with great success such as the Mid-Day Meal Programme which can be found in several other countries, states, and communities adapted (in type of food, which meal is provided etc.) to the local needs. The purpose to attract out-of-

school children, and those children who are coming from impoverished families results in an increase of attendance while also potentially providing additional jobs / employment for local women in preparing the food.

Additional programmes which target the out-of-school population include the Bridge Course Centres and Bal-Mitra Varg. These two programmes act as an alternative and supplementary school intended for students who have failed, dropped out or not attending a school due to migration or other reasons. These programmes although very helpful when attended often fall victim to the same reason why the students did not attend or failed in the first place. In addition there is a lack of knowledge of such programmes in the wider community and therefore the potential is under realized. Irregularity of attendance challenges several programmes and reflects in the many programmes with the main objective to encourage younger students to attend class. Such programmes as Ramta Ramta Bhaniye that is based on play-based teaching methods and involves older children assisting the younger, as well as Entrance Ceremonies and Celebrations all attempt to draw students to school, especially girl children.

Despite the amount of programmes to encourage girl children and their families to send them to school, the programmes to encourage and “catch up” migrant children, and those programmes designed to create an “attractive” school environment, there remain several issues that hold many of these programmes back. The lack of materials and other resources and the overwhelming amount of paperwork required by some programmes is prohibitive to the implementation. Other issues involve the lack of community input and clear transparent communication between stakeholders.

Regardless, these practices can and are in several cases adapted and implemented elsewhere. The key is that the adaption to the contextual background and the unique community’s needs and desires. India has several excellent practices, and in this case it is apparent that despite having “good practice” the contextual nature continually causes the implementation to require adaption and re-evaluation of the initial design.

CONCLUSION

Where does “good practice” factor into the research for Education for Rural Transformation (ERT)? It is clear from the historical evidence that there is a need to clarify what is meant by “good practice” in order for the beneficial results to take place. Too often there is incomplete research. If the research is only meant to be exploratory then it is mission completed however, by the very nature of the title “*Education for Rural Transformation*” it is implied that education should be utilized to **transform**. Not merely describe, those who live in such situations can aptly describe their living conditions

themselves, they do not need highly paid researchers to merely speak their reality. There has been proven time and time again that there is disparity, there is a large number of (out-of-school, illiterate etc.) children and adults, of both sexes, in destitute situations. As this is now proven, the need for “good practice” is even more apparent. As the model described (Figure 1) indicates, once the situation has been contextualised, assessed and the needs and desires are taken into account, something must be done. To acknowledge these disparities and then not respond could be unfortunately, taken as equivalent to condoning these inequalities.

The known “good practices” presented and revisited in this paper measure not only the contextual situation and implement a “solution” but measure the impact, the extent of transformation be it personal, communal or even societal. This answers the question that if a practice is “good” the impact should be reviewed and authentic. Whether the transformation is seen at an individual or wider spread level is non-consequential as what starts at the individual can only but spread as seen in the excellent example of the L3 Farmers. Transformation does not only require the empowerment and building of those who are /were marginalized but it requires a change of conceptualisation and thinking of rurality, of agricultural areas, of those who live in those areas. The beginning of this advanced form of transformation is seen by the Bank Official’s comment and surprise of an illiterate, impoverished woman arguing for her right to a fair and equitable loan rate.

In the case studies from China and India of good practices, it is clear that these practices need to be adaptable as well as affordable, effective and cost efficient. If it is not there is a real danger of limiting the possible outcome and influence. Through this explicit, evidential based exposure of “good practice”, subsequent research can fully expose progress, achievements and continued shortcomings with clearer effectiveness and implication; resulting in genuine concrete transformation, effective reduction of poverty and the dissolution of gross disparities.

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CHAPTER THREE

CONTEXTUALISING KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND EDUCATION

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FOCUS AND PROBLEMS

When talking about rural transformation it is of course relevant to bring into focus examples of so called “good practice”. However it is not always easy to identify what constitutes good practice and what are the active determinants constituting good practice. What concepts are usable and fruitful in this endeavor? In this paper I want to explore a number of different concepts that can be meaningful in order to identify *what knowledge* and *what learning* takes place in the so called good practice we talk about.

As a point of departure I want to focus on two issues of importance to take into account when dealing with questions that have to do with education and rural development. From an educational perspective I want to stress the value of always asking what knowledge and experience people, or rather those who are the target groups of any educational intervention, acquire through their daily interaction with the world around them, of relevance for the educational project. This holds true whether we talk of children or adults or farmers in the course of their daily activities.

I would like to draw attention to the word transformation in the title of this symposium and argue that no transformation of life conditions are possible without involving the knowledge and experience of those whose life conditions are under development and change. In the following I present a few examples of what I mean by the foregoing statement, at the same time I elaborate some theoretical concepts that can facilitate our understanding of what it implies or means to say that knowledge is always something constructed by people themselves.

The examples in this paper, taken from North East Brazil and from Chile are in many ways similar to the examples given in the report from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) by Acker & Gasperini (2009). In this FAO-report the focus is on identifying different dimensions of education, especially non-formal, presenting projects that

involve local groups of people in rural areas in different parts of the world, in their own learning and construction of knowledge. As such this report provides a valid basis for the theme that is in focus in my paper.

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AMONGST LOCAL FARMERS IN THE BRAZILIAN NORTH EAST

During the major part of the 1990's I had the opportunity to regularly visit the province of Ceara and the city of Sobral including the University UVA-Universidade Vale do Acaraú. My interest focused a cooperative along the Rio Jaibaras, South of Sobral. I also came to visit and follow a rural developmental project near Fortaleza in the mountainous district of Baturité. A unifying organisation at that time was CEPEMA, which grew out of a group of engaged students from UVA of various disciplinary backgrounds from social work to agriculturalists.

Originally the group got engaged in supporting a farm cooperative that was formed by a number of farmers along the Rio Jaibaras with a focus on using the river as a means of irrigating. As independent farmers it was impossible to support the different farms' need of water from the river. The building of canals and the distribution of water needed an infrastructure that went beyond each individual farmer's capacity. CEPEMA as an organisation developed as a result of the experience with the farming cooperative. It was obvious to the group of students that when the cooperative developed there also developed social knowledge that went beyond the practical problem of irrigation. Aspects as schooling, family life and relations to women also became issues that were addressed within the cooperation. By focusing the issue of irrigation and the infrastructure needed to deal with this task, other aspects of daily life within the cooperation came into the foreground. Within a few years CEPEMA came to expand so as to focus the issues of ecological farming as a means to use the dry earth in this north eastern part of Brazil. This was done by developing an experimental farm where local farmers could learn from each other together with agricultural and social knowhow that the group of students from UVA provided. The social experience from Jaibaras resulted in a more general focus on women's rights in this central part of Ceara through the use of radiobroadcast from Sobral certain hours a week that people in different villages could listen to even if they did not have a radio receiver. The local restaurants were in this case adequate places for people to come and listen to the experience of others. The dialogue that developed within the cooperative in Jaibaras was taken as a model for developing an expanded dialogue within the local region.

Towards the end of the 1990's CEPEMA had become a well-established group with financial support from the local government of Ceara but also from Sweden through the organisation *Framtidsjorden* (Future Earth) and could start to engage themselves in the ecological production of coffee to sell on an international market.

Farmers from the mountainous district around Baturité, a short distance from Fortaleza, who had heard of CEPEMA's activities in Sobral, approached CEPEMA with their questions about the production of ecological coffee. As the product was coffee that had to be sold on an international market, youths as well as older farmers started to involve themselves in the emerging media landscape with its possibilities for easy contacts with coffee buyers internationally. A local Swedish coffee producer, Nordström AB, became one such buyer. Around the district of Baturité there developed small ecological cooperatives, where bananas and coffee could be produced in such a way that both plants actually supported each other without undue intervention in their natural growth. The experience from Sobral led to the starting of schools and means of communication amongst the local inhabitants, and the presentation of ecological coffee on the international market contributed to the creation of new job opportunities for youngsters growing up in the area, especially with the introduction of new media.

LEARNING BY DOING- SOME BASIC CONCEPTS

In order to understand the educational or rather educological mechanism behind the development of the foregoing activities I want to take up some theoretical points worth considering.

It is obvious that "experience", in whatever way we approach this dimension of daily life, is of central importance when we talk of human learning or human socialisation. When reflecting on this I feel that in order to fully appreciate the implications of experience and to better grasp its centrality in order to understand human development, we must treat experience as something more than an input variable in a theory of learning or socialisation. I would like to say that we have to try to understand what characterises the *human experience*.

In this paper I have no intention to fully explore the above mentioned theme. However I do want to suggest a train of thoughts that seems feasible in order to give experience a theoretical frame that can have practical as well as theoretical implications for our understanding of people's actions in this modern age with economical divides and global communication.

Basic to this line of thought is an attempt to delineate and relate those basic factors that are involved in our construction of a relation to the world that surrounds us. Here I take the concept of *appropriation* as a useful point of departure.

Appropriation

By highlighting appropriation I want to focus the human capacity to relate to the environment and to be able to construct own knowledge of what this environment has to offer in terms of different possibilities for action. The following arguments have also been elaborated in Löfberg (2006).

To me the concept of appropriation is based in Piaget's idea of constructivism, explicated in his Genetic Epistemology (1970, 1972). The elements that constitute the substance or the content of what is learned are actively extracted by the learner from the world around as they appear to the learner. Knowledge formation is therefore to be seen as an act of construction based on what we perceive as elements that can be used in this process of construction.

An important aspect of Piaget's work is his emphasis on the learner's internal as well as external actions. By that he means our internal reflections on the one hand and on the other hand our external actions in a specific setting. As a result of this external action, we also create the opportunity of becoming aware of and being able to perceive elements that constitute our world. External action is what in fact allows us as humans to gain experience. Learning, knowledge construction and scientific endeavours are in this sense aspects of the same basic human capacity to interact with the world around us and to appropriate this world by making it our own by transforming it into a world that has *quality* for us. Note that when I use the concept of quality, I am referring to quality's substantial aspects. Quality as a value, good or bad, is added when that substance comes into use by people.

In an earlier paper (Löfberg, 1994) I argued that quality is that aspect of the world which can be perceived as something in relation to something else, and which as a result of that perception can be used in order to carry out different intentional actions in a specific context or setting. In other words, one can say that quality provides opportunities for intentional action and is basically an environmental aspect. It is the act of discovering these new environmental aspects that ought to be the focus when we try to understand how we as humans relate to aspects of the world that confront us. In short, one could say that it is this appropriation of qualitative aspects from our environment that actually comes to constitute the context in which we live. In a way, one could say that we as humans construct our own liveable context in the sense of being manageable. The basis for this construction is our awareness of the environment or the world as we can understand it.

Field of action

Here it can be relevant to talk of a *field of action* and when I use this concept I am referring to the possible actions that you can undertake as an actor from the actor's perspective. A chair is not part of a baby's field of action although it is so for the parents. The objective world as understood by others is not part of an actor's field of action if it isn't perceived by him or her. In one sense one can question if there is an objective world in an absolute sense. Science and our culture in the sense of collective experiences always transcend the so called objective world. I will later refer to Charles Sanders Peirce (1891) who I think treated this problem in an understandable way, at the same time avoiding a solipsistic standpoint. On an individual basis one can argue that experience expands our field of action in the sense that new aspects of the environment become available for usage through our actions.

By the idea of a field of action I therefore also include our perception of the world, our knowledge and the process of constructing knowledge as well as restructuring the world we perceive while observing our actions' revealing environmental affordances. In order to clarify that our field of action is not the same as our environment in a more general way, I prefer to use the concept of context when I refer to the field of action as a place for action.

I will briefly touch on the above concepts in the following treatment of how one can conceive the build-up or formation of a field of action.

Constructing a field of action

Affordance: The way I previously used the term quality is very near the term affordance as formulated by Gibson (1979).

In order for the concept of affordance, as used by Gibson, to become meaningful I feel that it is important to relate to the philosophy of Peirce (1891) and the way he explicated a theory of knowledge during the late 1800's, especially in his article on the Architecture of Theories, published in the *Monist* 1891.

The interesting thing with Peirce's idea of knowledge and knowledge construction is that with this idea, some very specific distinctions within the phenomena that constitute the world are formulated. Knowledge *about* the world and the world *as such* are in this way not two different phenomena but part and parcel of the same existing world. Firstly, we have something that we must assume as existing in its own right, which Peirce calls *firstness*. However, we can never attain direct knowledge about this something, and here he argues in line with Kant's proposition about the impossibility to gain knowledge about "das Ding an sich". Peirce's compelling argument is that

knowledge is relational. That is, knowledge is always about how something is related to something else. However, that presupposes a mediating idea or theory of how something can be related to something else, and this he calls *thirdness*. What actually appears to us as part of our environment or context is the relational world, which we can perceive as a function of our knowledge of the world and which Peirce calls *secondness*. Even if we can talk of three different but related aspects of the world, there still remains the issue of how they can be conceived as functionally related.

In an article, Löfberg (2001), I relate Gibson's (1979) concept of affordance to Peirce's (1891) concept of the perceived world in terms of *secondness*, and argue that the only way we can conceive of a functional relationship between Peirce's three phenomenal aspects of our world is by relating perception of the world to consequences of our actions in the world. Awareness of possible actions allowed or afforded within the context we perceive, with Peirce's terminology *secondness*, when actually carried out may reveal aspects of the world that are unknown to us, beyond our possible awareness and perception and part of that *firstness* which Peirce talks about. This new awareness may, as a result of our actions, confirm what we already are aware of, but it may also reveal new aspects of the world beyond what we already perceive and comprehend. Our actions can therefore come to reveal unknown aspects of the world we live in, aspects that need to be incorporated in our knowledge of the world by relating these sensory impressions to already existing knowledge. The world becomes what I think Gibson would say, a world permitting or affording meaningful action.

Here the reasoning comes very close to Piaget's concept of knowledge construction (1970 and 1972) by relating internal to external action, especially if we take into consideration that action in contrast to reaction is always task-related. In Löfberg (2001), I make a point of the fact that all external actions in fact always take place in the world as it is and not in the world as we perceive it, i.e. action always takes place in relation to *firstness*. This of course is an obvious point to make, considering the fact that we actually do get knowledge of the real world, and also a necessary point to emphasize in order to break the circularity that looms as a possible implication of my argument. The so called social constructionist argument that knowledge is always relative and, in fact, a social construction may hold true to a certain extent, but knowledge can't ever transcend the material base of our existence, and knowledge is always in the last analysis empirically grounded.

We do not only appropriate new innovations or elements in the world; we also appropriate the existing world and transform it into a workable context, or to put it in other words, transform it into our personal life world which we partly share with others through the use of language and by being part of a lived culture.

I thus want to emphasise that it is humans themselves who relate to the world around and that this relating is an act of taking or extracting something from the world and using it intentionally.

The lived context

The world as we perceive it is therefore a world that is built up by our own actions where we, as individual actors, in one sense are an integral part of the world we have built.

The context as a curtailing factor: We are bound to the world as we perceive it. It is not the environment or the context as such that curtails our actions, rather our limited knowledge and perception of the affordances that are embedded in the environment that limits our actions. By this I don't mean that there are no circumstances that effect our position in the world such as economical or political circumstances that differentiates living conditions. What I want to say is that it is only when you perceive them and incorporate them as part of your life world that you can act on them.

Breaking environmental restraints: The previous discussion can easily lead to the idea that we are bound to the context and the environment that is ours from the start, especially if we think in terms of social heritage. However, the conceptual framework discussed in this paper negates an environmental determinism. In fact it is our actions that determine the way we expand our context. The substantive aspects that lend quality to our world that comes from our specific experiences can also be affordances and resources for actions that lead to those experiences that in fact give us the capacity to expand our specific context. To me the idea of education as a practical venture is to find means to assist, without overriding, in peoples expansion of their lived contexts, breaking environmental restrains, either we talk of individuals during their development or of groups of people facing their challenges as for example people and farmers in Ceara.

TAKING CONTROL OF ONE'S OWN WORLD

If we return to Jaibaras in North Eastern Brazil it is apparent how people in need of water from the river joined forces and organized an irrigation scheme that would be of help to all individual farmers. In a discussion (with the help of an interpreter) with one of the farmers it was evident that their joint experiences had helped them to identify aspects of the terrain that

helped transporting water to each other and at the same time leaving enough water to slowly fill individual plots with the water needed. When women came together and met on a daily basis trying to solve collective tasks, it was also evident that they had common tasks that were best tackled on a collective basis.

It is in interaction with our world that we can obtain the necessary experience or elements that can be used as building-blocks for constructing an adequate way to perceive and understand the world around us. By adequate I mean a world that we can act in and act towards in such a way that it meets our expectations. What we actually do when we learn is building knowledge about the world that leads to the construction of a liveable context and in a sense a meaningful context for us as humans. Before we act we can never know what elements of the world can come to afford experiential qualities that can be assimilated by our existing knowledge or logical system. One could say that we appropriate our world or take it into possession by building our own specific human knowledge about what the world in fact affords us.

With the word appropriation, I thus want to emphasize that it is humans themselves that relate to the world around and that this relating is an act of taking or extracting something from the world and using it intentionally. In this sense, I thus use the term in a very similar way to Paper's (1990) use of the term appropriation, in order to emphasize that it is not the circumstances as such that should be put into focus but rather how these circumstances are perceived and used by us as individuals and members of society.

It is, in other words, a question of perceiving new possibilities that can be of relevance to us as humans rather than circumstances causing or having an effect on our behaviour. Basically, I would argue that it is a question of us, as humans, constructing new knowledge about our life-world and in that sense a question of human learning depending upon and conditioned by the culture or the setting which is ours.

INCORPORATING RURAL AND LOCAL PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE AS PART OF A CHILEAN UNIVERSITY'S AMBITION TO DECENTRALISE THE BUILDUP OF KNOWLEDGE

During my visits to Chile and the Faculty of Education at the University of Concepción I was partly involved in their ambition to develop workable contacts with local communities, especially in the southern part of Chile and in regions predominantly inhabited by descendants from the Mapuche who previously inhabited the area. At that time large international forestry companies had bought land so as to replace the indigenous forests with pine trees that could easily be sold on the international market. Temuco and

Cañete are two districts South of Concepción where the Faculty of Education tried to establish learning centers that focused the local inhabitants' life experiences. It must be noted that there is a lot of experience of dealing with and using the original kind of wood inherent to the area. Most of this knowledge was verbally handed down from one generation to the next and one of the aims for the Faculty of Education at Concepción was to try to structure this knowledge together with people from the area, based on their experiences so it could be available for a larger group.

The philosophy behind these educational projects was that people's practical experiences of dealing with their life tasks were an important source of new knowledge and should be taken care of in order for these districts to develop, based on the local inhabitants' own activity. The problem that these projects faced was the fact that the products that could be produced with the original woods were difficult to sell on an international market and were also time consuming to produce. It was difficult to compete with the international companies that turned the indigenous forest into large pine plantations that needed few workers with the experience that the local people had acquired. Therefore youngsters from these districts tended to leave and move to the bigger cities.

THE VALUE OF KNOWLEDGE

I will once again return to the concept of "appropriating the world".

The value of knowledge can be discussed from at least two perspectives. Firstly there is the psychological impact from being confident in what you know and the added self-reliance that this can bring about. But the aspect I would like to emphasize in this paper is the fact that knowledge is the tool by which we can expand our world into a liveable world that we can deal with, that we can live and be in control of. The world we have appropriated is also the world that contains qualities unique for our world, and knowing these qualities is the basic value of knowledge. Here we can see how the experience from CEPEMA's work in North East Brazil contributed to farmers in Jaibaras being able to see other, previously unseen aspects of their world, as meaningful aspects of their life context. It is in this respect I see the Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire (1985) as a forerunner with his emphases on a language that contains so called generative themes, allowing people to see and understand their own life conditions.

DISTRIBUTING OR CONSTRUCTING KNOWLEDGE

With the concept of appropriation, I thus want to emphasise that it is humans themselves who relate to the world around and that this relating is an act of taking or extracting something from the world and using it intentionally.

A traditional view on teaching is built around the idea of transmitting knowledge. At stake is the question of pre-formulated knowledge to be transmitted involving the transmitter and the receiver. These basic concepts often delineate the idea of an educational setting in a conventional view.

The perspective of appropriation implies on the other hand that the focus shifts from the transmission of knowledge to the creation and formulation of knowledge. The basic idea is that the environment or the context provides the learner with information and that it is the learner who actually builds up his own knowledge. This is an everyday experience for all of us and therefore nothing controversial. However, the issue here is to utilise this fact consciously in teaching efforts or in efforts to inform. Trying to understand the learner's capacity to build up his or her own knowledge in interaction with a specific environment becomes of major concern. The role of the educator or informant is no longer the transmitter of pre-formulated knowledge but someone concerned with intervening in the learner's learning context.

The concept of knowledge must also be revised. From the perspective of appropriation it becomes meaningless to conceive knowledge as something that exists outside and apart from the learner, as something already formulated and ready to be transmitted. Knowledge must first and foremost be conceived as something built up in the relationship between the individual person and his or her specific context or environment, where the focus lies on what the learning context can provide in form of resources (affordances) for the individual to build up his or her knowledge. In short one could say that it is a question of trying to understand learning as construction and knowledge as the product of this construction. Furthermore knowledge ought to be understood as always delimited by the range of our possible actions and our capacity to perceive the consequences of our actions.

THE EGOCENTRIC POSITION AS A RISK

With the previous way of reasoning it is not at all unreasonable that people in power or in a central position tend to see their world, their knowledge and their understanding as basis for determining all knowledge and all understanding in the periphery as less valuable than their own. However this argument holds true for all of us and therefore it is in place to warn of the risk of falling into the trap of "the egocentric position". That does not imply negating one's own understanding and knowledge, rather a reminder of the fact that we must acknowledge that the world can be understood from a number of perspectives.

In order to be able to see the world with new eyes it is important to realize the importance of the *dialogue* with others round a common interest. This is something that has been analysed and discussed by Waldenström (2001) in her doctoral thesis investigating how farmers and agricultural advisors communicate round a common interest, i.e. the development of farmer's crop production. The value of that necessary dialogue between different experiences and knowledge is also well illustrated by the Brazilian experience, especially the farmers round Jaibaras and their way of developing the farming cooperate together with the scientific knowledge, brought to the farm cooperative by the university students versed in modern agricultural science about salinity and different earth conditions, the possibilities of ecological horticulture etc..

SOME CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

In today's world with the growth of a global economy and at the same time many people who, for different reasons, cannot become part of this growth, it is easy to realise that there are many different individuals and groups that have appropriated their specific world and in fact live in separate worlds. Here I do not think of a strictly material world but the appropriated world. From the perspective I elaborated in the previous sections of this paper, seeing youngsters growing up in suburban areas or in rural areas without means of employment and others growing up and becoming part of the global economy raises other questions than seeing these differences as questions restricted to either lack of knowledge, different attitudes or different material needs. These different experiences are also those experiences that make people see what they can see. The discussion in this paper therefore raises a number of unsolved and important questions. What affordances are perceived by people living under different life conditions? What actions are allowed and what actions can be taken to break environmental restraints? What values adhere to the so called "marginal" experiences of e.g. youngsters or adults excluded from regular work or people living apart from the so called global economy?

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CHAPTER FOUR

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR LEARNING AND SOCIALISATION – EXPERIENCES FROM LATIN AMERICA

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WHAT EDUCATION AND EDUCOLOGY HAVE TO DO WITH HUMAN RIGHTS

First I want to say something about how I consider the discipline, the Science of Education or rather what I would like to call it: Educology. Education as a human and cultural science, educology, involves studies of cultural and social conditions for change, in human knowledge construction and in socialisation, especially from the perspectives of the actors, for instance children and young people. Culture is then to be seen as something that is created and constructed, as being conducted jointly with others, children and adults. Culture in this sense may contribute to democratic participation in society.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES ON LEARNING AND SOCIALISATION

The relationship between work, play and studies for street and working children below the age of 18 (or sometimes 12) is of prime interest for our understanding of how learning and socialisation proceed as interrelated processes. This assumption needs some clarifying notes. The aim of this presentation is to discuss and illustrate the existence of young people's daily combination of work, play and studies, with the intention to show some alternative ways to understand the area of learning and socialisation connected to education in rural and urban settings. I hope to contribute to the discussion and to the knowledge of life-long learning in a critical view, and I will do it by taking up and use some concepts of relevance for the area of educology, focussing conditions for learning and socialisation in various spatial contexts and under different temporal conditions.

CONCEPTS TO DISCUSS AND TO ELABORATE

The following concepts are of relevance and interest for a discussion on learning conditions and socialisation, either they are related to the situations of young people or to older people on the labour market: Developmental tasks, learning as knowledge construction, Cultural and educational challenges considered as mental and perceptual affordances, and Human rights. As my contribution concerns young people's situation, the concepts

actualise some questions. Who are young people, and who are children? Does the distinction matter? Remember that children are those under 18, according to the UN convention on the rights of the child, 1989. Which are their “developmental tasks”, and what is the essential meaning of this concept?

Developmental tasks of people nowadays may be seen as a kind of pendulum ambitions and strives for children, young people and adults: Culture – to – Nature; Environment – to – Biology, Person – to – Society, not however as a bipolar or dichotomous dimension, but rather as a continuous line along which other strives and ambitions may take place and become expressed. I originally borrowed the concept from Robert Havighurst (1953) who together with collaborators investigated and made visible the cultural and social new tasks, as challenges, that met the society and citizens of various ages and nations, after the so called second world-war. I took as a task for myself (Qvarsell 2000 and 2003) to develop this concept, related to studies of children’s, young people’s and, childhood’s use of old and new media, e.g. digital communication techniques.

Developmental tasks as challenges have to do with cultural and educational changes, cultural for human beings themselves, and educational also for parents and teachers, or tutors and advisers. Cultural challenges may provoke persons or groups of persons, they may be or become collective and global, or they may be or become private and personal. Social claims, new digital arenas for communication, peers and other fellows and their interests – and above all perhaps coping with *being* and *becoming*, with claims of today and with the future – will show up as challenging tasks.

Learning as knowledge construction is an assumption about how learning proceeds in various contexts and under different conditions. Generally speaking learning means change of perspectives and enriching the view on the world and environment – it is thus a typically culturally embedded concept. With reference to among others David Kolb (1984), researcher within a learning-and-communication tradition belonging to the classical writers, it is rather safe to say that learning is the process by which meaning is constructed, and that learning has to do with perspective change and with possibilities to take new positions in viewing the world and its environmental *affordances* (James Gibson, 1979).

Cultural and educational challenges as affordances may play an important role in young people’s socialisation and learning. Grasping the world in its manifold of dimensions has to do with taking the world in use, as social human beings. Here one may notice some interesting differences between children, young people and adults, but as a process and in general the socialisation and its relation to the world around could be understood in this way – thus in terms of a manifold of affordances. Affordances exist in

the environment, as perceptual or mental possibilities to approach and use, but they have to be perceived and handled by the persons themselves, as provisions to use in solving the developmental tasks.

These concepts are thus embedded in a theoretical view where learning and socialisation are seen as active knowledge construction, related to activities of young people, such as work, study and play. Some other important concepts of another character have to do with *settings* in which learning and socialisation may proceed, and which may entail possible *functions*, for developmental tasks as well as for the use of affordances. The settings may be related to places for work, studies and play, and the functions to possibilities to solve problems or to develop knowledge. I will return to these concepts later, when taking up examples from street and working children.

AN EDUCOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF LEARNING AND SOCIALISATION

As a frame of reference for the scientific study of the above mentioned activities, and their importance for learning and socialisation, I will use the concept of *educology*, as mentioned in the introduction of this presentation. Educology is a way to deepen the understanding of conditions for learning and socialisation, thus to find scientific possibilities for more general knowledge from specific praxis situations.

With an ambition to study processes and conditions for socialisation and knowledge building as educological phenomena, the focus is in one sense rather narrow - on change, but at the same time the scope is broad - in terms of fields of application and contexts of study. Processes and conditions of socialisation and knowledge building are studied in various settings and contexts, including work-life, health-care, school and pre-school, childhood and youth cultures. Qualitative data are often used for research questions concerning the construction of meaning in diverse conditions of living and learning, but other paradigms and strategies are not excluded. Often the most fruitful approach is to combine quantities with qualities. As always in research, questions have priority.

A forerunner in suggesting the concept of educology for scientific work in education was the media education prophet Seymour Papert (1990) formerly a collaborator of Jean Piaget and a fervent proponent of new media and their applications in schools. He himself got struck by the normative, technological and, thus, often unreflective suggestions that were at that time (the 80-s) connected to the use of old and new media, analogous as well as digital. He pointed to the need for critical studies, scrutinising the social and human phenomenon of media in pedagogic research - and introduced "media educology" as a concept and designation for this scientific enterprise. It is

perhaps not surprising that the educology concept first came into use within the media field, but this is just one example of areas that have been swamped by narrow pro- and con- thinking, here in the praxis field of education.

The connection to semiotics, so evident in the texts of Papert, is also stressed by other proponents of educology. One of the editors of *International Journal of Educology*, James Fisher, in a lengthy article in the journal in 1996 associated the domain of educology with pragmatism and semiotics. According to Fisher, educological knowledge concerns the "end-in-view of reflective thinking", stressing the use of eventful situations as empirical data. His thoughts in this article are similar to the abductive thinking of Charles Peirce (1891), a semiotic and pragmatic writer, of importance for educological analyses within an ethnographic tradition. Using an abductive logic in social research points to a special kind of relationship between theory and empirical data, but also between theory and praxis. It evokes insights into the empirical situations one encounters, seen from a theoretical ambition to understand the character of social change, in e.g. young people's daily life and activities.

In *practical educational work* with and for people of various ages and under various conditions, it is interesting to note how perspectives on what seems to be a joint reality may differ, especially between professionals and laymen, probably due to their various positions but also due to their various interests and knowledge about the supposed joint tasks. The challenging character of this problem is stressed by the fact that professionals have a responsibility for human beings' welfare and possibilities to learn, in schools, at universities, at work places and other action arenas.

The different dimensions and aspects of using or taking persons' own perspectives and rights to influence their life and contextual situation, meet in attempts to make school and other communal institutions more democratic. If adult professionals, for children often the teachers, consider what is the best for those under their responsibility, and at the same time have the ambitions to do good, not just for the moment but for the future, it is near at hand to take over the responsibility and the agenda, to undermine people's rights and perspectives on what is best for them. Professionals have as a special goal to do good, for the best of other people, and this may be a problem if we also have the ambition to understand the world from the informants' perspectives. It is not self-evident that they converge at the same points. To take on the responsibility to compensate for assumed incompetence in those who are subjected to our educational intervention can be problematic in many ways.

HUMAN RIGHTS FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

In political work with children and young people, their rights to be heard are nowadays of prime interest. As a tool for this, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child has come into use, in as well as outside school and other institutions. Children are in this context those under 18, and this implies that many of them also work, with or without pay. The convention itself is a tool that is often discussed in terms of perspectives and contextual cultural frames of reference. It is not obvious from the UN-Convention on the Rights of the Child that each young person is included in a cultural community, and it is not self-evident that the rights of the child can be extended to all situations which are of importance for the child. The distinction between social claims and legal or political rights is not always clear when we talk of human rights. As the Convention on the Rights of the Child is global and has widespread international importance, it is of course not easy to apply in all various kinds of work and study, not to mention the play conditions that may appear globally. However – the convention may open up for discussions on rights related to needs, and possibilities to partake in important decisions, for children below 18.

Whether human rights are thought for children, for youngsters or for adults, one may wonder what relevance a discussion on rights may have for the topic under consideration. Can we talk of work as a right, irrespective of the human beings' ages? What groups of human beings are subjects to rights? Judith Ennew and Jill Swart-Krüger (2003) in an introduction to a special issue of *Children, Youth and Environment*, introduce a new paradigm for considering a very special group, namely street children's possibilities to act and influence their lives, thus to practice their rights, with the help of concepts such as "space" and "time". This shift in paradigm is, according to the authors, in turn influenced by new kind of researchers studying the street life of young people – geographers and anthropologists.

One could also say that these new kinds of researchers introduce and put to the fore new kinds of knowledge interests, from pitying the young people, to observing, analysing and valuing their cultural and social life, often from their perspectives. A discussion on rights related to various cultural settings for young people worldwide is given in Qvarsell (2007) where street and working children in Latin America are taken as examples.

THE SPECIFIC GROUPS OF YOUNGSTERS IN MIND - WORKING AND STREET KIDS

The examples that I will present as specific illustration, or what Sjoberg and Nett (1968) would call "specific universe" related to the "general universe" (theory) of learning and socialisation related to work, studies and play, are taken from my visits to Lima in Peru during a ten year period (1995 – 2005)

around the last turn of the century. An interesting overview of projects conducted within a master programme at San Marcos University in Lima are presented by Luis Tejada Ripalda (2005) showing the variation of situations that street and working children in Lima may live under. I had various reasons and ambitions for my visits to Lima, for instance to get better knowledge of some interesting attempts to support children in “the margin” of societal and communal attention. I repeatedly visited *Mundo Libre*, a centre for about 50 street boys below the age of 18, in Jesús María, a rather “posh” area in Lima. What is typical for this centre is the ambition to use the boys’ competencies in group life, for their own education and socialisation into a community life. The adults, some of them voluntary, work with the ambition to take care of the boys’ own experiences and possibilities to organise group activities, in studies as well as in workshops and leisure life.

Of special international and global interest is an organisation for child workers in Lima: *Manthoc*, created by and for working children in Lima, which started in 1976, and which has during the last years got financial support from the Swedish Save the Children in Lima. The philosophy of this organisation (which is an abbreviation of approximately “The movement of child workers, sons and daughters of working class people”) was formulated by Alejandro Cussianovich (1997), one of the persons originally starting *Manthoc*. He is still working with *Manthoc* and with Swedish Save the Children, giving seminars to people who work with children directly or indirectly, and giving lectures on the topic of child rights at the San Marcos university (in Lima) and its master programme in children’s political rights. *Manthoc* has a school which is aimed for studies, and connected to this there is a workshop house in Northern Lima. In this house there are localities for workshops and a kitchen and dining room for a lot of children and adults, apart from the office. The possibilities to combine work and leisure activities with studies are in this way clearly demonstrated as affordances for the children, and it seems as if they take the chance to realise them. This is in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in many respects, although the rights to labour or work are not included in this convention.

Generación was another street child centre in Magdalena, Lima, at the time for my visits in 2002 and 2003. It was sponsored by the Swedish and Danish Save the Children. Youths (mostly boys, but also some girls) lived in a house where they got food and lodging. During mornings and before lunch they worked in the parks and other public areas in the city, and after lunch they had school hours at the centre. There were also some infants here, as their moms and dads lived as youths at the centre. All youths belonged to groups with a tutor for each group, a tutor with a special responsibility for the group and its activities and daily life. At a later revisit I saw a diminishing centre, mostly teenagers, some of them with own kids. The

centre was threatened by the political authorities in this specific area of Lima. Its existence and future was not guaranteed, and some years later it was closed.

What can be noticed from an educological perspective, especially for Manthoc and Generación, is the reliance upon the personnel as well as the young inhabitants as actors and responsible persons for the daily life, with schooling and work in an interesting combination. The culturally and contextually emerging qualities, which then arise, have to do with how the children and young people themselves take responsibility for work and studies, as well as how they combine it with play and different kinds of leisure activities. This could be considered as interesting examples of child rights, to exert influence on studies as well as leisure time activities, based on the necessity to work.

What can we learn from working children, who are at times also street kids? It could be a contribution to an educology of knowledge construction, seeing child work as a possibility to learn, by apprenticeship, but also in other senses of the word work or labour. With reference to Janusz Korczak (1967) we could see the working children and their activity arenas as a basis and as content for theory construction within the area of socialisation, respecting the child in her or his actual world, not as a stepping stone in to another world. What, then, can be learned by working and street children? One lesson is that work as considered by working children is an activity with many different values and purposes, often of another character than adults think and value. Work, paid or not, may also be possible to combine in a useful way with studies as well as play, if responsible adults allow that (Qvarsell 2002).

Play, work and study as activities can also be anchored in Margaret Mead's (1970) distinction between ways to learn, related to the surrounding cultural conditions: pre-figurative, post-figurative and co-figurative, thus a difference related to who is leading and teaching whom. Mead saw the consequences of the new techniques in young people's possibilities to "take over" in the relationships between adults and children, teachers and pupils, parents and their kids. Roger Hart's observations (1992) of play and work as combined activities for street and working children are also of relevance here, showing how learning becomes a dimension in both activities. Play, work and study are also common activities in people's daily situation, but we often think of work as something for the adults, of play as something for the youngest and study as something for those under socialising and educational measures, thus most often the young persons. These activities appear however in different ways for people in various parts of the world – the concept of developmental tasks as cultural challenges becoming important to use in order to understand how. What qualities that are valid as

"affordances" (aspects that afford meaning) in these settings for children and youth will be important to get a deeper view on, as we can learn from these cases about what are the valid conditions for child and youth socialisation in general.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION RELATED TO EDUCATION FOR RURAL TRANSFORMATION

Changed patterns of learning and relations?

The situation for children, young people and responsible adults around them, of our time, is very clearly marked by what Margaret Mead labelled co-figurative forms for culture and learning (1970, op.cit.). In a relatively stable society you can count on the so called post-figurative learning form as the normal one. When changes are few and the relations between generations are stable, the younger will learn from the elder, in a post-figurative way. Parents, teachers and other professionals teach and bring up children and youngsters. Our society is to some extent co-figurative where equals learn from each other, peers from peers. To some extent it is also evident that we change into a society with pre-figurative learning conditions. Younger people have to teach the older generation the rules of society in some aspects, and they may be able to introduce the techniques to be used in modern information systems. If I put the question with this perspective in mind, it will be: What are the pre-figurative conditions for us to learn from working and perhaps also street children and their ways of solving developmental tasks? From their ways of combining play with work and studies, considering the value of seeing phenomena from marginalised positions? In various parts of the society, be it rural or urban, you can see possibilities and opportunities as conditions for learning and socialisation, thus as conditions for an educational and an educological progress. David Acker and Lavinia Gasperini (2009) show in their presentation of educational programmes for rural people, how non-formal education may emerge as a result of the participants taking own responsibility for the progress. It is of special interest to see the global approach in this FAO-report, with examples from Peru, among experiences to report on.

Play, work and study

When it comes to street and working children and their possibilities to organise their lives, Roger Hart's (1992, op.cit.) definition of "participation" as "sharing decisions which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives "(p. 5) is of interest and relevance. What one can see in street life of children, he says, is play and work in combination - as an expression of a desire for competence. This seems to be valid also for other examples: Play and work in combination, yes, but what about the possibility to study, in the sense of spending time on tasks at school? People, children

as well as youngsters and adults, in different contexts and cultures, construct their specific developmental tasks, their challenges for socialisation. Social and educational settings, as well as workplaces, have to give them the opportunities to solve the tasks. Such opportunities may be expressed in terms of space and time, not the scheduled time and space, but space and time from the children's perspectives. They need space and time for thinking, actively handling different problems and for play, reflection and communication, to tackle developmental tasks. Can we see these kinds of combinations also in rural settings and in districts far away from the centre?

The picture is, however, of course also often very complex. Quite another picture of working children is shown by Therese Blanchet (1996) examining the lives of Bangladeshi children and adolescents, pointing to the "stolen childhoods" that these child servants are condemned to. William Myers et. al. (1989) wrote about child work in different parts of the world (Nigeria, Peru and India), discussing views on child work, perhaps better understood as child labour. Is child work (labour) a maltreatment of children, during a period when children should study and play, or is it an apprenticeship for adult life?

The relationship between play, work and studies is not easy to describe and to understand, is one conclusion. In an overview of the whole field of working children, Jo Boyden, Birgitta Ling and William Myers (1998) suggest that we use a better distinction between different kinds of work that children are busy with, for different reasons and for various aims. Alejandro Cussianovich (1997) takes the Manthoc organisation as an example of possible ways to combine work and studies as socialisation context during childhood and youth.

Rosamund Ebdon (2001) conducted a valuable overview of the different kinds of work or labour that children all over the world are involved in, hence making it possible to see with better sharpness the possibilities of combinations of research strategies. Kristofer Lieten (2009) takes up the situation for working children in Asia, Africa and Latin America. He discusses child labour related to child rights, considering the relationship between rights and needs. Anthropological, political and economic approaches are used in the studies he presents, stressing various ideological views and how they may influence the children's situation.

Pia Christensen and Allison James (eds., 2000) present a collection of texts concerning conditions for making research together with children, which is another interesting aspect to discuss for street and working children-research paradigms. As these children have special experiences and often special competencies from their ways of living, they may contribute with specifically relevant information to the knowledge production about conditions for socialisation and learning.

Thus, I can see two main aims with research about (and also with) working and street children, as young people put in the margin of the society, from this standpoint: a) critical reviews of specific and actual educational settings in praxis for street as well as rural working children, and b) contributions to a general theory construction about conditions for childhood learning and socialisation.

ON LEARNING AND SOCIALISATION, CONSIDERING COMBINATIONS OF SETTINGS AND FUNCTIONS

Functions and *settings* in young people's life worlds and socialisation could be the entrance to understanding their lives and possibilities to construct and change knowledge, thus to learn, from their perspectives. Functions are to be interpreted as phenomena such as learning modes, affordances, ways of control and developmental tasks, while settings are the arenas that people attend, such as family, leisure, school and work. Different combinations of settings and functions are interesting to discuss in comparisons between situations and their meaning affordances, in work as well as in other fields of activity.

Paying attention to settings and functions around young people's lives, specifically the educational praxis dimensions, would, thus, make it possible to develop educologically relevant knowledge with a more general scope. What possibilities have young people in different cultures to combine play, study and work in a fruitful way, for learning, socialisation and overall knowledge building? And how can these different combinations be taken into consideration in accordance with claims on human rights? These and other examples could contribute to an opening theory of work as a global challenge for people of various ages, thus not only of relevance and interest for understanding childhood and youth learning processes but with a more general theoretical ambition.

One important philosopher and educator to take into this discussion is the already mentioned Janusz Korczak, active as medical doctor, author and pedagogue in Poland during the first half of the 20th century (active 1912 – 1942). His most important contributions to our thinking about children and democracy are expressed as *the child's right to be respected*, which is of course the most important right that children as well as adults have. This claim could be connected to thoughts about what kind of culture and democracy that could be visible and applied in children's and humans' lives. His "child republics" existing in Warsaw between the two so called world wars, have given inspiration to people in e.g. Latin America to work with an ambition to respect children's rights and perspectives on life.

Also Paulo Freire (e. g. 1993), the Brazilian pedagogue and educational philosopher, was an important inspirer for developmental projects in Lima as well as in other parts of Latin America. His thoughts and experiences of taking in people's own desires and experiences in non-formal educational projects have had important impact on the building and maintenance of many centres for working and street children.

Kalle Löfberg (2000) uses Jürgen Habermas in a discussion about three forms of culture: Cultural conservative, which means that we convey cultural norms from one generation to the next, according to existing norms and values, the other one being market liberal, meaning that anything goes, and the third being a cultural radical way, meaning that we invite people to take part on their terms and with their competencies. This has the implication that we may invite young people to a variation of expressions and possibilities, to take part in joint activities and creative actions, to a manifold and variation of possibilities, where children's and adults' different experiences may be used in a constructive way.

Results from these kinds of projects on child and youth cultures in educational and educological settings have led to the identification of a more general field of knowledge – which has to do with the activities of “play”, “work” and “studies”. This more general theoretical work was parallel to experiences from studies in Latin America and Africa for my part, related to these concepts and to the UN convention on the rights of the child, considering how it was interpreted and followed in these parts of the world.

TO CONCLUDE

I want to return to Janusz Korczak's (1967, op.cit.) thinking about children and adults, after many years still valid for our ways to view and interact with children. It is not up to adults to keep an eye on children, to watch them and to control them, but rather to rely upon them and respect them for what they are, not for what they ought to be or may become.

Children's as well as adults' various competences and experiences are, thus, contributions to a joint democratic way to function, with cultural – that is aesthetic as well as ethic – values to take care of and to develop, jointly with respect for differences in background and experiences. Respect, mutuality and democracy in relations have thus to be expressed in the language of aesthetics and in the frame of ethics.

Just to mention some other important persons within the field of childhood studies and international comparisons, let me also note Mary Ellen Goodman (1970) who compared childhood cultures over the world, Martin Woodhead (1999), who analyzed the views on child rights and child matters during the last century. Both are, together with the earlier discussed authors

and practitioners, interesting for an international and intercultural discussion on human rights and people's chances to grasp and to use affordances, socially and physically and for cultural development. And - To make a final note, let me mention a newly published report by Helen Murray (2012). She shows the importance of flexibility in measures taken to implement educational programmes for poor children, in an overview of situations in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam. It is not enough to give financial support, the forms of education must also be thoroughly considered. Notable are differences due to gender, class and use of afforded resources. I would say that this report supports the importance of non-formal education also for young people.

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CHAPTER FIVE

ROLE OF HEALTH PROMOTION TOWARDS IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY OF LIFE OF RURAL PEOPLE

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INTRODUCTION

The human race is characterized by a long childhood and by a long old age. Throughout history this has enabled older persons to educate the younger and pass on values to them; this role has ensured man's survival and progress so now it is our payback time.

Intergenerational relationships, the chains of relationships between parents, grandparents and children, are potentially a strong source of data about social change since they are by definition data across generations. Developing connections with a younger generation can help older adults to feel a greater sense of fulfillment. In fact, linking older adults with youth can provide advantages for both groups.

Adolescence is an age of opportunity for children, and a pivotal time for us to build on their development and help them navigate risks and vulnerabilities, and to set them on the path to fulfilling their potential, (UNICEF, 2011) whereas the old age is characterized by time-altered changes in an individual's biological psychological and health related capabilities and its implications for the consequent changes in the individual's role in the economy and the society. Thus if these two generations are brought together then there would exist a balance between the dynamic and the subtle group. This would then help to create an intergenerational relationships leading to the betterment for both stages of life cycle.

CARE GIVING FOR THE ELDERLY

In the Indian Society, the cultural values and the traditional practices emphasize that the elderly members of the family be treated with honor and respect. The families of the aged persons are expected to ensure the needed care and support for the aged. However, recent changes in the size and structure of families have caused the re-arrangement of the roles and functions of the members in the families.

Health conditions in old age are largely determined by health promoting practices. This in turn is influenced by proper practices followed by proper attitudes.

The capacity of family care to provide support and the norms motivating such support are weakening as families are growing smaller and smaller. So efforts are to be made to encourage the family in discharging that role (Biswass, 1988).

In Indian social context family support networks seems to be most important for the preventive health maintenance behaviors. Davis and Randall (1983) have summarized literature on food habits of the elderly, noting that elderly persons who live alone compared to those living with someone else, have been observed to have less adequate dietary intake and less variety in their diet. Family also plays a role as a line of defense against placement in long term care institution (Branch and Jetter, 1982).

HEALTH PROMOTION

According to the World Health Organisation, Health promotion is any combination of health, education, economic, political, spiritual or organizational initiative designed to bring about positive attitudinal, behavioral, social or environmental changes conducive to improving the health of populations

Why do we need health promotion?

- Promotes quality of life
- Reduces inequalities in health
- Reduces pressure on services
- “Adds life to years- Adds years to life”

In order to fulfill this dream it necessary to start with the building blocks of the country which are the youth and from the grass root level which is the tribal area so as to build up strong base for the study. Thus there is a need to evoke the knowledge on healthy aging and natural care giving behavior that is there in all the youth, by contributing the care of a parent by the child in their later years as an intergenerational approach. Creating such a behavior would change the attitude of many of us on the duty of a child towards his ageing grandparent.

Developing adolescents' capacities and values through education can enable an entire generation to become economically independent, positive contributors to society. Investing in education and training for adolescents and young people is perhaps the single most promising action is to end extreme poverty during this decade.

Education can also have a strong impact on promoting gender equality and improving maternal health. Data for 24 sub-Saharan African countries show that adolescent girls with secondary education are six times less likely to be married than girls with little or no education. They are also three times less likely to get pregnant than their peers with only primary education. In developing countries, women who have completed secondary education or higher are more likely to have a skilled attendant present at delivery than their counterparts, thereby improving their children's chances of survival (UNICEF, 2011).

Documentation of the tribal adolescent's knowledge on exercise, nutrition, mental hygiene, and health care for elderly is scanty. Thus strategies need to be developed for promoting awareness in the public on the problems of ageing and how to manage them. Awareness is crucial because the status of the elderly in any community depends on the attitudes held by the public towards them.

Hence, there is a need to impart NHE to the tribal adolescent towards healthy aging for improving the quality of life. Very little work has been done in this context, in the Indian situation. Therefore, the second part of the present study deals with NHE intervention of tribal adolescents.

Thus, tribal adolescents need to be educated about healthy aging which would in the long run help to support the dependent elderly to maintain and expand their quality of life and also to indirectly benefit the adolescents to lead healthy lives. They also need to be informed about care techniques, preventive health care, and the importance of intellectual stimulation and social involvement.

Regardless of the changes and adjustments that both youth and elderly are undergoing, nothing could still replace the very positive effect of communication and interaction among young and old. Data in national and regional context in the area of need for sensitization of tribal adolescents on healthy aging is scanty.

Investing in education and training on healthy aging for adolescents is perhaps the single most promising action way to build intergenerational approach for improving quality of life of rural people. Thus the present study aimed at the two ends of the string named *Intergenerational Relationship*; one end which is adolescent and the other end which is the elderly and create benefits for both.

It is along these lines the present study was desired. The aim was to educate the tribal youth about healthy aging and thus build and strengthen a healthy relationship between the young and the old .The specific objectives were as mentioned below.

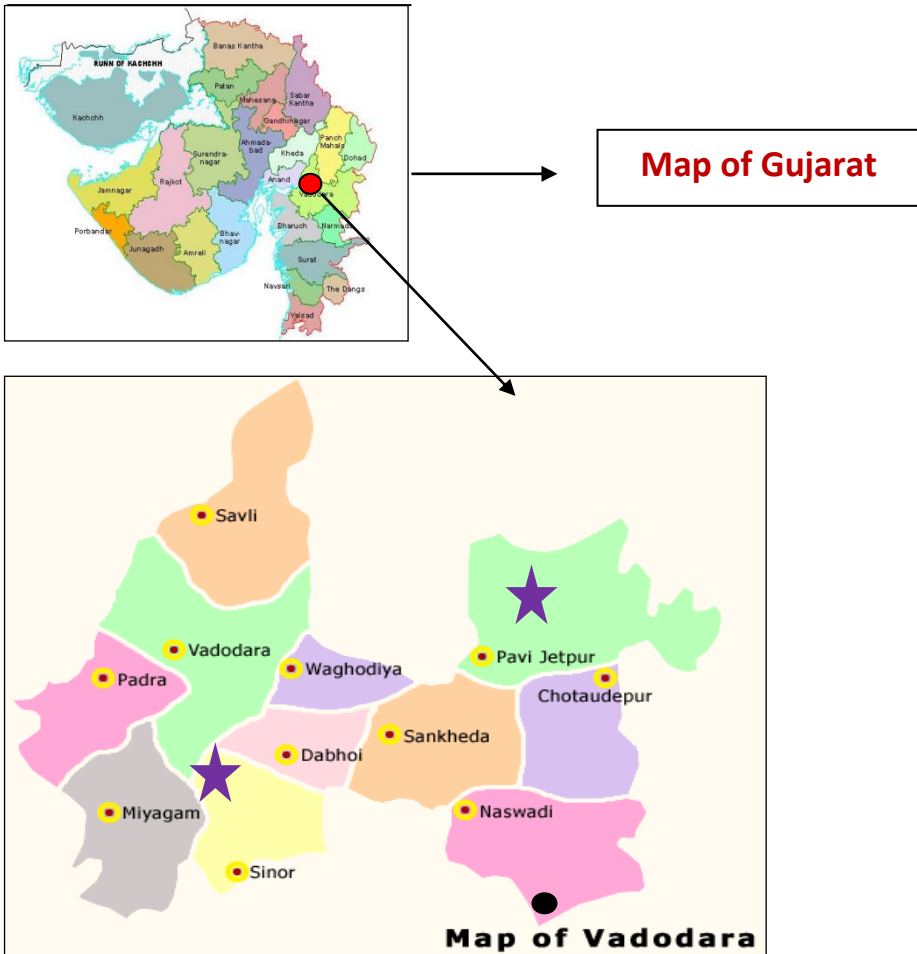
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- 1) To study the socio-demographic profile of the tribal adolescents of secondary (8th-10th) and higher secondary (11th-12th) division of Ashramshala.
- 2) To study the knowledge, attitude and practices of adolescents with respect to elderly care and nutrition.
- 3) To impart Nutritional Health Education to the enrolled adolescents regarding adolescent nutrition and healthy aging.
- 4) To study the impact of Nutrition Health Education with regard to adolescent nutrition and healthy aging on knowledge retention of these adolescents.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Sample Selection

An Ashramshala (Figure 1) was purposively selected which is exclusively for tribal children and has both secondary and higher secondary divisions. Also, it was co-educational and the school authorities were willing to co-operate for the study on the basis of rapport with the school. All the tribal adolescent children studying in 8th to 12th standards were enrolled for the study (n=158).



Sankheda Taluka Golagamdi Ashramshala

Figure 1: Location of Ashramshala in Sankheda Block

ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICES

The assessment of knowledge and practices of the tribal adolescents regarding elderly care and nutrition was done on 8th and 9th students (n=64), whereas the Attitude towards elderly scaling was done on all the students from 8th-12th standards (n=158) NHE. Program called Creating Awareness with Respect to Elderly care “CARE” was developed.

CARE (Creating Awareness with Respect to Elderly Care) included the following sessions

Session 1: Introduction session

Session 2: Basics on foods and nutrition

Session 3: Major Nutritional Problems in Adolescents

Session 4: Introduction on ageing

Session 5: Diet Related Non Communicable Diseases seen in Elderly

Session 6: Health Concerns of the Elderly

Session 7: Care of the elderly for healthy aging

Session 8: Summarization of care of the elderly

Session 9: Programmes and policies for the elderly

Session 10: Concluding session

NHE intervention was imparted through Power Point presentations on Adolescent Nutrition and Healthy Aging to all the students of standard 8th – 12th for a period of 15 days having a total of 10 sessions of 2 hours each. Group communication method using participatory approach and activity oriented games were used to reinforce the content of NHE. Post data was collected after a period of 15 days of NHE intervention. The post data was collected from the students of 8th and 9th standard, to assess their knowledge retention regarding elderly care and nutrition.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data collected, checked and cleaned was entered into computers and was analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Frequency distribution and percentage were calculated for all parameters that were expressed in rank order fashion. Means and standard deviations were calculated for all parameters that were expressed numerically. The student t tests were also calculated for relevant parameters.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Background information of the adolescents

- Almost all the adolescents belonged to tribe “Rathva and Vasava” following Hindu religion and were vegetarians
- Nearly 3/4th of the adolescents belonged to the BPL (Below Poverty Line) category
- More than half of the adolescents *lived in joint families*
- Seventy two % of adolescents had grandparents.

Knowledge on aging aspects

As seen from the above table, 4.26 more than half (58%) of the adolescents considered 60-70 years as the age of aging followed by (30%) who considered 50 years as the age of aging whereas after intervention (80%) of them considered 60-70 years and only 12% considered <50 yrs as the age of aging. The majority of the boys (63%) and girls (61%) was not aware about the concept of aging and only 24% of them had a partial knowledge which improved to 58% after intervention and the percentage of adolescents who were not aware reduced from (62% to 24%).

Table 1: Knowledge regarding Aging Aspects

PARTICULARS	Boys (n=41)				Girls (n=23)				Total (n=64)			
	Pre		Post		Pre		Post		Pre		Post	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Age of aging												
<50 years	12	29	6	15	7	30	2	9	19	30	8	12
60-70 years.	23	56	30	73	14	61	21	91	37	58	51	80
70 -80 years.	4	10	5	12	1	4	-	-	5	8	5	8
>80 years	2	5	-	-	1	4	-	-	3	4	-	-
Concept of Aging												
Good knowledge	-	-	32	78	-	-	9	40	-	-	37	58
Fair knowledge	11	27	2	5	4	17	-	-	15	24	6	9
Poor knowledge	4	10	2	5	5	22	4	17	9	14	6	9
Not Aware	26	63	5	12	14	61	10	43	40	62	15	24

Knowledge on Care of the elderly during illness

The tribal adolescents were tested upon their knowledge regarding care during various illnesses. This was done by asking them to state or identify the care for various illnesses. These illnesses were classified to three categories- dental problems, gastro-intestinal problems which included: vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, acidity, flatulence, abdominal pain, etc. and diet related non-communicable diseases which included obesity, diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease. Then the answers were scored ‘yes’ if the student was able to identify both the dietary care and the other care for the particular problem. It was viewed that there has been an increase in the knowledge of the adolescents regarding the proper care during various illnesses. The knowledge regarding dental problems and its care which was previously 47% reported by the adolescents which increased to (81%) after the intervention. In the case of the knowledge regarding the proper care of diet related non communicable diseases which then increased from (11%) to (69%) after the intervention as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Knowledge regarding dietary and other care during illnesses in old age

Care for illnesses	Boys (n=41)				Girls (n=23)				Total (n= 64)			
	Pre		Post		Pre		Post		Pre		Post	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Dental Problems	20	49	37	90	10	43	15	65	30	47	52	81
Gastro-intestinal Problems	25	61	37	90	17	74	8	35	42	66	45	70
Diet related non communicable diseases	4	10	24	59	3	13	20	87	7	11	44	69
Not aware	12	29	1	2	3	13	3	13	15	23	4	6

Dietary aspects

Knowledge and practices of adolescents with regards to importance of diet, frequency of liked foods prepared for the elderly is present in the table 3a & b. There was a 20% positive difference between pre and post data of intervention. Previously before the intervention their attitude towards knowledge about importance of a proper diet in old age was casual as they had scanty exposure towards dietary care for the elderly, but after the intervention positive change was seen in their perception towards the importance of diet in old age.

Table 3 (a): Knowledge on importance of diet in old age:

PARTICULARS	Boys (n=41)				Girls (n=23)				Total (n=64)			
	Pre		Post		Pre		Post		Pre		Post	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Importance of diet in old age												
Yes	24	59	29	71	14	61	21	92	38	59	50	78
No	6	14	8	19	2	9	1	4	8	13	9	14

Table 3 (b): Preparation of liked foods for the elderly:

PARTICULARS	Boys (n=41)		Girls (n=23)		Total (n=64)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Prepare liked foods for GP						
Yes	21	59	21	91	42	66
No	7	14	-	-	7	11
Frequency of liked foods prepared						
Never	7	17	-	-	7	11
Daily	1	2	-	-	1	2
Weekly 2-3 times	6	15	12	52	18	28
Weekly once	9	22	7	30	16	25
Once in 15 days	5	12	2	9	7	11
Monthly	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 4: Knowledge regarding psychological problems that are faced in old age and related reasons for these

PARTICULARS	Boys (n=41)				Girls (n=23)				Total (n=64)			
	Pre		Post		Pre		Post		Pre		Post	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Psychological Problems												
Depression	4	10	4	10	1	4	1	4	5	8	5	8
Stress	4	10	24	59	3	13	20	87	7	11	44	69
Fear	-		-		1	4	1	4	1	2	1	2
Worry	1	2	21	51	1	4	15	65	2	3	36	56
Shyness	-		-		-		1	4	-		1	2
Isolation	-		1	2	-		7	30	-		8	13
Lack of interest	2	5	1	2	1	4	-		3	5	1	2
Irritation	-		8	20	1	4	4	17	1	2	12	19
Aggressiveness	20	49	37	90	10	43	15	65	30	47	52	81
Forgetfulness	1	2	1	2	-		2	9	1	2	3	5
Not aware	15	37	2	5	12	52	1	4	27	42	3	5
How to overcome												
Provide social support	11	27	15	37	3	13	12	53	14	22	27	42
Take them out	2	5	3	7	1	4	-		3	5	3	5
Talk to them (others)	5	12	8	20	3	13	-		8	13	8	13
Not aware	24	59	16	39	17	74	11	48	41	64	27	42

Psychological problems

Under this section the adolescents were tested for their knowledge regarding various psychological problems seen during elderly age.

Table 4 shows the percentage of adolescents having knowledge regarding various psychological problems that are faced in old age and ways to overcome it. Prior to the intervention 42% of the total adolescents were not aware of any psychological problems faced by the elderly. The most common sited was the problem of aggressiveness, which was related by about 47% of the adolescents. After the NHE sessions the scenario changed and it was observed that an average of them could feel stress (69%), worry (56%), irritation (19%), and aggressiveness (81%) as psychological problems.

Adolescents reported that providing social support will help to overcome psychological problems in elderly. 22% after intervention and before the intervention 64% could not answer this question.

Social aspects

Data on the need for social support for the elderly was gathered from the tribal adolescents regarding care and practices of the elderly. As shown in table 5, it was seen that after intervention about (90%) of them agree that social support is required by the elderly, which was priorly (80%) and in all other aspects also a positive change were seen in the adolescent's knowledge regarding social care. Prior to the intervention (38%) of the adolescents considered that social support influences health, which then increased to (95%) after intervention.

Table 5: Knowledge of the tribal adolescents regarding social care of the elderly

PARTICULARS	Boys (n=41)				Girls (n=23)				Total (n=64)			
	Pre		Post		Pre		Post		Pre		Post	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Social support in important												
Yes	31	76	38	93	22	96	22	96	53	83	60	94
No	4	10	1	2	1	4	-	-	5	8	1	2
Not aware	6	15	2	5	-	-	1	4	6	9	3	4
Reason if yes												
Do not feel lonely	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	1	2	-	-
For emotional support	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Live longer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
For physical support	27	66	36	88	15	65	2	9	42	66	56	88
Reason if no												
Sit alone	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Involved in religious activity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social support influences health												
Yes	15	36	31	76	6	26	2	9	24	38	51	77
No	13	32	6	15	12	52	-	-	25	39	6	9
Not aware	13	32	4	10	5	22	3	13	18	28	7	11
Impact of social support												
For better health	15	36	28	69	4	17	17	74	19	30	45	70
For emotional well being	3	7	-	-	1	4	-	-	4	6	-	-
Should join social organization												
Yes	26	63	38	92	20	87	23	100	46	72	61	95
No	9	22	1	2	2	9	-	-	11	17	1	2
Not aware	6	15	2	5	1	4	-	-	7	11	2	3

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Families are urbanizing rapidly all over the world leading to the conversion of joint family system into nuclear families. But still there are places where this urbanization is yet to affect and are still deep-rooted with their cultural bonds and keeping the family bonded. These are the tribal terrains of India. This is the place where the young and the old are still staying together and also bonded to each other. Thus in order to create an intergenerational relationship and to let the two ends of the young and the old meet, it is required to harness the minds of young to learn and apply elderly care and nutrition. It is along these lines the present study was desired and thus the aim was to educate the tribal youth about healthy aging and thus build and strengthen a healthy relationship between the young and the old.

After the NHE intervention, improvement was seen in the knowledge of the tribal adolescents regarding various aspects of elderly care and nutrition. Thus the present study created a program - *CARE* (Creating Awareness with Respect to Elderly care) in order to impart Nutrition Health Education as part of health promotion strategies to strengthen the capacity of Tribal Youth as caregivers for elderly towards improving the quality of life of rural people.

The following recommendations emerged from the study.

- Topics on adolescent nutrition and elderly care should be integrated in school curriculum in secondary and higher secondary divisions
- Community awareness for benefits of government schemes for elderly should be organized by the Senior Citizens Association / NGOS/ State Welfare Board
- Studies can be extended to other tribal districts of Gujarat to strengthen the regional data base on adolescents and healthy aging

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CHAPTER SIX

SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION, KIZUNA (SPIRITUAL BONDS) AND LEARNING:

EVIDENCES EMERGING FROM AFTERMATH IN EAST JAPAN, TOWARDS A NEW DEVELOPMENT PARADIG

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While measures to alleviate the hardships faced by affected people are needed now, rehabilitation and reconstruction work must also continue in the affected areas for some time, and it is now clear that true recovery will take much longer than originally anticipated. (...) during the recovery process, for years to come, it will be important for children to continue having hopes and dreams, for youth to acquire and utilize leadership skills for the reconstruction, and for people to share what they learn with the world while improving the recovery processes in the Tohoku region. (JFS "Learn to Create in Tohoku" Projects: Learning from Tohoku Now and Fostering Hope for the Future, 2012)

INTRODUCTION

The catastrophic Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011, transformed and is still transforming many aspects of contemporary Japanese society. The series of catastrophic disasters: the most powerful earthquake ever recorded to have hit the country, followed by the unpredictably enormous Tsunami, and the subsequent meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant transformed the life in Tohoku. People have lost family and friends, homes, farmland, livelihood: the daily life. The government initiated recovery actions¹ prioritizing societal recovery and environmental

¹ The government immediately implemented necessary fiscal measures, including the initial supplementary budget on a scale of 6 trillion yen in addition to utilizing supplementary expenditures in series beginning three days after the disaster struck. The "Reconstruction Design Council in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake" was established and the "Basic Act on Reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake" was enacted. "Basic Guidelines for Reconstruction in

sustainability, ultimately leading to revitalizing rural Japan². The prime minister at that moment, Kan, established three principles for the reconstruction which were analyzed by Matanle (2011): 1) to create a natural disaster prepared regional society; 2) to establish a social system to enhance harmony between people and the global environment; and 3) to build a compassionate society that cares about people, in particular, the vulnerable. The social and ecological dimensions are acknowledged, but there is no direct reference to the economy dimension.

The notion of sustainability has been deeply reflected in the time of difficulty, and the sustainable discourse is further transforming the society to some extent. As has been discussed in the globalization theory (e.g. Apple, 2009; Bhagwati, 2004; Croucher, 2004; Daun, 2009), the world we are living in today is complex and it demonstrates increasing high interdependency and connectivity as well as fragmentation: diverse and changing map of the world politics and economy, rapid advancement of technology in general, increasing gap between individuals who have too much and who have too little, increasing natural disasters due to global warming and pollution, and etc. Global sustainability is an urgent agenda for all the individuals in our diverted societies regardless of all the differences that we have, and the issues include harmonizing human economic activities with ecology by using alternative technology and living according to alternative ways of life; abolishing absolute poverty in many parts of the world; coping with rural and urban disparities which include changing demographic factors; protecting basic human rights for the oppressed and disempowered, just to name a few. While the world faces these global challenges which require solidarity, it also witnesses negative fragmentations, which lead to destructive actions and conflicts. There are dynamic frames of actors in multiple layers, namely civil society, government, business sector, who act locally, internationally and globally with diverted values and interests conditioned by different contexts. Partnership among these actors and harmonization of their actions based upon dialogue are increasingly important. The notion of “global sustainability” and *Kizuna* (relations/ties) became increasingly crucial in Japan during the process of recovery and reconstruction. As the cases of this paper demonstrate, spiritual values for human beings, which were de-prioritized in the context of global economic

response to the Great East Japan Earthquake," by Reconstruction Headquarters in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake stipulated an overall vision of efforts by the national government for reconstruction (Kan, 2012).

² Generally, three types of criteria define a rural society: 1) The number of inhabitants, 2) the ratio of inhabitants to open land and 3) type of economic activities e.g. agriculture, fishing, food production and exploitation of raw materials. In Japan any cluster of fewer than 30,000 people is considered rural. (http://mennta.hi.is/vefir/ust/latira/what_is_rural.htm). For more discussion on Rural Japan, see e.g. Tanaka, K & Iwasawa, M (2010).

development and competition, is re-appreciated in a time of disaster and reconstruction. The shift of consciousness could eventually lead to a transformation of the entire society to some degree. The concept of sustainability has been examined in the new context, and the national energy policy has been in the process of serious review (JFS, 2012a, c & e). New technologies have been developed and applied in order to reduce energy consumption at the individual and collective levels. Large cities are re-examining the city plans to make it not only economically sustainable but also ecologically sustainable.

The paradigm of Development has been challenged fundamentally. The neo-liberal market economy ideology has been heavily driven by a set of economic and social relations that privileges the market as the prime structural and ideological governance mechanism (Apple, 2009), which shapes certain global and national social orders that establish asymmetrical power structure represented by dominance by the economically privileged. Education, in many countries, is seen to reproduce and to promote the dominance of the neo-liberal market economy ideology nationally and internationally. This capitalistic conceptualization of economic sustainability is being challenged and instead, the alternative post-economic paradigm, which focuses more on people's capacity and global ecology, is being increasingly discussed. Energy policy is also questioned from a global sustainable point of view. It is interesting to observe if Japan will manage to make a shift to a pro-ecological and post-economic model of development. In today's Japan, *kizuna* between people and *kizuna* between people and the global ecosystem is being increasingly in focus, in light of sustainable development/transformation. This paper identifies and presents some innovative non-formal learning projects from Tohoku, Japan, from a point of view of learning and regional transformation in this special context. As discussed earlier, the issue is not just local, but shared globally. It is hoped that the paper can give insight to what is emerging out of this experience and conceptualization of *learning and sustainable transformation of a rural society* based upon these cases.

GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSFORMATION: LEARNING AND EMPOWERMENT OF PEOPLE IN THE POST- ECONOMIC AND PRO-ECOLOGICAL SOCIAL MODEL

Post-economic and human centered development

...educational issues have to be grounded in the complex realities of various nations and regions and of the realities of the social, cultural, and educational movement and institutions of these nations and regions (Apple, 1995, p.2).

Importance of the humanistic and humanizing dimension in comparative education has been emphasized (Kazamia, 2009) in a context of increasing globalization. The multi-dimensional globalization process is driven by a combination of economic, technological, socio-cultural, political, and biological factors, involving multiple layers of stakeholders. The process of globalization can be understood around a “mechanism” which consists of neo-liberal economic globalization, namely, the opening and deregulation of commodities, capital and labour markets; political globalization, i.e., the emergence of a transnational elite and the shifting of economically powerful nation-states; cultural globalization, i.e., the worldwide homogenization of culture; ideological globalization; technological globalization; and social globalization (Cars, 2012 citing Beech, 2009; Fotopoulos, 2001).

One of the consequences is the widening disparities between the rich and poor at various levels: from the individual to the global, as conceptualized in the neo-Marxist theoretical perspective. Urbanization continues accelerating rapidly and there is urgent need to diminish tensions of rural-urban disparity in a context of demographic changes, which has economical and societal implication. Despite the urge for more holistic approaches to development, the dominant development ideology observed in current practices still appears to be heavily driven by a neoliberal macro-economic ideology accelerated by the globalizing economic context promoting mass, standardized, formal schooling. This in turn contributes to the creation of an effective labor force for an economically advanced nation-state to promote competence in the global economic structure as well as international acceptance, which needs to be questioned further (Kendall, 2009). Japan developed a highly centralized and complex system where politicians, bureaucrats and business worlds are consolidated by promoting high capital accumulation and consumption through an export oriented strategy, adopting an international and domestic division of labor policy (Nishikawa, 2012). In order to sustain the domestic division of labor policy, 54 nuclear plants were constructed in rural areas of Japan with economic and cultural rationale. With the vision of revitalization of rural regions, a large amount of subsidies were given to these rural areas, which included cultural propaganda of the safety of nuclear energy.

Nishikawa (ibid.) observes the rise and confrontation of two development paradigms of Japan after the Great East Japan Earthquake. One is the conventional centralized type of macro economy driven development policy, which promotes economic globalization; the paradigm that Japan has been underlining Japanese development with for half a century. The other one is the newly emerging alternative type of social development policy, which emphasizes regional sovereignty, use of local resources and recyclable clean energy with active participation of civil society. The latter alternative development paradigm can be regarded as a hybrid between post

development or alternative development discourse (e.g. works of Arturo Escobar and Gustavo Esteva) and environmental discourse, where people's capacity and harmonization between human activities and ecology are the driving force. Here, global sustainability is in focus. Sustainable transformation requires empowerment of the individual who is the agent of the social changes. The human development paradigm, developed by Sen (1989) provides increasing attention to the empowerment of people. Development problems and needs vary qualitatively from one society to another; and from one individual to another, and they change over time in changing socio-cultural, economic and political contexts, including *ecological aspects* in light of global sustainability. Human capabilities can also vary according to the specific social context over time, place and conditions. By exploring the issue of human aspects of social contexts/structure, distinction shall be made between "institutional structure" and "relational structure". Giddens' (1984) conceptualization of *human agency* and *social structure dualism* is helpful. Agency, which acts within social structures, is defined as those individual human agencies, together with organized groups, organizations and nations, who act rationally and reflexively in relation to a) power, which is the ability to influence/transform the situation, and b) structural conditions: social, political, economic, ideological and/or cultural (Cars, 2006). Structures include both large-scale social structures and micro structures such as those constituting individual human relations. It implies importance of empowering individual/collective agencies in order to influence and transform the society.

Education for Sustainable Development/ Transformation

Sustainable development is a vision of development that encompasses populations, animal and plant species, ecosystems, natural resources and that integrates concerns such as the fight against poverty, gender equality, human rights, education for all, health, human security and intercultural dialogue. Education for sustainable development (ESD) aims to help people to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge to make informed decisions for the benefit of themselves and others, now and in the future, and to act upon these decisions (UNESCO, 2012).

Development as social intervention causes cultural, political, social, economic and ecological changes (Cars, 2006). With the recent discourse and movement of ESD, the concept of *development* is re-envisioned as a dynamic concept that utilizes all aspects of public awareness, raising education, as well as policy priorities. It seeks to "integrate the principles, values, and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning, in order to address the social, economic, cultural and environmental problems" (UNESCO, 2012). ESD is an essential part of

ethical and moral education that implies personal ethical choices, the embodiment of the individual and social good (Jämsä, 2006). It emphasizes “creative and critical approaches, long-term thinking, innovation and empowerment for dealing with uncertainty, and for solving complex problems. Interdependence of environment, economy, society, and cultural diversity from local to global levels are emphasized, taking into account the past, present and future (Bonn Declaration, 2009). ESD can also be seen as a process to empower individual actors in different contexts towards attainment of the shared universal goal, to strengthen capacities at various levels in the pursuit of a sustainable global society considering the future of the planet. Here, the concept of sustainability shall be examined. What do we mean by *sustainability*? Different understanding of the concepts leads to different policy implications. General understanding of sustainable development calls for a convergence between the three dimensions: ecological, economic and social. economic development, social equity, and environmental protection (Drexhage and Murphy, 2010; Bonnet, 1999). While ecological and economical sustainable development deal with the relation of every polity with its natural and economic environment, socially sustainable development implies societal solidarity (Rauch, 2002). It should ultimately transform the moral/social/political structure of society (Bonnet, 2002).

Sustainable transformation requires a shift in individual/collective consciousness of a society at various levels, e.g. the local, the national and the global levels, in efforts of attaining the common vision. The trigger for transformation can be external (international consensus) but should be endorsed locally reflecting local contexts. In order to achieve a sustainable social transformation, changes have to take place in a participatory manner reflecting diverse interests of heterogeneous actors (Cars, 2011). At the individual level, the process of transformation requires a deeper level of learning involving the following elements in the process: *critical thinking*, *self-reflection*, *dialogue* and *consciousness-raising*, facilitated in participatory circumstances (van der Merwe and Albertyn, 2009, cited in Cars 2011). Critical thinking involves careful examination of situations from multiple perspectives. Self-reflection refers to self-examination as an individual actor, involving change of own values and perspectives in light with other alternatives. Dialogue enables reflexive examination of controversial issues in a relative manner. Consciousness-raising empowers individuals. Transformation needs to be sustainable for it to be a genuine empowerment, enabling people to gain skills to change and control their circumstances. Transformation, as sustained change, is thus an integral part of empowerment.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION, KIZUNA AND LEARNING - LIVING TOGETHER AFTERMATH IN JAPAN

Education and its Socio-cultural Context in Japan

Relatively speaking, Japanese culture is regarded as traditionally more group oriented, valuing social norms and obligations rather than individual rights (Hofstede, 2012). Confucius emphasized the importance of education and self-cultivation for the service of the community and greater population (Sugiyama, 2001). Through Confucius thought, a more competitive education process, a value system of unquestioning obedience to superiors, elders, parents, teachers and respect for antiquity was developed. This emphasis placed on morals, ethics, respect for elders and the importance of education permeates all discussions in Japan's education policy documents (Westlund, 2004). A long tradition of Confucius influences combined with increasing demographic changes has increased the necessity for a review of the function of education within Japanese society. Depopulation of Japan's rural regions have been one of the major concern in Japan for more than half a decade, accelerated by the rapid industrialization and remarkable economic development of the 1960s and 1970s. Successive efforts have been made to revitalize rural communities, revisiting and promoting the local socio-cultural, political and economic structure. Demographically, Japan is aging rapidly with the additional challenge of a decreasing birthrate. In 2010 the average life expectancy for women was 86.0 years and 79.2 years for men. 22.1% of the population is 65 years or older, while in comparison, those under the age of 15 constitute a mere 13.3% of the population. Japan has a Human Development Index rating of 0.884, ranking 11th in the world. Japan is consistently above the OECD average, between 1980 and 2010 rising by 0.5% annually from 0.768. However, despite this high ranking, Japan struggles with a number of challenges resulting from increased Globalization, individualism, socio-economic disparities, a disconnect from the traditional multi-generational family, widening regional disparities and an alarming deterioration of ethics and moral values, on top of several decades of economic recession and recent natural catastrophe reinforced by the nuclear disaster.

Japan has a very centralized approach to the implementation of education. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) establishes and implements education policy including curricula, reforms and assessment. According to MEXT, education is intended to nurture citizens, empower a sustainable democratic society, while providing equal opportunities for all to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. With the revision in 2006 of the Basic Act on Education, Japan renewed its commitment to an education-based nation, ensuring freedom, high intellectual and moral standards, sustainability and

richness in Japanese society, while promoting Japan's status to gain trust and respect internationally. The Japanese government seeks to foster a "zest for living" in each child through all stages of education. The intent is to raise academic standards while re-enforcing morals, ethics and positive attitudes towards rules and life (Young and Rosenberg, 2006). Global issues such as environmental conservation are also a main concern.

Community collaboration is a strong force in the Japanese learning paradigm. Community building is a challenge that Japan takes seriously, and communities are perceived as an extension of the family. Mass urbanization and moving away from the traditional family structure threatens the bonds between people and the essence of Japanese society. Through voluntary participation of individual citizens, children are able to understand and learn cooperation from diverse generations, styles and parties, learning also the significance of work ethics and the ties of society and social participation. Both schools and local cultural facilities (community centers) are assisted by the government to provide programs to appreciate and participate in cultural or art activities. Inter-generational learning is another feature. Society-wide commitment to improve education is one of the main directives of the Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education. Parents and guardians are responsible for teaching morals, respect for life, social skills, self-control and independence to their children. It is stated that "home is where education starts." Respecting the autonomy of each family, assistance is provided in the form of kindergartens, child-rearing organizations, the wider community and day care centres (Watanabe, in Rotberg, 2010).

CASES FROM TOHOKU, JAPAN: NON-FORMAL LEARNING PROJECTS TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

The concept of sustainability became one of the key discourses in the Japanese society after the Great East Japan Earthquake. The three cases selected for this paper are just some examples of countless "good practices" of the reconstruction process witnessed in Japan during this period. The cases illustrate how regional areas affected by the catastrophes are transforming, embracing the global ecological sustainability issue, empowering people, emphasizing peoples' emotional bond. It demonstrates the emergence of post-economic discourse, re-emphasizing humanistic and ecological dimensions in sustainability discourse.

Case A

Conscientization towards Sustainable Global Societies: “Japan for Sustainability” (JFS)³

Japan for Sustainability (JFS), established in 2002, is a non-profit organization providing information on developments and activities in Japan that lead toward sustainability. It utilizes an online platform for communication between Japanese citizens and the rest of the world, publishing 30 short articles every month in both English and Japanese and also publishes a monthly newsletter to over 190 countries (Edahiro, 2007). Publications are utilized as a tool to report the current issues and proposed solutions, and some of the authors are actively involved in decision making of policy dialogue outside of JFS. Its mission includes creating ecology minded societies, especially focusing addressing youth, in order to create an eco-culture generation, who can be seen as agents of change for the future (JFS, 2012c). JFS’s activities covers various geographic areas namely international, regional, national, and local and their projects include areas of renewable energy, examining nuclear energy, technology to enhance sustainability, non-formal education for youth, etc.

Conscientization of youth: JFS regards children and youth as future agents of change. Special websites⁴ are developed to encourage children to deepen their understanding of global sustainability by providing opportunities to critically address the issues and raise consciousness, so that children can identify environmental issues and search for sustainable solutions that can be lead to actions (JFS, 2011d & JFS, 2002e).

The Youth Projects are implemented through two settings: 1) Youth Group Networks; and 2) Youth Group Schools. Youth Group Networks link youth to external NGOs such as, A Seed Japan and Japan Young Greens, to facilitate collaborative work. Youth Group Schools are youth action projects formed by students at educational institutions, mainly at the university level. Both settings promote a collaborative and participatory approach to reflect on social sustainability from a global ecological level, and try to act from the local level. Examples include: consumption and waste, value of recycling, sustainable local agriculture, energy issues, etc. The Youth Schools are a good platform for empowering youth to develop and advocate an eco-culture, which also promotes volunteerism (JFS, 2004f).

³ Japan for Sustainability (JFS) <http://www.japanfs.org/en/>

⁴ These websites include: Miracle-Miracle, A Place for Global Kids to Create the Future and Kids for the Future

Interlinking connections between the local, national and global student through non-formal learning: In August 2012, an international project called “Learn to Create Tohoku” was initiated by JFS, as an effort to support the youth of the tsunami-affected area of Tohoku through non-formal learning initiatives. In efforts of mutual learning, several actions have been organized. Children from the Tokyo area held a performance event to encourage children of the Tohoku region. Another project called “Learning Journey in Tohoku” promotes local and international student exchanges to learn from the recovery process in the area. Participants meet and listen to people who experienced the disaster and who are working with the recovery process. They reflect and share their thoughts (JFS, 2012b). The interviews of participants published online demonstrated that this experience raised not only their critical consciousness about sustainability, but also promoted *kizuna* (spiritual bonds) with others, an element which is crucial in the social sustainability dimension. Lastly, the third project, “Youth Leadership Development for Disaster Recovery”, offers leadership-training workshops to young volunteers working with the recovery process in Tohoku, as a way to support their visions for the future (JFS, 2012b). The workshop aims to provide systematic thinking to identify problems within complexity, reflective dialogue skills to co-create constructive discourse among stakeholders who have different perspectives, and skills to facilitate the creation of shared visions for the future (JFS, 2012g).

The above mentioned are just a few projects implemented by JFS. Their concern for sustainability covers e.g. energy, transportation, material reduction, global warming, ecosystem, food/water, chemicals, eco-product/business, technology, system/law; and their stakeholders include national government, local government, university/research institute, manufacturing industry, non-manufacturing industry and civil society. Their concrete ongoing projects are namely: Asia for sustainability, Leading municipalities to reduce CO₂, Renewable energy, Trends after nuclear accident, Energy policy, Youth action (mentioned above), JFS Biomimicry Project (identifying technologies from nature), JFS indicators, and Sustainability college (in collaboration with private sector support), which illustrate their broad coverage to address sustainability. JFS continues addressing issues of sustainability at the local to global levels in a holistic manner, from socio-economic, political, ecological, and technical dimension, contributing to form discourse and raising awareness of the civil society government, and business. This case demonstrates good practice by an NGO, who actively interlinks and conscientizes various levels and types of stakeholders, mixing various communication tools to advocate the message to foster sustainable societies.

Case B

Revitalizing aging communities with training competent human resources: “Disaster Recovery Leadership Project”

The Entrepreneur Training for Innovative Communities (ETIC) aims to develop a sustainable “entrepreneurial ecosystem” for Tohoku region as a tool to attract young entrepreneurs to the post-earthquake region (ETIC, 2012b). The ETIC, which functioned mainly to identify future leaders for social changes and entrepreneurial innovation, developed, after March 2011, the Disaster Recovery Leadership Project in Tohoku to recruit young skilled personnel and entrepreneurs in the context of an aging population to revitalize the region. The project’s innovative approach focuses on the importance of local citizens’ participation in reconstructing the regional community, by using the pre-existing civil society, community people, and creating capacity by rerouting young talented workers to remain or return to their regional hometown of Tohoku (ETIC, 2012c). The abovementioned project has a long-term development and sustainability plan, encompassing two main components: Fellowships and Entrepreneurs. The Fellowship Program offers youth personal opportunities to work with impact recovery projects that directly support local community members. 74 youths were assigned fellowships and with positive feedback from the communities, positions shall be expanded to 100-to-200 by 2014 (ETIC, 2012a).

The second stage of the project began in April 2012, creating an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem for the revitalization of Tohoku through development of strategic projects towards a recovery model for both industry and community, which include creation of future employment opportunities for the youth (ETIC, 2012b). Hub centers are created in high need communities, each of which has a community coordinator/innovative entrepreneur who is responsible for linking external funds as well as developing a long-term plan towards creating self-sufficient communities. Good practices within their hub shall be shared with the fellows to transmit knowledge (ETIC, 2012b).

The organization proposes re-building a sustainable community based on a “new model of society”, which is “not growth driven or urban orientated” and which promotes involvement of local citizens in decision making (ETIC, 2012b). As of March 2012, its annual report lists 47 ongoing projects focused within community sustainability, such as education support for children, job creation and industry recovery within agriculture and fishing markets, promotion of tourism, and creating employment for local women (ETIC, 2012b). Throughout training, non-formal educational engagement between the fellows and entrepreneurs is found; organizing and participating in workshops, coordinating

community held seminars and working directly with local citizens and within local communities. This community grounded mechanism allows the fellows to develop skills and knowledge to become the future entrepreneurs for sustainable development projects in Tohoku, reflecting local needs and aspirations, while involving local stakeholders in the decision-making process.

Case C

Government efforts with human face: Kizuna Bond Project (The Youth-Exchange Program with Asia-Oceania and North America)

“Kizuna (bond) Project” is an international youth exchange project run by the Japanese government in order to promote international understanding with regards to Japan’s recovery process after the Great East Japan Earthquake. The stipulated aims of the project are 1) to provide accurate information to the world community; 2) to contribute to the development of local communities through exchange students and volunteers; and 3) to strengthen the bond with other countries by sharing the knowledge and experience (JICE, 2012). The project invites youth from 41 different countries/regions in Asia-Oceania and North America to exchange programs, aiming to promote global understanding, while encouraging international perspectives and awareness through youth volunteer activities, and by implementing programs that work in partnership with education and support recovery within the disaster-affected areas. During the stay in Japan, they will visit the disaster-affected areas in Tohoku region (prefectures such as Miyagi, Iwate, Fukushima, and Ibaraki), participating schools, and focus on listening to community members speak of their personal experiences in order to develop a deeper understanding of Japan’s recovery process (MOFA, 2012). Youth from Japan to partner countries/regions are also encouraged to share their own personal experiences with partner countries (CGP, 2012) and these exchanges are expected foster intercultural experiences around global sustainability.

According to the United Nations Volunteers Programme annual report; the Kizuna project was identified as a global volunteer program linking youth together by “bringing messages of encouragement and providing funds for disaster areas”, while also learning about disaster support and sustainable reconstruction of societies (p.29). Both short and long-term exchanges within Japan allow the participants to experience the ongoing condition of reconstruction through practical volunteer activities and educational seminars. The youth volunteers will share their experiences and learn about the various local government initiatives and NGO’s roles and activities in the process of reconstructing communities. As the project is about international youth exchange in this specific context of reconstruction after the disaster, as a short term outcome, enhanced international

understanding can be expected, and full long time intended and unintended impacts of these exchanges shall be seen in many decades to come, as these young participants with this particular experience will develop and may become future agents of change and conscientizing actors at various levels and in various ways for the global sustainability in the future.

CONCLUSION

These three cases of non-formal learning projects in Tohoku area provide empirical evidence of what is emerging out of Japan during the post-Great East Japan Earthquake. As repeatedly argued throughout this paper, the concept of transformation has been questioned. Tension is observed between two development paradigms: a) conventional centralized type of neo-liberal economy driven development policy, the paradigm that Japan has been pursuing in the global economy; and b) a newly emerging alternative type of social development policy, which emphasizes regional sovereignty, active participation of civil society, and pro-ecological solutions. Humanity is in focus, in times of difficulty, and structural efforts to emphasize the significance of spiritual bonds (*kizuna*) are noteworthy. Sustainable transformation requires empowerment of the individual who is the agent of the social changes, and agency cannot act alone in society in pursuit of social sustainability.

The three cases demonstrate that sustainable transformation is promoted in various ways. The first case can be featured as a case of interlinking and conscientizing various levels and types of stakeholders, mixing various communication tools to advocate and disseminate local voices and local evidences to foster global sustainability. It addresses sustainability in a holistic manner, from socio-economic, political, ecological, and technical dimension, contributing to form discourse and raising awareness of the civil society government, and business. The second case can be then regarded as a case of empowerment and training of young people to promote ecologically sustainable entrepreneurship, which will be a catalyst to revitalize the rapidly aging regional area by creating employment opportunities for the future generation. The combination of community based participatory approach and leadership training is indeed an effective strategy in order to increase the adequacy and sustainability of transformation to the local context. The third case can be seen as a large scale intergovernmental program which directly addresses the grassroots. The international youth exchange program shall foster intercultural and international understanding and as has been argued, full effects shall be seen in the decades to come. Re-emphasizing the humanistic tradition with values such as tolerance, respect, and collaboration may increasingly be important in today's interconnected and interdependent world.

In order to pursue global sustainability based upon conflicting values held by heterogeneous actors, a shift in individual and collective consciousness is a requirement (Cars, 2011). Acknowledging the importance of varying local socio-political, economic and cultural contexts across and within a nation, local experiences of sustainable transformation can still trigger a wider transformation in other localities by addressing consciousness of others. It is in the spirit of global sustainability that this paper was formulated, based on evidences from Japan. Post-economic sustainability discourse should be considered, in favor of pro-ecological and humanizing global society. The paper supports holistic and contextualized transformation process, where emphasis is placed upon people's capacity to effect social change, in a collective and participatory manner, in harmony with global ecology.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS THROUGH COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMMES –SUCCESS STORY

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INTRODUCTION

After more than 60 years of Independence, when we look towards India's development, one can visualize the impoverished rural India on one side and the booming urban elite India on the other side. Why, it is so, though the country is implementing various developmental programs extensively? It is not only the government's efforts but also various NGO's, voluntary organizations, corporate sector, and educational institutions that have jumped into the development sector and hence we see the country is progressing but at a very slow rate. Due to combined efforts of various organizations and sectors, the poverty rate is reducing year by year and India is marching towards the developed world. Similarly in other sectors of development, there is improvement, due to combined efforts of various organizations and institutions that are striving to achieve the intended goal.

ROLE OF UNIVERSITY IN EXTENSION WORK

The greatest asset of our country is manpower, which is working in abundant number of colleges and universities. These institutions must work for rural development. Universities should not only concentrate on their academic and research programs but also utilize its intellectual resources to cater to the needs of rural India.

Realizing the potential of higher education, the University Grants Commission in India articulated the idea of extension in 1977 and 1982 and called for the introduction of extension as a third but equally important function of the system of higher education. Extension is one of the responsibilities of higher education institutions along with major research and teaching dimension. This is an extremely significant dimension of higher education since it is directly concerned with development of the people and society at large. In pursuance of this, University Grants Commission (UGC) introduced several extension programmes including eradication of illiteracy,

continuing education, population education, and national integration, science for people, rural development, and remedial teaching / coaching for the weaker sections. Extension in higher education is important not only to open gate to the aspiring people from the poor section of society but also to make researches more relevant to their day to day living for improving their quality of life and standard of living.

The Xth plan of UGC recommends that the scope of extension education needs to be widened by reorienting it as a link between business and society. Further, it suggests that in the changed economic environment outreach activities and Lifelong Education in aspects related to skills, health, environment, physical fitness, values, good citizenship and other factors that lead to a good life, gain special importance. In addition to this, supporting disadvantaged groups-SC/ST, Minority, Women, Physically handicapped is a task in itself. The core mission of higher education is to educate, to train, to undertake research and to provide service to the community. Therefore, the Xth UGC plan suggests that universities and colleges be a focal point of activities to spread and sustain the torch of lifelong learning.

OBJECTIVES OF UNIVERSITIES EXTENSION PROGRAMME

Reddy and Mythily (2007), in their article on universities and extension in the content of globalization has described the objectives of extension activities by the universities. They are as follows:

1. Generation of knowledge, information and skills and passing on the same to the target population.
2. Dissemination and documentation of healthy practices in terms of training and development, so as to replicate the same in other parts of the country.
3. Sensitization of people for the effective participation in the government development programmes.
4. To provide on the job vocational training to enhance the skills of the community.
5. To understand the community problems and find out appropriate solutions through research and innovations.
6. To provide better self-employment opportunities by utilizing the government support services.

7. To train the different categories of people for sustainable development in the community.
8. To develop liaisons between government departments and the public.

Though, these objectives are clearly laid out, and a role of university for community development is emphasized time and again by UGC and government, hardly few university departments are working for it. This is the most neglected component in any university education system. Priority is given to teaching and research work than outreach activities. The university departments who work towards outreach are small in number. The concentration of work and efforts is higher towards laboratory research work and teaching.

There are various factors, which lead to the neglect of this area in university education system. The foremost reason is financial crunch. For community outreach programme, to be organized the departments would need funds to reach to the rural and tribal areas. The flow of fund is not continuous, and because of it the university department cannot remain in touch with villages and villagers. When outreach activities are not planned for a longer period of time, and if continuity in the programme is not maintained, the outcome is not desirable. The outreach activities planned by university department are for few days in a year in the form of an educational tour or a camp. This breaks the rapport between the villages and university.

Like every teacher should know how to teach besides their expertise in their subject matter, a university teacher also should be trained to conduct extension activities. All teachers are not trained to organize outreach activities. Hence, it becomes one of the reasons for the neglect of extension work in the university departments. Other than this, students and teachers are not ready or willing to live and work in the area, where basic facilities are not available like - a clean place to stay, clean water and food to eat and drink. They are used to living in the area with all facilities. So, the willingness to work in underdeveloped areas is not there. But, now our country cannot afford to remain as a developing country. We need to work towards its development and especially for underprivileged section of our society.

RURAL EXTENSION AT THE DEPARTMENT OF EXTENSION AND COMMUNICATION

Rural Extension Programmes are conducted by Post Graduate students of the department under the course "Field Work". The objective is to develop abilities among students in planning, conducting and evaluating rural development programmes. To achieve this objective, students are placed in the villages adopted by the department.

Duration of the Field Work Programme

Is from January to April and July to November, twice in a week and for 3 to 4 hours per day.

Target Groups:

Women: Housewives, farm labourers, Dalits, Pregnant women, Women in anti-natal post-natal stages.

Adolescent Girls : Dropouts and school going.

Teachers : School and balwadi/anganwadi.

Children : School going and pre-primary stages.

The development projects are mainly focusing on issues related to health, education, and Income generation. Until today number of development projects have been undertaken and few of them could bring desired results. Described here is one of the projects which was undertaken with farm men and women for producing organic manure through Vermi composting.

A PROJECT ON PROMOTION OF VERMICOMPOSTING AMONG FARM MEN AND WOMEN FROM THE SELECTED VILLAGES OF VADODARA DISTRICT

Nowadays organic farming is gaining wide attention among farmers, entrepreneurs, policy makers and agricultural scientist for varied reasons such as it minimizes the dependence on chemical inputs like fertilizers, pesticides and other agro chemicals. This safeguards and improves quality of resources and environment. It is labour intensive and provides an opportunity to increase rural employment and achieve long-term improvement in the quality of resources by using organic manure.

The term "vermi-composting" means the use of earthworms for composting organic residues. Earthworms can consume practically all kinds of organic matter. It is organic manure produced as the vermicast by

earthworm feeding on biological waste material and plant residues. This compost is an odourless, clean, organic material containing adequate quantities of N (Nitrogen), P (Phosphorus), K (Potassium) and several micronutrients essential for plant growth. Vermicompost is a preferred balanced nutrient source for organic farming.

In rural areas, various types of waste namely animal dung, crop residues, green manure, bio-fertilizers and bio solids from agro industries and food processing wastes are some of the potential sources of nutrients for organic manure. Development of several compost production technologies like vermin composting, phospho composting and N (nitrate) - enriched phospho composting improves the quality of compost through enrichment with nutrient bearing minerals and other additives. This organic manure has the capacity to fulfil nutrient demand of crops adequately and promote the activity of beneficial macro and micro flora in the soil. Use of organic manure for organic farming has attracted the attention of naturalists, ecologist and workers in applied sciences such as agriculture, pest management, horticulture and sericulture at global scenario.

The role of farmers with changing time is seen not only in the production of some kind of food without any taste or smell but also to see that the food is clean for human consumption and must take care of the soil quality, which can be affected by using more chemicals and pesticides in the farm. The farmers thus have the responsibilities to the environment in which humans and animals live and also to the other land users. This requires proper information in the areas of sustainable farming. Hence through this project effort has been made to revive skills and knowledge of small and marginal farmers of selected villages of Vadodara district.

Objectives of the project

Broad Objective

To promote vermicomposting among farm men and women from the selected villages of Vadodara district.

Specific Objectives

1. To develop understanding among the farm men and women regarding segregating garbage into degradable and non-degradable waste.
2. To develop skills among the farm men and women to implement vermicomposting as a technique of waste management.
3. To guide the farm men and women to utilize vermicompost in their farm/garden or sale.

PLAN OF THE PROJECT

To implement the project systematically and successfully, the following steps were planned

1. Identification of environment action-plans by various agencies
2. Collection of information on vermicomposting
3. Collaboration with existing organization
4. Selection of villages
5. Training of the Project worker
6. Learning materials under the project

1. Identification of environment action plans by various agencies

Information was collected by making personal visits, observation, meeting and talking to the personnel's in charge of projects on environment management and reviewing reports of the existing local agencies on the activities of environment management. Through meetings, visits and observation, we came to know that there are various types of waste in rural areas namely community waste, waste from agricultural and agro based industries, animals wastes and oil bearing seeds and lots of unutilized agricultural wastes are available easily in the villages. These leaves, litter of farms, animal and bio waste are found littered in rural areas.

Vermicomposting can be adopted in the fields easily and effectively. But being a new concept it requires wide publicity among the different sections of the society.

Keeping these points in mind, it was planned to promote vermicomposting for farm people in selected villages of Vadodara district.

2. Collection of information on Vermicomposting

Information from different organizations like Nature CARE, Natropethy Centre and SVADES was collected on-

- Process of vermicomposting
- Difference between large and small units
- Use of earthworms in the vermicomposting process
- Points to be taken care while implementation
- List of addresses from where earthworms can purchase
- Use of vermicompost manure in farms.

3. Collaboration with existing organization

Collaboration for the project was done with the existing working organization SVADES. In meetings with SVADES officials, it was decided that we would plan, execute and monitor the project and SVADES would provide its working areas to execute the project activities and other human and non-human resources as per the requirement of the project.

4. Selection of villages

Gohilpura and Kotna are two adopted villages of SVADES with a majority farm population. Agriculture is the main occupation of the villages. Villagers used to dispose the agricultural and other waste in the outskirts or waste was laid as it is on the field/farm. It was observed that the villagers were unaware about using waste for some useful purpose. Hence, Gohilpura and Kotna villages were selected to execute the project activities.

5. Training of the Project worker

To get first-hand experience about vermicomposting process, this technique was adopted first at home which helped to understand the difference between preparing Vermicompost in small unit and large unit, actual steps involved in the process of manure production, precautions to be taken during the project implementation stage and problems faced and solutions that can be worked out.

6. Learning materials under the project

For better comprehension of project activity by low literate villagers a set of charts and flex in Gujarati covering the following topics were prepared:

- Process of preparing the vermicomposting unit.
- Points to be kept in mind while adding waste in the unit.
- Care to be taken during vermicomposting process.
- Benefits of adopting vermicomposting project

EXECUTION OF THE PROJECT

Execution of the project after planning all the aspects of the project was done under the following steps:

- 1) Approaching and attracting attention of the people for vermicomposting
- 2) Arousing interest, convincing people and promoting awareness about vermicomposting
- 3) Leading to action and guiding to manure production
- 4) Monitoring the execution of project
- 5) Field visit
- 6) Testing the nutritive value of manure
- 7) Evaluation of the project
- 8) Achievement of the project at a glance
- 9) Conclusion

1. Approaching and Attracting Attention of the People for Vermicomposting

Farm men and women were approached and it was explained to them from the learning materials about the topics like benefits of vermicomposting as a feasible method of waste management, deterioration of land quality due to increasing use of chemical manure and contribution of the farm men and women in the process of manure production through waste management.

2. Arousing Interest, Convincing People and Promoting Awareness about Vermicomposting

Aanganwadi workers, primary school teachers, farm men and women and key leaders were approached. Pamphlets were distributed for better understanding. After initial meetings, ten women got convinced in Gohilpura village whereas in the Kotna village, with the help of key leaders, ten farm men showed their interest in initiating these project activities.

It was assured to each of the individual participants that all the needed help like preparation of vermicompost units, obtaining required materials for preparing the units (like bamboo basket, bricks, plastic etc.), bringing and adding waste, cow dung and earthworm and taking care during the process of vermicomposting would be provided to them.

3. Leading to Action and Guiding To Manure Production

The project was carried out in two major phases.

Phase I - Execution of action plan with first group of participants.

Phase II - Execution of action plan with second group of participants.

In phase I the following steps were carried out with the first group of twenty participants.

- **Demonstration of vermicomposting**

Demonstration can illustrate and explain a new production method, new tool or can show results in a convincing manner. Hence, demonstration was organized in both the villages separately at a key leader's place at a time: convenient to all the participants.

- **Guiding and leading participants to adopt following steps of vermicomposting process**

4. Collection and segregation of garbage and preparation of vermicompost unit

In this step participants were instructed to select either a container for a small unit or a site/open place to start vermicomposting in a large unit. Kits containing all the required materials were provided to all the participants by

SVADES. A shade was prepared before preparing the units, as it requires to be protected from the sun and heavy rain for breeding process. The participants were instructed to collect their kitchen, agro, garden and animal waste as per size of the unit. The project participants were explained the harm by adding non-biodegradable wastes like glass, plastic, metal, stones, aluminum foil and rubber on earthworms.

5. Preparation of waste layer in vermicompost units

In all small and large units layers of waste was prepared by the participants under the guidance. The layers were prepared with all the degradable wastes like dry leaves, peels of vegetable and fruits, left over foods from the kitchen, farms, and animal waste.

6. Checking of pH level and introduction of earthworms in the units

The pH level of the collected waste was checked, as it was necessary to maintain the pH level of the collected waste within the range of 6.5 to 7.5, as that is the only suitable level for the earthworms. After checking the environmental condition of both the units, *Eudrilus Eugeniae* earthworms were introduced in the required amounts. For small units 250gms of earthworms, whereas for large units 5kg of earthworms were provided to the participants from SVADES.

7. Maintenance of humidity in vermicompost units

The participants were explained that the unit should be sprinkled with water mixed preferably with cow urine, keeping the surface of the unit slightly moist.

8. Taking care of vermicompost units

The participants were instructed to cover their baskets/bedding with jute sack and sprinkle water regularly in the units to maintain the humid atmosphere. The temperature was measured and pH level of the compost was again checked after one week by the project participants under the guidance of project worker. Project results were encouraging and shape new groups of adopters in both the villages. The vermicomposting process for this second group of participants was carried out in phase-II.

Phase II - Execution of action plan with second group of participants

The steps followed in this phase were:

1) Selection of trainers

To strengthen the replication of project activities within and outside the villages, four leaders from each of the two villages were selected to become trainers.

The selection of leaders was based on their abilities and capacities in terms of clarity of the content, communicating skills and successful results of their projects.

2) Imparting training to trainers on vermicomposting

To develop leader's capacities, three-day detailed training sessions were conducted with them by using learning materials on vermicomposting.

3) Approaching the second group of participants

Motivated groups of participants were approached, which emerged as a result of Phase-I in both the villages. There were fourteen participants from Gohilpura and ten participants from Kotna village.

4) Execution of vermicomposting process with the second group of participants by trainers

The second groups of twenty-four participants were guided by trained leaders in respective villages.

MONITORING THE EXECUTION OF THE PROJECT

Each phase of the project execution namely waste segregation, collection of garbage and maintenance of soil humidity for the first group participants, was monitored by personal visits. The monitoring was done to check for collection of required amount of garbage, growth of the earthworms, maintenance of the humidity in the vermicompost unit, production of manure and problems faced in a project execution.

For second group of participants, on every alternate day, selected trainers of Gohilpura and Kotna were instructed to guide and supervise the vermicomposting process by making personal visits. Every week, a visit to both the villages was made to check and understand the progress of the first and second group of participants.

In all, there were forty-four participants who adopted vermicomposting in the first and second phase of the project. Total production of vermicompost manure in small and large units by project participants within the project duration of September 2007- April 2008 was 7294 kg.

FIELD VISIT

Field visit/excursion provides opportunities for the participants to see production methods and conditions of other farmers in other regions. It brings local innovators into contact with each other. Hence, project worker

arranged field visit to the "Sarjan Vermicomposting unit" which is situated at Aklau village of Vadodara district, 35 km away from Vadodara city. The visit was found to be encouraging and interesting.

TESTING THE NUTRITIVE VALUE OF MANURE

To check the effectiveness of the manure in terms of its nutrients, manure samples were sent to agriculture department of Gujarat State Fertilizer and Chemical Limited (GSFC). Nutrient value of manure was checked and matched with ideal requirement of nutrient in fertile soil. It was found that all the samples had shown its richness in nutrients.

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

A reaction scale was implemented to evaluate the project after its completion. The results were as follows:

1. Background information of the participants. The majority of the participants were:

- were young (81.81 percent);
- had an education upto higher secondary (40.90 percent);
- were staying in joint families (86.36 percent);
- doing own business (54.54 percent);
- had a monthly family income between Rs. 1001 to 2000 (70.45 percent);
- had their own farm of 1 to 2 bighas (95.45 percent);
- were spending Rs. 100- 500 monthly to buy manure (88.63 percent).

2. Reactions of the participants regarding promotion of vermicomposting project

- High majority (95.45 percent) of the participants participated in the project to develop cheaper manure.
- All the participants felt that content and teaching methods used to explain project work was complete and easy to understand. Regarding field visit as a teaching method under the project, high majority (90.90 percent) of the participants felt that the method was complete in nature and made project work easy to understand, whereas almost nine percent (9.09 percent) of the participants did not react about it, as they could not go for it.
- All the participants received help in execution of the project activity, mainly of family members (77.27 percent) followed by neighbours/friends (72.72 percent).

- Majority (56.81 percent) of the participants received help in introducing earthworms in the unit as well as in taking care of the unit.
- High majority (86.36 percent) of the participants did not face any problem during execution of project activities and few (13.63 percent) of the participants faced problems of flies/mosquitoes/ants/snails/other insects.
- All the participants felt that vermicomposting is a useful waste management technique.
- All the participants would like to continue this technique.
- All the participants felt that reactions of other villagers were positive toward the technique,
- All the participants felt that they would like to promote this technique and high majority (81.81 percent) of the participants also expressed willingness to promote it to their neighbours and relatives.

3. Reactions of the key trainers

- Only few of the participants (18.18 percent) who were selected as trainers by project worker imparted training to the other groups within and outside village.
- Some of the trainers (37.5 percent) found difficulty in providing instructions to the people.

4. Benefits of the project

- All the participants felt that vermicomposting technique should be adopted by others also.
- Almost fifty-five percent (54.54 percent) of the participants felt that vermicomposting technique should be adopted to produce cheaper manure.
- All the participants felt that vermicomposting technique was ecologically, economically and socially helpful technique.
- High majority (95.45 percent) of the participants felt that it will help economically by providing cheaper manure.
- High majority (93.18 percent) of the participants felt that it helps ecologically by saving land degradation, providing nutrition, long life to the products and preserving nutrition in the products.
- High majority (90.9 percent) of the participants expressed that vermicomposting technique helps socially also, by raising the status as an organic farmer.

ACHIEVEMENT OF TFIE PROJECT AT A GLANCE

The visualized effect and progress achieved in community-centered project of vermicomposting was also checked, measuring following three main goals of capacity building namely; (1) Replicability, (2) Effective use and (3) Sustainability

1. Replicability

This goal was visualized and measured by checking the project worker, participants and the collaborative organization's ability to communicate to expand the project.

- It was found that one-third of women of Gohilpura have expanded their vermicomposting units from small to large without seeking any assistance from the collaborative organization.
- Efforts of project workers on vermicomposting project was published by the local print media namely The Times of India, Gujarat Samachar, Sandesh and Loksatta-Jansatta. As a result seven different individuals/organizations were contacted and asked to demonstrate this technique for adoption.
- A new group of participants in both the villages are ready and hence trainers are guided to follow the same steps. To expand the project, collaborative organization under the project has offered trainer's visit package for new-interested groups.

2. Effective Use

This goal was visualized and measured, keeping in mind optimal use of manure for domestic and commercial purpose as well as its consistent use by project participants.

- During the project 7294 kg manure was produced by forty-four participants. Out of that, 7107 kg worth cost of Rs.35,535.00 (1 kg = Rs.5) was used by project participants for their own farms on regular base.
- A total of 187 kg vermicompost manure was sold and earned Rs. 1445.00. The profits were distributed among participants according to their share of manure.

3. Sustainability

This goal was achieved by strengthening individual project participants as well as through management of resources.

- During project execution at the end of phase-I, the second group of participants in both the villages were ready to adopt project activities, which were trained later on.

- Through phase I and II of the project, forty-four adopters of vermicomposting were prepared by a project worker, who shared their experiences with neighbours, relatives and friends. This resulted in two more groups in both the villages to adopt vermicomposting process.
- Total of eight leaders were selected and trained to sustain project activities for future.
- Trainers conducted four training programmes, two within the village of Gohilpura and Kotna and two outside communities like Reliance ladies club of Vadodara and farmers of Moti Koral village, Nareshwar, Vadodara.
- Project worker emphasized importance of earthworms and asked project participants to "pay an interest" by providing at least 50 percent of earthworms to the new recipients of the project after first round of manure production to enhance easy availability of earthworms within village.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the project results were quite encouraging. Vermicompost manure was used by the participants on a regular basis to achieve better results in their plants and farms.

It indicates that, an adoption of such practice needs to be promoted to the large number of people in society. As it not only practically solves the problem of garbage management, but also develops the sustainability of soil nutrients and yet provides better natural manure. However, adoption of such practice by a handful of people will not serve much purpose, but united efforts of all the people in promotion and adoption of vermicompost manure helps to serve for the better environment in long run.

Besides this, in concluding the paper it would be prudent to recommend some of the **best practices** followed which made the project a success story:

- ⊙ Participatory Approach
- ⊙ Educative Approach
- ⊙ Education through Peer Groups
- ⊙ Involvement of Key Leaders
- ⊙ Use of Small and Big Media
- ⊙ Collaboration with Voluntary Organizations for Finance and Follow Up

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CHAPTER EIGHT

EDUCATION FOR RURAL TRANSFORMATION A CASE OF UDANG FORUM¹

Marmar Mukhopadhyay

BACKGROUND

Education has been described across countries as an instrument of social change. Indian renaissance and struggle for independence were engineered and fuelled by education. Emphasizing the role of education, the Education Commission (1966) titled its report as Education for National Development. It is true that the social and transformative role of education, for the nation and society at large, is much more valid in the case of rural transformation, particularly since India lives in her villages. Programmes in health, shelter, food, etc. provide ‘here and now’ solutions to the rural people. Compared to that, education is empowering. It empowers villagers to find and/or create solution, be it in health, agriculture, food, etc. No wonder, demand for education among the masses is steadily on the rise.

An estimated 70% of people in India live in rural areas. Benefits of official initiatives often get restricted within the urban boundaries. Literally, benefits of 70% developmental initiatives are reaped by 30% urban people; and 30% (if at all) benefits are shared by 70% rural people. Hence, the key to India’s development is in transformative development of rural areas.

In this and most other village clusters in India, flood, fire, diseases and epidemics, poverty and hunger, illiteracy and poor quality education, law and order management, roads and transport, etc. are managed by the community, often ill-prepared. There is only a notional presence of the Government. With the devolution of power to the Panchayats (Local self-government), there is some movement and hope; though these are often clouded by rival political agenda and compulsions. Hence, non-governmental social organizations occupy an important space in rural transformation initiatives.

Howrah Rural Teachers’ Forum (Udang Forum) at Udang (Howrah District of West Bengal, India) took initiative for development of overall

¹ The case study has been developed by following the principles of Naturalistic Inquiry allowing the reader to identify and interpret the processes and the outcomes.

quality of life of rural people. In such a flood prone area, during floods ‘we’ take charge of flood management and rehabilitation of people; in case of fire, ‘we’ extinguish fire; ‘we’ take charge of epidemics, accidents and injuries, and ailments; ‘we’ generate funds for education of children of poor parents, and also marriage of daughters; ‘we’ do conflict management through local negotiations and judgments; etc.

As mentioned above, villages are still self-governed without the necessary resources. The purpose of our intervention is to improve the quality of life of the villagers. ‘We’, here, implied teachers and senior students of the local school and alumni -- either school dropouts or pass outs. There is a tradition of social actions in this rural society. It was cultivated during the school days at Udang High School by the Founding Headmaster [Late] Sri Nrisinha Prasad Mukhopadhyay since 1933 ² and his compatriot/comrade doctor-social worker, (Late) Dr. Tarapada Pramanik.

WHY TEACHERS?

In rural areas, teachers are the only educated and also relatively better informed people. Other educated villagers migrate out of the village in search of greener pastures in the cities. Hence, for any development project in the rural areas, teachers are not only the best bet, but also the only bet. This cluster of villages is no exception. This is evident from the role they play in such rural societies. Besides teaching in the schools³ they play a variety of roles in the community, especially in absence of qualified professionals in this rural community. They are:

- ✚ Educational and Vocational Counselors;
- ✚ Private/Home Tutor complementing education in absence of home support;
- ✚ Health Guides;
- ✚ Veterinary Doctors;
- ✚ Actuaries and Property Assessors;
- ✚ Advocates and Judges;
- ✚ Mediators in Conflict Managers;
- ✚ Marriage advisors and counselors;
- ✚ Private Tutors;
- ✚ Cultural Leaders;
- ✚ And, many others.

² Mukhopadhyay, Nrisinha Prasad, *Ancient Indian Education: A Plea for Reintroduction as a Liberating Education from the Decadence of our Times*, New Delhi: Shipra, 2004

³ Many of them actively participate in party politics

Hence, the rural development programme in and around Udang is steered by the teachers organized by the Udang Forum.

UDANG FORUM'S WORKSITE

The project is operated in 20 contiguous villages⁴ belonging to Amta, Bagnan and Uluberia blocks. Yet, all villages pertaining to these three blocks are not part of the project site. The entire project was initiated from Udang, though participating teachers belong to other neighbouring villages also.

Informally, initial activities that sowed the seed of the project began with five primary schools -- all at Udang. In the first formal stage (1994-98), 42 primary schools from all the villages mentioned above were included. In the next formal phase (2003 onwards), 30 schools were selected for project implementation. Due to demands from other primary schools, project, especially the capacity building component of the programme was extended to 100 primary schools. However, only 80 schools remained effectively engaged in the project.

Udang had the first school -- primary school in 1905 and secondary school in 1933 -- in this cluster of villages. As a result, majority of the first generation educated people in this rural community are alumni of Udang High School. The first headmaster of the school had a 30 year long span -- 1933 to 1963 who established a variety of social norms and values including social service and community leadership, as mentioned earlier. Hence, it is relatively easy to develop a network based on emotional affiliation to the school and its first headmaster.

PARAMETERS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The current stage of rural development activities started in an innocuous manner, just to help a qualified musician girl in distress. It all started with personal contribution. Over the years, Udang Forum has developed a comprehensive approach to rural development (Figure 1) covering almost all vital areas that determine quality of life.

⁴ Udang, Fatehpur, Tetuliapara, Sonamui, Tulsiberia, Tajpur, Haturia, Khanpur, Harop, Purnal, Nawapara, Agunshi, Bishuberia, Gazipur, Kumarchak, Mollarchak, Hafezchak, Muktirchak, Ranapara, and Deora

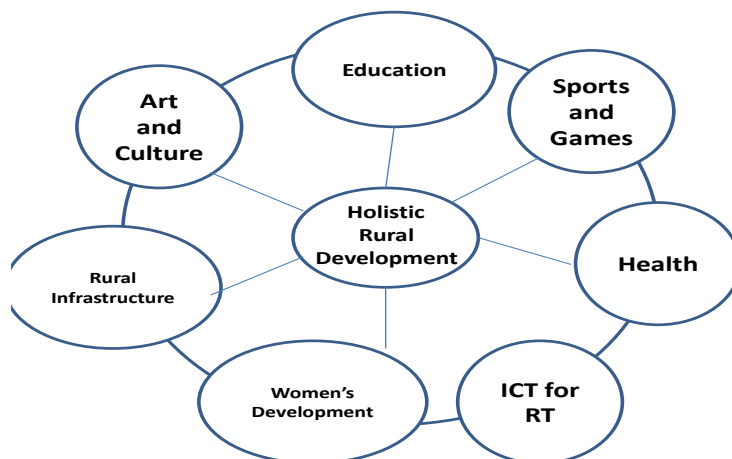


Figure 1: Parameters of Holistic Rural Development

However, since the leadership was with the school teachers, much larger concentration and efforts have been on education. Other areas emerged as ‘add-on’ dimensions based on the concerns and fascination of some of the members of the Udang Forum, and also in response to the felt needs of the villagers. In the following pages, we shall present our activities under a few heads. Also, activities in all areas were not started at the same time. There is considerable time lag between the beginning of activities, say in education and health or women’s development, more and more dimensions and activities as more and more villagers took interest and actively involved themselves in this rural transformation movement.

EDUCATION

There are several activities in education. Initial activities in education were designed for arresting school drop out that moved on to the School Improvement Programme (SIP). More and more areas within education were added later (Figure 2).

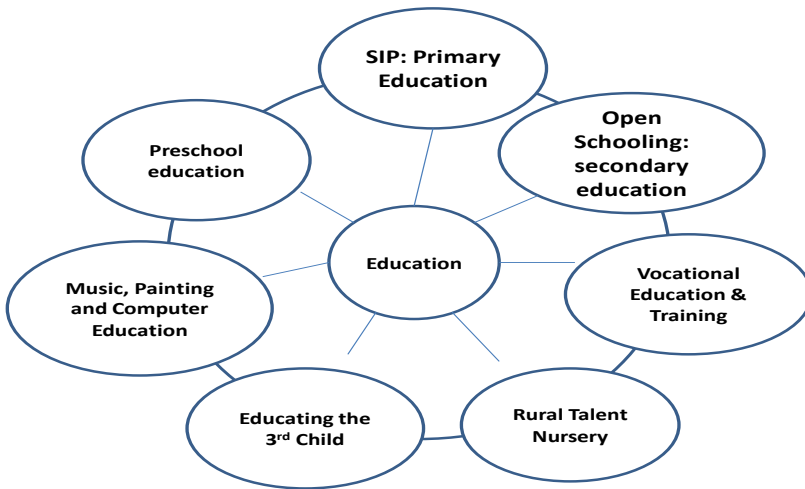


Figure 2: Educational Activities and Services

ARRESTING PRIMARY SCHOOL DROPOUT

During the formulation of the National Policy on Education 1986⁵, a special exercise was taken in the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA, New Delhi) to carry out content analysis of the research on school dropout. More than 350 studies were analyzed. Almost all studies focused on ‘causes of drop out’ – usually opinion surveys where prognosis was caught in the usual trap of ‘poverty as the only reason’. There was not a single experiment on how to arrest or reduce drop out. Being villagers ourselves, we knew for certain that poverty was (/is) not the only reason. Accepting dropout as ‘normal’ was/is a case of ‘Learned Helplessness’⁶ (Peterson et.al, 1993 & Seligman, 1990).

A few years later, in late 1980s, financed by the Department of Electronics and Government of India, Udang Forum conducted a door-to-door survey with the help of unemployed educated rural youth mentored by rural teachers, of 48,500 people in the cluster of 20 villages around Udang and developed a database. Causes of dropout were one of the 27 different

⁵ Author was intensely involved in this exercise, and also later on Indian educational policy making, planning, implementation and evaluation at the national level.

⁶ Seligman, M.E.P. (1990), *Learned Optimism*, New York: Knopf.
Peterson, C., Maier, S., and Seligman, M.E.P. (1993). Learned Helplessness: A Theory for the Age of Personal Control. New York: Oxford.

data fields from education, health, economy, living conditions etc. This question on dropping out was asked to all 48,500 respondents whose age ranged from 8 to 92 years. This door-to-door survey (database) indicated that ‘*school jete bhalo lage na*’ (don’t like to go to the school’ (lack of school attraction) as the 2nd most cited reason, only next to poor financial condition.

We asked ourselves, ‘we cannot change the financial condition of the students; but can we work on improving school attraction? Will it change the dropout pattern in this village cluster?’ We decided to give it a try.

About 125 primary school teachers⁷ conferred on what can be done to make schools more interesting. We did an ethnographic study with a mix of ‘rapid appraisal’ of what do the children do when they absent themselves from the schools. The outcomes were: [a] they do not either work in the field with their fathers or take care of siblings at home. Instead, boys play in the local ponds, meadows and trees (climbing), listen to radio music; and girls play with dolls and participate in household chores with elders. Boys play soccer with hand-made footballs made of paper, jump from trees into ponds and swim, play with a long and short stick (*danda-goli*), *Ha-do-do*, etc. From this ethnographic exercise, teachers closed-into two types of activities – music, and sports and games in schools to enhance school attraction.

PHASE I

Initially, we started the project at our personal cost with one music teacher (mentioned earlier to provide her a livelihood). She was asked to sing with children in five neighbouring primary schools. Later, in 1994, with the financial grant of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the Government of India, the experiment was upgraded to cover 42 rural primary schools with about 6400 students enrolled in grades 1 to 4 in the project site. The singular agenda was to enhance school attraction and reduce drop out with sports and games; hence, in music, there was no ‘voice training’; in sports and games, no ‘warm up exercises’; just enjoy playing and singing. Twenty two unemployed youth with skills in both sports and games, or in music, or in both were engaged as peripatetic teachers at a paltry sum of INR200 (approx. \$4 per month) per school. Each such peripatetic teacher was allocated five or six neighbouring schools.

⁷ These are the same rural government schools, same government teachers with same qualification and salary, same curriculum, etc. The difference that HRTF has done is in the qualitative shift in teacher empowerment programme, quality of the capacity building programmes, and on site mentoring.

The project began with popular children's songs from the available music albums, and games like Frisbee, tenniquet (popularly called ring throw), cricket, football (soccer), skipping, badminton, etc. Inspired by their experience and self-induced inspiration, primary school teachers composed lyrics on arithmetic, science, geography, history, culture, etc. Some of them composed music. Peripatetic teachers picked up these new curricular songs. Children happily sang the curricular songs with the peripatetic teachers and joyfully learnt their subjects without the stress. The Forum documented all the curricular songs with their notations. The State Council of Educational Research and Training, West Bengal published this document in the form of a book, titled 'khalay o gane anandapath' (Joyful learning through games and music). SCERT produced enough copies for distribution to all primary schools in the state. Dissemination seminars were organized at the state level chaired by the then Education Minister. Newspapers carried big news, Aajkaal; a prominent Bengali daily carried an editorial on the experiment.

The peripatetic teachers maintained headcount of students in their classes. The headcount during the music, and sports and games classes were invariably larger than actual school attendance on that day. Out of school children flocked into the school for those joyful moments. Udang Forum and the concerned school teachers [positively] exploited this opportunity – children were told, 'Unless you enroll yourself in the school, you cannot sing or play with the students'. The idea worked. Enrolment shot up and attendance increased.

Not to be caught in self-fulfilling prophecy, Udang Forum conducted its internal audit of the project from time to time to fine tune the processes, and reduce 'regional diversities' from one village to another in terms of performance. Satisfied with its internal audit, the Udang Forum commissioned a professor of education from Calcutta University to undertake an external Project Evaluation. Our internal audit and external evaluation matched each other.

In the four year of the project period (1994-1998), funded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the dropout rate came down to 17% compared to 49% dropout rate in the state at that time.

The project was evaluated by Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai commissioned by the Ministry of Human Resource Development that funded the project. The Government of India, the Ministry of Human Resource Development flagged Udang's success story in the EFA 2005 document presented in the HLG meeting in Brazil (pp 19; the Udang Experiment caught attention of the international media and imagination of many countries.

PHASE II

The experiment was continued beyond 1998 till 2003 even after the external funding was over due to enthusiasm of both peripatetic teachers and regular teachers in the school with marginal funding from some of our personal sources. In this phase, Udang Forum undertook a study to assess whether improved school attendance and reduced drop out improved academic performance of students. A usual matched group design was adopted. The study revealed that students of the 42 experimental schools performed only as well as their counterparts in non-project schools in academic achievement tests. We learnt for ourselves that *improved attendance is no guarantee for improved learning and improved test performance*. We realized the need for pedagogical intervention also. We decided to launch the third phase in 2003.

School Improvement Programme [SIP]

Whole school development was the agenda of SIP [new phase] that can be called the 3rd phase of the project. The 3rd Phase began in 2003 with funding support from the Barrington Educational Initiative⁸ with focus on Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) goals, namely:

- Universal Enrolment;
- Universal Attendance; and
- Universal Performance

The Forum defined its own performance parameters as 100% enrolment, 10% drop out and 60x60 performance (60% students to secure 60% marks in examination).

The Forum reconstructed its strategies for meeting the challenge of EFA Goals. Major interventions in this phase were:

- i. School Improvement Programme: The Process Intervention
- ii. Headmaster and Teacher Empowerment; and
- iii. Supervision and On-site Mentoring

⁸ A representative of Barrington Education Initiative, Sweden called on the author at his office in New Delhi and expressed its interest in working with the author. As per the statement of the BEI Rep, author was identified through Internet search. BEI's original intention was to award a few awards for good teachers to encourage them. During discussion and on understanding stage of development in Udang, it agreed to support a whole school development project.

HEADMASTER AND TEACHER EMPOWERMENT

Innovative Way

One of the cardinal principles of total quality management is staff development. Udang needed to focus on the capacity building of headmasters and teachers. Capacity building and empowerment of educational personnel have been built into the SSA with major emphasis on training of teachers. The Forum adopted this national policy directive; the difference was in the approach. Conventional practice is teacher training; training dealing mostly with content up-gradation and teaching methodologies. Teacher empowerment was redefined in Udang Forum as building self-concept, self-esteem, and confidence to take decisions and solve problems. Assumption was: a teacher with self-esteem and confidence will be able to find solutions to problems. The forum adopted a seven-pronged strategy to achieve teacher empowerment that is stated below.

- a. Managing Own Affairs: In every teacher training program sponsored by government and organized by the government officials, participating teachers take a passive role of listening to the lectures of teacher trainers, taking lunches and snacks as provided to them. They don't have any role in organizing and managing the programme. In the Forum, there is a deliberate effort in involving teachers in organization and management of their capacity building programmes. They are involved in classroom organization [e.g. choice of tables and chairs versus carpets], food management, academic coordination, audio-visual aids management, assisting trainers on white board, etc. As an example, *in one of the Udang Forum programmes, before the beginning of the programme, teachers were told the amount available for lunch and snacks for the day; they were given some time off, about half an hour, to organise management of their food. They decided the menu, identified two retired primary school teachers from the village to take charge. Despite lavish lunch, they were unable to consume the budgeted amount.*

These capacity building programs for teachers and headmasters are often attended by supervisory staff in the blocks from the state government at the invitation of the Forum. One of the supervisors, during the lunch asked the Forum leaders, 'How is it that the variety and quality of food here is so rich compared to what we provide in our departmental programs for the same or more budget allocation, and what is the logic of telling the teachers the amount available for hospitality and asking them to manage -- buying the vegetables and groceries, cooking and serving. The answer was, 'By announcing the amount we achieve transparency so that there is no leakage.

By involving them we wanted them to take their own decisions. Although it may look futile, it is part of our teacher empowerment strategy'. This is just one example; there are several other instances where they are asked to manage their own affairs including classroom practices.

b. Financial Decision Making: In such government funded schools, there is a small amount of contingency budget for chalk, duster, etc. Entire civil works, supplies are bought by the vendors commissioned by the concerned government department and supplied to the schools. The only exception is the provision of INR.500 (approx. \$10) per year per teacher for innovative teaching learning material. This amount either remains unutilized at the end of the year for the majority of the teachers or pulled together for procuring some school resources. Under the project provision, Udang Forum offered every school Rs. 10,000 for enhancing school attractiveness and improving student performance. Unlike the practice in similar government schemes, Udang Forum asked the teachers of each school, and then by teachers of a cluster of schools, say five schools, to collectively decide how they wanted to spend the amount. The only restriction imposed by the Udang Forum was: "You cannot spend any amount of this money on any construction related work" (reason was construction being expensive and there are so many missing links in the school infrastructure, this money can be spent without much thinking). They had to decide if they want to have peripatetic music and sports teacher, the items to be purchased, create the budget, go to the city (Kolkata) and buy it. Whereas all the schools created the budget and items of expenditure after long persuasion and mentoring, the majority of the schools refused to take responsibility of actually buying the items from the market. They expressed their fear of being criticised for misuse of funds. They had to be persuaded to accept the challenge; and they did wonderfully well. This was another strategy of empowerment.

c. Collective Problem Solving: The Forum initiated teachers into a journey from 'Learned Helplessness' to 'Learned Optimism'. There are several deficiencies in these rural primary schools, namely, poor infrastructure; poor student teacher ratio; multi-grade teaching; children without any home support for learning; teacher absence to attend to non-academic duties imposed by the government like election duty, census duty, and personal work, etc. During the training programme, teachers raise such problems seeking solutions from the trainers. Trainers, carefully, avoid any direct answer. Instead, the trainers would constitute smaller groups of teachers and ask them to generate alternative solutions to such practical problems. They solved problems of multi-grade teaching, attracting and retaining students, and many such others. When they

- generate solutions, they are profusely appreciated for their problem-solving skill, and advised to try it out in the school to examine whether
- d. the solution is real or there is a need to examine again. Repeated interventions of this kind help them take it upon themselves to find solutions. And, they proudly own the solution.
- e. **Appreciation and Repeated Confirmation of their Capabilities:** Linked to collective problem solving is the next strategy. Udang Forum used an inspirational model⁹, rather than a pedagogic model of teacher empowerment. In this model, teachers are appreciated citing actual episodes from their own activities and experiences. The purpose is to emboss in their mind that they are very capable, committed and have all the necessary competence to improve the quality of school. Initially, teachers found it difficult to believe in themselves. But repeated evidence of their performance and problem-solving skills helped them overcome their self-imposed limitations to improve self-concept and self-esteem. As the self-concept and self-esteem improved, teachers became more confident. They learnt to feel and behave as equals with other professionals and they displayed their new found identity. There are several incidences and episodes. In one such case, a few professors from the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur came to demonstrate e-contents for primary education. This was an outcome of a project funded to IIT by Media Lab Asia. After carefully watching the digital contents, primary school teachers engaged the IIT professors into a serious discussion on pedagogy indicating the limitations of the format of the digital contents. In another instance, the Expert Committee on Curriculum Review appointed by the State Government in 2011-12 invited teachers from this cluster for consultation and suggestions.

⁹ Secretan, Lance, *Inspirational Leadership: Destiny Calling and Cause*, The Secretan Centre Inc. 1999

Box 1: Learning Assessment Survey

One of the goals of the project is improvement in academic performance, and we need to measure periodically the progress. Although there are state run evaluation exercises, the Forum decided to conduct its own Learning Assessment Survey within the project. There was unanimity among the teachers about the need for conducting "our own tests". Teachers were familiar with three levels of cognition, namely knowledge, understanding and application. But how to test higher order thinking? They asked for some input. In an informal manner, we presented Bloom's Taxonomy (the original linear taxonomy, and not the revised matrix format by Anderson and Krathwohl in 2000) and concept and practice of 'blueprints' for setting examination papers. Following this, teachers took two exercises. In the first one, a group of teachers developed one question paper on a subject for grade four as a pilot exercise. Since a large number of teachers was involved and everyone was keen to set papers, everyone was allowed and encouraged to set papers. Hence, there were six or seven parallel test papers on the same subject. In the next workshop, they worked together and merged the multiple papers into one. The test papers covered Bengali, English, Science, Mathematics, and Environmental Studies for grade IV and General Knowledge. Compared to the normal experience of setting papers, it took them much longer time because they had to set questions according to the blueprint.

Once the question papers were ready, discussion was held on the mechanism of actually administering the tests and creating the data. Following the convention, teachers suggested that students of one school should go and appear in another school. This suggestion was rejected. Next suggestion was swapping of teachers from one school to another for invigilation. This too was not accepted. We asked, "Why either students or teachers should be swapped between the schools for learning assessment?" The response was: "Firstly, because that is the practice. And secondly, that reduces the possibility of copying". We entered into a serious dialogue whether we suffer from lack of trust in ourselves. Since this learning assessment has not been imposed by anyone from outside or from above, it is our collective decision. Why can't we take charge? If there is a copying let us also make an assessment of the degree of copying; we refrain from helping students to copy. Teachers agreed; question papers were printed at the local press in Amta; tests were conducted, scored and results were published. The extent of copying, according to the teachers' reports was less than 5%.

The tests are not compulsory for all students. This is voluntary and free of charge. Approximately 2000 4th grade students take the tests every year.

¹⁹ Tests are conducted annually every year.

This episode is a case of convergence of several strategies like taking charge of their own affairs, collective problem solving and enhancing self-esteem.

- f. Broader Exposure: Intense interaction with the teachers unveiled the gap in the information and breadth of the horizon between those who are exposed to the larger world outside and those who are restricted to the villages. It was necessary to expose the teachers to different types of thinking for creating a resonance between the developmental thinking of the opinion leaders and the field level functionaries. Udang Forum followed a two-pronged strategy to widen the horizon of rural primary school teachers. In one strategy, experts and leaders in the field of academics e.g. professors of universities, NIEPA, NCERT, heads of national and state level institutions like NIEPA, SCERT, Board of Secondary Education, Higher Secondary Council, State Open School, etc. are invited to the village to interact with the primary teachers. In the second strategy, teachers are encouraged and also supported financially to participate in national and international conferences on education held in Kolkata and New Delhi. Such interactions help open up new Vista in education.
- g. Teacher Training in Frontline Classroom Practices: When it comes to actual teacher training, the teachers are exposed to frontline curriculum and classroom practices. They are given workshops on content analysis, concept mapping, blended learning designs, etc. They are also exposed to alternative taxonomies in education, activity-based learning, etc. that are still unheard of by majority of the teachers outside this cluster. The primary school teachers in this cluster are exposed to ICT integrated education. At the courtesy of Azim Premji Foundation, the Forum has an inventory of e-contents. However, due to lack of facilities like computers/laptops and projectors, these are not used in the schools.
- h. Recognition and Performance Award: India honours teachers through national awards. However, there are only 374 awards per year for more than six million school teachers in the country; far too few for such large number of teachers. Forum, at the instance of Barrington Educational Initiative (BEI), introduced a system of recognition through performance award for innovations. The value of the award is Rs.5000/- (\$100). There are two kinds of awards-- institutional and personal. Institutional awards are given to a school for its innovative practices and individual teacher awards for personal excellence and innovativeness. For 30 schools, there are three institutional and three personal awards. Criteria for selection of schools and teachers are developed collectively by the participating teachers and the organising experts from the Udang Forum. Award is given on the basis of school evaluation; and personal performance of the teachers. Amount received for school award has to

be used for school improvement; personal award money is meant for personal expenses. In practice, however, all awardee teachers have used their award money for school improvement. This is an important indication of their empowerment and affiliation to school and education.

Nonetheless, teachers and school awards have not been found to be a motivator of the SIP goals.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME: PROCESS INTERVENTION

Primary schools are often seen as some kind of public distribution system distributing knowledge at subsidized cost (read as poor quality). This defeats the very purpose of schooling. Forum decided to approach whole school development through total quality management¹⁰ and called it School Improvement Programme (SIP). To achieve the goals of total quality, Udang Forum introduced two sub-projects *Chanchal Vidyalay* and *Swachchha Vidyalaya*. *Chanchal Vidyalay* is the pedagogical process intervention, and *Swachchha Vidyalay* is process intervention for infrastructure management.

Chanchal literally means non-quiet or even naughty. The basic idea was to shift from the 'quiet disciplined school' to a school that throbs with children's activities; that fits with the natural tendencies of the Children. Full of activities, *Chanchal* schools are designed to give back the childhood to the students. The various activities mentioned earlier were designed to contribute to this concept. In pedagogical terms, it meant introduction of activity based learning where students are active in constructing their own knowledge rather than passively listening to lectures.

Swachha means neat and clean. Under this program major emphasis was on cleanliness, hygiene, aesthetics and beautification of the school. Students and teachers actively participate in cleaning the classrooms, corridors and school compound; they plant saplings and flowering plants to decorate and improve ambience of the school. There are spillovers as reported by the teachers. Some of the students carry the message home, and insist on their parents to keep their houses clean and hygienic as they do in the school.

¹⁰ Mukhopadhyay, Marmar, *Total Quality Management in Education*, Sage, 2005

ON-SITE MENTORING: INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION BY PEERS

On-site supervision and mentoring is key to school quality improvement. Non-supervision of primary schools is a major source of deficiency in quality management in primary schools. Udang Forum introduced an innovative practice for on-site mentoring through peer supervision.

During one of the capacity building workshops in the Forum, we broached the issue how to assess whether the schools are really making any progress in terms of quality improvement. There was a consensus that it should be done. I personally shared my experience of Institutional Evaluation Project in Polytechnics.¹¹ The idea was instantly received. Headmasters of 30 project schools formed themselves into six groups, each of five Headmasters. The six teams worked for couple of days and developed a set of criteria.¹² After a pilot run, the evaluation programme was freezed to include the following items:

- School identification data
- Total staff by gender
- Teacher attendance
- Class-wise Student attendance – presence against enrolment
- Environment -- Cleanliness and beautification of classrooms, seating arrangements, office room, toilets, corridors, mid-day meal kitchen, and open space;
- Creative Activities – games, music, drawing and painting, and other activities;
- Teaching learning processes – classroom organization and decoration; teaching learning processes;
- Use of Innovative Teaching Learning Materials;
- General Observations, if any.
- Signature of the headmaster of the school and the peer supervisor.

¹¹ Many years ago, probably 1982-83, author, then as professor in TTTI Bhopal, worked on a project on institutional peer evaluation for polytechnics. The idea was simple but very powerful. Principals of a group of five polytechnics would go round and evaluate another five polytechnics on a structured evaluation proforma and schedule. Similarly another group of five will evaluate a second set of institutions. This provided an interesting mutual learning experience for the principals from each other that are rarely possible by external evaluation.

¹² When the Forum expert group offered to create a set of criteria for evaluation and appropriate instruments for data gathering, participating primary teachers resisted. 'Please give us some time. We will develop the mechanism and tools ourselves. You can always advise us then to improve'. Expert group readily accepted as this was yet another indication of teacher empowerment.

Teams visited each school observed and evaluated the schools on the set of criteria. This was followed by another workshop for reporting on the visits to schools. The most interesting aspect was the content and style of reporting. Instead of reporting their observations, particularly the deficiencies, the teams focused on the strengths of the school that they visited. They also mentioned what was lacking in their own schools compared to the schools they visited. Instead of finding fault with others, here was an effort to draw lessons for their own improvement. Only when the expert trainers asked the team to suggest further improvements, they made some observations about the possibility of improvement of certain aspects of schools.

In the project, the emphasis is on holistic development of the school as an institution. This requires a conceptual understanding of institutional structure and framework. In a large measure, a primary school as an organisation still continues to be fluid or informal organization. Through institutional evaluation, an effort is made to bring in the concept of school as a formal organization. Another important agenda is to help schools to grow together. Through inter-school visitations and discussions, Udang Forum tries to develop a collective concept which is the essence of Cluster Resource Centre.

Since this project is implemented by the Udang Forum, an NGO, the absence of the visiting team from their respective schools could not be treated as on duty. They decided to take personal leaves on the days of visits to schools. This was an indication of remarkable enthusiasm on the part of the headmasters and teachers.

Beyond this pilot experimentation, the Udang Forum looked for a more sustainable model. Three headmasters who have been associated with the project volunteered to undertake the responsibility of school visits after their superannuation. The Forum inducted another unemployed science graduate to undertake the same job. In the meanwhile number of schools that demanded to be covered under the project had gone up to 80. The group of four peer supervisors earmarked themselves 20 neighbourhood schools against each. They visit, on an average, a school once in a month compared to the visits by the inspecting staff of the government once in several years or a decade. So, firstly, Udang Forum was able to create a mechanism for supervision and mentoring. Secondly, because of repeated visits, the Forum generates a data trend on school processes and outcomes.

The simple proforma helped Forum monitor student and teacher attendance; school cleanliness, hygiene and aesthetics, co-scholastic activities, classroom processes or curriculum transactions, utilization of resources; and finally validation and authentication of the data.

Some qualitative information may be of interest.

- *Number of students in grade four is almost invariably the maximum; steadily declining with lower grades indicating the changing demography of this rural cluster.*
- *Proportion of children from minority community has grown significantly.*
- *Student and teacher attendance is not a major problem;*
- *Teacher absence is primarily due to allocation of non-academic duties like census, cattle census, panchayat, assembly and parliament elections, organization of sports at block and district levels, etc.*

Qualitative information is interesting. Schools – both teachers and students -- eagerly wait for the supervisors' visits. Students demand the supervisors to teach; teachers join the chorus. As committed good teachers, the supervisors readily respond to the demand and enjoy interacting with teachers and children. While the supervisors teach, the teachers sit at the back and observe the classroom proceedings. The headmaster also joins. The mutual acceptance and respect is such that in one of the workshops, several headmasters complained about non-visit of their school supervisor. The Forum had to clarify that 'their supervisor' was unwell for the entire month. *It is evident that the teachers and headmasters prefer their seniors with experience in primary classes than better qualified but without experience of primary school classrooms as supervisors.*

These peripatetic supervisors are not on salary. The Forum adopted a performance based approach to this issue. The Forum pays a measly sum of INR 50 (approx \$1.0) for each report duly signed by the supervisor and the headmaster. The practice has been on ground for more than three years now and has stabilized and internalized with the rural schools, teachers and headmasters.

Summary

By 2007, the dropout rate further came down to 5% and stabilized there for the last few years to reduce to 4% by 2011-12 only; enrolment went up to 100% -- No Child Left Behind; and performance went up to 60x50 matrix in achievement tests conducted by the Forum (50% students scoring more than 60% in the school subjects, but much higher in assessment conducted by the state).

OPEN SCHOOLING

The agenda of arresting school dropout was followed up with 'back to schooling' [of those who dropped out] project. A large number of young people, especially girls, dropped out at different stages of schooling because of a variety of economic, socio-cultural and educational reasons. Naturally,

they turned out to be unqualified. Udang Forum decided to bring them back to education and help them qualify in 10th and 12th board examinations. Since the majority of them are grown-up adults, and are engaged at home and work, there was no way they could go back to school. The Forum opened study centres of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS, then NOS), and Rabindra Mukta Vidyalay (RMV-West Bengal State Open School)¹³. IGNOU programmes are at undergraduate level; it has since been discontinued due to lack of availability of tutors/subject specialists. Local secondary school teachers conduct classes in the week end and provide tutorial support to the open school students. So far, 1207 women (56%) and men (44%) have qualified the 10th board examination of the RMV; and 134 (131 girls and 3 boys) have qualified in the Beautician (vocational) course of the NIOS. The Majority of the students who passed the 10th RMV examination from the Forum registered themselves in the higher secondary courses in the RMV Study Centre located at Udang High School.

Thus, those who had lost all hopes of securing a qualification have found a new opportunity to qualify themselves through flexible open learning system.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Although overwhelming emphasis was on primary education, Udang Forum undertook serious exercise in vocational education and training for the rural unskilled youth, especially school dropouts, girls and youth belonging to socially disadvantaged classes like scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and minorities, and women. Udang Forum undertook a collective assessment of the skill sets necessary for servicing needs of the community; and the skills that can help earning generation for the unemployed youth. Major effort was to couple the community needs with development of the skill sets. Effort was to match the areas of training with community needs. Forum offered training in masonry, house wiring and electrical repairs, computer education and training, repairers of TV, radio and other electronic equipments, mushroom cultivation, leaf plate making, beautician course, etc. These vocational education and training programs and projects were financially supported by Department of Electronics, and Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.

¹³ Author as Chairman of NOS and RMV, and member of several academic and non-academic committees of the IGNOU facilitated setting up the study centres at the Forum for rural reach out of these institutions as well as to serve the rural population in this area. .

More than 150 young people were trained in different vocations. These vocational skills training program has helped large number of young villagers to find earning while dramatically reducing the cost of the community for such services.

Scholarship for Brilliant Students at Risk: Educating the 3rd Child

The Educational Technology and Management Academy (ETMA) in New Delhi runs a project called *Educating the 3rd Child* for brilliant minds at risk from poor families. Forum connected ETMA. The Forum identifies brilliant students based on results of the 10th Board examination, but at risk due to poverty. Poverty is so intense that their very survival is under threat; leave alone the quality of life. By the time they complete their 10th board, they reach the age group of 16 or 17. Boys run the risk of getting pushed into the labour market to alleviate poverty of the family; girls are either married out or kept in the waiting for marriage at home. Udang Forum identifies such poor but brilliant students – brilliance based upon Board results. Each student is given a fellowship of INR 500 (approx. \$10) per month for 20 months till they complete the higher secondary education. Scholarships are distributed through bank cash transfer.

The fund is generated by ETMA through individuals contribution under Personal Social Responsibility (PSR) programme. So far, 37 students have benefited from this scholarship program. The scholarship has been extended to cover the undergraduate studies especially for those who perform brilliantly in the higher secondary examination of the state Board.

Other Educational Activities

Forum has initiated host of other activities. A few other important activities are (a) a model preschool for holistic development of the rural children; (b) Rural Talent Nursery for primary school pass outs, (c) Mass Education through Video+TV (Vivek Darpan), (d) music education and education in drawing and painting, (e) computer education, and (e) education in sports and games, especially in soccer through a football academy set up by the Forum.

ICT for Rural Transformation

Technology intervention, especially information intervention, is a powerful tool for rural transformation. At the initiative of the Forum, Udang is one of the first villages in India to have ICT intervention.

It all began with the organisation of annual National Conference of All India Association for Educational Technology (AIAET) 14 at Udang in 1986. During this conference, author organized demonstration of computers in Udang High School (the conference venue) with the help of two major companies, namely HCL and PCL. Villagers showed immense interest; they literally jammed the demonstration centres for eight to ten hours in all three days of the conference.

At the end of the conference, several primary and secondary teachers expressed interest to learn computers. We discussed with the vice-principal of the Bengal Engineering College who attended and addressed the Conference, and took fancy at our 'arrogance' and 'adventurism'. He readily agreed to host a 15-day training workshop for 20 teachers completely free of charge. Twenty primary and secondary teachers were sent for training. Once they came back, they realised that without access to a computer, they could not practise and it would not take much time to forget the knowledge and lose the skills. We decided to buy a computer-- the cheapest was the single motherboard computer. We collected approximately INR 8000 (then \$400). We reached Kolkata to buy the computer. The lowest configuration of computer was quoted for INR 12,500 (\$625). After a lot of negotiation, especially after knowing our mission, the dealer offered to sell the computer at cost price of INR 10,000 (\$500). We had exhausted our resources. We could not mobilise more money. As we were about to leave, the dealer called us back and offered the computer at whatever money we were able to collect.

When we asked him how do we pay the difference of INR 2500, he offered the difference as his personal contribution. On further questioning 'why he should contribute to a project in our village', he made a beautiful statement that must be shared. After knowing the author's personal earning and contribution in this fundraising, he said, "Your contribution is almost 10% of your one-month salary; my contribution is not even 2.5% of my monthly earning. I have enough space to profit. What you are doing, I cannot do. So, let me contribute and join your mission." We happily carried the first computer to the village, and housed it in a mud hut with a tin roof with a false ceiling made of bamboo pieces to protect from heat.

Several months down the lane, the Computer Society of India was hosting its annual conference in Kolkata. One of the themes was on rural computing. The Vice-principal of the BE College was one of the speakers drew attention of the Convention on our experiment at Udang. We received a phone call from the director of Department of Electronics, Government of India. The discussion led to the project developing rural database; then to

¹⁴ As secretary of the AIAET, author brought this conference to Udang.

computer education and setting up a centre for training NGO activists on computers, especially database management. The Forum never looked back.

The Forum offers computer education to rural youth; to talented students in the Rural Talent Nursery, Teachers and Toddlers in the nursery classes.

Today, the Forum has several desktops, laptops, netbooks, printer, et cetera. It has now added telephone, fax and Internet facility, duplication and lamination facility, Television Set, overhead projector and LCD projector, public address system, a science lab, and a heavy duty generator set, etc. In a limited way, the Forum is well equipped with technology.

HEALTH

There are several activities in the health sector, designed largely to create awareness and diagnose rather than providing actual treatment (Figure 3).

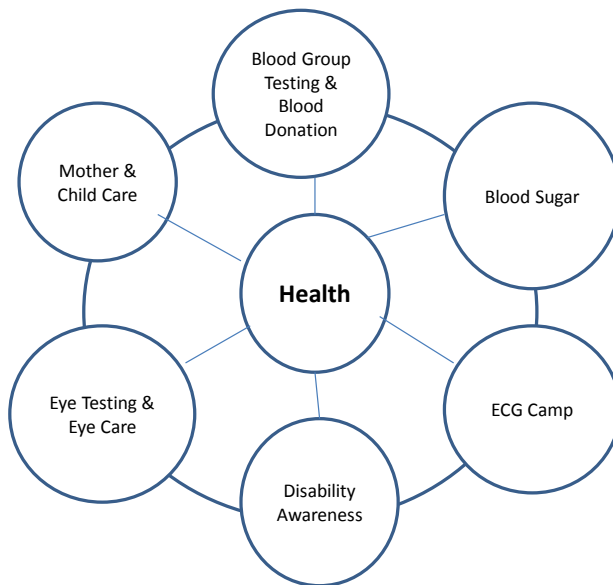


Figure 3: Various types of Health Services

Activities in the health sector were triggered off due to two major reasons. Firstly, the community does not have qualified physician. A few students from the local schools who qualified in medicine migrated out to the city and abroad. The health services in this area are largely managed by unqualified and untrained quacks. Even now (2012), situation is no different.

The second triggering off point was relocation of (Late) Prabar Mukherjee, one of the soccer players and coach from Udang. His initial concern was about the health of the children attending schools that slowly moved to cover people of all ages, especially senior citizens, and women among them. Following are some of the activities in the health sector.

Blood Testing and Blood Donation

22nd January, 2000 was a special day for the village. As many as 523 young men and women stood enriched with information so vital to their life. In a camp, their blood groups were tested and they were informed. Although it appears routine for urban populations, this was

the first instance of blood testing for the villagers since Indian independence. Another associated service is blood sugar testing. In these camps, usually about hundred villagers turn up for testing blood sugar. Blood group testing continues.

Concern for Thalassemia

Sponsored by and at the instance of Thalassemia Guardians' Association, the Thalassemia Carrier Test was carried out on 520 villagers on 22nd February, 2003. Blood donation was necessitated by the shortage of blood for the Thalassemia patients especially during the summer. The state-run mechanism was far too inadequate; and also the beneficiaries used to be decided on political considerations. The appeal from the parents of such children was unbearable. Using its human network, Udang Forum decided to collect blood through blood donation camps. Udang camp is held on first Sunday of April every year. On an average, these camps generate 125 to 150 packs of blood¹⁵ every year. The blood collected in these camps cannot be sold; it has to be provided free of charge to the needy Thalassemia patients. Against this blood donation, the Forum gets a good number of donor cards. These Donor cards come handy in cases of crisis. There have been cases when people have knocked at the door in the dead of the night to collect donor cards for the ailing patients in the hospital who need to be given blood immediately.

Disability Awareness Camp

A camp was organized to create awareness among the villagers about various types of disabilities and various schemes of the government. On this occasion, 101 villagers with various types of disabilities were provided with various types of support.

¹⁵ Author produced a documentary film on the Blood Donation Camp (April, 2012); copy is available free of charge from the Forum.

Eye Testing and Care

Udang Forum introduced eye testing and eye care in 2005. The eye testing and eye care camp is held once every month. A dedicated ophthalmologist provides voluntary service. On an average, more than 400 people, mostly senior citizens of this rural society benefit from such camps every year. Eye testing camps, naturally, leads to identification of patients who need glasses (spectacles). Wherever the patient is unable to purchase the glasses due to poverty, Forum mobilises funds and helps in getting the glasses. There are cases of cataract that needs operation. So far, more than 200 villagers have been identified to have cataract. Udang Forum has facilitated operation, free of charge, of more than 100 patients tying up with Ramakrishnabati Eye Hospital, Jagadishpur, and Howrah.

Mother and Child Camp

The primary objective of Mother and Child Care camp is to provide competent medical advice to the mothers with small children by qualified medical practitioners. Each camp is conducted by a qualified gynecologist and a pediatrician. On an average, these camps are attended by about 70 to 80 mothers and 100 to 125 children. Medical support is provided by Association of Medical Women's Mission Hospital.

ECG Camp

Another initiative is the ECG camp to test the potential cases of heart disease. The ECG camps are also held once every year, and more than 100 people turn up in every Camp. Such camps have identified potential cases of heart problem. Though a few lost their lives due to identification of heart problem at advanced stage, many lives have been saved through these camps due to early diagnosis allowing time for treatment.

All health camps are organised like a festival where the organizers, medical team and the participants join in a community lunch. The entire cost of the health camps are raised locally.

SPORTS AND GAMES, ART AND CULTURE

Sports and games, especially soccer and art and culture like music and dramatics are quite common in this community. Specially designed music and dramatic activities in education had its origin in the music and sports program in the primary schools mentioned earlier. This brought all those who have talents in music together. One of the music teachers took the initiative to organise music activities in the Udang Forum. The activities include musical programmes and presentations on different occasions. But more importantly, Udang Forum started music education program for the rural children.

This enthusiasm in music attracted another villager trained in fine arts. He also started a course on drawing and painting for the young children of the villages. Now, more than 35 children regularly attend either the music or the painting classes, or both.

The Udang Forum celebrates all the national days and festivals with lot of enthusiasm involving other institutions and organizations in the village.

WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT

Being a poor community, a large number of families used to borrow money from the moneylenders; and got exploited. Often, such money lenders charge them 2 to 3% interest per month, or 24 to 36% per year. Forum initiated a self-help group of women. More than 600 women have joined this self-help group. Each member contributes INR 10 (\$0.2) every month. The money is deposited in a bank. Whenever a member-women need to borrow, she now borrows from their collective deposits. Against this loan, borrowers are charged as per rules of the bank. The cases of borrowing from moneylenders have been totally neutralized. Total annual borrowing is approximately 30% of total deposits. The rate of loan repayments is very high with very negligible defaults. In other words, the Self-help group is totally self-sufficient for the purpose for which it was set up. However, the group as a whole or its members do not use the deposits for any productive and earning generation purposes.

RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Udang Forum has made some modest contribution in rural infrastructure development. Among various initiatives are: the (a) Forum Building comprising three halls, a large porch, kitchen, store, bath-toilet facilities, power back up, photocopying, telephone-fax-internet, computer-LCD Projector-OHP, Science Lab, Mini-Library, etc. (b) an open air theatre at Udang High School, (c) four additional rooms and a hall at Udang Girls Primary School, (d) reconstruction of Peer Baba's Mazar – a Muslim shrine, (e) a children's park, (f) a play (football) ground and (f) reconstruction of a century old village temple. Although the Forum did not spend in any of these infrastructure projects, it managed and thereby indirectly contributed to cost savings on supervision and management of the projects.

PROJECT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Howrah Rural Teachers Forum is a trusteeship society registered under Society's Registration Act of West Bengal. There are five trustees, and a few elected members on its executive committee. Because of its social service,

the Forum enjoys exemption under Income Tax Act; it has also been certified for receiving foreign grants under FCRA. Projects are organised and managed collectively by members and volunteers without any real formal structure. Author as the founding chairman of the Forum, provides direction and guidance to the rural transformation project. 'Project Director' is formally used only in cases of externally funded projects only where it is a legal requirement of the funding agencies.

There is complete devolution of powers and responsibilities. It can be observed from the way project evolved with lots of spillovers at the enthusiasm of the members of the Forum and the rural community. The original (formal) project of arresting school dropout led to setting up rural talent nursery for talented students among the primary school pass outs; concept, concern and focus on drop out led to creating opportunities for those who dropped out long ago through open learning system. From one to another; the Forum set up the Preschool to experiment with high quality preschool education for rural children. These 'old dropouts' and the 22 peripatetic music and sports teachers brought rural youth into focus warranting introduction of vocational education. Concern for health of the children was the beginning point that unfolded into various health camps for the adults, and so on.

Activities in each area are essentially triggered off by serious (vested) interest of one or more members of the Forum depending upon their interests and concerns. Each sector is managed by a team of volunteers led by one of them based on their areas of interest. There are informal groups on education, health, sports and games, women's development, and art and culture. However, in actual project, especially event management, all interest groups work together as one team. In terms of management structure and processes, process of devolution is not top-down. Instead, it unfolds at a bottom-up process through pro-active participation of the members.

Different components of the projects have been funded through various sources. These include external funding by various ministries and departments of the Government of India, and Barrington Educational Initiative. External funding has supported the project activities in education including vocational education. Activities in Health, Women Development, Art and Culture, Sports and Games, and Rural Infrastructure have been supported by local mobilization. Those who can afford contribute money; others offer voluntary services.

CONCLUSION

This rural transformation programme has evolved spontaneously rather than with a preconceived design and notion. The origin of this rural development movement was the concern of a few idea leaders from the community itself. Programmes and activities have been added without prior planning to provide opportunity for enthusiastic villagers to participate and contribute. In the process, the concept of 'teacher' stands enlarged to include all those who are interested in rural transformation. This is naturally increasing the diversity while involving larger number of people in this movement.

THE AUTHOR

Prof. Marmar Mukhopadhyay (born in Udang and educated at Udang High School), to begin with was a village school teacher. He then taught in colleges, universities, regional and national institutions. He headed three major national and state institutions in India (National Open School, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi and Rabindra Mukta Vidyalaya, Kolkata); led several international NGOs like ICDE (Oslo) as Vice-President (Asia), IMAGE (Washington, DC) as a Member of Steering Committee; and built several non-government organisations in India for social action programmes.

He has been involved in India's policy making, planning and implementation in education at the highest level. Mukhopadhyay is an author, educational filmmaker, speaker, and trainer with several publications and educational films to his credit.

Marmar, founding president of the Udang Forum brought his learning at national and international levels to bear upon and improvise rural transformation in this area through his commitment to the community and intellectual demand of a social researcher.

BRIEF PERSONAL NOTE

Although there is a tradition of social activism in the village cultivated in the school and later transferred to local clubs and organizations, these were mostly for crisis and disaster management. I engineered the organized effort of holistic development and transformation as a mark of my commitment to the community and intellectual demand of a social researcher. Whenever or wherever I worked and in whichever capacity, my talisman was my village – will it work in the village. The project of arresting rural dropout began as an experiment on effect of implementation of the national policy on education (1986) in letter and spirits. I was deeply involved in the formulation of Indian National Policy on Education in 1986 and later. Secondly, I tried and brought various innovative programmes designed the national level to the village to serve the community. Whatever I learned through my international engagements I tried to bring it to the village. Thirdly, I made a deliberate attempt to create convergence so that the benefits are not just an additive. Fourthly, inspired by Sri Aurobindo and other great minds, I spend my book royalties and earning from consultancy assignments for my village work, especially in developing rural infrastructure and supporting brilliant students from poor homes.

CHAPTER NINE

EMPOWERMENT OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN GUJARAT STATE OF INDIA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

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INTRODUCTION

India is a country of villages as the majority of its population lives in villages and far-flung remote areas. The interesting aspect is that every region of the country though connected with the cities now; however, still possesses its own peculiar traditional ethos. Also most of the rural communities/Tribals are still devoid of modern facilities like education, electricity, proper drinking water, health care, ample transportation, etc. But the lack of education in many of the rural belts of India is proving fatal and acting as the breeding ground for social vices, evils and paving the way to anti-social/national activities.

Education enhances ones competence level to cope up better in physical and social environments, Bourdieu, an educational sociologist refers it to as cultural capital and argues that it is the dominant culture known as “cultural capital” because, via the educational system it can be translated into wealth and power, which a rural community is usually devoid of despite possessing abundant resources and man power. It can transform the rural/tribal communities of India by: Ensuring the upward social mobility among people, by liberating them though slowly from the shackles of casteism, groupism and superstitious life ways. Further education will ensure opportunities for functional employment thereby empowering rural folk for more economic opportunities, growth and development and can thus lead to the change in the whole map of poor and downtrodden rural landscape.

This paper discusses the empowerment of tribal women in Gujarat through education and skill development as education, skills development and training are central to agricultural and rural employment especially the tribals. It prepares mostly young people for work in the formal and informal sector in rural areas and thus plays an important role in poverty alleviation. The better the training and the more refined the skills in terms of human capital, higher the income and returns leading toward the better rural life and

socio-economic structure. This goes without saying that India has the second largest tribal population in the world and its women continue to be under-represented in formal business training programmes thus limiting their employment options, economic returns and long term career development. Consequently, more disadvantaged, poorer and discriminated the women in any society, lesser the development index and poorer the growth and progress of that society. The fact is despite being unskilled, poor, suppressed or discriminated; women still try to contribute to family income either directly or indirectly. Poor and vulnerable women are usually more interested in skills training that meets their immediate 'practical gender needs' as opposed to longer term, "strategic gender needs" that directly tackle the basic underlying causes of female subordination (Moserm, 1989).

Women are often concentrated in handicrafts, basic food processing and sale which are traditionally considered to be women's domain. Women also show a propensity to pursue micro-enterprises and homestead farming activities (The World Bank, FAO, IFAD, 2008). Skills training, increased growth, productivity and innovation, in particular for the informal sector are linked with poverty re-education. (Fluitman, 2002). Skills development improves output, quality, diversity and occupational safety and improves health, thereby increasing incomes and livelihoods of the poor. It also helps to develop social Capital and strengthens knowledge about informal sector associations, rural organizations and governance. According to human capital theory, the better educated the agricultural labor, the higher their productivity (Atchoarena, et. al., 2003).

CONSTITUTIONAL¹ PROVISIONS OF TRIBAL

The constitution has given more than 20 articles on the redressed and upliftment of underprivileged with policies on positive discrimination and affirmative action with reference to S.T.

- Article 14 confers equal rights and opportunities to all
- Article 15 prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of sex, religion, race, caste etc;
- Article 15 (4) States to make special provisions for advancement of any socially educationally backward classes;
- Article 16 (4) empowers the state to make provisions for reservation in appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens, which in the opinion of state, is not adequately represented.

¹ The Constitution of India is the supreme law of India, containing 450 articles in 22 parts, 12 schedules and 94 amendments.

- Article 46 state to promote with special cares the educational and economic interests of the weaker section, especially the ST and protects the social injustice and all form of exploitation.
- Article 275 grant-in aid for promoting the welfare of ST and raising the level of administration
- Article 330 - Seats shall be reserved in the House of the People for - Article 332 Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of the States 332,335 stipulates the claims that the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.
- Article 244(1) tribal welfare communities to be setup for the welfare of the tribes.
- Article 22(2) 73rd and 74th amendments - to ensure effective participation of tribal in the process of planning and decision making.
- Extension to scheduled Areas Act 1996. Amendments of Constitution are extended to the Scheduled Areas through Panchayats.

These constitutional provisions of the Government of India helped in the development of the tribes and their education.

THE PROSPECT OF THE TRIBAL'S OF GUJARAT & GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES

The State of Gujarat comprises of a total of 43 Talukas in 12 Scheduled Tribe dominant districts of total population, the population of scheduled tribes (ST also called 'tribal' and 'adivasi'²) is 15%, i.e. about 75 lakhs. In Gujarat 28 scheduled tribes are enlisted and of them 8 are primitive tribes, mainly belong to Gir, Barda and Alech forests (mainly Junagadh and Jamnagar district in western Gujarat) and Ahmadabad district in central Gujarat. About 21 tribes are spread over 12 districts (north-eastern belt) in Gujarat. The major problems of the tribes in north Gujarat (Banaskantha, Sabarkantha, Panchmahal, Dahod and Vadodara) are – lower level of literacy, high incidences of sickle cell anemia, unemployment, high degree of migration and no access to forest or forest produce. The tribes of south Gujarat (Bharuch, Narmada, Surat, Tapi, Valsad, Navsari, Dangs districts) have reported higher level of literacy but they face similar set of problems, i.e. high incidences of sickle cell anemia, unemployment, high degree of migration and little access to forest or forest produce.

² Adivasi means Aborigines or Native

To ensure a better quality of life for the tribal population, the Constitution of India has advocated the policy of positive discrimination and affirmative action. For this purpose the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) Strategy has been adopted for all round development of tribal areas since Fifth Five-Year Plan. Under the TSP approach, almost entire tribal inhabited area of Gujarat has been covered. Specially empowered Project Administrators have been appointed to carryout development programmes in these areas. The TSP approach ensures allocation of fund for tribal areas from State Plan in proportion to the ST population in the State. State of Gujarat had earmarked 15.85% of its budget for the development of tribal areas during 2008-09. The Government of Gujarat has taken steps like launching Joint Forest management (JFM), Vanbandhu Yojana and such development programmes but its effect is limited in providing employment and better quality of life. Panchayati Raj Extension to Scheduled Areas Act, 1998 (PESA) was expected to provide opportunity to tribal's for local self-governance but it has not been implemented by the government. In this situation, tribal development has remained centralized and largely government dependent. Unfortunately, the industrial houses have not thought of engaging the tribal educated youth meaningfully in respective units.

Towards accomplishment of the said objective and bringing qualitative change in the lives of tribal people, the State Government is implementing and further planning to implement several large scale projects with the help of commercial partners like private sector units, cooperative and public sector undertakings to double the income of ITDP talukas in next five years with the involvement of BPL families as major participants. This goal is now feasible due to enhanced funding under TASP, high economic growth rate of the State, increased opportunities in dairy, horticulture and service sectors, and involvement of private sector organizations on PPP model. Government has realized the need and importance of private sector participation in developmental activities for qualitative results.

THE SKILL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE BY THE TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

The Government of Gujarat is one of the Chief Minister's Ten Point Programmes to enable tribal people to upgrade their skills in order to get sustainable employment and thus increase their incomes. Skill development initiative includes various types of training programmes, involving both conventional and non-conventional subjects, varying in duration and cost. These training programmes are implemented through NGOs and institutions having expertise in their respective fields. With a view to understanding Training for aged tribals especially women is emphasized in order to help

them lead an independent and respectable life. As in any other case, tribal or not, aged women feel depressed and hence attention is given to them and are given proper medical aid, diet etc.

Tribal Welfare Association has been giving much importance to equip tribal youth and women with alternative skills to supplement and augment their income and employment and to fulfill the community needs with locally available raw materials and human resources towards optimum use. Some of the important skill training programmes in equipping tribal youth and women are: tailoring, embroidery, sanitary pads, cooking snacks, painting potteries, etc. Women training programmes on eco-environmental issues, socio-economic and cultural aspects have found its effect in women taking up issues affecting them, through collective action. The importance of such issues and problems are - women asserting property rights, free choice of their would be husbands, organizing women against violence on women etc. Women training programmes have been effective to a great extent and now the women sangams activities are gaining momentum with steady improvements in small savings and loan schemes with support of TWA.

The farm forestry programme helps in empowerment of women; they are benefited by the easy availability of employment during the dry season. As a result migration of women to nearby industrial towns has come down to some extent. Nurseries for supplying seedlings to farm forestry and wasteland development programme are managed and run by villagers under the guidance of village institutions (both men's and women's village institutions) are allotted to poor women of the villages. Women have gained tremendously from this mini-enterprise in the form of economic as well as social gains. It helps build their confidence and instill the spirit of entrepreneurial capacity in them. Two women nursery raisers from a remote tribal village participated actively and earned a lot of appreciation at a workshop held in this connection at Ahmadabad. Their knowledge of the problems and prospects of nursery rising as a profitable venture for tribal women was quite a revelation to the experts present in the workshop. Its aim was that women should involve actively in each and every stage of the farm forestry programme.

DANGS DISTRICT: A BRIEF PROFILE



Dang (also known as The Dangs) is a district in the state of Gujarat in India. It is predominantly tribal area with sparse population and rich forest cover. The administrative headquarter/ Taluka of the district is located in Ahwa. Dangs is located in the southern part of the state. To the north and west lie Surat and Navsari districts whereas to its east and south are the districts of Maharashtra. It lies between 20.39 degrees to 21.5 degrees North latitudes and 72.29 degrees to 73.51 degrees East longitudes. It is comprised of 311 villages and has an area of 1764 sq. km.

Table 1: The Dangs District Rural Population 2011

Description	Rural
Population (%)	89.11 %
Total Population	202,074
Male Population	100,868
Female Population	101,206
Sex Ratio	1003
Child Sex Ratio (0-6)	965
Child Population (0-6)	36,696
Male Child(0-6)	18,672
Female Child Percentage	17.81 %
Literates	124,229
Male Literates	68,869
Female Literates	55,360
Average Literacy	75.12 %
Male Literacy	83.79 %
Female Literacy	66.55 %

Source: Census survey 2011.

The total population was 226,769 as per provisional figures of the Census 2011 compared to 186,792 in 2001. The Dangs district population constitutes 0.38% of Gujarat's population. It is totally a Scheduled Tribe [ST] area; about 94% populations in the district are Scheduled Tribe. The sex ratio of girls per 1000 boys was recorded as 1003 i.e. an increase of 20 points from the 2001 Census which puts it at 945.

In education, the Dangs district has an average literacy rate of 76.8%. Male and female literacy were 84.98 and 68.75% respectively. About every village has a primary school. Dangs district has secured 14th rank in overall literacy rate with 76.80% out of 26 districts in Gujarat. Gandhinagar is on top with the male literacy rate at 93.59 %

and Surat has 1st position in the female literacy rate with 81.0%. The Dangs rank is 15th in male literacy rate (84.98%) and 12th in female literacy (68.75%) out of 26 districts in Gujarat.

Dangs is one of the two districts in the country having more than 80% rich forest-cover. With very small and uneconomic holdings, the majority of the cultivators barely manage to survive for few months of the year on the crops harvested. The agricultural laborers find some employment only during the agricultural season. Large numbers migrate in semi-bonded conditions to Surat district to work as cane-cutters in the sugar co-operatives.

Table 2: Tribal groups of the Dang

Tribe	Percentage of population
Konkana	51.0 %
Bhil	25.8 %
Varli	14.7 %
Others (Kotwalia, Kathodi, etc.)	8.5 %

Source: District census 2001

The entire district is tribal dominated with 98% of the population comprised of tribals. Of the total population, 73.84 % falls in the BPL category. Although the district is mainly inhabited by 13 different tribes, about two third of the tribal population consist of Konkana and Bhil. There are three ethnic tribes identified as Primitive Tribe Group (PTG) also residing in the district: the Kotwalia, Kathodi and Kolcha. This paper brings out the cases of successful tribal women belonging Bhil tribe. The training received by these women and the positive educational and economic changes that has happened to them after undergoing the training and developing skills for their livelihood.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF BHILS IN DANGS DISTRICT

The Bhil tribe is a homogeneous group with their own leadership, laws and customs. Bhils are the original inhabitants of this area, at one time they were organized under a powerful chief. Under the system of chiefdom, Bhils were not subjected to elaborate system of administration but they were socially economically and politically autonomous. They led a nomadic life and were dependent on hunting and agriculture. They worship various spirits which according to their belief inhabit their villages and forests. Most of them have no land, and whoever has, manage to get one crop in a year, i.e. the monsoon crop. The vast majority of the population is made up of landless poor and unskilled people who have few opportunities for full-time employment. Villagers work the land, owned by a handful of upper caste families. As agricultural activity is seasonal and ceases in the winter months the employees are underemployed. Hence many of them switch over for a living to subsistence farming around their homes and are involved in local trade that is generally not profitable. They belong to many of the lower castes and tribes that are categorized by the Indian Government as 'Other Backward Classes' (OBC). The development of the region is possible if the women were uplifted and could contribute to the success of their family and community. The effect of empowerment of women creates a powerful influence on the norms, values and finally the laws that govern these communities (Page and Czuba, 1999).

CHALLENGES AND WINDS OF CHANGE

The first and foremost challenge to the Bhil (tribe) of Dangs district is that they are still not much exposed to the outside world and are confined to their community only. Therefore living in their cocoon only and thus has witnessed hardly any socio cultural encounters. Their entire universe hence is their own community, and by virtue of this scenario, social mobility, occupational diversity, poverty alleviation, change and development, change in mindset, education and economic prosperity are still new concepts for them amidst their own traditional setup that has not altered sufficiently till the recent past.

The changes taking place in the field of science and technology, development, etc, are laying their impact on the Indian society and the feeble winds of change have started laying their influences on the Dangs tribal's as well. The educated community leaders of Bhils are seriously concerned about the educational and economic development of their community. If we closely analyze functioning of educated tribal's, we notice two traits of transformation. One group of educated tribal argues that tribal's should reform themselves with the mainstream society. The other group of tribal's wants to maintain its tribal identity. Recently the tribal's of Dangs have shown a lot of change in their outlook to cherish educational development programmes carried out in their areas. Their children definitely get encouraged to join the boarding schools. The girls are doing much better in the field of education.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

There are many governmental agencies, non-governmental agencies (specially the Christian missionaries and Hindu groups) and the corporate sector that are working for the upliftment of the area. The goal of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is to embrace responsibility and encourage a positive impact through its activities on the environment, consumers, employees, communities, stakeholders and all other members of the public sphere. Furthermore, CSR-focused businesses would proactively promote the public interest by encouraging community growth and development. In this paper we seek to explore how the Corporate Social Responsibility undertaken by the Bank of Baroda has been successful in the empowerment of rural women living in highly patriarchal and traditional societies. Bank of Baroda has a training centre at Ahwa and it offers Training to the tribal's of this district. Tribals from different villages come to this training centre at Ahwa and avail of all the facilities provided by the Training institute.

The Bank of Baroda (BOB) founded by The Maharaja of Baroda, Sir Sayajirao Gaekwad III, on 20 July 1908 in the princely state of Baroda in Gujarat. It is the third largest bank in India. The bank, along with 13 other

major commercial banks of India, was nationalized on 19 July 1969, by the government of India. Baroda Grameen Para marsh Kendra³ (BGPK) – is another initiative undertaken by the Bank to help the rural community by providing Credit Counseling, financial literacy and other services like information on the prices of agricultural products, scientific farming, etc. It has established 52 BGPKs in 2010. Yet another initiative is the establishment of **Baroda Swarozgar Vikas Sansthan**⁴ (BSVS) for imparting free training to unemployed youth for gaining self-employment and entrepreneurship skill so that they can help improve their family's economic status and thus give a boost to the local economic status in those locations. Until now, 25 (BSVS) have been established by the Bank in which more than 37,000 youth have been trained and around 22,000 have gained self-employment. Furthermore, a special thrust is laid by the Bank in financing SC/ST under various government sponsored schemes namely Swaranjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Swarna Jayanti Shahar Rojgar Yojana (SJSRY), Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), etc.

Under the guidance of the Bank of Baroda, Krushi Vigyan Kendra, Waghai (Dangs district) provides extension services in the district. It also plans and conducts need based production oriented short duration courses for farmers, farm women and rural youth and imparts vocational training to unemployed rural youths and school dropouts for the self-employment. It has developed and maintained instructional farm and demonstration unit (vermin compost) for training purpose. The bank organizes Extension activities between scientists and youth which include frontline demonstration, Vocational training, Krushimela, Khedut Shibir, Training (on Campus) Field training (off Campus) Agricultural exhibition etc. A few NGOs in the district are also providing extension services.

The agro-climatic conditions prevailing in the district are suitable for cultivation of fruits like Mango, Cashew, Banana, Custard Apple (Sitaphal), Sapota (Chikoo), Aonla, Lime, and vegetables like Potato, Onion, Brinjal, Ladies finger, Carrots etc. There is a Govt. Medicinal plants collection centre in the district. The raw materials for different medicines are collected at the Govt. Centre. So short duration training is given by the different departments of the government. Over 1000 women have been trained in the making of Nagli papadi and other Nagli preparations by NGOs and TDO under RSVY programme. The activity is mostly under taken on group basis

³ Baroda grameen para marsh Kendra is counseling provided by the Bank officials to the tribal and rural youth.

⁴ Baroda swarozgae vikas sansthan is a Scheme that covers all aspect of self-employment like capacity building, subsidy, infrastructure facility, credit, skill up gradation, insurance and marketing.

by Self Help Groups (SHG) Around 100 SHGs are engaged in the activity. The existing SSI units mainly engaged in activities like garments manufacturing, wood work, bamboo craft, cane work, paper & paper mash, metal work, maintenance and repair works of electrical machinery / oil engines / transport vehicles, etc. All the youth trained under various training programs under Capacity Building Component of RSVY should be provided guidance and sponsorship for establishing their own units under various trades / skills learnt by them. The training given by these institutions is not enough as the population of Dangs 7.5 million people, so there is a need based training and collaboration with other departments and agencies.

In the district of **Dangs in Gujarat, Bank of Baroda** with its head office and training centre at Ahwa has been working for the development of the tribals. Training to youth in different areas are given based on the availability of where job opportunities. The training needs are also consulted with the village community. The trainings are either given at the centre or in their villages depending upon the program. The programs are fully financed and the trainees are provided with all the basic facilities. After the training the feed- back also is taken. A helping hand is rendered even after completion of the programs.

The main focus of this paper is on the training received by the tribal Bhil women in the Dangs district. The following table shows the different programs conducted by BSVS – Ahwa. It gives the picture of the training programs, number of participants, and duration.

Table 3: Training programme for the Tribal (Bhil) Women of Dangs District

Batch No.	Name of Training	Village	Duration	Total No. Trainees
1	Cooking	Ahwa	4 weeks	25
2	Incense stick making	Vangan	2 weeks	34
3	Sanitary pad making	Ahwa	3 weeks	25
4	Farm forestry	Borkhet	1 month	15
5	Stitching	Koshimda	2 weeks	18
6	Organic food	Godadia	3 weeks	22
7	Pashupalan	Kakshala	3 weeks	21
8	Cooking	Gadvahir	2 weeks	13
9	Snack making	Nimpada	1 week	15
10	Pashupalan	Mahalpada	3 days	15
11	Snack making	Subir	3 weeks	22
12	Stitching	Kakshala	4 weeks	21
13	Stitching/Sewing	Gadhav	2 weeks	13
14	Pashupalan	Kutarna Chya	1 week	15
Total:				274

Source: Annual report 2008-09 Bank of Baroda

MAJOR EFFECTS

- Training centre Ahwa trained altogether 274 trainees from 100 % tribal Villages of Dangs District. The women's representation was 100 percent. It is not very easy for women without explicit family support to be away from their homes for relatively long periods of time. Also since women are less exposed than men, travelling to the different villages for the training workshops were a major hurdle. But still the women were successful in receiving training.
- 70% of the trainees are involved in the development process: the nature of involvement depended very much on the motivation and capacity of the ex-trainees. Some are actively working as volunteers; others are working in their individual capacity in their own villages. About 10 of them are absorbed within the government structure as lower level functionaries
- Increased efficiency in literacy levels of all those who went through the training process. This was evident from the nature of presentations made when they were called upon to do so during the workshops. This was also clear from their increased capacity to read materials and write reports in the local language by the end of the training programme.
- Facilitation of networking among the tribal women and solidarity development as they interact with each other on several platforms.

SUCCESS STORIES

CASE-1: Village Ghadhav

Empowerment Through Stitching and Papad Making

Tallika (name changed), 19, is a resident of Ahwa village. She belongs to a tribal family. She belonged to a very poor family and depends on daily wages for livelihood. She is now a mother of an illegitimate baby girl born out of her love affair with a tribal boy, who impregnated her but never married. Her teen age pregnancy dragged the whole family in mud and even villagers excommunicated with the family. She was abandoned by her family but she gave birth to her fatherless child, because of her decision her whole family was asked to go out of the village, somehow the family managed to stay in the outskirts of the village.

Tallika joined the training institute and learnt sewing and stitching in the training programme organized by the Bank of Baroda in Ghadhav. She underwent a 48 day training where the group of trainees not only learnt the skill of stitching and tailoring but communication, marketing and decision making skills also. Focusing on individual development the institution also offered as a part of the training module topics like personal hygiene and sanitation, stress management and interpersonal relationships. The Bank of Baroda distributed sewing machines to all the women who successfully completed their 48 days training to start their livelihood.

Tallika earned her living by stitching blouses and frocks for the tribal women and children. She also learnt the *Papad* making from the locally available product *nagli*. She with the help of three other friends tried to convince other women of her village to join the training institute and earn some money for their living. They were successful in it and today under their guidance total 10 SHGs are formed. This has brought a change in lives of these women today there are economically independent. This comprehensive training increased the confidence of these women and immediately after completing the course, they started a small tailoring unit. She shared that villagers from the nearby areas also come to get their clothes stitched with them. She expressed her happiness and said she feels empowered and confident. They are now proud to be able to stand on their feet. As people in the area celebrate Tribal fare in a big way, these women got good offers for stitching clothes and their skill and adherence to time pleased the people of the area so their business improved within no time. In just two months they were able to do a business worth Rs 15,000 which increased their confidence. Recently, the two tribal welfare residential schools of that area agreed to give them orders for stitching the school uniforms for 600 children. This is how this poor tribal girl is now economically independent to educate her girl child.

CASE-2: Village Borkhet Empowerment Through Farm Forestry

Mangi Ben is also a tribal women from Borkhet village. She had no means of livelihood before she underwent training in farm forestry⁵. She had been an extension volunteer (EV) where the Farm Forestry advisory Service provided her with information and advice about growing commercial trees on farms, with an emphasis on integrating trees into farming systems, to maximize total productivity and enhance sustainability. She was promoted to become a master extension volunteer (MEV) and was also successful in mobilizing her fellow women. Furthermore she has been successful in helping women realize their urgent needs like those of firewood and timber for house construction. Consequently, women have been able to express their need and have been acting on preemptive ways of avoiding the crisis. The highlights of Mangi Ben's extension methodology are as follows:

- Mobilising tribal women for plantation drive
- Sensitising women folk about the rampant forest degradation
- Preparing women for creating sustainable sources of livelihood and homemaking be that widespread plantation drive etc and fostering in them the need for a collective involvement including male folk for the environmental cause
- Explaining them the correct way of plantation and benefits from timely completion of all planting operation.
- She is a success story of farm forestry programme in her village Borkhet by virtue of this training she has received and the confidence she has gained.

ASSESSMENT AND IMPACT

The monitoring of Skill Training Programmes is organized mainly by the following means:

- (a) Quarterly and Annual reports from the Workshop organizers
- (b) Periodical visits of officers from the Bank and their reports
- (c) Meetings with the training organizers at regular intervals

Evaluation is a process wider than monitoring and its purpose is not only to improve the process of implementation, but also to review the very design of the programme in order to achieve its objectives. It should be carried out through an external agency and all the stakeholders should be associated

⁵ Farm forestry includes any trees on farm land which are managed to produce saleable products such as timber, oil, tannin, charcoal or carbon credits.

“Improving the Skills and Productivity of the tribal women. Thus, assessment of these activities would help the trainees to improve and work with perfection. It will lead to better productivity and income of these tribals.

SUGGESTIVE RECTIFICATION

To consider tribal women not only as employee but as potential contributors to the growth of the region, community and economy of Gujarat.

- To engage women in income generating activities in home based or village based industries.
- The trade should be innovative and strategic in promoting activities where larger share is received by tribal women.
- Emphasis should be given to Women Friendly Special Projects to promote
- To facilitate participation in productive work that ultimately leads to increase in social empowerment of woman.
- Farm forestry should be implemented through Mahila Vikas Mandal (MVM)

Thus, there is no doubt that the rural women can acquire any developmental milestones (skills) only through education and thus can change their own destiny. Their self-perception can be elevated by the knowledge that they are contributing financially and visibly to the household and that they are in a better negotiating position. They can avoid dependence on others and escape exploitation in everyday life, avoid humiliation, gain confidence to work more productively. Thus, education has played a major role in empowering rural women. They contribute towards national development by making 36% of the GNP exclusive of their services as mothers and household managers.

CONCLUSION

Any developmental process is the expansion of assets and capabilities of rural women to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold the institution accountable that affect their lives. Skill development among rural women is the need of the hour so as to make them confident, self-reliant and to develop in them the ability to be a part of decision making at home and outside. Indeed it may not be wrong to say that still tribal's and rural women are the most disadvantaged and neglected section of the society for they are economically backward. Therefore there is a need on the part of the government and civil society to enable improvement in the quality of life of such vulnerable sections of the Indian population.

More importantly the developmental process in India should give priority to welfare schemes and programmes meant for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes' including women. These are the people who are

economically backward; therefore, there is a need for sincere efforts on the part of the government to help improve the quality of their life. The Social Assessment for the training and skill development clearly reflected that rural landless (mostly SC's and ST's) form an integral part of poverty-ridden and marginalized groups. By empowering rural woman through education can thus enable them to live with dignity and self-reliance cutting across the barriers of customary biases and prejudices, social barrier of caste, class, gender, occupation and institutional barriers that prevent them from taking actions to improve their state both at the individual and collective level. Therefore, free education and necessary and employable skill development programmes must be launched for tribal students and women so as to make them self-reliant and economically independent. Furthermore, right to vote is meaningless unless rural women are made aware, educated and imparted skills to understand the order of the day and this can bring change in their lives, in the family and lastly transform the holistic tribal landscape of India, through education, legal awareness, and socio economic independence.

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CHAPTER TEN

IS BETTER GOOD ENOUGH? PRIVATISATION OF EDUCATION AND ITS LINKS TO INEQUITY AND GENDER BIAS

Renu Singh, Country Director, Young Lives

INTRODUCTION

The Right to Education Act, 2009 has ensured a mechanism to promote free and compulsory education for all children aged 6-14 years. The last few years has seen the mushrooming of private schools across the rural landscape of India- many of these continuing to be unrecognised and charging fees that vary from Rs 300/- to as much Rs 20,000 annually (Singh & Sarkar, 2012). This paper draws on both quantitative and qualitative rural data from Young Lives, a longitudinal research study that is tracking two cohorts of 3,000 children in Andhra Pradesh, India since 2002. The third round survey report (Galab et al 2011) revealed that there was an exodus of younger cohort children (age 8) to private schools in 2009 (44 percent), when compared to Older cohort (age 8) in Round 1 (23 percent) in 2002 in Andhra Pradesh. Parents aspirations and 'English medium' label attached to low fee charging private schools in rural areas has resulted in the private school enrolment increasing across for all groups- male, female, OBC's, SC's and ST's. However, serious equity concerns exists with increased enrolment far from evenly distributed and gender-based school choices more prevalent (Woodhead et al, 2011). Student achievement tests conducted in mathematics and language raise concerns about quality existing in public¹/Government schools at both primary and secondary levels. Furthermore, higher teacher absenteeism, lack of toilet facilities and English teaching in government schools, are all factors impacting how public school are viewed. Parental aspirations and absence of accountability frameworks in government schools are highlighted as critical reasons for poor families' choice of low fee charging private schools. A significant finding is that in spite of the 'English medium' tag attached to private schools, Grade X Board exam English results of private school students were not found to be significantly better than students in public schools. It is important to consider that achievement scores alone cannot be the only indicator of 'good schools'. Schools must promote the larger goal of promoting social inclusion and should not be only catering to those who are 'better off'. The biggest concern is the emergence of a dual system of education, since panel data

¹ Government schools are generally known as 'public' schools in India

shows that for the older rural cohort the gap in enrolment into private schools for the richest 25 percent of households and the poorest quartile, rose from approximately 12 percentage points in 2002 (primary school), to 28 percentage points in 2006 (middle school), to a gap of 42.7 percentage points in 2009 (at secondary level when the children were 15 years). It is critical that policy makers develop robust mechanisms to develop, mentor and monitor teaching and learning standards across all schools, to end the stratification of schools into ‘free schools for the poor’ and ‘better schools for the better off’.

BACKGROUND

In India, the past decade has seen an emphasis on enrolment of children into primary schools across the country. Subsequently the number of out- of - school children (OoS) has decreased from 3.2 million in 2001-02 to .7 million in 2006-07 according to Ministry of Human Resource Development. As universal elementary education is close to realisation there are concerns l

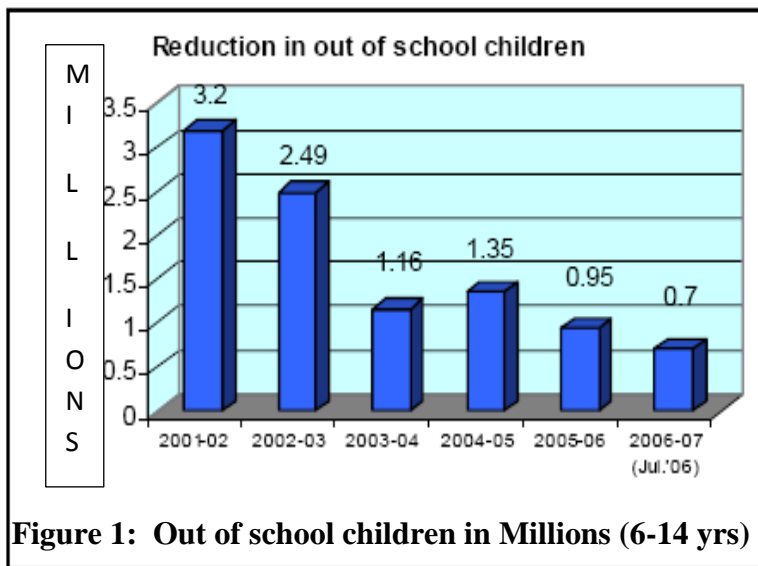


Figure 1: Out of school children in Millions (6-14 yrs)

Source: MHRD

about secondary education meeting the pressure of increasing number of children moving into secondary levels. A World Bank report (2009) claims that access to secondary education in India is highly unequal. There is a 40 percentage point gap in secondary enrolment rates between students from the highest and lowest expenditure quintile groups (70 percent versus 30 percent enrolment, respectively). In addition, there is a 20 percentage point gap between urban and rural secondary enrolment rates, and a persistent 10

percentage point gap between secondary enrolment rates of boys and girls. Enrolment of STs, SCs and Muslims are well below their share in the population at large. According to XII Plan working group document, the Gross Enrolment Ratios in 2007-08 was 58.2 for grades IX and X and 33.4 for grades XI and XII (Planning Commission, 2012). Kingdon (2007) estimates, that at the secondary stage, 10.6 million children are in classes IX and X; and 5.3 million in classes XI-XII. According to National Family Health Survey (2007), only 54% of all children at the secondary school age (11-17 year) attend school. When data is broken down by incomes, the net enrolment ratio of children in the richest 20% of households, is 83% compared to 29% among children from the poorest households. The recently launched centrally sponsored scheme for secondary education, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA, 2009), offers strategic opportunity to overcome these gaps. There is indeed a huge challenge for the country to focus on retention rather than only enrolment of children, particularly for children who belong to socially and economically marginalised backgrounds.

Emergence of Private Schools

It has increasingly become clear that Education for All (EFA) Goals cannot be achieved by merely achieving Universal enrolment- quality education is and must become an inherent right of every single child irrespective of gender, caste, ethnicity, religion, socio economic background, ability and location. In India, schools are broadly divided into three categories: (1) public schools run by various state education departments i.e. government owned and controlled which do not charge fees at elementary level, though they charge fees at secondary level. (2) Private aided schools i.e. schools managed by private bodies but receiving funds from the government to pay salaries of teachers (3) private unaided schools which are privately managed, do not get any aid from the government and survive by charging fees from the students. The private unaided schools are not homogeneous in nature and range from very high fee charging schools, mainly in urban areas to low fee charging schools starting from Rs 30 per month to Rs 3,000 per month depending on the location and services provided by the school. It is critical to mention at the outset that private schools are not homogeneous in nature and that is why one can find, very low fee charging schools in rural and urban slums of India and internationally competitive high fee charging schools in urban areas, catering to rich students (Singh & Sarkar, 2012).

Elementary Level

An interesting trend in the recent years has been the increase in enrolment in private schools, both in urban and rural India. While enrolment in government schools at primary level has been decreasing- private schools show an increasing trend in the period 2007-2011 (Fig 2). The Annual Status

of Education Report (ASER, 2010) reports that private school enrolment for rural children in the 6-14 yrs age group has increased from 16.3 percent in 2005-06 to 24.3 percent in 2010.

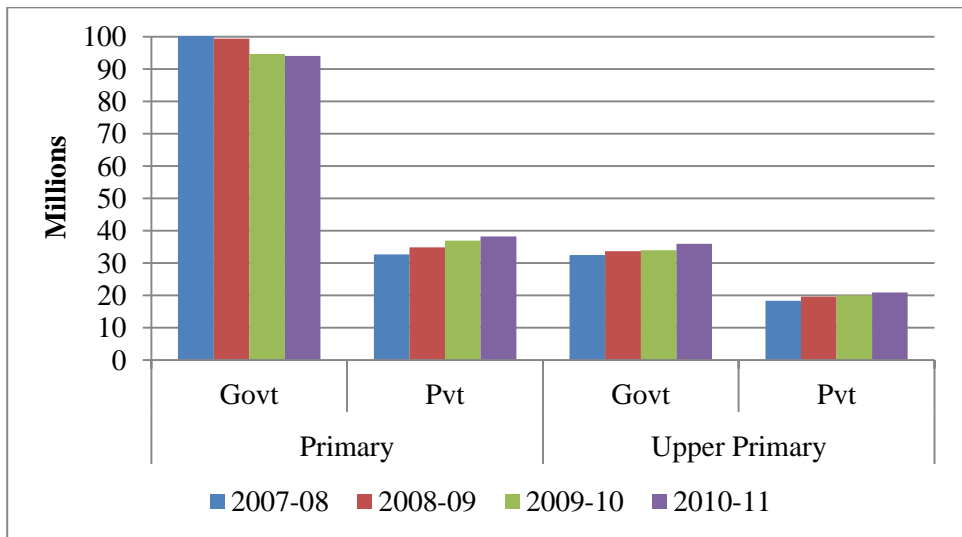


Figure 2: All-India Enrolments (6-14 yrs) in government and private (including aided) schools
Source: DISE

The National Sample Survey, 2009 reports that 7% of students are in private aided and 20% in private unaided schools.

Secondary Level

The dramatic growth in Indian elementary education enrolment and improvements in retention and transition rates over the past ten years, particularly among more disadvantaged groups, are increasing pressure on the secondary level to absorb new entrants (World Bank, 2009). In 2009-10, India's secondary school sub-sector comprised approximately 195,000 schools, with 166,185 secondary (Grades 9–10) and 56,629 senior secondary (grades 11–12) schools (Planning Commission, 2012).² Most of the growth of secondary schools in the private sector in the last two decades has occurred among private unaided schools, which in 2009-10 comprised 36% of school share, according to MHRD statistics (SEMIS, 2009-10).

² Some of these institutions have secondary section too, and therefore, should not be added to the number of institutions having secondary sections to get the total number of secondary and higher secondary institutions in the country

Around 71% of institutions having secondary sections are located in rural India. The share of institutions having the secondary section located in tribal and hilly areas in the country is 12.6% and 11.1% respectively (SEMIS 2009/10). Among the institutions having the secondary section, 46.3% are funded by the State/UT Government; 20.55 are government aided; 32.45% are privately funded (un-aided); and only 09% are funded by the Central Government or Public Sector Undertakings/Companies. Around 83% of State/UT government funded institutions having secondary sections are located in rural areas. Similarly, around 70% of aided secondary schools/sections are found in rural areas (see Table 1). It is important to note that more than half of the un-aided institutions (55.1%) with secondary sections are found in rural areas.

More than 63% of institutions with higher secondary section are located in rural India; 10.3% in tribal areas and 9.6% in hilly areas. Around 66% of institutions with higher secondary institutions are either fully funded or aided by the state governments; 45% of them are fully funded by the state governments. Around one-third of the total number of institutions with higher secondary section is funded by the private sector (i.e. un-aided institutions). In rural India, 74% of such institutions are fully funded and 60% are aided by the state governments. According to the NSSO 64th Round (2007/08), 82.9% of rural households and 99% of urban households have access to a secondary school within 5 kilometres.

Table 1: Distribution of institutions having secondary and/or higher secondary sections in India by location and sources of funding as on 30th September 2009

Source of Funding	Location of the Institution					
	Rural		Urban		Total	
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Institutions with Secondary Section (Grades IX-X)³						
State or UT Govt. funded	63604	82.7	13342	17.3	76946	100.0
Govt. Aided	23843	70.1	10153	29.9	33996	100.0
Private Un-aided	29650	55.1	24129	44.9	53779	100.0
Central Govt. or PUC Funded	820	56.0	644	44.0	1464	100.0
Total	117917	71.0	48268	29.0	166185	100.0
Institutions with Higher Secondary Section (Grades XI-XII)⁴						
State or UT Govt. funded	18896	74.2	6565	25.8	25461	100.0
Govt. Aided	7062	60.2	4673	39.8	11735	100.0
Private Un-aided	9294	50.2	9211	49.8	18505	100.0
Central Govt. or PUC Funded	477	51.4	451	48.6	928	100.0
Total	35729	63.1	20900	36.9	56629	100.0

Source: NUEPA, *SEMIS 2009-10*.

Public-Private School Debate

Many authors have compared public and private schools in terms of access, costs, infrastructure, management and recruitment of teachers and student scores (Kingdon, 1997; Tooley, et al 2007; PROBE, 1999, Jha & Jhingran, 2002, Ramachandran, et al 2004, Muralidharan & Kremer, 2006, Desai et al, 2008). The sad state of publicly provided education services has drawn attention of both academics and policy makers in the recent times. In India teachers in primary public schools were noted to have an absence rate of 25 percent (Chaudhury et al, 2006) and teachers in rural private schools were 2-4 percentage points more likely to be present in school (Muralidharan & Kremer, 2006). Recently conducted achievement studies, highlight the differential access to quality schooling and persistence of gender and social gaps in levels of achievement (NCERT, 2012; ASER, 2010).

³ Not equal to all secondary level institutions; it is more than that as it includes secondary sections in higher secondary schools and junior colleges.

⁴ Not equal to all higher secondary schools; it is more than that as it includes higher secondary sections in +2 colleges and degree colleges.

The rural –urban divide in education is clearly visible in India. Many factors are responsible for this. At the secondary level it is observed that while urban middle-class students are stressed from the need to perform extremely well, rural children are not sure about whether their preparation is adequate even to succeed. It is well documented that much of the higher failure and dropout rates in rural schools can be attributed to poor performance in three subjects- Mathematics, Science and English (Planning Commission, 2012). It is argued by Tooley & Dixon (2006) that the public school system is expensive and wasteful and fails in imparting even minimum basic education to students.

While it has been postulated that the increasing prevalence of private schools is due to the poor performance of public schools, it has not been easy to systematically disentangle the extent to which the creation of private schools is reflecting demand due to poor public school performance as opposed to rising incomes. This paper draws on the longitudinal data set available from the Young Lives longitudinal study, to answer the question if Private schools are in reality performing better than government/public schools as well as parental aspirations and reasons for school choice.

The Context

Andhra Pradesh (AP) is the 5th largest state in India, with a population of over 80 million, 73 percent of who live in rural areas. According to DISE 2009-10, Andhra Pradesh had a total of 102,798 elementary schools of which 77.6 percent (79, 813 schools) were Government schools (comprising local body, tribal welfare and department of education schools) and 22 percent (22, 985 schools) were private schools. There were a total of 18,163 secondary schools in the state and 4364 senior secondary schools in 2009-10. Of these 38 percent at secondary level and 68 percent at senior secondary level were private.

In Andhra Pradesh, the secondary level Gross Enrolment Ratio has increased from 59 percent in 2008-09 to 64.3 percent in 2009-10 and was above the All India average (refer Table 2). There has been a significant improvement in enrolment ratios for girls in particular.

Table 2: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Andhra Pradesh at the secondary level (grades IX-X) in 2008-09 and 2009-10

State	GER in Grades IX-X in 2008-09			GER in Grades IX-X in 2009-10		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Andhra Pradesh	59.5	58.9	59.2	63.7	65.0	64.3
All India	57.1	51.5	54.4	60.0	56.8	58.5

Source: Estimated based on SEMIS 2009-10

It is important to note the high drop-out rate of 53.6 percent for children in Grades I-X in AP. This is higher than the National figure of 52.76 percent. What is particularly disturbing is the fact that SC's had a drop-out rate of 58.15 percent and ST's an even higher figure of 76.75 percent (MHRD, 2011). This means that less than half the children enrolled in Grade 1 complete secondary education and only a quarter of ST children complete secondary education in AP.

YOUNG LIVES

Schooling choice can simultaneously be used to either reproduce or transform social and gender inequalities, by excluding the marginalised, or providing them an opportunity to gain access to tastes and styles that serve as markers of elite distinction (Bourdieu 1984). In this paper we analyse rural data from the Young Lives longitudinal study⁵ in Andhra Pradesh, India. Andhra Pradesh (AP) is the 5th largest state in India, with a population of over 80 million, 73 percent of who live in rural areas.

In 2002 Young Lives collected data on 2,011 children who were aged 6 to 18 months (the Younger Cohort) and 1,008 children aged 7.5 to 8.5 years (the Older Cohort) for the first survey round across rural and urban settings. The Young Lives sampling strategy was based on randomly selecting 100 children within 20 clusters or geographic sites, throughout Andhra Pradesh. Two subsequent rounds of quantitative data have been collected in 2005-06 and 2009-10 and the overall attrition by Round 3 was 2.2 per cent over the eight-year period. The Young Lives study has also carried out three rounds of qualitative fieldwork in 2007, 2008 and 2010 in Andhra Pradesh (AP) as well as school based sub-studies.

⁵ Fifteen year longitudinal study in, four countries (India, Peru, Ethiopia and Vietnam) on poverty in children's lives, University of Oxford

YOUNG LIVES EDUCATION DATA ANDHRA PRADESH

A very large sample of Young Lives Index children are located in rural AP and this paper highlights trends of enrolment into school across the three rounds, along with qualitative case studies drawn from interviews with parents and children. Young Lives is advantageously placed to draw on the longitudinal data set of children's school history across survey rounds as well as achievement scores in Mathematics and Language across Rounds.

Table 3 shows that enrolment for both boys and girls has increased in Round 3 (2009-10) as compared to Round 2 (2006) for the younger cohort (YC) children who were around 5 year olds in 2006 and 8 year olds in 2009. While 93% of the YC children were enrolled in ICDS Centres and pre-primary classrooms at age 5, by age 8 Universal enrolments was evidence in primary schools.

On the other hand enrolment has gone down in 2009 for older cohort (OC) children who were around 12 year old in Round 2 (2006) from 90% to 77% when they were approximately 15 year old in Round 3 (2009). It is important to note that almost a quarter of the girls and 20% of the boys aged 15 years had dropped out-of-school by the time they reached secondary schools (Galab et al, 2011).

Table 3: Percentages of boys and girls enrolled in schools-round wise

	2002	2006	2009
<i>All</i>			
Younger cohort	-	93.3	99.2
Older cohort	97.6	89.8	77.2
<i>Rural</i>			
Younger cohort	-	94.7	98.9
Older cohort	97.5	87.9	74.8
<i>Urban</i>			
Younger cohort	-	98.2	99.8
Older cohort	97.9	95.1	84.7

Source: Young Lives, Round 1, 2 and 3

INCREASING ENROLMENT IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Round 3 Young Lives India Survey Report (Galab et al. 2011) highlighted that private school enrolment in 2009 of YC aged 8 years of age was double (44%) when compared to OC children aged 8 years in Round 1 (23 %) in 2002 in Andhra Pradesh. Table 4 shows that the private school enrolment

has gone up for every group – male, female, rural, urban and SC/ST. While the total enrolment has increased by only 1.6% the private school enrolment has been approximately doubled in 2009 (Singh & Sarkar, 2012).

As evidenced in Table 4, the private school enrolment in rural area has trebled for YC aged 8 year olds in Round 3 as against OC aged 8 years in Round 1 Survey.

Rural Sample

The rural sample used for this paper consists of both the Younger cohort as well as the older cohort in rural sites. Table 5 provides a snapshot of the rural YL Index children by cohort, gender, and caste in Round 3 (2009-10) according to school enrolment and distribution. The younger cohort consists of 1411 children aged eight years enrolled in primary schools, while the older cohort consists of 545 school going children from the rural sample.

Table 4: Change in enrolment and private school participation during the period 2002 and 2009

	8 year old cohort in 2002 (OC R1)		8 year old cohort in 2009 (YC R3)	
	Enrolled	Of which, in private schooling	Enrolled	Of which, in private schooling
	%	%	%	%
Male	98.2	25.1	99.2	50.4
Female	97.0	21.4	99.1	37.1
Urban	97.9	62.3	99.8	80.3
Rural	97.5	10.6	98.9	31.3
Scheduled Castes	98.6	11.6	98.9	29.3
Scheduled Tribes	95.3	12.7	98.4	21.7
Backward Classes	97.6	20.4	99.2	44.2
Other Castes	97.7	45.7	99.8	70.4
Total	97.6	23.2	99.2	44.1

Source: Young Lives, Round 1 and 3

Private school enrolment is 31.7 percent for younger cohort and 24.4 percent for the older cohort attending secondary schools. The data reveals that more girls were enrolled into public schools in Round 3 across both primary and secondary levels and it is clear that gender considerations determine choice of private schools. Other Castes (OC's) were in the largest majority in

private schools in both cohorts and least number of ST's were enrolled at primary level and SC's at secondary levels.

When enrolment patterns for both cohorts, between Round 2 (collected in 2006) and Round 3 (2009-10), are compared, we notice an increasing trend of enrolment into private schools for both cohorts (Figure 3). The proportion of children in private school has increased by approximately 10 % between 2006 and 2009-10 for younger cohort children and by almost 9% for older cohort children studying in secondary schools (aged 15 years). Thus a large number of rural parents are opting for private schools, even though our sample is based on poor households.

Table 5: Sample description- Rural (2009)

	Public		Private	
	N	%	N	%
Younger cohort (8year old)	964	68.3	447	31.7
<i>Gender</i>				
Boys	453	60.6	295	39.4
Girls	511	77.1	152	22.9
<i>Social group</i>				
SC	230	77.2	68	22.8
ST	198	79.2	52	20.8
BC	460	68.3	214	31.8
OC	76	40.2	113	59.8
Older cohort (15 year old)	412	75.6	133	24.4
<i>Gender</i>				
Boys	203	72.8	76	27.2
Girls	209	78.6	57	21.4
<i>Social group</i>				
SC	113	86.9	17	13.1
ST	59	80.8	14	19.2
BC	189	75.9	60	24.1
OC	51	54.8	42	45.2

Source: Young Lives, Round 3

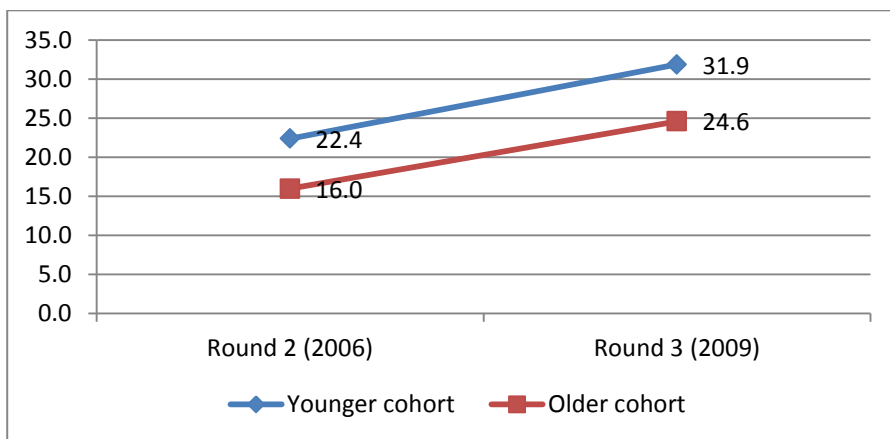


Figure 3: Enrolment in rural private schools in 2006 and 2009

Source: Young Lives survey, round 2 and 3 (2006 & 2009)

RATIONALE FOR SCHOOL CHOICE

It is important to further explore, why parents are making these choices, since public schools charge no fees at elementary level, while private schools continue to charge fees. In 2009 (round 3 survey), parents of each YC child was asked about the main reason for choosing a particular school for that child. Table 6 contains the possible set of reasons and the distribution of responses by the parents across rural locations. It is interesting to notice that the reasons cited by majority of the parents who send their children to public schools are very different from the reasons stated by majority of the parents who send their children to private schools. On the one hand, almost 54 percent of parents who sent their wards to public schools cited proximity of school to their homes as the main reason, while another 28 percent give the reason of no or low school fees, and only a miniscule 6 percent cited good quality teaching as the reason for choosing the public school. On the contrary, 69 percent of parents of children aged 8 years (YC) who chose to enroll their children in private schools, based their decision on good quality teaching, and only 18 percent chose the school due to proximity. Thus, ‘good quality teaching’ as perceived by the parents, happens to be the most compelling reason for those opting to send their children to a private school.

Table 6: Main reason for choosing a particular school – reported by parents (Rural)

	Public	Private
School is near to home	53.82	18.57
No other option (only school)	6.18	2.86
No school fees	28.27	1.67
Low school fees	1.57	2.86
Good quality teaching	5.66	69.29
Other	4.49	4.77
Total	100	100

Source: Young Lives, Round 3, rural data (Younger cohort)

Unplanned growth in private schooling for the poor in some parts of the world is symptomatic of an underlying malaise: underperformance, or outright failure, of public providers UNESCO (2008). The phenomenon of households preferring to send their children to private schools therefore needs to be analysed carefully.

WHAT DO THE ACHIEVEMENT TESTS REVEAL?

Achievement tests are important indicators and reflect learning outcomes of children. Young Lives has conducted achievement tests in language and mathematics across rounds. For the YC in 2009-10, Round 3 Survey a mathematics achievement test as well as Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) was utilized, whereas a Cloze test and a mathematics achievement test was utilized for the older cohort.

The EGRA is a test designed to measure the most basic foundation skills for literacy acquisition in the early grades: recognizing letters of the alphabet, reading simple words, understanding sentences and paragraphs, and listening with comprehension. The Mathematics test for the younger cohort was divided into two sections; the first section was aimed at measuring basic quantitative and number notions. It included 9 items on counting, knowledge of numbers, number discrimination, and using basic operations (including the 2 x 4 item mentioned above). These questions were read by the field worker with the aid of cards, so that no interference would result from poor reading skills. The second section was aimed at measuring abilities to perform basic mathematics operations with numbers. It included 20 items dealing with using numbers for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The items were ordered in increasing levels of difficulty.

For the Older Cohort aged 15 years, the Maths Test was in two sections. The first section included 20 items dealing with addition, subtraction, multiplication, division and square roots, using both whole numbers and fractions, and children were allowed 8 minutes to complete this part. The second section had 10 items on mathematics problem solving (available from TIMMS and PISA) related to i) data interpretation, ii) number problem solving, iii) measurement, and iv) basic knowledge of geometry. This was the only math section that included both open responses and multiple choice items. The time allowed for this section was 10 minutes.

Table 7: Average Rasch scores of children in rural Public and Private schools (2009-10)

	Public	Private	Difference (Public-Private)
<i>Average Mathematics test score</i>			
Younger cohort (8yr.)	299	301	-2***
Older cohort (15yr.)	298	311	-12***
<i>Average language test score</i>			
Younger cohort(8yr.)	299	301	-1**
Older cohort (15yr.)	299	309	-10***

Note: ** p<0.05, * p<0.01 in t-test for significant difference.**

Source: Young Lives, Round 3

In language, a CLOZE test was administered to assess reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge of the older cohort children in Round 3. 24 items of increasing difficulty were developed and children had to read each of the sentences and ‘fill in the blank’ with an appropriate word.

The results are telling, since the scores for private school enrolled children are higher for both cohorts across both subject areas. This is similar to other studies (Muralidharan & Kremer, 2006; Desai et al, 2008) in rural private schools. Pritchett and Pande (2006) point out that the situation, where 50% to 80% of children do not have adequate basic primary schooling competencies, is indeed a cause for concern. What is particularly significant is the fact that older cohort enrolled in private schools score show a 12 percent difference in mathematics and 10 percent in language scores, which is much higher than the 2 percent and 1 percent higher scores for the younger cohort (Table 7). It would appear that as children move into higher classes, the disparity in achievement scores of children in private schools widens even further in both Mathematics as well as Language. It is no wonder that many families in rural areas are opting to shift their children to private schools at secondary level.

Higher accountability of private schools, towards parents and students learning outcomes is evident from the interviews with parents. Kavya Sri's mother explains the difference between private and government school:

We can see the education and tell the difference.... Those who cannot afford send children to government schools... the smaller (younger) children they send to the government school, they go have food there and come. In government school one teacher comes and one teacher doesn't turn up, it is their wish. For private schools, we pay money, we can question them if children come home early or if they don't study well... if they don't teach properly, we won't send the children to their school. But in government (schools) the teachers come and teach for the sake of their salaries... they just come and go daily.

Private schools have the advantage of being “incentive compatible“, in the sense that it is in the interest of the parents to keep an eye on the teacher, and in the interest of teachers to be responsive to parental demands (Dreze and Saran, 1993).

The ‘English medium’ tag is a very important one that persuades families to choose private schools over government schools. The OC children were asked to report on language of instruction used by their teachers. Figure 4 reveals that 68 percent of private secondary school YL children reported that their teachers teach in Telegu, 20 percent reported they were taught in a mix of Telugu and English and only 6 percent of the children reported they were taught in English.

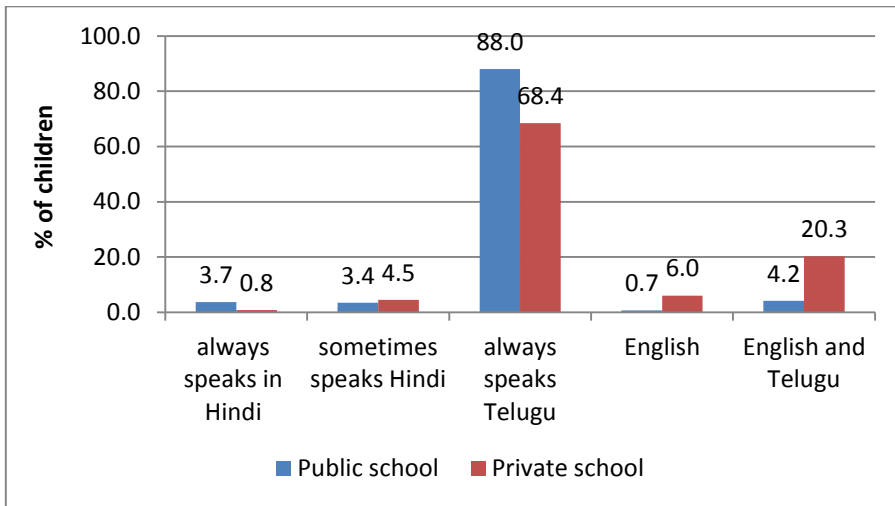


Figure 4: Language of instruction in the classroom of secondary school children (15 year) – public/govt. and private school

Source: Young Lives, Round 3

Furthermore, we analyzed the Grade X Board Exam English result of 14% of the OC children who had completed the Secondary Board Exams in Round 3 i.e. 2009. An analysis of their English scores is very telling, since ‘English medium’ is one of the main reasons parents are choosing private schools. Figure 5, gives details of the scores children attained in the X Board Exam in English. Though children in private schools are seen to attain relatively better scores- it is clear that the results are only marginally better. The average score in English is not significantly higher for private school children than public school children (Refer Appendix A).

A parent of an YL child (Jagati) explains the manner in which the private sectors work towards better results in Grade X.

They (private schools) don't care for lower classes. They do everything casually for the other classes. When they come to 9th and 10th they feel stress. They teach 10th syllabus in 9th itself and after students move to 10th Grade, they do revisions. It will be easy to get rank(better grades) then. It is not possible in government schools. They should follow the procedure. By completing 10th syllabus in 9th class the children never feel stress and strain.

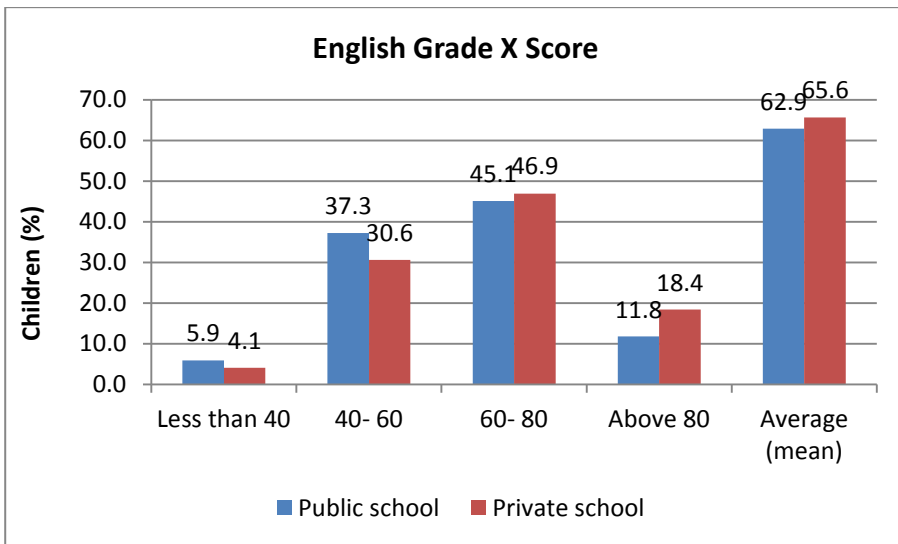


Figure 5: Distribution of older cohort children (15 year) by English Board X Exam score

Source: Young Lives, Round 3

Yashwant, a BC 15 year old, feels that only rich people are studying in English medium schools, while poor and tribal children could not (afford to) study in English medium. He commends the SUCCESS program introduced by the AP government to initiate teaching of English in public schools. He says “*this is an opportunity for poor children to get good education and it is also helpful to compete with the English medium students in the future*”. Vinay, an ST child, agrees and shares that he was unable to get the seat in Sainik school because of language gap. The government has provided books but the public school teachers cannot teach the lessons like teachers at private schools, because these teachers were not specially trained in teaching in English medium.

Does Exclusion Exist

The good news is that even the poorest families are keen to educate their children. Nearly two-thirds of the 33 education officials interviewed in the school sub-study opined that that people in their communities, across all regions in AP were of the view that their children can lead a better life if they are educated. One of the officers observed “*The people are showing interest to educate their wards irrespective of caste, community and economic conditions*”.

Rupesh attends a government school in Grade IV. His mother and father work as daily wage laborers for Rs 70/- per day and grow groundnut in the 1.5 acres they own. The mother shares her aspirations for her son “*We*

want him to study up to 10th madam. We want him to study till he stops on his own”. She spends Rs 20/- per month for two tuitions (morning and evening) and Rs 250 on books.

An analysis of enrolment pattern of OC into private schools in 2002, 2006 and 2009 according to wealth quartiles, portrays the gap in enrolment between the wealthiest and the poorest quartile. The gap rose from approximately 12 percentage points in 2002, to 28 percentage points in 2006, to a gap of 42.7 percentage points in 2009 at secondary level when the children were 15 years. This is very disconcerting, since it is clear that the poorest children are being sorted for government school enrolment, while the richest quartile children are in large numbers attending private schools.

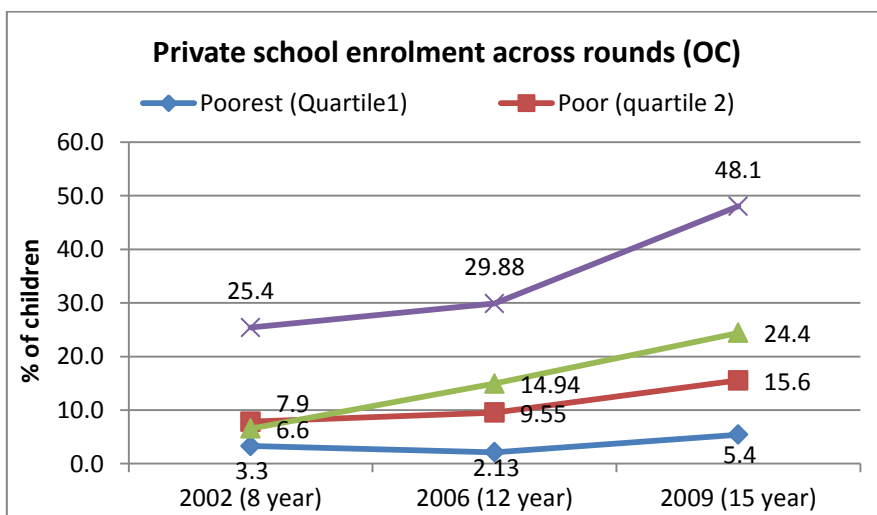


Figure 6: Private school enrolment across rounds – wealth quartile wise
Source: Young Lives, Round 3

Shiridi, a Scheduled Caste (SC) nine year old boy, studies in Grade IV in a rural public school. He lives with his maternal grandmother along with his sister (Grade III) and father (daily wage earner) who has a physical impairment and has difficulty walking. The mother works as a housemaid in Kuwait. Shiridi’s grandmother explains that from the village, the majority of SC children are attending public schools. She explains that,

In total not even 10 children go to private school.... they feel they get good education there (private schools), here (public schools) they quarrel and don’t study well, so they send them there... The other 40 children’s parents are poor don’t have money. ...in some family two or three persons work and

save....in some families one works and that will (only)be sufficient to run the house -then how will they have money for children's education.

It is evident that parents and caregivers, who continue to send their wards to public schools, are doing so because they cannot afford to pay the fees charged by private schools.

Teacher Absenteeism

Parents and children complain about absenteeism as well as late arrival of teachers in public schools. In Round 3, Young Lives collected information regarding teacher absenteeism in a typical week from the OC children. Figure 7 highlights the significant difference in teacher availability across public and private schools. While 30 percent of the public school children reported that teachers were absent for 1-3 days in a week and 8 percent reported absenteeism for more than 4 days, private schools reported 16 percent absenteeism of teachers ranging from 1-3 days a week and only 1 percent for more than 4 days. This reflects the parents concern that teachers are unavailable in public schools.

A mother of a YC girl shares that she has decided to send her son to a private school, while her four daughters attend the public school. This is because she cannot afford to send them all to the private school. However, she complains that in the public school *“the madams(teachers) do not come... if they come on one day, they won't come on the next day... ... she(the teacher) arranged somebody else to come in her place (an alternative un trained teacher)”*.

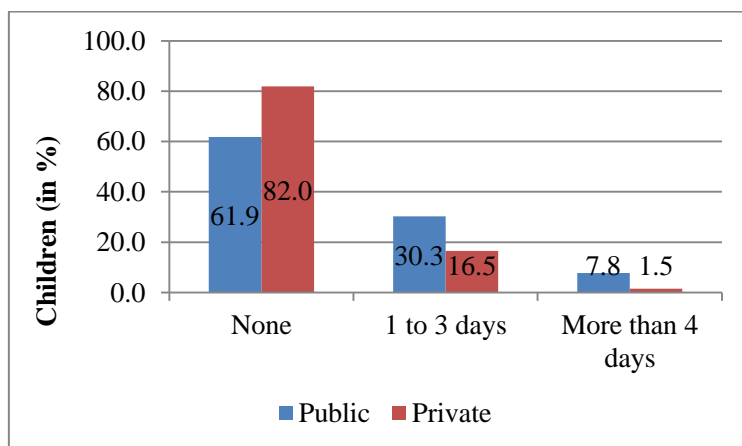


Figure 7: Percentage of OC children (15 year) reporting absenteeism of teachers in a typical week

Source: Young Lives, Round 3

Thus if 38 percent of the teachers in government schools were reported to be absent from more than 1 day in the week, and teachers are reported to pay someone else to substitute for them- is indeed a cause of worry. Interviews conducted with 33 education officials, during the school sub-study highlighted the urgency to build capacities in the supervision of public schools. 82 per cent of the officers interviewed concurred with the view that they do not have sufficient support staff to discharge their duties regularly including the inspection of the schools. As per the prescribed rules every officer should visit 15 to 20 schools in a month and 85 per cent have agreed that they are not able to discharge their duties. Almost all of them argued the necessity of regular Deputy Education Officers and Mandal Education Officers as it is becoming very difficult to look after both administrative and monitoring works in addition to the regular duties of head master and teaching in the school.

Other studies have revealed that lack of proper roads and inadequate transportation are key reasons for teacher absenteeism (UNESCO, 2000). Singh & Sarkar (2012) highlighted the fact that a large number of teachers working in public schools do not live in the same community, and therefore have to traverse long distances every day. This in their opinion led to both social and physical distance between the teachers and the taught.

As far as infrastructural and other facilities are concerned, the OC children were asked to report on facilities such as toilets, computers and libraries in schools.

Table 8: Facilities in rural public and private schools reported by secondary school children (15 years)

	Public school	Private school
Toilets in the school	62.8	88.0
Separate toilets for boys and girls	45.2	78.9
Library	50.9	33.1
Computers	68.2	45.9

Source: Young Lives, Round 3

The fact that 38 percent of the public schools did not have toilets as against 22 percent private schools, while only 45 percent public schools have separate toilets is a cause of great concern. Many adolescent girls in particular are known to drop out of schools, due to lack of toilet facilities. On the other hand, many more public schools have been noted to have libraries and computers, due to grants being given to public schools under SSA and RMSA, private schools in rural areas lack these facilities. Thus

household composition, family size, number of earning members as well as land ownership and accumulated loans – all determine choices households are able to make.

INCREASING INEQUITY IN SCHOOL CHOICE

Just as socio- economic divide seem to determine the school parents choose for their children- gender is another determining factor for increasing inequities that are arising out of the public- private school divide. Data collected form Round 2 and Round 3 Young Lives Survey, shows that more boys than girls have enrolled into private schools for both the cohorts (Figure 8). In 2009 the gap between boys and girls enrolled in private schools increased to 16 percent for the younger cohort, as against 6 percent in 2006. The gender disparity based on private school enrolment for the older cohort in rural areas, marginally increased from 5 percent in 2006 to 6 percent in 2009. Societal prejudice and family beliefs that the sons will contribute to the family income when they grow up, whereas the girls will go to another household- continue across the landscape of rural India. This belief is entrenched in families struggling to meet their daily expenses.

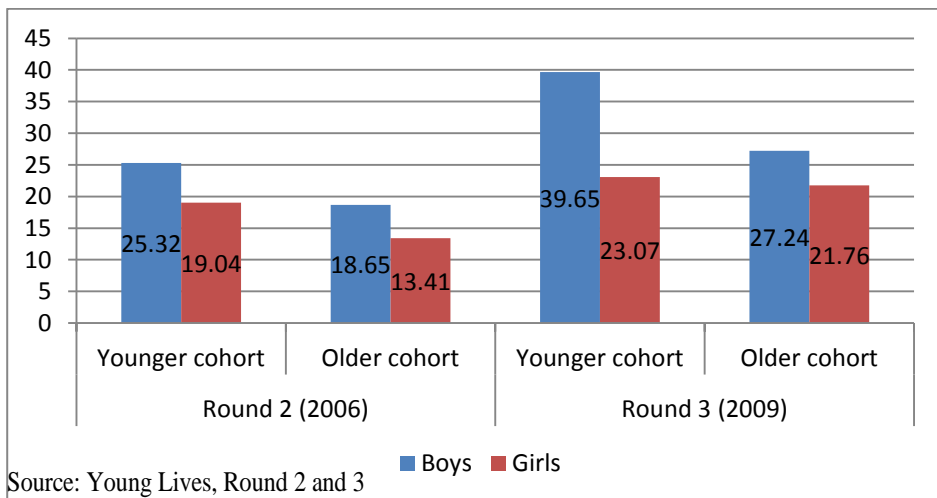


Figure 8: Enrolment in rural private schools in 2006 and 2009 – by gender

Shravanthi is a Younger cohort BC girl child living in Katur a poor rural Mandal in Rayalseema region of AP. Her mother explains that the family has decided to admit her younger son in a convent(private) school and pay fees of Rs 10,500/- annually, while Shravanthi continues to attend Grade IV in the village public school, which is free. Gender inequity is not only restricted to the school type but also in the manner in which girls are treated. Shravanthi feels that her father loves her brother more since he gives “*more money to him, though she is older*”. The mother complains that two years ago the public school was much better and that “*now the teachers are not*

bothered... then teachers were good...they were said to have been transferred to a different village". Jayanthi (YC girl) who studies in the same school in Grade III echoes this concern and explains that three boys have left the public school and joined a private school this year. She says that "eachers that served earlier were better... Now when children are excused for urination... children run away (from school)".

Gender bias is still prevalent and mindsets towards spending on girls' education still takes a back seat. Most families prefer to send their boys to private schools and are noted to be making huge sacrifices to send their children to private schools and often end up taking loans. Singh & Bangay (2012) using Young Lives Round 3 data, suggests that households sending 8 year old index children to private schools spend 18% of total expenditure on education as against 5% of total household expenditure for those sending children to public schools. At age 15 years, the households are seen to be spending 8% of total household expenditure for public and 27% for private schools.

Shanmukha Priya is an 8 year old girl in Grade IV, YC, BC child studying in a rural public school. Earlier she was studying in an English medium school in a hostel, but has been brought back to study in the village school by her parents. Her younger brother has instead been sent to an English medium school in a nearby town. Her mother and father work as labourers and mother explains the reason for not sending Shanmukha to a private school "We have only one male child". We want our only son to get good education. Shanmukha is a girl. Whatever she studies is good enough. And we have till 10th grade in the village. We will see what happens after that".

The father shares that the decision to take her out of the private school was based on:

My family members and others. They all said instead of sending daughter to English medium, it will be good if we send the son. They also said It will be beneficial for him, than to the daughter. So we took her out of English medium and put our son Prashant in English medium.... Some people say that girls are also just like boys and they should be educated well. And some people say what are they going to do with higher education since they will be going to somebody else's house anyway? They also say, since we can't benefit from her education, why spend money on her education!

CONCLUSIONS

It is important to consider that achievement scores alone cannot be the only indicator of ‘good schools’. Schools must promote the larger goal of promoting social inclusion and should not be only catering to those who are ‘better off’.

There are multiple factors that contribute to students’ achievement such as school quality, household factors etc., examining which is beyond the scope of this paper. Based on the analysis it is clear that teachers are more frequently absent in government schools and qualitative interviews divulge that private schools are more accountable to parents and remain answerable to parents who pay a price for the education of their wards. Many more public schools lack toilets, though they are better equipped with computers and libraries. It is difficult to comment on whether these are utilized appropriately. Students in private schools are undoubtedly getting better scores in both mathematics as well as language. The fact that the gap between public and private school scores widen at the secondary level (based on the language and mathematic achievement test scores) furthers the current belief and perception of rural families that low fee charging schools are better than the government schools. However, serious equity concerns exists with increased enrolment far from evenly distributed and gender-based school choices more prevalent (Woodhead et al, 2011). The fact that there is a very large discrepancy in private school enrolments, based on wealth quartiles, raises serious concerns. It would appear that the current educational system is being bifurcated into dual system- one for the poor, which is free and another of relatively better quality at a price. Exclusion, based on socio-economic status of families as well as gender and the subsequent disparity in achievement scores for children in the two types of schools is evident from the analysis.

Concerns for Most Marginalised Children in Public Schools

Given that the Right to Education Act, 2009 is currently promoting 25 percent reservation in private schools⁶ for economically weaker sections- one sees the possibility of very few children opting to remain in public schools. There is already the existence of a government school within every habitation and the mushrooming private schools are drawing children from the public schools, leading to many government primary schools with less than 60 children (DISE, 2011). Does this mean the death toll for public schools and stratification of schools into ‘free schools for the poor’ and

⁶ The 25 percent reservation in private schools under RTE Act, 2009 for economically weaker students has been recently upheld in Supreme Court by a Bench of Chief Justice S. H. Kapadia and Justices Swatanter Kumar and K. S. Radhakrishnan (2012).

‘better schools for the better off’? Mooij (2011) warns that schools are segmented in a hierarchical order, because children are not randomly distributed over different schools but segregated in separate streams leading to unequal opportunities in the rest of their lives (p.7). Urgent reform is needed and must address formidable challenges related to management and governance, quality and equity. As pointed out by the PROBE Report (2006), government schools set the benchmark against which private schools must compete for students. Unless the public schools undergo a paradigm shift and provide quality education that translates into learning for the poorest children, the public schools are going to slowly lose their student population to private schools. Lack of accountability and absence of a monitoring mechanism to ensure that public schools teachers are answerable to the children they are employed to teach, is an area of primary concern. Public schools are financed by tax payers’ money and it is time that schools focussed on delivering the goods they were set up to provide, so that parents and children once again repose their faith in these schools. Equity and social justice must remain the focus of education services in a country where nearly 37 percent continue to live below the poverty line, and all-India poverty rates in rural areas are estimated at 41.8 percent by the Tendulkar Committee report (Planning Commission, 2009). Stratification of schools must be avoided, or else the poorest and most socially disadvantaged children, particularly girls, will continue to be short changed and not get access to the skills they require, that will enable them to escape from the poverty cycle of deprivation.

In terms of the RtE provision of compulsory 25 percent reservation for economically weaker students in private schools, it is important to ensure that low fee charging private schools are given the subsidy they will need to continue to function and not be wiped out financially. The norms that are mandated in terms of infrastructure (playground, number of classrooms, toilets etc.) as well as Pupil teacher ratio and qualifications needs to be carefully thought through, since low fee charging private schools may not meet the norms by 2013, thereby facing potential closure. On the other hand it is vital to develop a framework for regulating private schools and encouraging greater community participation, by making School Management Committees an essential component of private school management.

Quality as Focus

It is absolutely imperative that the education system turns its attention to ensuring ‘quality assurance’ across both public and private school. The National Achievement Survey, Class 5 (NCERT, 2012) conducted across government and private aided schools reported that nine out of twenty states fell below National average scores in Reading comprehension as well as mathematics and that SC and ST children continue to perform poorly in

subjects such as language, mathematics and EVS. Another recent study on Science, Maths and English on 32,000 children in 5 metros drawn from an international survey that has been used in 43 countries found that Indian children scored below the international average. Clearly, we need to change what we teach and how we teach (Wipro, 2006). With 37.3% Indians living below the poverty line, the poor who are trying to eke an existence definitely do not have the capacity to pay for education of their children's educational expenses. The Government has already stated its commitment to provide free and compulsory education at the elementary level through the RtE Act, 2009 and RMSA (2009) aims to achieve increased and more equitable access to good quality secondary education. The XII plan document (Planning Commission, 2011) emphasises that Public Private Partnership (PPP) with appropriate regulation and concern for equity, should be encouraged in the social sectors, such as education. This does not mean that Government can give up its responsibility to provide education. There is urgency for regulatory mechanisms at the state, district and sub-district levels, to ensure that school effectiveness is promoted and educational commercialisation is regulated. It is critical that India developed 'quality standards' for both public and private schools and institutional reforms undertaken to ensure that schools provide learners with an education they deserve. An autonomous department of Standards and Evaluation needs to be set up, with an independent set of evaluators that will mentor and coach schools to become more effective. This will counter the effect of the 'inspector Raj' that is being feared and supplement the weak link of supervisory cadre that exists in the states today. Schools should be encouraged to develop their own vision and School Development Plans must be utilised as a vehicle for various stakeholders such as parents, village community, PRI members, teachers, Head teachers as well as children to determine and plan for the specific needs of a school and monitor daily performance against set indicators.

Furthermore, funding of public and private schools should be based on performance standards and criteria such as special funds for schools serving the poorest students. This will address the current inequities in the education system and meeting the larger goal of education.

It is critical that policies at macro and micro level serve to promote 'inclusion' *not* 'exclusion' in education for children, based on caste, class or gender. Only then will the education system be able to address the current inequities and meet the larger goal of education's "acculturating role" of "furthering the goals of socialism, secularism and democracy enshrined in our Constitution as defined in the National Policy of Education, 1986.

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Appendix A

Table A1: English and overall score (out of 100) achieved in board exam

	Public school	Private school	Difference(Public - Private)
English (%)	62.9	65.6	-2.8
Overall Percentage	64.3	70.8	-6.4***

Source: Young Lives survey, round 3

CHAPTER ELEVEN

MIGRATION AND CHALLENGES OF LEARNING CONTINUUM: EXPERIENCES GAINED BY SAVE THE CHILDREN, INDIA

CHILD RIGHTS FOR CHANGE-A CASE STUDY

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Note: *The views expressed in the paper are that of authors and need not necessarily be of Save the Children, India. Any errors in this paper are inadvertent and are responsibility of the authors.*

The names of children have been changed to maintain their privacy and confidentiality.

INTRODUCTION

The Census of India, 2001 estimates around 12.26 million child laborers. As per ILO 2010 report- accelerating Action against child labour, there are about 215million child labour across globe, and out of which 115 million children are engaged in work that is hazardous in nature. In terms of distribution by economic activity, 60% of child labourers are engaged in agriculture, 7% in industries, 25.6% in services and 7.5% in others. The present Child Labour and Prohibition and Regulatory Act (CLPRA) in India does not recognize “agriculture” as a hazardous occupation, thus, a large number of children engaged in the agriculture is denied their right to education and development. One of the studies indicates that there are about 400 thousand children engaged in cotton and cotton seed cultivation in India.¹ Similarly (Venkateswarlu, 2005)², the cotton seed production sector runs mostly on child labour, and predominantly on girls’ labour. An estimated 450,000 children from 6 to 14 years of age work in cottonseed production in the country, of which 250,000 are in Andhra Pradesh and the rest in Gujarat and Karnataka. Almost a third of all child labourers in Andhra

¹ Global March Against child Labor (2012) - Dirty cotton – a study on child labor, slavery, trafficking and exploitation in cotton and cotton seed farming in India

² Venkateswarlu, D. (2005) Unilever and Child Labour in hybrid cottonseed production in Andhra Pradesh – Allegations and response. United Kingdom: ActionAid.

Pradesh are migrants, and girls constitute 85% of the work force in the state. As labour requirements have increased, the burden has been transferred to girls. In the cotton pollination migrations from Rajasthan to North Gujarat 44% are girls, and in some areas girls outnumber boys. Children are recruited from a large arc of tribal blocks on the border of South Rajasthan, spanning Sirohi, Udaipur, Banswara and Dungarpur districts. The total requirement of labour for the pollination season has been estimated at three lakhs and recruitment is often extended further inwards in Rajasthan as well as into tribal areas of Gujarat³

These forced distressed migration of children along with parents or alone in search of livelihood makes the children to work in inhuman conditions and deny their right to education and development

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Save the children have been working for the rights of children, especially against child labor and believes that any child out of school is potential child labor. In 2009 the project for addressing the issue of child labor in cotton- **Child rights for change** was initiated in state of Gujarat and Maharashtra in India. Child Rights for Change is implemented in four districts each of these two states, covering about 1800 villages. The national sample survey, 2004 – 05, estimates that in Gujarat 76.69% of child labour works in agriculture and 82.62% in Maharashtra. While working for children in the cotton farm in the north Gujarat, it was realized that 80% of migrant child labour are from Rajasthan.

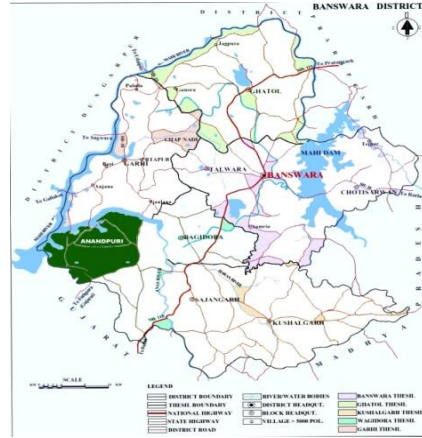
In search of livelihood, thousands of families migrate with their children. Some children may stay back in the village without their parent's while others migrate alone. When the children are migrating with their parents they are forced to live in inhuman conditions and are deprived of their rights for growth and development. They miss out on their education, denied of any recreation and are vulnerable to abuse.

In this context the education intervention were initiated on experimental basis at 40 source villages in the Anandpuri block of Banswara district.

³ Smita (May 2008), Distress Seasonal Migration and its Impact on Children's Education, CRE - CREATE PATHWAYS TO ACCESS, Research Monograph No 28

District Profile

According to the India Human Development Report 2011: Towards Social Inclusion, by the Institute of Applied Manpower Research, Planning Commission, the HDI rank of Rajasthan is 17 in the year 2007-08 (0.434) among 29 states, where seven north eastern states have been combined excluding Assam. In Rajasthan state among all 33 districts in the State Banswara ranked the 2nd from the last. Banswara is located in the southernmost part of the state. It is bound on the north by Udaipur district and Chittorgarh district; on the east by Ratlam district of Madhya Pradesh; on the west by Dungarpur district; and on the south by Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh⁴. It also touches the boundary of Panchmahal district of Gujarat on the south-west. It is predominantly a rocky terrain undulated by short ridges and flat topped hills. The district is predominantly inhabited by tribal's mainly Bhils, Bhil Meenas, Damor, Charpotas, Ninamas, etc. Tribal population of the district is 72.27 percent (2001 census). The main



occupation of the people, especially of tribal's residing in this area is agriculture. The tribals live in small one-room houses, known as "tapra", and as scattered habitation. The dialect spoken in the district is Wagri, a mixture of Gujrati and Mewari. Literacy percentage is 70.80 (2011 census) but women literacy, though almost doubled as per 2011 census, is only 43.47%. There are 2977 Primary Schools and 855 Upper Primary Schools in the district⁵.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Migration from Banswara district starts just after monsoon in Bt Cotton fields of Gujarat. The Bt Cotton plants are small in height and children are found very effective in cross pollination process because of their heights and tender fingers. Farmers from Gujarat get this cheap child labour through touts who have a well-organized network exploiting utter poverty and illiteracy of people in Banswara districts. Tribal children migrate to work in inhuman conditions at Bt. cottonseed farms of north Gujarat during the rainy

⁴ Home: Official Web Site of **District Banswara (Rajasthan)** . . . Profile, statistics, administration, and tourism information. From the **district** government. --- <http://banswara.nic.in/>

⁵ Rajasthan Government , SSA-AWP&B, 2012-13

season for two to three months every year. There are particular challenges for continuation and completion of elementary education by children of migrant families in this area.

Now after the Right to Education Act (2009) is notified in April 2010 and the central government has given a 3 years of period to the state government to implement the Right to Education Act. The government is trying its best to see that all children are enrolled in age appropriate classes and achieve class appropriate learning competencies. Still the data shows that many of the children are out of school and dropped out because of various reasons.

One of the reasons is migration of the families to far off places to earn their livelihoods resulting in children of such families having no choice but to follow their parents missing their school days. While staying with their parents at the destination, they spend their time either attending younger siblings at the worksite or get into the workforce as child labourers. Often after coming back to the source village, they find it difficult to catch up with the lessons already covered in the school during their absence and slowly drop out from the school. A large number of children are reported migrating from Southern Rajasthan to Northern Gujarat areas to work in cotton seeds production and cotton farming work. It is also reported that they do not get access to education and stay on the farm site, which is far off from the settlement. Neither the parents of such children nor the employer have any idea with respect to rights of the children to education and the education facility being provided by the government for such migrating children. Farmer employers also have no idea with regard to his obligation to legal protection for engaging children in their farms. Children themselves have no idea with regard to such provisions which can ensure continuation of their education even after losing classes for several years.

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

The above situation of migration effect on the growth and development of child can be summarized into the following problem statements.

1. Lack of awareness and motivation of **children** themselves on the possibility of resuming studies. The lack of parental guidance and encouragement also plays the crucial role in discontinuation of their studies.
2. Lack of awareness among **parents** regarding how migration affects the growth and development of the children and on the special training programme of the government mentioned under RtE Act 2009 for such children.
3. Lack of coordination between government departments and Panchayati Raj Institutions on the rights of the children and legal protections for the children and obligation of the employers.

SCHOOLING ISSUES

Schooling is a major issue in all the southern districts of Rajasthan, and Banswara district is no exception. It seems that one of the major reasons why children migrate to places of Gujarat for work is because schools do not

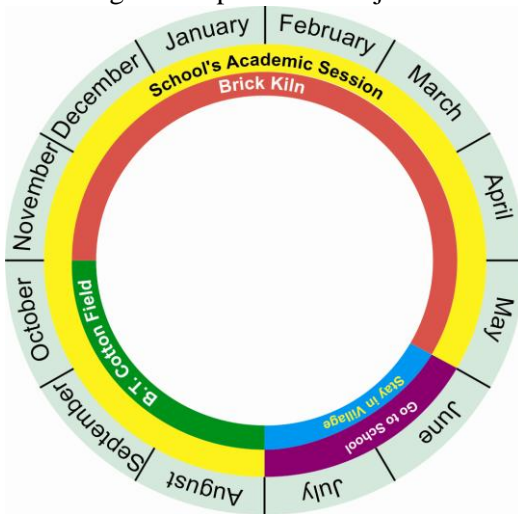


Figure 1: Migration cycle in Anandpuri block

provide quality education and are generally non-functional. Sharda Jain presently working for SANDHAN prepared a report on migration in Dungarpur, the district adjacent to Banswara titled, "Children, Work and Education in the context of migration"⁶. This report states that education is hugely compromised in the southern Rajasthan districts as a result of migration. The children remain in the village for the utmost of 2 months and start migration from August till May for cotton cultivation and later to the brick kilns.

The household survey was conducted by Save the Children in the 100 villages of Anandpuri block of Banswara district before initiating the education program under the project 'child right for change' for the migratory children. It was observed that generally schools have one or two teachers, and the attention given to children was minimal. Children were found to be caught in a vicious dilemma of continuation of education against much alluring economic benefit. It was noted before the intervention that most of the children have either lost or continue to miss basic education opportunities partly because of migration and domestic chores. They have lost interest in education, drop out of school, and are increasingly vulnerable to abuses.

Based on the situational analysis it was found that it was better to track the children at source villages and support them to continue their elementary education. Hence Save the Children initiated the work in the

⁶ Jain, Sharda (draft) (2006) "Children Work and Education in the context of migration"

partnership of the local NGO VAGDHARA for the implementation of its program. The education initiative – **Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)** for migratory children was initiated in the Anandpuri block of Banswara district.

At the inception of the project, a house hold survey was conducted in 100 villages of Anandpuri block of Banswara district. The objective of the household survey was to identify the most vulnerable villages, develop the list of children with current status of children as - children migrating/migrated, children engaged in BT Cotton, and children who stayed in the village but their parents migrated for livelihood. The project started working in two ways intensive and extensive. 40 of the most vulnerable villages were identified for intensive intervention with a volunteer based approach (Annex – 3).

This household survey, conducted in the 100 villages revealed that:

- 3408 children (7-18 yrs) were out of school; either dropped out or never enrolled
- A significant number (7-18yrs) of these children 1571 (about 46%) migrate outside for work.
- 31% of total out of school children (7-18 yrs) are reported to be in Bt cotton farm in Gujarat including 292 children of below 6 years of age. (Refer to Annexure 1)

The Accelerated Learning Programme started working with 1107 children of 7 to 14 years of age group (approx.50% of 2303 children) in 40 select villages for intensive intervention. In simple terms, the child tracking list acted as an extended Village Education Register (VER) whose information was available to everybody in the village.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To sensitize the parents and the adult members of identified migrant families on child protection issues and create awareness of educational facilities available for children of migrant families.
2. To reduce the migration of children, in the age group of 6-14 years of identified migrant families
3. To involve the government departments in the process and ensure that these children realize their right to education development

PROCESS

The Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) was implemented for six months during peak migration period from July to December in the project

villages. The ALP was supported by village volunteers. ALP strived to make learning a pleasurable, natural process through the use of games, storybooks, role-playing and singing local folk songs together. ALP put more emphasis on the quality of the learning environment. The ALP believes in creating and maintaining the child friendly learning space, an emotionally safe and rich environment to develop and motivate children to learn. The ALP in the villages has not only allowed a child to go through school without trauma and stress, but also enables him/her to uncover innate potential to share and express openly in the village environment.

It was noted before the intervention that most of the children have either lost or continue to miss basic education opportunities partly because of migration and when left behind by parents. These children are also vulnerable to abuses. The project functionaries felt that one of the viable options is to intervene through ALP to motivate and encourage them to continue their education and re-enrol in the school.

STRATEGY

1. Provide village level support for the children by village volunteers to ensure regularity in attending school
2. Motivate and encourage children to stay back and enroll in school – providing learning and recreational opportunities
3. Community mobilization and sensitization of community on Right to Education Act 2009 (free and compulsory elementary education for 6-14 years of children) and child protection
4. Support in coordination with government education department and PRI on the rights of the children and legal protections for the children

- 1. Provide the village level support for the children by Village volunteers to ensure regularity in attending school**

Recruitment of Volunteers - It was essential to see that the village level support was provided for the children to stay back. While identifying the person as a village volunteer it was ensured that the person belonged to the same village and parents and community had faith and trust in him/her. The minimum educational qualification was the 12th Standard (higher secondary school education).



Ensure regularity in schools- The village volunteer collects all school going children from their homes and take them to the school. In the evening when schools are closed, again the volunteer escorts them back. This process ensured regularity of children in the school and at the same time brought a sense of safety in parents for their children.

Children Returning Home with the Volunteer after School

The initial challenge for the volunteer was to get involvement of the

parents and other community members, to send their children to school. The volunteer training and capacity building helped them to engage with the community at a larger level and household survey in the village proved to be the entry point for the ALP program. The household survey in selected 40 intensive villages revealed that, a total of 2303 children were out of school of which 1046 were boys and 1257 were girls. The survey finding also revealed that children who migrate along

A volunteer for the cause

Man Singh Damor is a 20 year old boy from the village Parwali. He is one of the very few in the village pursuing for the Bachelors' degree in the village. He wants to contribute for the improvement of educational level of children in his village. According to him the poverty, quality of education and lack of supervision and motivation of parents force the children to drop out and engage in child labour.



with their parents gradually landed up as a child labour.

The training helped the volunteers' in creating awareness, kindle interest and subsequently brought positive action by them. They knew each child and kept the tracking of each of them.

2. Motivate and encourage children to stay back and enroll in school – providing learning and recreational opportunities

The village volunteers were trained to organise various activities in the village. They organised the sports activities and encouraged use of library books. The trainings were on roles and responsibility, life skill training, community mobilization etc. The guiding principles behind volunteer recruitment were to create local capacities and strengthening them with a series of training and orientation. The project believed in localization of skills and knowledge at the community level.



Savita Pargi - Inspiring the Break through

Savita Pargi is a volunteer in the Coordila village, who is a daughter-in-law of the village. She has passed 12th grade. Though she hails from a conservative family, with her in-laws posing many

restrictions for her, she is regarded as an elder sister and respected as a leader by the marginalized women in her village. She is determined to see that all children in her village attend the school regularly and complete primary education. She says “education is power and literacy is very important to get out from the vicious cycle of poverty.” She thinks, if the project will continue her village will be a much better place for children.

Provision of Library books and sports equipments -

The community library was placed outside the home where children with very different skills, talents and needs (dependent on their age, cultural background etc) come together. This helped them to develop their interpersonal communication skills, learn to cooperate, exchange their ideas/views, make new friends, participate, share, and improve their self-confidence and esteem.

The participation in sports activities helped children to learn teamwork, sportsmanship, winning and losing, the rewards of hard work, self-discipline, build self-confidence, and develop skills to handle competitive situations.

To support this principle of library and sports after school hours, the children were provided with library books and sports equipment. The village volunteer would accompany these children for the activity. The main objective of it was to provide learning and recreational opportunities to the children.

Children’s festival (Bal mela): The purpose of the *Bal mela* was to create a sense of solidarity and friendship among these deprived children and provide an opportunity to express their talent. The event was also intended to create interest for school among the children. There were different events in the festival such as games, sports, cultural activities and a drawing competition. Fun games and the *kalajatha (Folk Theatre)* were conducted to entertain the children. They were also encouraged to participate in the drawing event to draw using their imagination. A total of about 1352 children participated in these festivals.

Dakhila Abhiyan (Enrolment Drive)



Kala Jatha Performance in One of the Villages on Child Leaving School and Started Working as a Child Labour in Gujarat

As a follow-up to the activities, through folk media for community mobilization, an enrolment drive was undertaken in all of the 40 intensive interventions. The drive, proved to be extremely successful, for re-enrollment of identified dropout and migrant children More than 50%

children (1208 from 2308) i.e 605 girls and 603 boys were enrolled from the drop out list of 1257 girls and 1046 boys.

3. Community mobilization and sensitization of community on Right to Education Act 2009 and child protection

There was recognising the need for complete community/parental participation in the program to ensure retention of children and increase enrolment in schools; various community mobilisation activities were initiated.

The community mobilization started with door to door visits by volunteers of the identified families who migrated from village based on the data from household survey. Volunteers shared the concerns regarding irregularity or out of school status of particular child from the visited household. The child protection campaign also helped the community mobilization effort for ALP programme. The campaign addressed panchayat members (village level government body) through Gram Sabha and Ward Sabha, on migration and child rights.



Challenge but not Impossible – Mohanji a school teacher committed to children's education

Mohan Ji, a local teacher in Khunta village school, was a significant force in creating awareness on the importance of children education in Khunta Village. He did home visits with the village volunteer and has been successful in mainstreaming and enrolling most of the dropout children. Mohan Ji however, is still unsure about how many of these children would be able to continue schooling and further education. He says, "It is a daily struggle that must be continued to encourage out-of-school children to join school. However, it is a challenge I am happy to carry out." Though the road to transformation is a long one, the impact of learning on the children is evident as they excitedly recount KALA JATHA stories, sing songs from bhajan mandali (Folk songs) that express gender discrimination and feel free to talk of children migration in their families. Perpetuating change is of paramount importance. Children in the villages will have to carry forward the process; and they could be expected to pass on the same legacy to their own children.



Back to School

Pankhi who is re enrolled in 5th grade of primary school Khatwa wants to become a doctor and wants to work for the people of her village because the medical facilities are far from the village.

Pankhi is eleven year old and had drop out of school as her parents migrated in search of livelihood and she had to take care of her two brothers and seven goats at home. After constant persuasion of village volunteer when her parents were in the village for the continuation of Pankhi's education, her parent's agreed to enroll her in school and make alternate arrangements for an aunt to cook food for her and her brothers, and she takes care of the goats after school hours.

Community meetings were organized on education and child protection issues, Rallies were organized in the village with community support. However, the major catalysts were Bhajan Mandali (Religious folk Songs) based on child protection issues and a street play performance with the help of local artist (Kala Jatha). The street play was performed in all the 40 intensive intervention villages. The activities designed were indigenous and

were made in consultation with grass root workers of Save the Children's NGO partner VAGDHARA; both street play and folk songs were derived from the age old traditional practices of local inhabitants of Bhil tribes. The crucial innovation faced immense success in the villages. The mobilization resulted in the improved enrolment status in schools and thus helped the retention of children in school and prevented their migration.

TEACHER SENSITIZATION

Sensitizing teachers was the most important challenge in school education as they are the principal instruments of education. The teachers in the village were informed about the planned activities under ALP and they become an integrated part of the process. The teachers in the village were satisfied with the work of the volunteers as enrolment status significantly improved. The teachers in few villages were also actively participating in the project activities. The child tracking survey was considerably supported by teachers in project villages. The improved attendance of children built the confidence levels of the teachers who were motivated to work in the improvement of education in the project villages.

Coordination with government education department

Interstate level network and review meetings were conducted to share information and experiences of the project teams in Rajasthan and Gujarat and the government departments. People from the communities, selected Panchayat representatives, chairperson and members of Child Welfare Committee (CWC), government officials from the education department, health department and labour department, and local NGO representatives participated in these meetings. With their active effort following successes were achieved.

- A total of 292 children were enrolled in school who were denied the admission by teacher in the school
- On the representation by village volunteers and interventions by district collectors and block education officers, 175 children from Below the Poverty Line (BPL) families, who were previously denied the same by the school received scholarships.
- The meeting also helped the children in nine schools to receive model question papers for examinations which were not duly given to them.
- The joint visit by District Collector and Block Education Officer helped in the improvement of the quality of mid-day meal, teachers were deputed in the school and recruitment of teachers was assured in many schools.

Orientation and handholding support to Panchayat functionaries to monitor migrant families: As a result of the orientation and sensitization of panchayat functionaries the effort to prevent child labour, the registration of migrant families and issuance of identity cards to those families has started. 606 families have been registered from which 400 families have been registered by the Panchayat office in Karda and Badlia and identity cards have been issued to them. Similarly, 206 families have been registered in Mundri and Barjadia Panchayats.

OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAM

As per the set of objectives, the intervention was able to enrol about 1200 out of school children in school thus preventing them from child labour. The community support was generated by the panchayat members in village and issuance of migration card to the 606 families ensured their entitlement at the destination village including and children's right to education. Coordination with the government department ensured the provision of the entitlement of children in school as 175 (BPL) children got the scholarship, 292 children enrolled in school and other entitlement were also given after the representation.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The government has been taking various pro-active measures to tackle this problem. However, considering the magnitude and extent of the problem, and that it is essentially a socio-economic problem inextricably linked to poverty and illiteracy, requires concerted efforts from all sections of the society to make a dent in the problem. In this context the multi-pronged strategic approach is required to deal with the problems of working children.

The inadequate and less qualitative delivery of education in local schools make school going a less interested proposition for both parents and child. Perhaps the most significant challenge (and always do so within constraint budgets) is to improve access to education for these children, who also have dreams and vision for their future.

In this program there are still opportunities to improve the quality and access to education by these children. The major recommendations for the ALP program were as follows:

1. The **in school processes** must be increased as the thrust was more on **out of school process** like enrollment and escort support to maintain the regularity in attending school
2. The **out of school** process like strengthening capacity of School Management Committee needs to be taken up for sustained efforts.

3. There was the constraint in the acceptance of number of out of school children by government though the DIET and SSA support could have added value to the program.
4. Media coverage of the ALP program was also less visible. The sharing of findings for dropouts and other issues should have been shared with local media for larger discussion and awareness on the issue
5. The pedagogical interventions were limited only with the distribution of library books and few Teaching Learning Materials. The volunteer should have been trained more on pedagogy and producing and use of innovative TLM.
6. The innovative methods for assessing learning enhancement of individual children can be developed for the ALP The program.
7. Social security schemes access to school going children need to be brought up in improving the retention. The improved access to social security scheme can reduce the migration.

RECOMMENDATION FOR GOVERNMENT

1. Ensure enforcement of Right to free and compulsory act 2009 for all children up to age of 14 years.
2. Ensure coordination, communication and collaboration of concerned department for effective implementation of law and polices
3. Effective implementation of child labour laws and rehabilitation of child labourer
4. Broadening the list of hazardous occupation and processes under child labour (Prohibition and regulation) act, 1986 by including agriculture labour

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WORKING AT VILLAGE LEVEL

1. Working with schools and especially School Management Committees to ensure that all children are enrolled in school and regularly monitored by them
2. Create awareness among communities including the effects of child labour on the growth and development of the child
3. Create awareness among the community and families regarding their entitlements and the legal provisions and their entitlement as per labour laws
4. Establish linkages with farmers and labour contractor to sensitise them and promote safe migration practices and monitor the migration

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CHAPTER TWELVE

EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTIONS IN THE PROCESS OF RURAL TRANSFORMATION: THE CHINESE STORY

Wen Zhang

INTRODUCTION

It is a well-received notion that the future of a developing country rests in how well the nation tackles the development of rural people, as they are the most deprived and disadvantaged group in large numbers. Rural areas are witnessing dramatic changes in the context of modernization and globalization. The transition period of rural transformation is marked by a set of changes, from the aspect of agriculture production to rural people's livelihood, including demographic changes, production advancement, urbanization, close linkage with the modern world and thus the loss of local folk culture, change of customs, values, etc.

Within contemporary society, education has an important role in enabling individual-level changes, which in turn has a broader impact on society (Shaw, 2011). As in the UNESCO-INRULED (2001) study entitled 'Education for Rural Transformation-Towards a Policy Framework', education is perceived as the driving force and proactive facilitator in the changing process of rural transformation. To be more precise, it is an effective instrument for poverty alleviation, elevating social and occupational mobility, empowerment and redistribution of resources and thereby, and an improvement of equity (Tilak, 2011).

Rurality itself is subject to different interpretations by various institutions. Thus, the improvement of education in rural areas has to take into account different contextual dimensions (Mincu, 2011). Education and training as to fulfill its responsibility of promoting overall development of rural people, has to be more responsive to local context and more flexible in delivery model; motivating learners as well as taking care of their cultural, spiritual well-being in handling the changes.

China, as one of the most populous developing countries, with its diverse context, serves as an interesting example for investigating how educational interventions are implemented in order to provide necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for people to cope with the changing rural scenario and improve their livelihood. The persisting problems of poverty

eradication, women empowerment, and the emerging issues of building a green economy, democratic progress, etc., all require attention from the perspective of restructuring education.

One decade has passed since the first initiation of Education for Rural Transformation (ERT). The restructuring of teaching and learning process for rural people has taken place. This paper, through investigating several successful education and training practices in rural China, tries to examine the role of education in the process and to find out what are the changes made through education.

The paper firstly explores contemporary rural China, including the socio-economic status, rural policy evolution and rural education to map the context. Then several success stories are introduced from different angles, namely: 1) poverty reduction; 2) dissemination of the concept of sustainable development; and 3) women's empowerment. These are all heated areas where education steps in as a form of intervention for rural development. These themes portrait the primary concerns upon rural transformation in China. The chosen cases, therefore, provide examples of possible solutions and innovative initiations that education can furnish to address the problems rural China is facing.

THE CHANGING REALITY OF RURAL CHINA

Defining rural

In China, rural identity does not merely refer to one's residence in the countryside or occupation in agriculture industry but also comes from the household registration system, known as the 'hukou' system. This system started in 1958. It divided people between rural and urban identities and led to an extremely unequal dual system; as one's urban or rural 'hukou' determines access to various resources regarding education, employment, housing, healthcare and social welfare (Han, 2012; Li, 2012). With the widening gap between rural and urban areas in terms of living conditions, educational resources and social welfare after the country's economy took off; there have been some attempts to reform the household registration system. The first change was that farmers are allowed to migrate freely to urban areas. The second change was to give autonomy to local government to reform the household registration system to different levels according to local circumstances. In some small cities, it is already realizable for one to settle down and change to local 'hukou'. The third innovation was that the benefits previously attached to the 'hukou' have now been limited to minimize urban-rural disparities, for instance, the regulations and laws that protect migrant workers' rights, etc. (Li, 2012). The most recent reform issued by the General Office of the State Council entitled 'Notice of the General Office of the State Council on Actively and Steadily Promoting the

Reform of the Household Registration System' on February 26th, 2011 has loosened up the small and medium-sized cities' household registration control for those who work for three years in the city can now obtain the local 'hukou'. Unfortunately, the door of municipalities and sub-provincial cities are still closed for outsiders to settle down.

National Policies for Rural Development

The Chinese Government is quite responsive and flexible in dealing with problems the country is encountering. The rural household registration system reform is just one piece of the emerging issues in the rural transformation process. Starting from 1982 when the Twelfth National Congress of the CPC (Communist Party of China) Report pointed out that agriculture is the most important aspect of the national economy, rural problems have become the primary concern for the nation. Through these years, national policies regarding rural problems have evolved according to the changing scenario as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Agriculture Policy Evolvement

Agriculture-related Content	
Twelfth National Congress of the CPC (1982)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture is the most important aspect of national economy; • Improve infrastructure; • Increase productivity.
Thirteenth National Congress of the CPC (1987)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve agriculture industrial structure; • Promote township enterprises and income generation; • Develop various kinds of contract responsibility systems; • Strengthen land management and protect farming land.
Fourteenth National Congress of the CPC (1992)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain increase on grain production and continuing improve industrial structure; • Develop high efficiency agriculture; • Deepen reform on production operational system; • Develop social service system.
Fifteenth National Congress of the CPC (1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure agriculture and countryside development and income increase; • Develop collective economy; • Perfecting social service system; • Lightening farmers' burden.
Sixteenth National Congress of the CPC (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed up urbanization process and provide guidance for rural migrants; • Enable transferring of land management right; • Establish and perfect social service system, including financial service for rural resident; • Promote agriculture tax and fee reform, lightening farmers' burden; • continuously support and increase input to education
Seventeenth National Congress of the CPC (2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote construction of 'the new countryside'; • Better tackle the problem of agriculture, farmer and village; • Ensure food security and protect farming land; • Increase farmer's income and develop township enterprises; • Cultivate educated, skillful new type of farmers who know about business; • Enrich spiritual and cultural lives of rural people; • Improve quality of rural teachers and promote balanced compulsory education; • Perfect rural social welfare system.

Source: Wang, J. X. and Song, Z. (2011).

Besides these reports, there are eight continuous No. 1 Central Documents that focus on the issue of the ‘Three Rural’, namely agriculture, farmer and village. These policies all emphasized the fundamental position and strategic significance of agriculture in national development. It is clear to see that the focus of the 20 years policy practices is on the following two dimensions:

Unleash the Potential of Rural Productive Forces

- Industrial structure improvement.
- The raising of small and medium enterprises in rural areas.

Close Gap between Urban and Rural Areas and Build a New Countryside

- Agriculture operational system innovation: on the basis of household contract responsibility system, speed up cooperation and coordination between rural households to form organized large-scale production.
- Rural tax and comprehensive reform: from 2006, the agriculture tax was repealed. There has been a comprehensive reform in rural areas, including repealing of the agriculture tax, transformation of government and ensuring access and quality of compulsory education (including exempting tuition and incidental fees).
- Establish and perfect rural social service system.

Achievements and Challenges Ahead

Considerable progress concerning the improvement of quality of life for rural people and agricultural development have been made through these favourable policies. However, despite the achievements made, there are still great challenges brought by the rapid economic, social, demographic, cultural and political changes, both domestically and internationally, that need to be addressed in order to promote the balanced and sustainable development of rural China.

Firstly, the continuous provision of adequate food for the large population and assured food security is a primary concern. It is estimated that, during the period of the 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-2015), the urbanization rate will exceed by 50%. At such a rapid pace of urbanization, continuing to provide adequate food and ensure food security is one of the most urgent challenges, as less people will be working in agriculture, while the demand increases from urban areas.

Secondly, in spite of the income increase, the growing income gap between urban and rural areas is still severe, increasingly widening and reflecting in growing discontent. Although the income of rural people increased 9.5% in 2007, the urban-rural income ratio reached 3.3:1- one of

the largest urban-rural income gaps in the world (Cui, 2010). Ge (2008) found that China was still on the ascending side of Kuznets' curve, which implies the quicker the development, the higher the inequality will be.

Thirdly, the grassroots level democracy of rural areas, as initiated by the Villager Autonomy System in 1987 has made some progress. Yet, due to the limited cognitive ability of villagers and lack of democratic awareness, there are problems regarding achieving the real democratic progress and democracy efficiency. Women's political participation in village autonomy and village elections should also be encouraged to execute everyone's right, reflect everyone's will and promote gender equity (An, 2012; Xiao & Zhu, 2012).

Finally, as agriculture modernization and urbanization continues, there will be a huge surplus in the labor force. Providing proper training and creating employment opportunities for them should be seen as an important part of the transformation equation (Huang, 2010). From 1983 to 2009, internal-migrants increased from two million to 152 million. For those internal-migrants, only 67% have basic education and 64.8% have no technical and vocational training. Also, migrant children and left-behind children's education and development, which generated from the inner-migration trend, require serious attention.

Calling for Educational Intervention

It is clear to see that the solutions to these problems lie in agriculture advancement; income increase; building the idea of democracy at grassroots level; and mainstreaming rural migrant workers as well as sustaining and increasing input, for which education is the very tool to achieve most. Thus, it steps in as one of the most influential interventions in rural China to tackle the challenges illustrated above. Education in rural China has first strived to provide universal compulsory education to all. Tuition fee was exempt and free learning material and subsidies are provided to poor rural families. By the end of 2009, the coverage rate of the 9-year compulsory education is 99.7% (Information Office of the State Council, 2009). The government also attached great importance to technical and vocational schools. Free secondary vocational education was provided to poor rural students. The school curriculum was reformed to match the labor market need. Resources of the schools are also utilized for training rural migrant workers and local income generation programs.

Meanwhile, informal and non-formal education increasingly plays an indispensable role. Educational programs are reforming towards more decentralized management and a demand-based tailor-made nature, which addresses diverse learning needs. There is also a tendency for a closer link between schools and the market, research and practices. Local communities are more and more involved to enhance quality, sustainability and

accountability of education programs. Modern technologies such as ICT were utilized to facilitate learning, improve quality of education and share resources between urban and rural areas. The ultimate goal of rural education in China is to cultivate new types of farmers who are skillful, well-educated and capable of doing business.

In the reforming and restructuring process, innovative cases and successful stories of rural education and training flourished at national and grassroots levels to address the either chronic or newly emerging problems. Some of the cases are selected in this paper to shed some light on countries in similar situations, more specifically E-9 countries, and to further research.

BEST EDUCATION AND TRAINING PRACTICES IN RURAL CHINA

Poverty Reduction

Poverty reduction must be at the core of any attempt to address rural-related issues, not only because rural people account for more than 60% of the world's poverty-stricken population, but also because poverty is the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely as lowness of income (Sen, 2006; IFAD, 2011).

In China, there is a large rural population who suffer from poverty, thus to a large extent, poverty reduction in China rests in solving poverty problems in the rural areas. From 1986, the Chinese Government has started the development-oriented poverty reduction program in rural areas. It formulated and implemented: The Regional Development-Oriented Poverty Reduction Programme (1986-1993), Seven-Year Priority Poverty Reduction Programme (1994-2000), and the Outline for Poverty Reduction and Development of China's Rural Areas (2001-2010), and the Outline for Development-oriented Poverty Reduction for China's Rural Areas (2011-2020), and a few other poverty reduction plans, making poverty reduction a common aim and action of the whole society (Wang, 2011).

Rural policies on one hand concentrate on relieving farmers' burdens in terms of abolishing the agriculture tax and, on the other hand, on subsidies to help with agriculture production. Moreover, regional policies for the most underdeveloped western region were carried out at the end of 20th century, focusing on infrastructure building such as water conservancy projects, projects of returning cultivated land to forest and projects of resource exploitation.

In the report 'New Progress in Development-Oriented Poverty Reduction Programme for Rural China' (Information Office of the State Council, 2011a), it showed that in the past decade the national economy of China grew rapidly and poverty incidence decreased from 30.7% to 5.05%.

The national poverty line for rural residents was raised from 865 Yuan in 2000 to 1274 Yuan in 2010. Based on this change, the poverty-stricken rural population decreased from 94.22 million at the end of 2000 to 26.88 million at the end of 2010; and their proportion in the total rural population decreased from 10.2 % in 2000 to 2.8 % in 2010.

UNESCO (2010) once stated that education may be the only way to greater social mobility and a way out of poverty in Chinese society. Education and training indeed play a very important role in combination with financial support, including increased input and loans, industrialization and infrastructure building in the national poverty-reduction framework. There are many successful nation-wide and bottom-up education and training projects that either promote agriculture development or aim to increase non-farm income for farmers. For instance, the “Dew Programme” which started in 2006.

THE DEW PROGRAMME

Source: <http://www.yulujihua.com/>

The “Dew Programme” is led by the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, a government initiation that aims to enhance the quality of human resources, employability and entrepreneurial ability of the poverty-stricken rural population as to enhance their possibilities to work in non-agricultural industries. It targets poverty-stricken people, including 16-45 year-old farmers who have been registered as poor people in the program; retired veterans who suffer from poverty; and village leaders in the key villages of the program. It is a training project for surplus rural workforce, specially designed for poverty-stricken populations.

There are different implementation models in different provinces. Each province explores its own way of delivering the training according to local context, such as ‘work-study’ model of Hubei province and ‘brand strategy’ of Heilongjiang province.

By 2010, more than four million people suffering from poverty received training from the “Dew Programme” and 80% of them found jobs outside agriculture. A sample survey revealed that workers who have received training earn 300 to 400 Yuan monthly more than those who have not. The program not only helped employment and income growth in poorer areas, but also provided chances for the workers to get access to new information and technologies. Thus, broadening their horizon and enhancing their confidence (Information Office of the State Council, 2011a).

Spreading of New Concepts as Sustainable Development

The 2009 UNDP China Report (UNDP China & Renmin University, 2009) pointed out that in the process of rapid growth, China is facing two major challenges: sustainability and equity. Today, in some areas of the country, environmental pollution threatens people's health and productivity. The unsustainable way of resource usage due to a low technological level as well as the rapid depletion of resources, result from an increased demand, making the current economic growth unsustainable.

Meanwhile, every year, there are around 6,000 agricultural, scientific and technological achievements, but the transfer rate of these achievements is only 30% to 40%. This same figure in developed countries is 70% to 80%. Furthermore, the popularization rate of the transferred technology is only 30% to 40% in China, which means that two thirds of the transferred scientific and technological achievements were not applied to agricultural production practice (Zhao, 2004). This shocking fact implies the severe gap between agriculture academia and the actual production in the field.

Serving local development is higher education institutions' main task and way of improving related disciplines and quality of students. It is a win-win action for both sides (Tong & Qiu, 2011). Since the promotion of the strategy 'Integrating Agriculture with Education and Science', there have been a lot of attempts to bridge education, science and agriculture. Successful cases that materialized the strategy according to local conditions emerged successively, for instance, the 'Taihang Mountain Road' of Agricultural University of Hebei; the 'science and technology caravan' project and 'hundreds professors serve the villages project' of Nanjing Agricultural University. The selected program of Guizhou University introduced an ecological agriculture system in Dagan town of Guizhou.

INTEGRATING AGRICULTURE WITH EDUCATION AND SCIENCE: THE EXPERIENCE OF BUILDING AN ECOLOGICAL AGRICULTURE SYSTEM IN DAGUAN TOWN

Source: Guizhou University (2005). Journal of Mountain Agriculture and Biology. No.3, pp.268-272

Guizhou province is an agriculture-based area with low productivity and a fragile natural environment. Arable land per person is only 0.046 hm² and the karst area accounts for three fourths of the province. Meanwhile, agriculture is unsustainable due to backward agricultural technology, low resource utilization efficiency, waste and a severely damaged local environment.

In 2003, Guizhou University started a program entitled ‘integrating agriculture with education and science, and building an ecological agriculture system’ in the Dagan Town of Qianxi County of Guizhou. The trick of this successful model was described by local farmers as ‘circle around farmers, help farmers to understand, set examples for farmers’: ‘circle around farmers’ points out the purpose of serving farmers (farmer-centered); ‘help farmers to understand’ means that to assist farmers to compare and to understand the examples for farmers’: ‘circle around farmers’ points out the purpose of serving farmers (farmer-centered); ‘help farmers to understand’ means that to assist farmers to compare and to understand the benefits of scientific farming in a simple understandable language and to find the path to move out of poverty; ‘set examples for them’ refers to the ‘in person’ demonstration of advanced technologies and knowledge, which allowed farmers to grasp advanced, practical and effective agricultural technologies.

The program tries to set up a sustainable agriculture at Qianxi Town through four dimensions: 1) promote suitable species and good cultivation method; 2) strengthen the development of animal husbandry and improve livestock species; 3) technical and vocational training for farmers; 4) establish out-school bases to promote integration of agriculture, science and education.

Due to the implementation of the program, the production of Dagan Town was increased by more than 20%. Also, the ternary structure planting pattern of intercropping corn, tobacco, rapeseed, and high-quality forage introduced by the program guaranteed the synchronized and coordinated development of both crop production and animal husbandry, as showed in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3: Per Capita Income Development in Dagan Town

Year	Grain output(ton)	Per capita net income of farmer(Yuan)
2002	12371	1430
2004	15125	1724

Table 4: Development of Animal Husbandry in Dagan Town

Year	Output of animal husbandry (million)	Agriculture output(million)	Proportion of animal husbandry output in total agriculture
2002	13.7	43.63	31.4
2004	20.37	56.58	36.0

There were more than 20 training programs carried out with 10 thousand participants during program implementation. More than 600 farmers obtained the ‘Green Certificate’ through training; 4,300 households became technology demonstration families promoting the dissemination and usage of technology and economic development in Dagan Town.

With the help of the program, local farmers built up 120 horizontal silos, 40 ammonization pools and 52 biogas digesters, which formed a virtuous cycle that not only reduced farmers’ dependence on environment and destruction of it, but also formed a virtuous cycle in favor of an ecological environment and sustainable agricultural development.

The setting up of the out-school base not only catered to the needs of the program, which is to establish a profitable ecological agriculture system in Dagan Town, but also promoted the combination of theory and practice improving the utility of related research at Guizhou University.

Women Empowerment and Democratic Development

The disadvantaged status of rural women resulting from historical and cultural reasons is still pervasive in most developing countries (Saxena, 2011). Thus, it is self-evident that rural women need to be empowered to equally participate in the economic, political and social developments of rural society. Especially in the intensifying process of urbanization when more and more males migrate to urban areas and women who were left behind have to shoulder the burden of the family and function under multiple identities (Han, 2008).

The notion of women empowerment was introduced to China in the early 1990s through foreign aid programs (Chen, 2008). The ‘Chinese Women Development Guideline’ (2011-2020) refers to the last decade as a ‘golden time’ for women’s development, due to China making significant progress in promoting women’s development and gender equality. More and more women can enjoy the benefits of social welfare; poverty-stricken women’s livelihood have been improved; women’s political and social participation were further enhanced; the educational level of women has been improved steadily, which further narrows the educational gap between men and women; women’s health was significantly improved, the average life expectancy was extended; continued increase of the protection of women’s rights legislation and laws regarding protection of women’s rights were strengthened; and the social environment for women’s development was further improved. According to the Third Survey of Chinese Women’s Social Status, the ratio of women working in agriculture is 45.3% (Information Office of the State Council, 2011b), while rural women who entered in the village party branch and village committee in the year of 2008 accounts for 21.7%, an increase of 5% compare to 2005 (Zheng, 2010; Lu,

2011). The number increased due to government promotions as stated in the 'Chinese Women Development Guideline (2011-2020)', women's participation in the political domain is to be further enhanced.

In the complex and diverse rural community practice, female village officials serve as important participants, active for the villagers' autonomy and grassroots leaders to shoulder the major task of the comprehensive development of rural society. Rural women's political participation has become one of the important indicators to measure the degree of social democracy and gender equity. To improve the majority of rural women's political participation is not only conducive to gender equity, but also beneficial to promoting China's rural social, political, economic and cultural construction. As stated by Lu (2011), female county officials are often more careful, responsible, good at family planning, and mediating disputes between villagers.

The chosen case is an on-the-job training program for women village officials, which demonstrates an educational intervention for the purpose of women empowerment and gender equity.

JADE POLISHING PLAN (WOMEN VILLAGE OFFICIAL TRAINING PROGRAM)

Source: Shantou University

The Jade Polishing Plan – the women village official training program is funded by the Li Kashing Foundation in cooperation with the National Women's Federation, higher education institutions, China Education Television and other multi-stakeholders. It is an innovative initiation designed to improve the comprehensive quality and capability of the village's 'two committees' women leaders through advanced technology and educational concept and thus maximizing leverage effect to draw more government and social resources and investment, and further promote gender equity and Chinese rural women's development.

Participatory Training: the training usually takes five to six days at the campus and adopts the participatory, scenario-based, case-based pedagogy to help women leaders to get to know themselves; to understand the concept of women leadership and make development plans; to learn basic skills of ICT and to learn how to handle relationships and mobilize resources; to interpret village laws and regulations and to design a profitable project for their own village. One of the most valuable elements of the Jade Polish Plan is that it provides 20 thousand Yuan as funding for feasible projects that are designed by the training participants, and this is called the 'seed plan'. Training participants are able to apply what they learned from class, allowing for practice and the materialization of it. After the on-campus training, there is also follow-up practice support including consultation

services, supervisions and other services provided for the trainees. At the later stage of the program, China Education Television will be involved in assisting the development of distance training resources, which can benefit more rural women leaders. The program intends to organize international forums to summarize and evaluate the program in the last phase.

Impact of the program: up until now, there have been 112 training projects that trained 4,305 women village officials. There are 225 ‘seed plans’ put into practice that has been given 1.3465 million Yuan funding.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Transforming through Education

Education for rural transformation is not a rhetoric discourse. It is income increase in a poverty reduction program; it is connection with the outside world; it is empowerment of understanding one’s rights and executing wise choices to improve livelihoods.

Through exploring the best practices presented in this paper, it is explicit that education serves as a proactive facilitator for rural transformation. It not only prepares rural people to reduce risks and seize the opportunities brought by the transition period, but reinforces local development and the transformation process through providing better quality of human resources. The question here, then, is not about the role of education in the process, but how to utilize education to facilitate the well-rounded development of rural people and socio-economic development of local communities.

HOW TO MAKE A CHANGE?

Decentralization and Strong Support from the Government

Judging from the Chinese context, government support is of great importance to the success of education programs.

The emphasis on rural problems and education is self-evident from all the policy documents mentioned before. The interesting point, however, is the devolution of power from the Central Government to the local communities in such a centralized country. Decentralization has become a main trend in addressing the ‘Three Rural’ issues, which means the Central Government has realized that community participation is very important in identifying the needs, meeting the needs and sustaining the achievements. As shown in this paper, the successful cases are either initiations of the local community or centrally planned but locally implemented programs with great autonomy.

A Good Education Program

A good education program must be needs-based. The need here refers not merely to the learning needs of the training recipients, but also the needs of the market. Education programs have to be carefully planned to cater to both sides, so as to materialize knowledge and skills. Local schools often play a significant role in grassroots education and training programs. According to the Chinese experience, it is also important to carry out training demonstration bases or set up model households for the dissemination of knowledge and skills. This can create a sense of reality and farmers are more motivated by seeing the actual benefits from the training. In addition, training and education itself is not enough, poverty reduction and empowerment programs should be combined with financial support or follow-up services that would lift them up and enable them to practice what they learnt, such as in the example of the ‘Seed Plan’ of the ‘Jade Polishing Plan’.

A Win-Win Situation

In the process of rural transformation, education is not just a ‘giver’. There is a need for a closer link between academia and the production field, between research and practices. There have been many best programs launched under the strategy of ‘Promote Agriculture through Science and Education’ in which education institutions and rural people both developed during the implementation of the training program, as the example of Guizhou University’s ecological program demonstrated. Local education institutions, especially higher education institutions, should serve for local development, bring together research and practice and in return, benefit from the tightening connections with agriculture.

These good practices reveal the multi-faceted role of education in the rural transformation process and the restructuring direction of rural education in China. Education has to respond to the urbanization process as well as to lift agriculture industry and promote local development.

While education alone is not enough, as pointed out by INRULED (2012), job creation, infrastructure development, and improvement of social services are all appropriate interventions in facilitating rural transformation.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

CORPORATE COMMITMENT FOR EDUCATION: THE LABYRINTH TO RURAL TRANSFORMATION

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INTRODUCTION

Public – Private partnership has been a strategy in India in recent years by engaging civil society and the corporate sector in social developmental activities, making them accountable and thus synergizing their energies for social upliftment. The Public-Private Partnership model is gaining huge popularity in recent times due to its unlimited contribution towards social development. Infrastructure, health and education and economic developments are important as they provide impetus to economic growth. Rural infrastructure is important for agriculture, agro-industries and overall economic development of rural areas. It also helps in providing basic amenities that goes a long way in improving the quality of life.

India as a future economic giant adopted the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) as a viable option to public funding, by encouraging private sector efficiencies for development which traditionally has been the government domain. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has come into existence as a government directive and encourages the corporate sector to exercise their leadership in social engineering. India has a long tradition of corporate philanthropy, but CSR gained momentum since the 90's. This can be gauged from the fact that in the 70's the CSR initiatives were 10 percent and increased to 18 percent by the 80's and 37 percent by the 90's (Times Foundation & TNS, 2006). CSR is seen as social investment which contributes to the development of physical infrastructure and generation of social capital. In this regard, the labyrinth is that somewhere along the way, the lines between donation giving and CSR have grown hazier. In this regard, the study by Times Foundation (2006) revealed that 94 percent private agency (multinational), 85 percent private agency (national) and 100 percent Public Sector Undertakings (PSU) implement CSR projects through their own CSR project management divisions. Almost all the companies see CSR initiatives as a catalyst in bringing about positive social change. With

this background, the paper attempts to present an appraisal of PPPs and CSR initiatives in India and a few success stories to showcase CSR initiatives for rural transformation.

OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE ON CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CSR principles have long been part of enlightened business practice, but the concept has witnessed an astounding ascendancy and resurgence in recent years. Nevertheless, the concept has not been uniformly embraced, with lingering diverging views about its potential usefulness and applicability (Dima Jamali & Ramez Mirshak, 2006). A growing body of evidence seems to suggest that cultural differences affect CSR dynamics with companies in different contexts exhibiting varied responses to this change in the business conduct landscape.

Studies by Abreu et al. (2005), Papasolomou-Doukadis et al. (2005) and Juholin (2004) on the CSR-related experiences of Portugal, Cyprus and Finland respectively note cultural differences, point to the need for more research on the socio-cultural determinants of CSR in the newly expanded European Community. They also suggest that the importance of managerial initiative, as well as financial gain as a key motive for the adoption of CSR by the business sector and the importance of top management initiative, the limited attention accorded to philanthropy, and long-term profitability as the prominent driving force behind CSR initiatives.

Research studies by Fulop et al. (2000), Tencati et al. (2004), Longo et al. (2005) and Uhlaner et al. (2004) note differences between the CSR orientation of large and small firms, with more accentuated attention to issues of profitability among managers of smaller firms. They also suggest that the majority of the companies can be considered as socially responsible using a stakeholder approach, noting obstacles relating to time and cost constraints and highlight the usefulness of a mix of CSR perspectives (economic benefits, conformance to legal and ethical expectations, and philanthropic/community involvement) as helpful in explaining variations in CSR orientations.

Two strong beliefs can be observed in the literature of CSR. While the first group firmly believes that a corporation is a legal construct and has only two responsibilities bestowed by the law creating it, namely making money for owners and obeying relevant rules, another group believes that corporations act intentionally via the intentional actions of their members and hence bear the duties and obligations of any good person or citizen, but on a corporate scale. The first view translates into a narrow conception of corporate responsibility as simply entailing economic and legal responsibilities, while the second translates into a broader conception of

CSR entailing a wider range of economic, legal, ethical, moral, and philanthropic responsibilities. The broader view attempts at meeting a wider spectrum of expectations, as in protecting the environment, developing the community, conserving resources, and philanthropic giving. From this perspective, business-like ordinary persons or citizens are expected to assume responsibility and conform to the principles of morality, accountability, and integrity with a much wider scope for potential contributions and interventions.

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (PPPs) IN EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

The introduction of PPPs in education in Europe and the United States in the 1990's and subsequently, the creation of the European Alliance for CSR in 2006 which currently consists of 70 multinational corporate houses and 25 national partner organizations, has become a unique resource for building capacity in CSR. The expansion of this new form of provision has paved the way for recommendations that developing countries embarked on these ventures to improve educational access and quality in their school sector (Patrinos, 2005). It is a fact that in most of the developing countries, the state's ability to provide an adequate and acceptable level of education has been criticized over the years. Private providers of education have long been present in Indian education at all levels and are providing education to the masses. These partnerships in education have emerged and strengthened at all levels with the increased demand for quality education and skilled human resources at global level. To understand the basis and impact of the emergence of partnerships in the Indian Education system, the conceptual as well as contractual aspects of partnerships need to be thoroughly reviewed within the framework of policy recommendations.

The decentralization measures of the Indian government introduced through the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Indian constitution facilitated the increase in the number of Non Government Organization (NGO) initiatives with regard to programs such as EFA and UEE in the 1990s. The District Primary Education Program (DPEP) by the Government of India was launched in 1994 with the objectives of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) with access, enrolment and quality as the foci. The results of the DPEP program indicated that there was greater enrolment in DPEP districts than non-DPEP districts and that primary enrolment of girls increased at a faster rate. This resulted into the formulation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) by locating it at the district level to provide a strong administrative basis for the collection and monitoring of education for achieving universal primary education. Both the programs were initiated in mission mode and the involvement of civil society and corporate sector was significant.

The manner in which non-state and state initiatives have operated in relation to each other provides a starting point to identify the economic and political strands emerging in the provision of education in India. It is worthwhile to explore whether these two types of initiatives have facilitated a move towards mutual recognition or whether the non-state and state initiatives have operated without regular or consistent regard to each others' presence.

The Eleventh Five Year Plan, Government of India (2007-2012) highlights PPP as a way of saving public funds by encouraging the private sector to be involved in this important human development sector and stress on the following paths:

- Private sector can be encouraged to invest part of its profit towards philanthropic activities in the education sector by adopting Government schools for improvement of infrastructure and resources like library, science lab., audio-visual and ICT infrastructure, art workshops, sports facilities, drinking water and toilet facilities, etc.
- Several functions of the government school can be outsourced through private sector involvement. For example, the entire computer education can be outsourced from private sector that can provide computer and computer teachers for a fee. Such an arrangement would work well for newly emerging or rapidly changing subjects for which permanent teachers and resources can be avoided in a government set up. Similarly, transport arrangements for students particularly for girls can be outsourced.
- Private sector can help greatly in Vocational Education as most of the teaching and learning can take place profitably in the premises of private sector companies and factories. Private sector should also be involved in designing curriculum and in designing a testing and certification system so that the demand for appropriate skill by the industry can be met.
- The corporate sector in the neighbourhood of schools may be represented in the school management committee so that they could assist the schools in enhancement of its infrastructure and resources.
- Private sector may be encouraged to set up modal schools at bloc level in collaboration with state governments (Planning Commission, Government of India, 2007).

The recent government directive to all the private schools in India to provide 20-25 percent seats and freeships to the children of the economically disadvantaged classes has reaffirmed the need for PPP in providing equal educational opportunities to all children towards the realization of the right to education.

CORPORATE COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT: SOME EVIDENCES

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2012) stated that “Corporate Social Responsibility is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large”. In the Indian context, the phrase CSR has a historical background that is culturally explicit through the act of “giving back to society”.

In the present era, public and private companies have been imbibing the social responsibility in their operations for supporting the efforts of the government in the nation-building process, providing localized rural employment, fostering environmental concerns, raising the quality of life, creating business leadership, creating sustainable economics and providing access to Information and Communication Technologies. Some evidences of corporate contribution to social development are discussed and examined as to how such programs brought rural transformation in India.

The Hoshangabad Science Teaching program (HSTP) was a first wave program that was introduced in 1973 in Hoshangabad district, Madhya Pradesh and within three decades of its existence it covered over a thousand schools and was regarded as an innovative approach to the teaching of Science and emerged as “Ekalavya”, a pioneering NGO for quality education.

- Alternative approaches to education that have been advocated by organizations such as Pratham and Katha have provided child-centered approach to learning. These schools have voted with their feet, choosing not to engage with the State educational system but make considerable use of voices from within the community space and strongly identify with the community approach to education.
- The Azim Premji Foundation is another significant example in this direction. It was set up as a not-for-profit organization with funds from WIPRO, in 2001 with the objective of ensuring UEE. It works with state governments to improve the learning in government schools using initiatives such as Learning Guarantee Program (LGP). The organization

began working with the state government of Karnataka and has now extended its operation to other states in India (Giridhar et. al., 2006)

- Amongst multinational corporations, Microsoft and Intel have outlined the future vision and activities in India in complementing governments efforts in realizing the vision laid out in India's IT strategy of increasing citizen-IT interface through investments in education. The Project Shiksha (Rs.100 crore or US 20 million dollar), launched by Microsoft to improve computer education in India, aims at training 80,000 school teachers who would be educating 3.5 lakh students across the country is an important step in this direction.
- ONGC and Indian Oil Corporation have been spending 0.75-1 percent of their net profits on CSR activities. ONGC's CSR projects focus on higher education, grants of scholarship and aid to deserving young pupils of less privileged sections of society, facilities for constructing schools, etc.
- The Bajaj Auto company has been running Samaj Seva Kendra at Akrudi near Pune since 1975 (900 families as members). The Kendra aims at improving the quality of life of its members (education, health care, vocational training, etc). The company also runs the Janki Devi Bajaj Gram Vikas Sanstha near Pune.
- The Shriram Group formed a trust in 1992 to carry out its social projects. It runs 5 schools for over 2,000 children; a home for orphans is run by the group. The group offers work sheds, capital and management support to women in Thanjavur who make incense sticks and candles. In 1995, the group launched the Shriram Rural Development project in Kanchipuram district of Tamil Nadu with a view to reduce indebtedness and offer credit to rural population at concessional rates.
- SAIL has taken successful actions in environment conservation, health and medical care, education, women upliftment, and providing drinking water.
- BHEL & Indian Airlines have been acclaimed for disaster management efforts. BHEL has also adopted 56 villages having nearly 80,000 inhabitants.
- Reliance Industries initiated a project named "Project- Drishti" to bring back the eyesight of visually challenged Indians from the economically weaker sections of the society. This project has brightened up the lives of over 5,000 people so far.
- Mahindra & Mahindra launched a unique kind of ESOPs- Employee Social Option in order to enable Mahindra employees to involve themselves in socially responsible activities of their choice.
- GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceuticals CSR programs primarily focus on health and healthy living. They work in tribal villages where they

provide medical check-up and treatment, health camps and health awareness programs. They also provide money, medicines and equipment to non-profit organizations that work towards improving health and education in under-served communities.

- Bajaj Electricals Ltd.'s corporate social responsibility activities include Education, Rural Development & Environment.
- Several companies organized a number of health camps to create health awareness and sensitize people on health-related issues like: immunization, blood donation, water purification tablets, distributing condoms, etc. Till 2007-08, SAIL has conducted 267 health camps benefiting more than 4.5 lakh people. In Lanjigarh (Orissa), Vedanta Aluminium Ltd. covered 53 villages with 32,000 villagers by providing free medicines, treatment and referral services through its mobile health units. Tata Steel Family Initiatives Foundation (TSFIF) established 'Lifeline Express' hospital on wheels which have helped over 50,000 patients in Jharkhand, Orissa and Chhatisgarh.
- Aditya Birla Group provided education to 62,000 children living in proximity to the plants by running 26 formal schools. SAIL supports around 13 schools in the peripheral areas of SAIL's plants/units in the country where more than 80,000 children receive education (Kumar, 2008). Asian Paints set up the "Shree Gattu Vidyalaya", a school catering to 25,000 children from class I to X, which has helped rural children gain access to formal schooling. Similarly, Satyam Computers have developed 170 modern schools benefiting 40,000 rural children. The schools into 'Smiles Project' supported by Coca Cola India Inc. has been launched and complete in 20 schools impacting the lives of around 10,000 children.
- For sustainable management and development of natural resources, many companies have been working for tree plantation, watershed management, waste management, wind farm, etc. For example, SAIL has planted 13.5 million trees in and around SAIL plants/mines so far. Watershed development program of Ambuja Cement Ltd. covered 9,000 ha in the last four years. Sustainable water management remains the top priority of Coca Cola India Inc. So far, the company's water initiatives have improved the lives of more than 140,000 people and spread awareness about the crucial importance of water conservation among millions of people.
- Some of the companies are also providing different infrastructural facilities like construction or development of roads, electricity, water facility, sanitation, school, health center, community center, etc. Lupin Human Welfare and Research Foundation's "Apna Gaon Apna Kam" scheme covered 38,000 villages in Rajasthan and almost all villages have school buildings, drinking water, ponds, link roads, community

centers, and electricity. SAIL has been involved in the construction and repair of 33 km of pucca roads per year, thereby providing nearby two lakh people across 435 villages access to modern infrastructure facilities every year. In Andhra Pradesh, in partnership with Hyderabad Urban Development Agency, local village communities and NGOs, Coca-Cola India has helped 16,000 villagers of ‘Saroor Nayar’ restore existing “Check Dam” water catchment areas (Parul and Gitika, 2011).

CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF CSR INITIATIVES

Several researches have been conducted to study the impact of CSR on rural transformation and reported that most of the CSR Programs have helped in livelihood, health, education, environment and infrastructure development. The critical appraisal of the initiatives has been presented based on the survey conducted by Times Foundation in partnership with TNS India, drawing a sample of 82 organizations including PSUs, private national and private multinational agencies on the basis of the current areas covered and priority areas to be considered under CSR initiatives.

Table 1: Current Areas covered vs. Priority Areas to be considered under CSR (in percent)

Sr. No	Area	Current (%)	Priority (%)
1	Health	77	81
2	Environment	66	81
3	Agriculture	18	29
4	Microfinance	45	69
5	Sanitation	41	61
6	HIV/AIDS	35	54
7	Childcare and Development	42	55
8	Rehabitation/Resettlement	32	38
9	Slum Improvement	18	50
10	Disaster Management & Rehabilitation	30	44
11	Livelihood Promotion	57	62
12	Women Empowerment	55	63
13	Education	82	82

Source: Survey Conducted by Times Foundation with TNS India on Corporate Social responsibilities, 2008

From the above table it can be observed that areas such as education (82 percent), health and environment (81 percent each) top the list followed by women empowerment (63 percent), livelihood promotion (62 percent), sanitation (61 percent), microfinance (60 percent), HIV/AIDS (54 percent),

child care (55 percent), slum improvement (50 percent) and disaster management (44 percent). Further a study conducted by Dutta and Durgamohan (2009) reveals that education takes the first place followed by health and social issues. Kumar (2003) also found that the initiative taken by different organizations has been restricted to a limited set of practices i.e. health, education and social issues.

As the data presented above viewed with respect to the objectives of CSR initiatives, it can be clearly stated that the first three objectives of CSR have been focused on more, whereas other objectives did not get adequate attention. Therefore, there is an urgent need to expand the set of areas covered under the CSR initiatives of various organizations for benefit of community, needy and the under privileged.

CHALLENGES TO CSR INITIATIVES IN INDIA

India, as one of the highly populated countries with lots of regional diversities, has experienced several challenges in implementing CSR initiatives and these need immediate attention.

- *Communication Gap*

There exists a communication gap between the personnel involved in CSR initiatives and rural people. This can be attributed to the fact that local people do not show much enthusiasm in participating whole heartedly in the programs launched by companies. While the companies are trying to create skilled and semi-skilled human resources in rural areas, there is a tendency among the rural people to receive some dole given to them. This creates confusion and consequently people show lack of interest in CSR initiatives.

- *Capacity Building*

It is a common experience that a large part of rural India suffers from inadequate infrastructure, lack of quality human resources and resource crunch. Thus, there is an urgent need to compensate these deficiencies through CSR initiatives. This demands capacity building on the one hand and availability of infrastructure on the other. Together these two will go a long way in transforming rural India.

- *Proper Identification of Local Needs*

Large scale heterogeneity in the demographic distribution results in equally varied requirements of rural people. This poses two serious challenges: first, in determining the pressing needs and secondly, prioritizing the needs for CSR initiatives. Both the Government and Non-Governmental organizations bring out conflicting data rather than complementary data about the actual need of rural people. Thus, it becomes very difficult to plan clear and focused strategies on rural transformation and this is a big challenge.

- *Critical Evaluation*

Non-availability of proper evaluative studies has created a knowledge gap regarding the success or failure of a CSR initiative. In this regard, the media seems to have not played an effective role. Although some good practices have been highlighted by the media, the failures have been highlighted much. Consequently, the Government, the NGOs and the companies have become skeptical in sharing the information. Such a situation accentuates the undesirability aspect of the strengths and weaknesses of the CSR initiatives.

- *Ambiguous guidelines*

There are no clear-cut statutory guidelines or policy directives for CSR initiatives and furthermore, there is lack of consensus among local agencies involved in CSR projects. Thus, in practical terms, in some places the projects are duplicated and unattended areas remain largely neglected.

CONCLUSION

In spite of growing concern in CSR initiatives in India, some critics are still questioning the concept of CSR. On the one hand, some claim that there are ulterior motives behind CSR initiatives whereas others view it more like social drama. Nevertheless, the existing CSR initiatives indicate that the labyrinth to rural transformation is not a blind alley, but rather a silver lining is visible behind this dark cloud. Thus, CSR initiatives should be viewed as the responsibility of all quarters of people rather than as corporate responsibility.

CSR is a potential strategy for rural upliftment in India and this partnership has to be seen more as collaboration rather than competition. The recent initiatives under CSR have shown positive results in bringing change in rural areas – not only the infrastructural development but also in the life and living of rural people. In order to strengthen CSR activities, certain grave areas such as capacity building of local people, functional transparency, mutual cooperation between government and civil society, non-repetition of the programs by various corporate and the use of ICT need to be addressed in a strategic way.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

DIFFERENCES IN READING LITERACY BETWEEN STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS IN RURAL AREAS AND OTHER STUDENTS IN THE LIGHT OF DATA FROM PISA 2009

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RURAL TRANSFORMATION, READING LITERACY AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STUDENTS IN RURAL SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS IN OTHER SCHOOLS

Literacy is considered an important skill that makes it easier to function in society, both as a citizen and in the labour market. Literacy is also a skill that can support personal fulfilment. An individual with good literacy skills has better opportunities to participate in all types of activities that a citizen is expected to participate in and has the right to participate in, to find a job in the labour market, and to fulfil herself/himself culturally and in other respects.

In OECD's International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) it was noticed that there was a "*close association between higher literacy skills and participation in the labour force and jobs that are shaping the knowledge economy*" (p. 11, OECD, 2000). One of the conclusions drawn from the study was that "*... literacy skills are an essential ingredient in the process of upskilling that accompanies the economic and social transformations that are occurring in the OECD countries*" (p. 11, OECD, 2000). It was also noted that literacy skills were associated with greater social cohesion, political participation of women, and improved health (p. 84, OECD, 2000).

The EFA Global Monitoring Report for 2006 examined specifically the importance of literacy (EFA, 2005). The report recognised that literacy brings human benefits, political benefits, cultural benefits, social benefits, and economic benefits. Human benefits of literacy are related to "*improved self-esteem, empowerment, creativity and critical reflection*" (p. 138, EFA, 2005). The political benefits of literacy "*can translate into increased political participation and thus contribute to the quality of public policies and to democracy*" (p. 139, EFA, 2005). Among the cultural benefits of literacy referred to are "*the transmission of certain values, attitudes, and behaviours through critical reflection*" (p. 140, EFA, 2005), "*access to written culture*" (p. 140, EFA, 2005) and "*preserving and promoting cultural openness and diversity*" (p. 140, EFA, 2005). The social benefits mentioned

contain “*maintaining good health and living longer, learning throughout life, controlling reproductive behaviour, raising healthy children and educating them*” (p. 141, EFA, 2005). The main economic benefits referred to are “*increased individual income and economic growth*” (p. 143, EFA, 2005). All these benefits mentioned in the report are underpinned with a number of references to research that has examined relations between literacy and the different areas mentioned.

It can be noted that literacy is important both at an individual level and at the level of communities and societies. Literacy can benefit individuals in respect to increased opportunities for political participation, better health, increased income, etc. Literacy can also benefit society as a whole not only through the benefits of a number of individuals, but also through economic growth for the society as a whole and a higher degree of democratic participation in discussions and decision making.

The benefits of literacy explain why literacy is not only considered a benefit, but also a human right. Literacy as a right is explicitly and implicitly stated in several of the declarations and conventions on human rights (EFA, 2005).

If we can consider that literacy plays an important role for the development of individuals and societies it also makes sense to believe that literacy has an important role to play in the transformation of rural areas. Education for rural transformation obviously includes and can include many different aspects. One of these aspects needs to be the development of good literacy skills. If literacy is considered a human right it is important that the rural populations get the same opportunities to obtain and improve literacy skills as other parts of a population in a country.

Literacy skills can be defined in many different ways. To be classified as literate does not always mean that the person in question has achieved the skills needed to read more than very basic texts. IALS showed that in countries/regions where the population is usually considered to be literate there are large groups of citizens that only have very basic literacy skills, for example in the United States about 20 percent of the adult population has literacy skills that corresponded to the lowest level on the IALS literacy scales (OECD, 2000). Many studies from countries in the South indicate that students after completion of school still find it difficult to read more than basic texts. In the SACMEQ (Southern Africa Consortium for Measuring Educational Quality) project, covering five countries in Southern Africa (Mauritius, Namibia, Zambia, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe), it was found that in only two of the five countries, Zimbabwe and Mauritius, at least half of the students achieved what was referred to as basic readings skills. Only in Zimbabwe, did more than a third of the students reach what was referred to as desired reading level (SACMEQ, 1998). In the project Monitor Learning

Achievement (MLA) it was shown that in only one out of 11 participating African countries more than 50 % of the students achieved the desired mastery level in literacy (Chinapah et al., 1999).

As stated in the Concept paper of 3rd International Symposium Educational for Rural Transformation (ERT, 2012) it is important to assess the quality of education and not just the access to education. This may be even more important in the rural, poverty-stricken areas with marginalized populations (ERT, 2012). As rural populations more often than urban populations experience extreme poverty and deprivation it is likely that general literacy levels are lower in rural areas than among the population as a whole. Studies looking at the difference between rural and urban schools have found that students in urban schools normally outperform students in rural schools (see for example Chinapah et al., 1999).

From the perspectives outlined above it is of interest to examine literacy among students in rural schools and compare their literacy level with the level of students in urban schools. How well do rural students read? How big are the differences between students in rural and urban schools?

PISA 2009 AND DATA ABOUT READING LITERACY AMONG STUDENTS IN RURAL SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS IN OTHER SCHOOLS

PISA is an international study of students' achievement in mathematics, science and reading organized by OECD and repeated every three years. In each study one of the three domains mentioned above is the major domain of the study. In PISA 2009, reading was the major domain and data was collected from 65 countries and regions, including 34 OECD countries and 31 non-OECD countries/regions (OECD, 2010a). (For a full list of participating countries/regions see appendix A). Within the PISA study information is not only collected about students' achievement. In order to facilitate different types of analysis, information is also collected from students and principals about factors related to the homes of the students and to their schools. Among many other things, information is collected from the principals about the location of the school (OECD, 2010b). Available data from PISA 2009 makes it possible to examine:

- proportion of students in the participating countries who attend schools in rural areas,
- average performance in reading of students in schools in rural areas in comparison with other students,
- average score points on the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status of the students in schools in rural areas in comparison with students in other schools,

- average performance in reading of students in rural schools in comparison with other students when accounting for economic, social and cultural status, and
- size of the differences in reading scores on PISA between students in rural schools and students in schools in small towns, towns and cities.

Before we continue with the analysis of PISA data, it is important to clarify how reading literacy is defined in PISA, which group of students that participated in PISA, and what type of distinction that is made between schools located in different areas.

Reading literacy in PISA is defined as “*understanding, using, reflecting on and engaging with written texts, in order to achieve one’s goals, to develop one’s knowledge and potential, and to participate in society*” (p. 37, OECD, 2010a). To guide the development of the PISA reading test a reading framework has been developed. The framework indicates what types of texts students must read, the readers’ purpose and approach to the text, and the intended use of the text from the authors’ point of view. The texts used in PISA are characterized in respect of medium (in what form does the text appear), environment (can the reader change digital texts – only relevant for digital texts), text format (continuous texts, non-continuous texts, mixed texts and multiple texts) and text type (the rhetorical structure of the text). The readers’ purpose and approach to the text are referred to as different aspects and three different aspects are identified: access and retrieve information in the text, integrate and interpret what is read and reflect and evaluate. The intended use of the text from the authors’ point of view is referred to as *situations*. Four different situations are identified: personal (to satisfy one’s own interests), public (relating to wider society), educational (used in instruction) and occupational (related to the world of work) (p. 38, OECD, 2010a). This paper refers only to the results from the PISA reading test covering reading on paper.

The PISA population contains students who are 15-years old and are enrolled in any type of formal schooling (OECD, 2010a). The reason for choosing students aged 15 is that in most countries/regions these students are at the end of compulsory education. The knowledge and skills they have at this age have implications for their further education and for their entrance in the world of work. In each participating country a random sample is drawn from the target population. This sample is a cluster sample where first a number of schools are drawn and then a number of students from each selected school (OECD, 2010a).

Among the questions in the questionnaire that principals were asked to complete was a question where they were asked to indicate the location of their schools. They were given five different alternatives:

- schools located in a village, hamlet or rural area (fewer than 3000 people),
- schools located in a small town (3000 to about 15 000 people),
- schools located in a town (15 000 to about 100 000 people),
- schools located in a city (100 000 to about 1 000 000 people), and
- schools located in large city (with over 1 000 000 people).

In the remaining parts of this paper students in schools located in a village, hamlet or rural area with fewer than 3000 people are the group of students that will be compared with students from other types of schools. Schools located in a village, hamlet or rural area with fewer than 3000 people will be referred to as schools located in rural areas or as rural schools.

STUDENTS IN RURAL SCHOOLS IN PISA 2009

Among the 65 countries/regions that participated in PISA 2009 there were six countries/regions where there were no schools located in rural areas. These countries/regions were: Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong-China, Japan, Macao-China, Shanghai-China and Singapore. France did not collect any information about the location of schools. This means that in the following analysis, data from 58 countries/regions will be used.

Table 1 shows the proportion of students who were enrolled in rural schools.

Table 1: Percentage of students enrolled in rural schools

Percentage of students enrolled in rural schools	Number of countries/regions
Above 50	1
49.9 – 30	4
29.9 – 20	10
19.9 – 10	14
9.9 – 1	25
Below 1	4
Total	58

Source: OECD, 2010b

The percentage of students enrolled in rural schools varies from 52 percent in Kyrgyzstan to 0.4 percent in Serbia. In five countries more than 30 percent of all students are in rural schools: Kyrgyzstan, Poland, Kazakhstan, Latvia and Azerbaijan. In four countries less than 1 percent of the students

are in rural schools: Korea, Netherlands, Luxembourg and Serbia. A more detailed table is included in appendix B as table B1. As can be seen from the table, a rather small proportion of all students are enrolled in rural schools among the participating countries/regions. On average 9.9 percent of the students in the OECD countries were enrolled in rural schools. Average for the

58 countries/regions covered in table 1 was 12.5 percent. In 29 out of 58 countries/regions less than 10 percent of the students are enrolled in schools in rural areas.

HIGHEST AND LOWEST AVERAGE ON THE PISA READING TEST AMONG STUDENTS FROM DIFFERENT TYPES OF SCHOOLS

How do students in schools located in different types of areas compare with each other in respect to reading? Table 2 shows which group of students had the highest average scores on the PISA reading test in the different countries/regions.

Table 2: Students from different types of schools with the highest average score in the country compared with other schools on the PISA reading test

Types of schools	Number of countries/regions where the students from this types of schools have the highest average score in the country compared with students from other schools on the PISA reading test
Students in schools located in a village, hamlet or rural area (fewer than 3000 people)	2
Students in schools located in a small town (3000 to about 15 000 people)	2
Students in schools located in a town (15 000 to about 100 000 people)	4
Students in schools located in a city (100 000 to about 1 000 000 people)	23
Students in schools located in a large city (with over 1 000 000 people)	27

Source: OECD, 2010b

As can be seen from table 2 the group of students with the highest average scores on the PISA reading test are in most countries/regions to be found in cities or large cities. Out of 58 countries/regions the students with the highest average scores are those in schools in cities and large cities in 50 countries/regions. In two countries the students with the highest average are in schools located in rural areas. These countries are Korea and the United Kingdom. In Korea a very small proportion of all students are to be found in rural schools, only 0.9 percent. In the United Kingdom the proportion is higher, 6.8 percent. For more details see table C1 in appendix C.

Table 3 shows which type of schools had the lowest average scores on the PISA reading test in the different countries/regions.

Table 3: Students from different types of schools with the lowest average score in the country compared with other schools on the PISA reading test

Types of schools	Number of countries/regions where the students from this types of schools have the lowest average score in the country compared with other schools on the PISA reading test
Schools located in a village, hamlet or rural area (fewer than 3000 people)	47
Schools located in a small town (3000 to about 15 000 people)	6
Schools located in a town (15 000 to about 100 000 people)	2
Schools located in a city (100 000 to about 1 000 000 people)	-
Schools located in a large city (with over 1 000 000 people)	3

Source: OECD, 2010b

Table 3 shows the other side of the coin. In the same way as students from schools located in rural areas in most countries/regions did not have the highest average score on the PISA reading test they generally have the lowest average score. Out of 58 countries/regions the students in rural schools have the lowest average in 47 countries/regions. For more details see table C2 in appendix C.

Generally, it can be noted that the pattern that is repeated in most countries/regions, with some exceptions, is that students from rural schools most often are not those who have the highest average scores on the PISA reading test. Students from rural schools are those who, in a large majority of countries/regions, have the lowest average score.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STUDENTS IN RURAL SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS IN OTHER SCHOOLS

Even if students in rural schools in most countries/regions have the lowest average scores, the situation may not be that bad if the difference between students from different types of schools is small. In 25 countries/regions the difference between the average score of students in rural schools and the students in schools in small towns is not significant, but in 32 countries/regions there is a significant difference between these two groups of students. Among these 32 countries/regions there are five countries where actually the students in the rural schools are doing better than those in schools in small towns (Korea, Dubai (UAE), Luxembourg, Israel and Qatar), but in 27 countries/regions there is a significant difference in favor of those students who are in small towns. For more details see tables D1 and D2 in appendix D.

It is also possible to make a comparison between the students in rural schools and the students in cities and large cities. In ten countries/regions there is no significant difference between these students, but in 46 countries/regions there is a significant difference. Among these 46 countries/regions the significant difference is in favor of the students in the rural schools in only one country (Korea). For more details see tables D3 and D4 in appendix D.

The difference between students in rural schools and schools in cities and large cities is significant in a much larger number of countries/regions than the difference between students in rural schools and students in schools in small towns. Differences are usually not in favor of students in rural schools. An exception is Korea where there is a significant difference in favor of students in rural schools both in comparison with schools in small cities and in comparison with students in schools in cities and large cities.

PISA'S INDEX OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STATUS

As mentioned in section 1, rural populations are often in less favorable situations than populations in other areas. In PISA an index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS) is used to measure the socioeconomic background of the students. This index is based on the students' answers to questions in the student questionnaire on family and home background. The index is:

derived from the following variables: the international socio-economic index of occupational status of the father or mother, whichever is higher; the level of education of the father or mother, whichever is higher, converted into years of schooling; and the index of home possessions, obtained by asking students whether they had a desk at which they studied at home, a room of their own, a quiet place to study, educational software, a link to the Internet, their own calculator, classic literature, books of poetry, works of art (e.g. paintings), books to help them with their school work, a dictionary, a dishwasher, a DVD player or VCR, three other country-specific items and the number of cellular phones, televisions, computers, cars and books at home (p. 29, OECD, 2010b).

The score points of the index have been standardized to a mean of zero for the population of students in OECD countries, with each country given equal weight. "A one-point difference on the scale of the index represents a difference of one standard deviation on the distribution of this measure" (p. 29, OECD, 2010b).

This index can be used to compare the economic, social and cultural status of the students in different types of schools. Table 4 shows which group of students has the highest average score point on the index in the different countries/regions.

Students in schools in cities and large cities are those with the highest score point on the index of economic, social and cultural status in 51 out of 58 countries/regions. In four countries the students in rural schools have the highest value on the index (Korea, Belgium, the Netherlands and United Kingdom). For more details see table E1 in appendix E.

Table 4: Students from different types of schools with the highest average score point in the country compared with other schools on the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status

Types of schools	Number of countries/regions where the students from this types of schools have the highest average score point in the country compared with other schools on the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS)
Schools located in a village, hamlet or rural area (fewer than 3000 people)	4
Schools located in a small town (3000 to about 15 000 people)	-
Schools located in a town (15 000 to about 100 000 people)	3
Schools located in a city (100 000 to about 1 000 000 people)	22
Schools located in a large city (with over 1 000 000 people)	29

Source: OECD, 2010b

Table 5 shows which group of students has the lowest average score point on the index in the different countries/regions.

With a few exceptions the pattern in all countries/regions is that the students in rural schools have the lowest average score point on the index of economic, social and cultural status. This is the situation in 50 out of 58 countries/regions. In four countries (Korea, Israel, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) we find the students with the lowest score point on the index in schools in small towns and in four countries (Denmark, Belgium, United Kingdom and United States) the students in schools in large cities. For more details see table E2 in appendix E.

Generally, it can be observed that students in rural schools in a large majority of countries/regions are those who have the lowest score points on the index of economic, social and cultural status. Korea, Belgium, the Netherlands and United Kingdom are countries with a different profile where the students in the rural schools actually are those with the highest score points.

Table 5: Students from different types of schools with the lowest average score point in the country compared with other schools on the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status

Types of schools	Number of countries/regions where the students from this types of schools have the lowest average score points in the country compared with other schools on the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS)
Schools located in a village, hamlet or rural area (fewer than 3000 people)	50
Schools located in a small town (3000 to about 15 000 people)	4
Schools located in a town (15 000 to about 100 000 people)	-
Schools located in a city (100 000 to about 1 000 000 people)	-
Schools located in a large city (with over 1 000 000 people)	4

Source: OECD, 2010b

HIGHEST AND LOWEST AVERAGE ON THE PISA READING TEST AMONG STUDENTS FROM DIFFERENT TYPES OF SCHOOLS ACCOUNTING FOR THE INDEX ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INDEX

We know from a large number of studies that students' socioeconomic background influence their school achievements and reading skills. As was shown in section 6 students in schools located in rural areas in most countries/regions have a lower score point on the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status than students in other schools. This may contribute to explain the difference we saw in section 4 and 5 between students in rural schools and students in other schools. In order to see whether differences in economic, social and cultural status contribute to differences in results on the PISA reading test, the same comparisons that were done in section 4 and 5 will be repeated in section 7 and 8, but this time accounting for the index on economic, social and cultural status.

Table 6 shows the group of students that had the highest average scores on the PISA reading test in the different countries/regions when accounting for the index on economic, social and cultural status.

Table 6: Students from different types of schools with the highest average score in the country/region compared with students in other schools on the PISA reading test accounting for the index on economic, social and cultural status

Types of schools	Number of countries/regions where the students from this types of schools have the highest average score in the country compared with other schools on the PISA reading test accounting for the index on economic, social and cultural status
Schools located in a village, hamlet or rural area (fewer than 3000 people)	4
Schools located in a small town (3000 to about 15 000 people)	2
Schools located in a town (15 000 to about 100 000 people)	6
Schools located in a city (100 000 to about 1 000 000 people)	21
Schools located in a large city (with over 1 000 000 people)	24

Source: OECD, 2010b

Generally, it can be observed that in a majority of countries/regions the students from schools in cities and large cities have the highest average on the PISA reading test even when accounting for the index on economic, social and cultural status. Only in four countries (Korea, United Kingdom, Iceland and Greece) do the students in rural schools have the highest average. For more details see table F1 in appendix F.

If table 6 is compared with table 2 it can be noted that there are more countries/regions where the students from rural schools have the highest average, 4 compared with 2. The number of countries/regions where the highest averages are found among students in schools in cities and large cities has also decreased from 23 to 21 and from 27 to 24.

Table 7 shows the group of students that had the lowest average scores on the PISA reading test in the different countries/regions when accounting for the index on economic, social and cultural status.

In a majority of countries/regions the lowest average scores on the PISA reading test are found among students in rural schools even when accounting for the index on economic, social and cultural status. For more details see table F2 in appendix F.

When table 7 is compared with table 3 it can be noted that in a slightly lower number of countries/regions the lowest average results are found among students in rural schools when accounting for economic, social and cultural status, 43 compared with 47.

When the results on the PISA reading test account for the index on economic, social and cultural status there are some changes that indicate that some of the differences between students in rural schools and other schools are related to economic, social and cultural differences, but still students from rural schools are, in most countries/regions, the group of students with the lowest average on the PISA reading test.

Table 7: Students from different types of schools with the lowest average score in the country/region compared with students from other schools on the PISA reading test accounting for the index on economic, social and cultural status

Types of schools	Number of countries/regions where the students from this types of schools have the lowest average score in the country compared with students from other schools on the PISA reading test accounting for the index on economic, social and cultural status
Schools located in a village, hamlet or rural area (fewer than 3000 people)	43
Schools located in a small town (3000 to about 15 000 people)	9
Schools located in a town (15 000 to about 100 000 people)	2
Schools located in a city (100 000 to about 1 000 000 people)	0
Schools located in a large city (with over 1 000 000 people)	3

Source: OECD, 2010b

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STUDENTS IN RURAL SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS IN OTHER SCHOOLS ACCOUNTING FOR THE INDEX ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STATUS

As mentioned in section 5 differences between students in rural schools and students in other schools may be of different size. From this perspective it is interesting to see what happens with the size when accounting for the index on economic, social and cultural status.

In 37 countries/regions the difference between the average score of students in rural schools and the students in schools in small towns is not significant, but in 19 countries/regions there is a significant difference between these two groups of students. Among these 19 countries there are five countries where the students in the rural schools are actually doing better than those in schools in small towns (Korea, Dubai (UAE),

Luxembourg, Israel and Qatar), but in 14 countries/regions there is a significant difference in favor of those students who are in small towns. For more details see tables G1 and G2 in appendix G.

Compared with the differences between students in rural schools and students in schools in small towns when not accounting for the economic, social and cultural index (see section 5) it can be noted that the number of countries/regions where the difference is not significant has increased from 25 to 37. In 19 countries/regions there is a significant difference when accounting for economic, social and cultural status compared with 32 countries/regions when not accounting for economic, social and cultural status.

As in section 5 it is also of interest to make a comparison between the students in rural schools and the students in cities and large cities when accounting for economic, social and culture status. In 18 countries/regions there is no significant difference between these students, but in 37 countries/regions there is a significant difference. Among these 37 countries/regions the significant difference is in favor of the students in the rural schools in only one country (Korea). For more details see tables G3 and G4 in appendix G.

Looking at the comparison made in section 5 between students from rural schools and students from schools in cities and large cities the number of countries/regions where this difference is significant is smaller when accounting for economic, social and cultural status – 37 compared with 46.

Generally, it can be observed that when accounting for economic, social and cultural status the differences between students in rural schools and students in other types of schools in reading skills seems to be smaller in many countries/regions. A reasonable conclusion is that the difference that has been observed between students in rural areas and other students is to some extent related to the economic, social and cultural status of the students.

BEST PRACTICE

With the help of the data described in previous sections it is possible to identify good practice in countries in three ways: 1) the countries/regions where the students in rural schools have the highest scores on the PISA reading test in comparison with students in rural schools in other countries/regions, 2) the countries/regions where the students in rural schools have the highest scores on the PISA reading test in comparison with students in other types of schools in the same country/region, and 3) the countries/regions where the difference in results on the PISA reading test between students in rural schools and other schools are smallest.

Among the 58 countries/regions covered in this paper the five countries with the highest average score for students in rural schools are: Korea (615), Finland (525), Belgium (522), Luxembourg (514) and the United Kingdom (512). It can be noted that among these five countries Korea, Finland and Belgium are among those countries/regions that generally have very high average scores on the PISA reading test. The average in these countries is above the international average. In the case of Luxembourg and United Kingdom it is of interest to observe that these two countries are not among the top performers in reading in PISA. Both countries have average scores below the international average on the PISA reading test (OECD, 2010a). In both Korea and Luxembourg the proportion of students in rural schools is a very small part of all students; in Korea 0.9 percent and in Luxembourg 0.5 percent. Among the five countries Finland is the country with the highest proportion of students in rural schools – 11.2 percent. The corresponding proportion is 6.8 percent in United Kingdom and 3.5 percent in Belgium (see appendix B).

When a comparison is made within the countries/regions it can be noted that students in rural schools in most countries/regions have the lowest average score on the PISA reading test when compared with students from schools in small towns, towns, cities and large cities in the same country. Only in two countries have the students in rural schools obtain the highest average score in the country on the PISA reading test: Korea and United Kingdom. When the scores on the PISA reading test account for economic, social and cultural status there are four countries where the students in rural schools have the highest average score: Korea, United Kingdom, Iceland and Greece (see appendix C and F).

Finally, if we look at the size of the difference in scores on the PISA reading test between students in rural schools and students in other schools it can be noted that there are 10 countries (Belgium, Finland, Greece, Montenegro, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Serbia, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States) where there are no significant difference in average scores on the PISA reading test between students in rural schools and students in schools in small town as well as no significant difference between students in rural schools and schools in cities and large cities. If accounting for economic, social and cultural status there are no significant difference in the scores on the PISA reading test between students in rural schools and students in small towns as well as between students in rural schools and students in cities and large cities in 15 countries (Belgium, Colombia, Croatia, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Russian Federation, Serbia, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States). Some of the countries/regions with small differences between students in different types of schools are countries/regions with a

reputation of having an education system with a high degree of equity, but not all the countries/regions with small differences have that reputation (OECD, 2010b).

DISCUSSION

The most noticeable observation that can be made in this analysis of PISA data on reading literacy among students in rural schools and in other types of schools is that in most countries/regions the students in rural schools have lower average scores than the students in other schools. Based on previous knowledge on differences between rural schools and other types of schools it seems reasonable to assume that this difference is related to differences in the students' socioeconomic background. It can also be noted that when the economic, social and cultural status of the students are compared within the countries/regions the students in the rural schools have the lowest score point on the PISA index for economic, social and cultural status in 43 countries/regions out of 58 (see appendix E). When the results of the PISA reading test account for the economic, social and cultural status of the students, as measured by the PISA index for economic, social and cultural status, the picture changes to some extent. The number of countries/regions where the students in rural schools show the lowest average on the PISA reading test decreases from 47 to 43. The number of countries/regions where there is no significant difference in results on the PISA reading test between students in rural schools and students in schools in towns increase from 25 to 37, and the number of countries/regions where there is no significant difference in results on the PISA reading test between students in rural schools and students in schools in cities and large cities increases from 10 to 18. Obviously, socioeconomic background plays a role in many countries/regions to explain differences in results between students from rural schools and other types of schools, but even when accounting for economic, social and cultural status, students from rural schools tend to have lower average scores on the PISA reading test in many countries/regions. When accounting for economic, social and cultural status, students in rural schools have the lowest average scores on the reading test compared with other types of schools in 43 countries/regions. Also when accounting for economic, social and cultural status there is a significant difference in results on the reading test between students in rural schools and students in schools in small towns in 19 countries/regions. When students in rural schools are compared with students in cities and large cities there are a significant difference in 37 countries/regions. A significant difference between students in rural schools and in other schools does not always mean that the students in the rural schools are doing worse. There are five countries where actually the students in rural schools are doing better than those in schools in small towns (Korea, Dubai (UAE), Luxembourg, Israel and Qatar), but in 14 countries there is a significant difference in favor of those students who are

in small towns. There is a significant difference in favor of the students in rural schools in only one country (Korea) when these students are compared with students in schools in cities and large cities.

If socioeconomic background is not the only factor that may explain differences in results between students in rural schools and in other types of schools it is essential to try to find other factors that could be of importance. Possible factors could be recruitment of teachers to rural schools and available resources for rural schools. It could be assumed that many rural schools have difficulties recruiting qualified teachers. It could also be assumed that many rural schools have access to fewer resources such as textbooks and school libraries than schools located in other areas. Some data from the PISA studies could be used for such further analysis, but it would also be necessary to find data from other sources to do the analysis.

Korea is a country that seems to differ from many of the other countries/regions covered in this paper when the results of students in rural schools are discussed. Korea is among the few countries/regions where students in rural schools have the highest average score on the PISA reading test when compared with students from other types of schools in the country. Korea is also the only country where there is a significant difference in the average on the reading test between students in rural schools and students in schools in cities and large cities that is in favor of the students in rural schools. These observations probably need to be linked to the fact that there is a comparatively small proportion of all students in rural schools in Korea, only 0.9 percent. It is also important to note that Korea is one of four countries where the students in rural schools have the highest value on the index of economic, social and cultural status in the country compared with students from other schools.

The other three countries where the students in rural schools also have the highest score points on the index compared with students from other schools in the countries are Belgium, the Netherlands and United Kingdom. In these three countries the difference on the reading test between students in rural schools and students in other types of schools are non-significant. The Netherlands has an even smaller proportion of students in rural schools than Korea – 0.8 percent. Belgium and United Kingdom have larger proportions of students in rural schools than Korea and the Netherlands – 3.5 and 6.8 percent.

Countries/regions that in some way could be regarded as good examples seem to meet at least one of the following criteria:

- there is a general high average score on the PISA reading test, for example Korea and Finland;
- the degree of equity is generally high, for example Korea and Finland;

- the proportion of students in rural areas is comparatively small, for example Korea and the Netherlands; and
- students in rural areas have a fairly high score point on the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status, for example Korea.

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

POVERTY TO PROSPERITY: A CASE STUDY OF MICRO FINANCE FOR ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY IN RURAL INDIA

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INTRODUCTION

India lives in its villages – Mahatma Gandhi. Literally and from the social, economic and political perspective the statement is even valid today. The rural population (% age of total population) in India was last reported at 69.60 in 2010, according to a World Bank report published in 2012. On the other hand, the population growth rate of rural India hovers around 1.1% as compared to 2.3% of urban India. The same may be attributed to the migration of rural population in search of better livelihood opportunities in urban areas. People in rural areas should have the same quality of life as is enjoyed by people living in sub urban and urban areas. Cascading effects of poverty, unemployment, poor and inadequate infrastructure in rural areas on urban centers, causing slums and consequential social and economic tensions to manifest in economic deprivation and urban poverty. Hence, rural development is concerned with economic growth and social justice, and improvement in the living standard of the rural people by providing adequate and quality social services and minimum basic needs becomes essential. The present strategy of rural development mainly focuses on poverty alleviation, better livelihood opportunities, provisions for basic amenities and infrastructure facilities through innovative programmes of wage and self employment. The same will be achieved by various programme support that are being implemented, creating partnership with communities, nongovernmental organizations, community based organizations,

institutions, corporate social responsibility wing of industrial entities etc. However, benevolent such policies be, the implementation of the same needs meticulous planning and execution, more so when the Indian sub continent is comprised of different states/ geographical regions diverse in culture, tradition, ethnicity and as such, the region based developmental needs differ. **Education**, training and development exercises, hand holding and mentoring exercises are truly the need of the hour to speed up such rural development that is engineered by way of self employment measures.

Capacity building exercises today are seen as an important component for facilitating sustainable livelihood and thereby scaling up poverty alleviation initiatives. Also referred to as Capacity Development, it is a conceptual approach to development that focuses on understanding the obstacles that inhibit people, Government, International Organizations and Non Governmental Organizations from realizing their developmental goals while enhancing their abilities that would allow them to achieve measurable and sustainable development. Education indeed plays an important role in developing the socio-economic condition of a Country and this study focuses on the role played by non-formal and informal education in developing the status of livelihood of the rural population specifically. Studies reveal the importance of capacity building exercises such as training, demonstrating, mentoring and hand holding of the economically backward section of the society towards uplifting their socio-economic conditions resulting in economic sustainability. Such exercises would involve educating and creating awareness amongst people in areas related to health and hygiene, economic sustainability through sustainable livelihood, basic managerial and entrepreneurial ability, cooperative operations, financial literacy and a host of other areas. Non Government Organizations (NGO) today plays an important role in development. NGO's serves as a special purpose vehicle in carrying forward the mandates of various Agencies, Departments and Ministries of the Government, in their respective areas of operation. This is due to their better understanding of the local problems, availability of resources etc. In this study, the role played by NGO towards facilitating the creation of sustainable livelihood amongst underprivileged sections of the rural population through financial literacy campaigns and a few success stories have been documented from Nandeshwari under Vadodara District of Gujarat and Morakolong under Morigaon District of Assam.



Community Hut where villagers meet, at Morakolong, Morigaon, India (ASOMI, Guwahati)



Training imparted on Sewing and Cutting at Nandeshwari, Vadodara, India (Deepak Foundation)

Microfinance includes a wide array of financial services like savings, credit, insurance, payments, remittance, and is a strong mechanism directed towards creating financial freedom amongst the economically weaker sections of the society. The power of finance to transform the lives of the poor is well understood when we look at the success stories of Grameen of Bangladesh, BRI of Indonesia and Bandhan, SKS Microfinance of India. Microfinance institutions have managed to implement financial service delivery mechanisms that meet the needs of the poor, at a lower cost than most accessible. The importance of microfinance in the field of development was reinforced with the launch of the Microcredit Summit in 1997.

Microfinance refers to the means by which poor people convert small sums of money into large lump sums (Rutherford, 1999). Microfinance started as "a collection of banking practices built around small loans (typically without collateral) and accepting tiny savings deposits" (Armendariz de Agion and Morduch, 2005). Enormous hopes continue to be held out for microfinance as an instrument of poverty reduction; the Microcredit Summit of February 1997, it will be recalled, pledged itself, perhaps over-optimistically [Rogaly, 1997; Mosley and Hulme, 1998] to reach 100 million families, or one-half of the world's poor, with this one instrument alone before 2005. Initially though the skeptics considered achieving this goal to be impossible, but the number of borrowers who are among the poorest has increased to 106.6 million by the end of 2007, achieving the Microcredit Summit Campaign's original goal and representing growth in the number of very poor borrowers of 30% per year. Including the families of borrowers, more than 500 million of the poorest people are now benefiting from access to credit and financial services.

The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was launched in 1980 to provide resources to help the poor to attain self sufficiency. But these supply side programs (ignoring the demand side of the economy) aided by corruption and leakages, achieved little. Further, the share of the formal financial sector in total rural credit was 56.6%, compared to informal finance at 39.6% and unspecified sources at 3.8%. [RBI 1992]. Not only had formal credit flow been less but also uneven. The collateral and paperwork based system shied away from the poor. The vacuum continued to be filled by the village moneylender who charged interest rates of 2 to 30% per month (Rural Credit and Self Help Groups- Microfinance needs and Concepts in India- K.G.Karmakar 1999). 70% of landless/marginal farmers did not have a bank account and 87% had no access to credit from a formal source (World Bank NCAER, Rural Financial Access Survey 2003). It was in this cheerless background that the Microfinance Revolution occurred worldwide. In India it began in the 1980s with the formation of pockets of informal Self Help Groups (SHG) engaging in micro activities financed by Microfinance. India's first Microfinance Institution 'Shri Mahila SEWA Sahkari Bank was set up as an urban co-operative bank, by the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) soon after the group (founder Ms. Ela Bhatt) was formed in 1974. The first official effort materialized under the direction of NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development). The Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency (MYRADA) sponsored project on "Savings and Credit Management of SHGs was partially financed by NABARD during 1986-87 ['Mainstreaming of Indian Microfinance'- P.Satish, 2005].

Microfinance can help reduce the disparity arising due to privatization, globalization and liberalization and lead to a more equitable growth of the country. Savings-driven microfinance environment is feasible in rural as well as urban areas. If properly regulated and supervised, they have great potential in poverty alleviation and development, both in rural and urban areas.

Certain key Initiatives taken by the Government of India, considering the success of micro finance are enlisted below:

- Setting up of the Rashtriya Mahila Kosh to refinance microfinance activities of NGOs
- Encouraging National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) to set targets for the self-help group (SHG) - Bank linkage programme
- Emergence of SIDBI Foundation for Micro-Credit as a financier of microfinance institutions (MFIs)
- Setting up of Regional Rural Banks all over India

- The pronouncements of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) from time to time -such as
 - (i) including lending to SHGs as a part of priority sector targets
 - (ii) exempting non-profit companies doing microfinance from registering as an NBFC (Non-Banking Financial Company)
 - (iii) permitting the establishment of local area banks (now withdrawn)
- Routing some poverty oriented schemes such as the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) through SHGs
- The close linkage built by DWCRA (Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas) schemes
- The initiatives of various state governments in promoting schemes such as Swa-Shakti (Gujarat), Velugu (Andhra Pradesh)
- Setting up of NEDFi (North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Limited) specifically for the development of North Eastern Region of India.

ROLE OF NGO IN FINANCIAL LITERACY CAMPAIGN

Microfinance clients are scattered over large geographical areas. Have different levels of formal education, speak a variety of languages and have disparate access to media. No doubt, creating a successful financial literacy campaign is a difficult task but covering the following elements may help develop a multi-pronged education drive that conveys some measure of utility to different audiences at a national or regional level.

Channels for Financial Literacy Campaigns Related to Microfinance

Trainings, workshops, ads, etc., can be delivered through the following channels.

- Radio – reach the masses
- National TV network – good geographical reach and low cost of subscription
- Mobile phones – especially useful in countries with mobile banking
- Local convenience stores or corner shops – suitable for distribution of pamphlets
- An Micro Finance Institution's (MFI) premises or group meeting location (trainings could be initiated by a group of MFIs or an independent body)

While it may be easier to develop ads and place them in the media, training sessions involving personal contact, entertainment and proper explanation of pros and cons of various microfinance services will have a lasting impact on the audience. This gives NGO's a better understanding of the ground realities and better acquaintance with local population. Some tools trainers rely upon to engage the audience as well as ensure they understand and remember the training content are:

- Stories, short skits, jingles and mnemonics about prudent financial management
- Budgeting worksheets (during training sessions)
- Use of multimedia – slides, videos and images
- Group discussions
- Mobile phone games –complexity of games limited by handset features
- Interactive simulations to test knowledge acquired
- Books and pamphlets – in local language, accompanied with pictorial depictions where necessary.

Good Practices as Observed

In this study two such Micro Finance Institutions registered as NGO were visited:

- 1) Deepak Foundation, Vadodara in the State of Gujarat in India and
- 2) ASOMI, Guwahati in the State of Assam in India.

To develop a meaningful insight into the area of Micro Finance and Financial Literacy Campaign, discussions were held with concerned team members namely Dr. Jai Pawar (Dy. Director, Mr. Ashok Makwana (Program Officer), Mr Surendra Rawat (Field Officer) from Deepak Foundation, Vadodara and Mr. Subhrajyoti Bharali (CEO) and Ms. Asmin N Hussain (Program Officer) from ASOMI, Guwahati.

Further to develop Case Studies on Success Stories; villages of Gujarat and Assam were visited respectively where Deepak Foundation and ASOMI operated. **Interview** as well as **Observation** techniques were adopted to collect first hand experiences from beneficiaries. Interactions in groups were also had, in order to share the experiences of beneficiaries who were the members of the self help groups created by the NGO namely ASOMI and Deepak Foundation at Morigaon, Assam and Nandesari, Gujarat respectively.

DEEPAK FOUNDATION – Through its multifaceted programmes, it reaches out to 1.9 million population of Vadodara district in Gujarat. The foundation provides services through Public Private Partnership initiatives primarily in Livelihood promotion and health. The projects are implemented by building networks with International NGO's, Civil Societies, Self Help Groups and Community based Organizations. Deepak Foundation and Baroda Dairy jointly initiated Cattle rearing and milk collection cooperative society in Nandesari area in 1995. It started the Female run Dairy and cattle rearing society for the first time in Sakariyapura village of Faazalpur Taluka

of Vadodara District in Gujarat. The male members of the village were engaged in farming and females started the Dairy Cooperative Society (DCS). Initially the females were not ready to form the DCS but with the constant guidance and motivation, the society became a reality.

- Importance of Dairying for Women Empowerment
 - Income from dairying can be controlled by women
 - Investment cost is low and it can be practiced on a small-scale
 - Build confidence for venturing into new businesses as entrepreneurs

Key Activities of Deepak Foundation

- Veterinary Services
- Capacity building of WDC
 - Leadership development
 - Account Keeping
 - Business Promotion
- Project Funding
 - A self-sufficient business model



Members of Women Dairy Cooperative Society seen at Milk Collection Center (Deepak Foundation)

Rural Innovation:

Roaming training unit
“Dibya” providing
training to educated
unemployed youth from
Marigaon to
Bangaigaon, Assam
(ASOMI, Guwahati)

ASOMI – a non government organization engaged primarily in the field of Rural Development in Assam through effective conduct of innovative programmes targeted towards empowering the rural folks. Their present engagements are:

1. *Suoni Gaon* (Prosperous Village) Programme
2. Credit for Holistic Development Programme
3. Welfare Fund Scheme
4. Partnership with Government of Assam for World Bank aided Assam Agriculture Competitiveness Project
5. Dairy Development Programmes
6. Training
7. Implementation of Employment Generation Mission with Government of Assam



Within a short span of 10 years since its inception in year 2001, ASOMI has made a mark for itself with contributions towards rural transformation. They have not only successfully convinced the urban daily wage owners to return to their primary activity of agriculture in their respective villages, but also helped them re establish themselves through proper and innovated approaches of training, mentoring and facilitating through the creation of 'community huts' where in the farmers and other rural folks assemble to sort out and look for solutions to their problems. ASOMI's belief in micro finance and micro credit over 'grant – in – aid' programme paid rich dividends not only to ASOMI but to all those families, villages where ASOMI has ventured into. Till date, ASOMI has successfully generated meaningful sustainable livelihood for 33000 families, created 2700 self help groups with a total disbursements of Rs 70.50Cr and an outstanding of Rs 17.05Cr.

ASOMI's magic wand being a well laid process of:

1. Awareness
2. Group Formation
3. Saving
4. Lending
5. Training/ Skill Up-gradation
6. Repayment



Demonstration cum Training session conducted by ASOMI

ASOMI created the 'community hut' in villages where the people met frequently to discuss their problems and where ASOMI's field workers visited for briefing the beneficiaries. It also introduced the mobile training camp and engaged unemployed youth with various activities like composite farming, cattle rearing and dairy, piggery, fishery, tailoring etc. Successful in intervening with the basic problems, ASOMI also was instrumental in introducing the modern techniques of farming to villagers and encouraged mechanization of agriculture on a cooperative mode.

Success Stories

Ramaben Kadubhai Gohil, resident of Gopalgadh (30kms away from Dhangadhra) whose main occupation was cattle rearing, farming and labour work is one example of success as a result of meaningful training and guidance. Earlier she used to sell milk to private vendors and was paid very little for the same. With formation of the Dairy Cooperative she became a

member and gradually knew the techniques of cattle rearing and how important it was to maintain the fat content of milk in order to command a better price.

Similarly it was learnt that the formation of such Self Help Groups by the Women Dairy Cooperative Society has resulted not only in poverty alleviation but also has changed the outlook of the village communities. Earlier where girls were not encouraged to study beyond class ten, are now seen pursuing courses on Engineering as well as other professional subjects. The skill development center has also successfully trained both educated and uneducated youth of the area with meaningful vocational skills.

As compared to men folk of the community, the women are found to be more readily adaptive to changing environments and have been observed working hands on with computers and other modern equipments and gadgets that are put to use by the dairy cooperative society.

According to the women members of the dairy cooperative society, instances of domestic violence, alcoholism etc has significantly been reduced with the enhanced financial empowerment of the families of such beneficiaries.



Dairy farmers at a milk collection booth



Secretary of one Dairy Cooperative Society, Nandesari



Soneswar Deka in order to meet the requirements for his family, worked as a daily wage labor in the City of Guwahati approx 90kms away from his native village Morakalong in Morigaon District of Assam. Morakalong happens to be one of the most backward villages in Assam with perennial floods creating problems for the farming community. With major part of land being lost due to erosion by river Brahmaputra, Deka was left with little option to fend for himself and his family. With proper guidance and motivation from ASOMI, Deka could manage to adapt with new farming techniques over and above venturing into Cattle rearing and dairying. Now he not only successfully manages his house but also extensively works for spreading awareness amongst communities in nearby villages.

CONCLUSION

Microfinance indeed is the key to provide economic empowerment to the weaker sections of the society through effective training and mentoring/ hand holding marked success is observed. However, lack of adequate professional expertise for field operations such initiatives are yet to reach communities that are far and widely scattered. Appropriate use of information technology by institutions engaged in such campaigns can go a long way. Creating a pool of manpower eager to serve for such extension activities will indeed go a long way and the same maybe effectively met through training and developing the local educated unemployed youths. It is also observed that the women are more active in such campaign and are in a better position to manage activities associated creation of awareness amongst fellow villagers.

Good Practices as observed with both the Deepak Foundation in Gujarat and ASOMI in Assam are in their relentless effort to create self help groups (predominantly with women), facilitate such groups with adequate

know-hows about various opportunities of livelihood, hand holding such group activities and continuous mentoring throughout a period of 12-36 months emphasizing upon the sustainability of the developmental exercise with respect to the realization of economic independence of the members of such groups.

An innovative approach towards implementing the developmental policies and programmes of the Government is indeed the need of the hour that facilitates and empowers the target group i.e. the rural population in true sense. This will surely happen when a well coordinated and synergized approach is adopted both by the Government and non government organization taking into consideration the actual developmental need of a region specific. NGO's can actively be involved as special purpose vehicle for delivery of such schemes and programmes. And in doing so, the authority, responsibility and accountability of the NGO must get reflected in how effectively it tailors the parent schemes that originate with various Government Departments as per the need and availability of resources in the region where it operates and delivers the same in a way that target population gets not only facilitated by the NGO but also mentored to a point where sustainable development is truly witnessed.

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

EDUCATION AND CHANGE: THIRD GENERATION FARMERS IN A VILLAGE

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India lives in villages; farmers, laborers, landless laborers, semi-skilled laborers, educated unemployed, landlords, money lenders and many others constitute the rural villages in India. People, since many generations, have been engaged in the same family occupations characterized by few changes here and there. If we see the situation of education in a typical Indian village fifty years back from today, we can see that hardly people were interested in education. The village teacher had to pursue parents to enroll their children in school. The parents, mostly farmers, were not having much of formal education themselves. They also were of the view that farming, and living a simple life was all that they could dream for themselves and their children. Now that India has a democratic form of government, people have been imparted education, exposed to modern living and liberal thinking with the introduction of Communication medias like TV and radio. Especially after District Education Project (1994) and Sarva Shiksha Abhijan (2001), the present generation of the villages has been enrolled in school and has education at least up to Class-VIII. But children in the villages are still not seeking secondary or higher secondary education because they have not been able to link education and development. So a very meager percentage of children and negligible percent of female children are taking the benefit of education especially post-primary education. However, change is natural. Farmers who were rich enough, poor or middle-class (fifty years back), may not be living the same way anymore. Their family members now (the third generation who are young and active in social life) are living a different life altogether. The questions that are worth deliberating today are; what are the pattern of changes that can be seen among these villagers and whether the patterns of changes are as a result of education? Here in this paper, these questions are deliberated in the context of a remote village of Odisha state in India.

LOCATION OF THE VILLAGE

The study is conducted by taking a remote village known as Kharsanmal. It is located 24 km away in the east direction on National Highway No. 6 from the district headquarter Sambalpur. To understand the village let us present briefly about the district Sambalpur where it is located.

Sambalpur District

Sambalpur district lies between 20° 40' N and 22° 11' N latitude, 82° 39' E and 85° 15' E longitude with a total area of 6,702 Sq. Km. The district is surrounded by Deogarh district in the east, Bargarh and Jharsuguda districts in the west, Sundergarh district in the north and Subarnpur and Angul districts in the South. The district has three distinctive physiographic units such as, Hilly Terrain of Bamra and Kuchinda in the north, plateau and ridges of Rairakhol in the south-east and valley and plains of Sambalpur Sub-division in the south east. Sambalpur district experiences extreme type of climate with 66 rainy days and 153 centimeters rainfall on an average per annum. Most of the rainfall is confined to the months from June to October visited by south west monsoon. Mercury rises up to 47° Celsius during May with intolerable heat wave and falls as low as 11.8° Celsius during December with extreme cold. The rainfall is highly uneven and irregular.

The district forms a part of the Mahanadi River basin. The Mahanadi, the longest river of the state, entered into the district in the north western border, where the famous Hirakud Multipurpose Dam Project is built. Other important rivers of the district are the *Maltijor, the Harrad, the Kulsara, the Bheden, and the Phuljharan*. The district has a total forest area of 3986.27 Sq. Km. which is 59.46% of the total area of the district. Total land under cultivation in the district is 173,540 hectares. Most of the villages of the district are inaccessible during the rainy season. Presence of a number of small rivers without bridges cuts off the villages from the nearby roads. The district is served by National Highway No. 6 and National Highway No. 42. It has also major district roads and a section of South Eastern Railways. Rural electrification has been extended to 63.6% of the villages of the district. The Telecommunication Network is not adequate to cater to the needs of the people in the rural areas. Drinking water facilities are available in villages, mostly from the sources of tube wells.¹

Sambalpur is a comparatively developed district of Odisha state; economically and educationally. The Sambalpur university established in 1960s is located 35 Km away from the Village. There is also a very good autonomous college “Gangadhar Meher College” at the district head-quarter. It offers graduate and Post-graduate courses in Arts, Science and Commerce. There are other 21 colleges including one government medical college, one government engineering college and a teacher training college. Education wise also the people have made much progress than the other districts of Odisha. The Hirakud dam built on river Mahanadi during 1955 is the main

¹ <http://sambalpur.nic.in/geography.htm> date; 3.10.2012

source of agricultural and industrial development. As a result of the dam, large areas of agricultural land became cultivable throughout the year and hydro-electric project supplies power to industries developed in and around the district head quarter and for domestic use.

Kharsanmal village

The village has existed since an unknown date. Many say that it has a history as old as 500 years. Many tribal communities viz., Munda, Gonda and Gaur were the early settlers. Then the farming community viz., Kulita inhabited the village and started farming. It was ruled by the King of Bamra for long and the revenue was collected by the King's representative (Gauntia who was appointed by the King) a Brahmin fellow. The King's representative ruled the village practically in the name of the king. It is heard that people were being severely punished for non-payment of revenue. People were compulsorily made to accompany the King for hunting wild animals and catching elephants. They were to give their bullocks and labour to cultivate the land of the King and his representative without questioning. Then after the freedom of India in 1947, the people were brought to the mainstream. In 1955 when the multipurpose Hirakud dam was built many people came and settled in the village. So the village has a composition of people from ancient age to migrants and settlers. Now since a decade, many tribal people of Bihar have come and settled down in Government land (Gochar land of Govt. meant for cattle gazing). As per the census 2011, this village has a total of 240 households with 1076 person; 545 male and 531 female². Caste-wise the people in the village are mainly Kulita (farming class) Brahmin, Gonda, Gaur and Scheduled castes. People of only Hindu religion are the inhabitants and they are mostly religious and god fearing. With the migration of tribes from Jharkhand and Bihar, now few people of Christian religion are also there. Although a primary school since 1950s and Upper Primary School since 1960s are there in the village, it has hardly made any impact on these people till 2000AD. The life style, living standards, housing and sanitation of the people are far beyond human necessity. Untill now people are manly agriculture dependent, engaged in farm as labourers. Many people (mainly ladies) have opted as bidi workers (a small scale industry where by a small size cigar is made from tobacco and a wild tree leaves).

²http://www.censusindia.gov.in/PopulationFinder/View_Village_Population.aspx?pc_aid=743603&category=VILLAGE date; 3.10.2012

The people in the village know each other very closely. All of them are like one community. They celebrate many festivals and live a happy life with their poverty and unhealthy life. Their expectation is not much. They are happy with their limited resources and the life they lead.

A GENERATION OF PEOPLE OF KHARSANMAL VILLAGE-FIFTY YEARS BACK

The total population of the village was 400 (approximate) with a total of around 100 families. They were mostly illiterate and semi-literate farmers and laborers. As per Plato, they all are Iron class people. Paddy, vegetables, fruits and sugar cane was the main production of the villagers. People were putting hard labour to meet the requirements of life. The village was known in the area for its agricultural productions. In the local markets, they were the main suppliers. There was hardly any danger of crop diseases. People were using mostly natural manures and use of chemical fertilizer was to the minimum. Pesticides were hardly used. People had also no knowledge of these fertilizers and chemicals to be used. Per acre of land, a farmer with good skills and proper care could produce eight quintal of raw paddy. There was a big water reservoir (spread on about forty acres of land). This was the main source of water for irrigation purpose for the villagers.

Below the reservoir, there was a big pond (spread on about five acres of land) used for bathing and washing purpose. There were two public wells maintained by villagers and Grampanchayat. These were the sources of drinking water. The people were having mostly thatched houses. Only four/five families in the village had houses with clay tiles (khapara). But the walls were made of un-burnt (kuchha) clay bricks. Only one house was of bricks and cement with tiles. It was the house of the head of village (Gauntia). People did not have toilets or bathroom facilities. The concept of sanitation and hygiene was very poor. Any epidemic that affected the villagers, would affect almost everyone.

People were happy and leading a simple life. During harvesting season i.e., from November to December, there was no scarcity of food. The months from January to September, people were putting hard labour to earn their livelihood. The well to do few families were employing cheap labourers in their field. Labourers were available then on two bases. One was on daily wage basis and the other on contractual basis (called Goti a system of bonded labourer). The labourers were available very cheaply and easily. There was an element of honesty among people. People were having faith in the words spoken. All the people were living as a unit. They had close bonding.

Among the 400 people of the village, few (mostly men) had primary schooling and were able to read and write. There was no school in the village. These few literates were the displaced people from Hirakud dam. So, the natives of the village were all illiterates. A primary school was established in the village in the year 1955 and this has contributed to the education of these people. It may be noted that all the people did not take the benefit of education fifty years back. Mainly because of the attitude to education and unawareness about the education of the illiterates, the people remained away from education. However, the few literates and those forward thinking people sent their children to school and as a result, the transformation one can visualize among the new generation.

A GENERATION OF PEOPLE OF KHARSANMAL VILLAGE-TODAY AFTER FIFTY YEARS

Today the village has 240 household with 1076 people. Children from most of the families are going to school. But the success and retention rate is very poor. The village has the same primary and upper primary school running successfully with some 80 children enrolled. There is also a high school with 50 students (Students from neighboring villages also are enrolled). In total, some 120 and 30 people have completed Std. X and Std.XII respectively. The village is proud to have produced very few university teachers, engineers, primary school teachers, and clerks. Few students are pursuing higher education in technical and professional fields.

The villagers are not yet having a proper hygiene sense. Sanitation facilities are still very poor. Only a few houses have their own bathroom and toilet facilities. Now the Panchayat has made the facilities of water supply in the whole of the village from boring well. Tube wells are also provided in every lane of the village since the last 25 years. These are all with public initiative and because of the villagers. However, none of the villagers have taken water connection to their houses as they have to pay some meager amount of money for it.

The village reservoir which was once the life-line of the village is no longer used for irrigating the vegetable and fruit growing land. In fact vegetables and fruits are not grown by the farmers now. These lands which were once full of greeneries with orange, lemon and vegetables are now lying as barren.

The pond, which was used for bathing and washing purposes, is used by very few people today. People have started using canal, and tube well for these purposes. The pond water is polluted and the village panchayat has given it on a contract basis for the purpose of fisheries. So the water of the pond that was so clean and used by villagers is beyond the control of the villagers and the village panchayat is having its monopoly.

The farmers were having bullocks and cows in plenty. But now very few small farmers are having bullocks for plough purpose and landlords have gone for tractor and power tillers. Cows are not found in plenty numbers. The varieties of native cows are not seen but the hybrid varieties are reared by few farmers. The native variety of cows and bullocks are on the verge of extinction as the output from the native variety was very meager like a cow of native variety may give maximum 2 liters of milk and one may plough maximum $\frac{1}{4}$ acre of land a day but the hybrid may give at least 15 liters of milk and one can plough $\frac{2}{5}$ acre of land a day. So people have shifted to a hybrid variety and that too is also a very small number. On enquiry about this phenomenon, it was found that to rear cows, the farmers are busy throughout the day in this work and it takes a lot of time and effort on their part.

Another area of change is that people are aware about their rights and responsibilities. Many of the people have access to news at local and national level through Television and radio. They hardly read the daily newspaper.

Celebration of festivals like Rathayatra, Nuakhai, Pausha purnima, and Lakshmi puja are the prominent ones (these are the local festivals of this region). The people have not yet changed the ways they were celebrating them fifty years back. They have the same enthusiasm and belief system.

Labourers are not available cheaply to the landlords today as it was fifty years back. The landlords were habitual to lead a happy life without them engaged in doing the manual works. Now that their present generation is not able to put the hard labour and cultivate their land on their own, they have been compelled to lead a life of misery.

Farming has become more technical. No more is the simple way of farming applicable. Now there are varieties of seeds, chemical fertilizers, pesticides and equipments are available. The farmers who have not taken to education are now at a disadvantaged point in understanding the technicalities. An educated farmer (at least up to Std. X) can produce more from his field and market than an illiterate farmer. So the small farmers who were at least educated up to secondary level and doing their own work manually are leading a better life than the uneducated landlords and landless labourers.

Few farmers, who were literate and well to do fifty years back, sent their children to school and college are the better off people. They are no longer in agriculture. They have given their land mostly on lease. They are mostly into service in government sector. They have concrete (*pucca*) houses with proper sanitation and bathroom facilities. Economically these are the well to do people.

The few landless labourers and small farmers, who were from lower castes, have taken the benefit of education. Their present generation has been in service and that they have continuous sources of earning are leading a happy life. They have proper housing and sanitation facilities.

Many of the small farmers and landless labourers who have not taken the benefit of education have been working as daily wage labourers. Now the bonded labour system (*goti* system) is no more in operation. The daily wage earners are paid well as per government rules. So, they also lead a life from hand to mouth.

As a whole, the economic well being of people has improved. Education has changed the life of people who have been aware and have a positive attitude towards education. The well- to-do at one time, who have not taken the benefit of education have been leading a miserable life. They have been sticking to their false pride and are really the parasites of the society today.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that people of the village Kharsanmal have changed over last fifty years to a great extent in their attitude and awareness level about rights and responsibilities. People of different sections viz., the landlords and landless have been affected differently by education. The landless have been able to lead life of economic wellbeing. Although they have not much to save for their future, at least they have been able to eat two meals a day. The landlords with education have been able to improve their life style, living standards and living peacefully. They have a secure future for themselves and children in terms of savings and a good life style with proper attitude. However, the landlords who were habitual to lead a luxury life fifty years back and have not taken the benefit of education have been living a life of misery. Their children are suffering and leading a poor life and they find it difficult to meet their daily needs.

A village that was having illiterate and semi-literate farmers, a green environment with clean ponds and water irrigation facility fifty years back has changed to a village of having few university professors, engineers, school teachers and about 120 secondary school pass outs and 30 higher secondary school pass outs is having a community of people who have a village with barren vegetable gardens, polluted ponds with most of its people having poor sanitation facilities. However education has changed the attitude and awareness level of people and they are willing to take the benefit of education.



Photograph by Karen Ann Blom, 2012

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

EDUCATION FOR CHANGE: GENDER MATTERS!

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INTRODUCTION

“Education for Rural Transformation” (ERT) envisages a proactive and positive process of change and development of rural communities in the context of national and global changes (INRULED, 2001) using education as the vehicle of transformation. The arguments underline that rural areas and rural people were not homogenous in any country, regions or in the world. Hence educational needs must respond to diverse needs of building skills and capacities for seizing economic opportunities, improving livelihood and enhancing the quality of life in diverse rural circumstances (ibid; Chinapah, 2010; INRULED, 2012).

The Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2010 and 2012 comment that learning and skills occupy a cardinal position in the global knowledge-based economy both with regard to economic growth and poverty reduction. As such the EFA Goal 3 related to youth and adult skills and learning has pushed it to the centre of the EFA Goals. “In rural areas, young people require new coping mechanisms to deal with climate change and shrinking farm sizes, and to exploit opportunities for off-farm work. Only inclusive education systems have the potential to harness the skills needed to build the knowledge societies of the twenty-first century” (GMR, 2012, p.iii).

The GMR 2012 reveals that around 200 million young people need a second chance to acquire the basic literacy and numeracy skills, which are essential to learning further skills for work. In all of this, women and the poor face particular hardship. ERT strongly advocates a holistic view and moving from rhetoric to action to build a learning community in rural areas. The report also voiced that by 2050 there will still be 45 percent of the people living in rural locations in India and a full one-third in the developing world.

In India nearly 86 percent of all rural women are dependent on agriculture but only 10 percent own land, which is a crucial economic asset (UN, 2012). There are two India’s: “one where we can see more equality and prosperity for women, but another where the vast majority of women are living with no choice, voice or rights,” said Sushma Kapoor, the South Asia

deputy director for U.N. Women. Gender experts say that the challenges are immense, given India's vast population of 1.2 billion, its diversity, and geographical spread. But they add they are not insurmountable.

The pilot study conducted in Chompi, Chinalabadu, Hattaguda villages in Araku Valley in Andhra Pradesh and Hardoi District, Uttar Pradesh strives to capture two distinct contextual and social settings. In both, education is perceived as the interlocutor for transforming lives of rural, marginalized women and girls. To stimulate rural transformation the contextual setting accompanied with its complexities (hierarchies and privileges, exclusion and discrimination, alliances and networks, agencies and struggles, etc.) needs to be comprehended to realize education as transformational. Education must be holistic and needs-based, fully recognizing the special nature of the rural environment (FAO & UNESCO, 2003). The paper tries to capture transformational change, sourced from collaborative inquiry with participants. Rather than focusing on '*what is wrong*' it rivets on '*what works*'.

A qualitative methodology was chosen aiming to develop an in-depth context specific understanding which is not possible through large scale quantitative research. The paper focuses on findings from individual interviews over of 25 women from the villages, 35 girls in the Ashram School and UDAAN (20 and 15 respectively), 5 educators and two focus groups of 15 participants each (women and girls). To capture transformation the interview guide was designed to cover three aspects:

a) *Gender Relations/Agency* i.e. Household demography-includes the contextual setting-background information such as age, sex, type of household, decision making power in the family (inner spaces), access and control (financial resources), education, livelihood activities, relationship with family members –has it undergone changes how/why?

b) *Economic spaces* i.e. Access to education - do women and girls have access to education, impact of education /learning in their lives/livelihood activities, place of education/learning in their lives, how much has it influenced their lives.

c) *Transformation defined* i.e. Financial autonomy, belief in daughter's education, freedom of movement, defining transformation in their words.

GENDER-SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

In many developing countries girls face many barriers in their attempt to gain an education. Moreover, the economic benefits that a family will receive are much lower than the investment in a son's education. In Mali

many parents commonly regard educating girls as a ‘lost investment’ because in the long run it would be the future husband’s family who would reap the benefits of education (Unterhalter and Aikman, 2005).

The cultural and structural barriers in the family, school, community, institutions and wider society have disadvantaged girls and women for generations. Cultural beliefs and practices discriminating against girls reduce their likelihood of attending school, or participating in the classroom if they do get to school simultaneously increasing the possibility of leaving school early to work or to get married. These barriers to literacy skill acquisition in the early years mean generations of girls are entering adulthood as illiterates (UNESCO, 2012).

THE REGIONAL SETTING

Andhra Pradesh (A.P.)

The ranking of countries on human development indices presented in the Global Human Development Reports annually since 1990 have captured the imagination of policy makers, development practitioners and civil society alike. Progress on the Human Development Index (HDI) is often cited in national and international debates as a benchmark of a country’s progress on key development indicators (UNDP India, 2011). In the UNDP methodology, literacy rate, enrolment rate, life expectancy and the per capita GNP are the representative indicators for these basic dimensions.

According to the Human Development Report 2007, Andhra Pradesh, the fifth largest state in India was lagging behind and ranked 10 among the 15 major states of India. The state is divided into twenty three districts of which eleven districts are educationally backward. With a population of 84.6 million, Andhra Pradesh is characterised by great diversity in terms of language, religion and caste and, like the rest of the nation, has been undergoing rapid economic and demographic change in recent years. It is still largely agricultural, although its capital, Hyderabad, is one of the leading centres of the technology revolution.¹

¹ Andhra Pradesh was the role model for several new government initiatives during the 1990s to eliminate poverty. For example, the *Midday Meal* Scheme introduced in all public primary schools across India in the 1960s is the largest school feeding programme in the world and is aimed at improving school enrolment and retention. The *Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)* was launched in 2006 from Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh. NREGS is committed to providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment each financial year to households in rural areas whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work, and is aimed at enhancing livelihood security.

The Constitution of India provides special protection to the adivasi/tribal/indigenous people, who constitute more than 8 percent of the total population of India and who inhabit the remaining vestiges of forests in the country. The Fifth Schedule is one such constitutional safeguard that deals with administration and control of Scheduled Areas (areas with predominantly tribal population) in nine states. Nine districts in the state of Andhra Pradesh, which includes the district of Visakhapatnam as well, falls under the Fifth Schedule. Nearly half a million tribal people from various communities, including the Vulnerable Tribal Groups (VTGs), reside in the forested and hill-top villages of the Eastern Ghats in Visakhapatnam district.

Uttar Pradesh (U.P.)

Uttar Pradesh is often described as the “Hindi-speaking heartland” of India. Nearly 80 per cent population of U.P. resides in rural area spread over 97,942 inhabited villages. The status of human development in U.P. continues to be far from satisfactory even after more than five decades of development planning aimed at social and economic upliftment of the people. It ranked at 13th position in terms of the Human Development Index (HDI) prepared by the Planning Commission. Though Uttar Pradesh improved its rank from 14th position in 1991 to 13th position in 2001, it continues to languish at a low level of human development and is in the lowest cluster of States, along with Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Orissa.

The social profile of U.P. is an amalgamation of diverse ethnic, religious and social groups. According to the 2001 Census, 80.6 per cent of the State population was Hindu. Muslims formed 18.5 percent of the population. The remaining 0.9 per cent of population consisted of other religious minorities like Sikhs, Boudhs, Jains and Christians. Scheduled castes formed 21.15 per cent of the State’s population. The proportion of Scheduled tribes residing in the State is negligible at 0.06 per cent. The socio-economic status of Muslims, other backward classes and scheduled castes is much lower compared to that of the higher castes. The high proportion of the population belonging to the socially and economically depressed sections has profound implications for the policy and the status of human development in the State. Table 2.1 briefly captures the state profile of Andhra Pradesh as compared with the Indian subcontinent.

The latest NSS 61st Round Report reveals that about 36 percent of rural males and 70 percent of rural females are illiterate. There are more than one million girls missing in the age group 0-6 years. While the overall sex

ratio improved from 876 in 1991 to 898 in 2001, Sex Ratio in 0-6years age group has declined from 927 to 916 during this period. The worsening SRB (Sex Ratio at Birth) with 115 male births to 100 female births in Uttar Pradesh is pregnant with meaning. Sex selective abortions are on the rise and female foeticide continues unabated especially in the urban areas with easy availability of sex detection and abortion.²

² The National Sample Survey Office(NSSO) in India is a unique setup to carry out surveys on socio-economic, demographic, agricultural and industrial subjects for collecting data from households and from enterprises located in villages and in the towns. It is a focal agency of the Govt. of India for collection of statistical data in the areas which are vital for developmental planning. The National Sample Survey Directorate was first setup in the country in the ministry of finance in 1950. The directorate was subsequently transferred to the cabinet secretariat in 1957 and

subsequently in 1970 it became a part of NSSO in the department of statistics under the ministry of planning. Since 1999 it is under the newly created Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI).

Table 3.1: The States of Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh as compared to India

	Andhra Pradesh	Uttar Pradesh	India
Total population in crores *	8.46	19.9	121
Male population	4.25	10.4	62
Female population	4.21	9.5	58
Urban %	33.49%	22.28 %	31.16%
Rural%	66.51%	77.72 %	68.14%
Literacy Rate % *			
Male	75.56 %	79.24 %	82.14 %
Female	59.7%	59.26 %	65.46 %
Population below Poverty Line **	15.80%	32.8%	27.50 %
Schedule Tribe *			
Population in lakhs	46.67	0.96	773.39
Schedule Caste* Population in lakhs	102.19	308.17	166.63

Sources: *Census 2011, GOI; **UNDP 2011.

THE RESEARCH SETTING

About the Villages

Araku Valley is a beautiful region located in Vishakapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh. It is 114 kms from Vishakapatnam bordering the State of Orissa. CARE India has described the people of this region as marginalized

and among the poorest and most deprived in India. Their situation is among the most disadvantaged in terms of access to information, resources and opportunities critical to their livelihood.³

The caste system was not a part of the tribal culture but crept in much later. The Bagatas and Kotias traditionally agriculturists belong to the higher groups followed by the Konda Doras and finally the Valmiki. The tribal languages predominantly spoken in this belt are Adivasi Oriya, Kond, Kupia and Kui Kond. Some villages are multi-lingual and even speak the state language (i.e. Telegu) while in others there is a dominance of single language groups.

The villages Chompi, Chinalabadu and Hattaguda are approximately 3 kms, 4 kms and 5 kms from Araku Valley having cultivation as the main occupation. With the exception of Hattaguda the villages Chompi and Chinalabadu have higher literacy level of women compared to their male counterparts and the predominant castes are Kotiya, Valmiki, Bagatha and Konda Dora. Usually, households belonging to the same caste tend to be clustered together within the village. Contemporary Chompi, Chinalabadu and Hattaguda have experienced lot of changes which have had a positive impact on livelihoods, poverty alleviation and employment opportunities. The drivers of change are local NGOs like NAANDI and AASSAV. A brief profile of the villages is illustrated in Table 4.1.

³ Article 366(25) refers to scheduled tribes as those communities who are scheduled in accordance with Article 342 of the Constitution. According to Article 342 of the Constitution, the Scheduled Tribes are the tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within these tribes and tribal communities which have been declared as such by the President through a public notification. As per the 1991 Census, the Scheduled Tribes account for 67.76 million representing 8.08 percent of the country's population. Scheduled Tribes are spread across the country mainly in forest and hilly regions.

Table 4.1: The Village Profile

	Chompi	Chinalabadu	Hattaguda
No. of Households	169	116	86
Total Population	846	902	467
Male	412	576	234
Female	434	326	233
No. of Literates			
Male	349	160	268
Female	150	298	166
No. of School age Children	199	145	102
School Facility	181	153	87
Anganwadi	YES	YES	YES
Transport facility	YES	YES	YES
Drinking water facility	YES	YES	YES
Health facility	YES	YES	YES
	YES	YES	YES
	Magadha-PHC	Araku Valley	Araku Valley
	CENTER PANIRANGANI		

Source: NAANDI 2012

Ashram Schools

Introduction

In Andhra Pradesh, the delivery of Primary education services is shared primarily between the Tribal Welfare Department and the Department of School Education through its flagship programme, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) or the Rajiv Vidya Mission RVM as it is registered in the State. Some Primary and High Schools are run by the local bodies. While the Primary schools run by the Tribal Welfare Department are either called Tribal Welfare Primary Schools or Girijana Vidya 5 Vikasa Kendras (GVVKs) and residential schools, the RVM supports Primary and Upper Primary Schools, AIE/EGS centres and KGBVs and other programmes. The RVM is also in charge of the National Programme for Education of Girls at the Elementary Level ⁴(NPEGEL) and the multi-lingual education (MLE) initiative which has been initiated in 2,248 schools in eight languages.

⁵Under the Tribal Welfare Department there are only 599 Ashram Schools (residential schools) having student strength of around 141971 or 156113, 442 hostels with enrolment of 77,420 or 75,479 and 272 Gurukulam residential institutions (from V to Inter depending on the kind of institution) with an enrolment of 73,052. There are GVVKs numbering 4,317 (enrolment of 101,852) of which 2,902 (with an enrolment of 86,980) are in the ITDAs. There are 1,425 AIE/EGS centres in the State with student strength of 25,706 and 5,120 ST children enrolled in 111 Best Available Schools across the State

The Ashram School-What I learnt!

Established in 1984 the Tribal Welfare Girls Ashram High School (V-X) in Araku Valley Mandal consisted of twenty teachers, and a warden. The residential school boasts of student strength of four hundred. The warden

⁵ As per Andhra Pradesh Socio-economic Survey 2010-11 and DSE 2009 respectively

As per Andhra Pradesh Tribal Welfare Department and DSE 2008-09 respectively

The Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) was initially designed to specifically address the issue of access. After a tentative start, the program went to scale in a brief period. Between July 1997 and July 2000, a staggering 26,571 EGS Schools were created (42 percent of them in Tribal areas) catering to 12,33,052 children (47 percent girls and 44 percent being tribal children) out of which 91 per cent of children were from Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and other socially disadvantaged communities.

plays a pivotal role in motivating the tribal girls. Coming from a similar background it was easier for her to relate to the problems, frustrations experienced by the students when placed in a structured and formal learning condition. She assumes the role of a mentor, guide, facilitator, and parent becoming the critical link between education and empowerment.

To establish bonds with the girls 400 of them is not easy...they are like free birds used to open spaces so you can imagine how tough the first few months are.....but with the help of my teachers we try to make them understand the value of education so that their lives can be better than that of their parents....and then they understand. (Laxmi, 35 years old Warden).

Education in its true sense should extend beyond literacy. The focus in this particular Ashram School was on providing literacy along with the creation of an environment in which the child's innate potential flowers out. Education, apart from increasing the awareness levels, should also focus on imparting values, skills and the ability to think independently (Balasubramaniam, 2011). A multi-pronged strategy was adopted which enabled the ashram school to receive support from a local non-governmental organization (NGO) 'Disha' that provided remedial classes for six months targeting those that had been unsuccessful in passing the board examination (i.e. Grade X).

To attract students and prevent drop outs, annual scholarships of Rs. 600 along with four sets of dresses, ribbons, textbooks and monthly toiletries (a luxury for most) were provided. To control nutritional deficiencies since majority of them were 'below poverty line' (BPL), bi-monthly health camps were held within the school premises. The Shankar Foundation (NGO) organised monthly eye camps and even allocated Rs. 50 for those requiring spectacles. Nearly all fifteen respondents said:

Here I can play with my friends, eat with them and have lot of fun. I am learning so much, no washing clothes, no cooking just being myself. I want to be different, take care of my parents and work-a job before I get married (Jyoti, 12 years old).

Hardoi

With a population of 3,398,306, Hardoi accounts for 2.04 percent of the population of Uttar Pradesh. 11.99 percent of the population lives in towns and cities. The three largest cities or town in the district are Hardoi, Shahabad and Sandila. Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes form 1,066,051 and 31.37 percent of the population respectively.

In Hardoi, 56.2 percent of girls marry before the legal age of 18 years. In order to tackle the problem of child marriage, in addition to compulsory registration of marriages, information and education campaigns also need to be initiated in the district. The three largest scheduled caste groups are Chamar, Pasi and Dhobi. The three largest scheduled tribe groups are Generic Tribes, Raji and Bhotia.

The Constitution of India guarantees equality and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex. The Constitution guarantees the right to equality (Article 14), right to life (Article 21), prohibits discrimination and empowers the state to make special provisions for the girl child (Article 15). In consonance with these policies various laws have been enacted.⁶

UDAAN-CARE India

UDAAN, literally meaning ‘flight’, is CARE India’s endeavor targeting marginalized girls and making education reachable and giving them an opportunity to transform their lives. For every 100 girls in rural India, only 18 will reach 8th grade, and only 1 will complete high school. To address this problem, CARE and its Indian field partners have established the UDAAN Program, a residential learning program specifically designed to help never-enrolled or out-of-school girls ages 11-14 complete primary level schooling in 11 months. This project will provide program support for the UDAAN Program in the Uttar Pradesh and Orissa regions, and allow approximately 3 girls to get a second chance at receiving an education, escaping the cycle of poverty and proving to their families and communities that everyone, regardless of their gender, deserves an education.

Education is empowerment....it has changed my life. As teachers and friends we are witness to the enormous change that will also transform their life. Even those girls who may not continue after this are enlightened and will make a difference in their lives... (Educator, UDAAN).

Apart from learning language, mathematics and environmental science, girls enrolled in the UDAAN program learn about themselves, society,

⁶Article14. Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth(3) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children.

Article21. Protection of life and personal liberty. No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.

Article15. Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth(3) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children.

institutions, ecology, family and the economy. Through this broad framework of relationships, girls learn about rights and equality and thus develop questioning minds. CARE has implemented the UDAAN program in India since 1999 with resounding success and is building on that experience to offer girls in Uttar Pradesh and Odisha, Bihar and Haryana the opportunity to catch up and reintegrate into upper primary schools.⁷

Talking to my teachers, studying...it has opened my eyes, knowledge and awareness is very important for now no one can fool me (Shilpi, 13 years old).

The deep bond between the teachers and the students was evident during the interviewing process. All fifteen respondents and the five teachers interviewed shared their experiences, their difficulties, problems eventually creating milestones of trust, solidarity and belief in each other.

BREAKING THE VICIOUS CIRCLE: STRIDING AHEAD

A sense of agency: Educating minds

Many of the girls demonstrated their avowed intention to stay in school or pursue higher education both in the Ashram School and the Accelerated Learning Camp organized by CARE India. Although they had limited means, the girls demonstrated personal characteristics such as persistence and self-determination. Most belonged to families who lived below the poverty line, did not value the importance of girls' education, needed them at home to look after the siblings while the parents tilled the land. When asked who encouraged them to attend school or the Accelerated Learning Camp they responded with comments such as "*Bhaiji (field worker CARE India) came to my house and convinced my parents, made them understand the*

importance of education and here I am. I wanted to come also so they agreed". While there were those in the Ashram School who got themselves admitted through relatives in Araku Valley.

CARE India is a leading national developmental organisation with an extensive global network. Through our pro-poor programmes, we have impacted on extreme poverty and social injustice in India by working with poor women and girls from the most disadvantaged communities. We place a special emphasis on working with poor women because, equipped with the proper resources, women have the power to help whole families and entire communities escape poverty. Women are at the heart of CARE's community-based efforts to improve basic education, boost maternal and child health, prevent the spread of HIV & Tuberculosis (TB) and expand economic opportunity. CARE also delivers emergency aid to survivors of natural disasters, and helps people rebuild their lives (www.careindia.org).

All the girls were asked “What do you think is important for you?” Almost all the respondents replied that education was singularly the most valuable thing for them. They viewed education as the gateway to improved livelihoods, gaining respect, independence and an opportunity to open up career prospects. Rupawati from Araku Valley, said:

I am the first one in my family to come to school and I want to stay in school. Because, if I cannot then my life will not improve. I know it is difficult because we are very poor but now the government is helping girls like me and I must make the most of it. The education is for me and I will not struggle for food like I see my parents struggling.

Almost all of them rejected marriages in the immediate future on the grounds that it may not only hinder their career aspirations but prevent them from creating a better life. Most of them wanted to be teachers especially in the Accelerated Learning Camp, Hardoi which explains the impact of teachers as their ‘role models’ and catalysts of change. A few in the Ashram School, Araku Valley wanted to be doctors, engineers, nurses although the respondents were at times ambiguous about the links between what they needed to study to realize their goals.

While interviewing women in the villages questions on a similar note were asked, “What motivated you to send your children to school?” Almost all respondents replied, “To have a better life. We don’t want them to struggle and live in poverty like we did. Without gaining knowledge there is no bright future”. Bimala a sixty old adivasi succinctly puts it:

I wish I had been born now. Before there used to be one school in fourteen villages, no one to show us the path. Now there are schools in most villages both boys and girls go to school and they can be someone, be independent. I want my granddaughter to also go to school and choose her life.

Irrespective of age education was perceived as giving them a power to change their lives many also saw it as a way of giving back to the community and their families materially and practically. For example Dipti from the Ashram School said, “I would not only like to take care of my parents but help other children like me because I know by seeing my parents a life without education. I want to give back to my community.”

Economic Spaces

The women interviewed in Araku Valley demonstrated their ability to change their situation. Nearly all of them were members of Self Help Groups (SHGs) and the change initiated in economic spaces due to micro credit has triggered off positive changes in mental spaces. “The benefits of DWCRA were many. The microfinance available through DWCRA helped rural women start income generating activities” (ICMR, 2003).⁸

The women interviewed were in more control of their lives, resources, mobility, had sway over decision making within the family with respect to girl child education and preventing early marriage. Group participation strengthened bonds and made them aware of their rights and realise the importance of education.

I contribute to my family income...so my husband has to listen to me and consult me...this has happened from the time I could earn money by becoming a member of DWCRA (Chandramma,46 years).

It had an impact on their lifestyle, health and nutrition. The women admitted that having an alternate source of income meant an increase in the purchasing capacity. Poverty had compelled them to live on a diet of fruits from the forest occasionally alternating it with herbs boiled in water. It was therefore, quite natural that children tended to be undernourished and suffering from skin diseases. But this scenario was gradually undergoing a change from the time the SHGs came into existence, NGOs like NAANDI foundation and AASSAAV started working with the tribal community.

Now I can buy meat once a month instead of living only on vegetables. My children can wear proper clothes and I can save some money for the not so good times. I have an account in the bank and it is only for me for my future in case something happens (Jamuna, 45 years old).

Transformation defined

Equally important to account for is the social capital that is created through these processes. In the case of SHGs, groups are formed usually within the

⁸ In September 1982, the Government of India (GOI) launched the DWCRA program² under the Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP)³. The program was started in 50 districts (all over India) on a pilot basis. This was the first rural development program which focused entirely on the development of women and children.

same caste creating strong identities. Group activities create a platform for women to voice their difficulties, find solutions to their problems and collectively come together to lend a helping hand to a friend in distress. So when asked '**to define transformation**' in their words, the prompt reply was:

For us transformation means to take control of our lives, be able to create a better future by educating our children, economic empowerment, making decision in the family and helping our sisters in the community... (Galori, 50 years old).

The intrinsic role played by educators in enlightening minds can hardly be underestimated. In both cases school/camp was cited as a safe haven from the world outside. Teachers were idolized and looked up to since they were approachable; helping them with work they had difficulty with, sharing their problems and counseling whenever required.

*When we miss our parents, brothers, sisters our teachers we cry on our teachers' shoulders. Therefore, I want to be a teacher when I grow up so I can help children like me, I want to give tuition in my village which will also give me a source of income when I join my **husband** after the camp is over... (Rajni, 15 years old).⁹*

Transformation for educators at the Accelerated Learning Camp is:

Soch badalti hai...the mindset changes in other words enlightens minds... Social Learning Classes makes them aware of their rights, discussions on social issues-early marriage, evokes questions encouraging them to participate and build leadership qualities....it is a huge departure from the girls whom we met in the beginning....(Educator, UDAAN).

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSION

For sustainable human involvement it is critical to ensure that resources made available in the case of SHGs reach the poorest of the poor and is eligible for all marginalized women:

⁹ Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is Government of India's flagship programme for achievement of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) in a time bound manner, as mandated by 86th amendment to the Constitution of India making free and compulsory Education to the Children of 6-14 years age group, a Fundamental Right.

In my village I cannot become a member of the SHG because I am unmarried and it's only for the married ones. Hope this eligibility criteria changes. The Government should also put more emphasis on non-formal education/adult education it will be better for us (Killo Guramma, 25 years old).

The quality of schooling is critical to retention. Milestones are set when girls not only complete schooling but show enthusiasm and determination to pursue higher education. But, too often the linkages between basic education and higher education for some even upper primary education tend to weaken due to adverse conditions.

From day one we are testimony to the changes the girls undergo in the camp. They emerge confident, independent, ambitious, determined at the end of the 11 month camp. Although most do eventually get mainstreamed into formal education (i.e. Grade VI) there are also those that are unable to do so because of absolute poverty. CARE has done so much for them but we still hope that one day it will be feasible to prolong the schooling years to include upper primary as well, get extra staff support and have space for in-service training for self-improvement (Educator, CARE).

The pilot study is a departure from most studies on 'ERT' since it focuses on '**what works**' and the invaluable role of education as a vehicle for rural transformation. The multi-pronged strategy of a public-private partnership is the cornerstone for policies and programmes to be successful.

A befitting conclusion would be to end with a quote from thirteen year olds Asha and Neelam both students at the Ashram School and the Accelerated Learning Camp leading similar lives:

I used to get up at 5am every morning-helping my mother to cook, clean the house, wash clothes and look after my little brothers and sisters. I would go to sleep late at night after finishing my household chores and sometimes even work in the field. I used to think that this is my life, what I am supposed to do. But now after coming here I know that there is another life a better one-my teachers have opened my eyes given me dreams. I can and will change my life-study, work, earn money and be someone.

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

EDUCATION, UTILITY AND NEOBILDUNG IN POSTMODERN SOCIETY

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EDUCATION REFORMS AND THE FORMATION OF THE MODERN STATE

This article is written from a Scandinavian perspective. Most references are taken from that hemisphere. However, many of the questions discussed might have relevance in many other contexts. I will freely move back and forth between the university level and the secondary school level, very aware of the difference between these two systems. However, I hope this freedom will support my thesis rather than blurring it.

In many countries, several educational reforms can be seen as a part of the development of the national state. Through comprehensive education programmes, literacy and many other skills necessary for modern life and vocational development have been implemented among large groups of young people. These reforms are often closely related to the concept of the national state. Education in itself may not only lead to better skills or elaborated behaviours, but also to a specific understanding of how the world is organized. When elementary schools were introduced in the 19th century, readers and text books contributed to the idea of the national state. Knowledge of the national history was crucial, as well as the national geography and cultural heritage. Ulf Lundgren uses the expression “moral curriculum” to describe how the primary school contributed to the formation of the idea of the motherland.¹

When understanding the development of the modern national state, we can see how education reforms are related to at least three projects – the economic project, the social project and also the political project. The economic project suggests a restructuration of the economic order through an increased industrialization, a developed trade (national and international), and a more rational organization of labor. Through this economic development, the urbanization led to new living conditions for the new and growing middle class.

¹ Ulf Lundgren: *Att organisera omvärlden. En introduktion i läroplansteori*. Stockholm, Liber, 1979.

When Europe was industrialized in the second part of 19th and early 20th centuries, the geographic landscape changed, and so did the social landscape. Due to the economic growth, a new middle class urged for modernized education better adapted to the requirements from this new economy. Engineers, technicians, skilled workers, economists, architects, teachers and other groups became more and more important for this growing economy.

Many education reforms were based on the ambition to educate larger cohorts of students – a growing and modernized economy also meant a larger education system, leading to larger administrative systems. So, the education systems became larger, more diversified and complex, included larger groups of student teachers, led to curriculum reforms but also to reforms of the teacher education. And many of these steps were taken because of a stronger political involvement in education, and the more or less pronounced ambition to modernize society, and to support economic and technical development.

The political involvement in education was also based on the assumption that such reforms of school curricula and administrative systems would support the democratic development in society. By an increased political steering of education, crucial values in society would be guaranteed. Through school, a more profound engagement in society could be taught throughout school. School was then not only seen as mirroring the past and dominating cultural traditions in university, but also as a tool for social and economic reforms. After World War II, we have seen a stronger emphasis on educational utility. Utility for the individual, and for the labor market as well as for society itself. Utility for the individual can be seen as education for “private good” – useful skills and competences in daily life, as well as an understanding for a piece of the cultural heritage. Utility for the labour market is of course connected to vocational training, but also to a closer link between curriculum reforms and the need for various and advanced technological skills. These close links between labour market and education also demands severe planning and analysis. This future directed education has become dependent on severe planning and evaluation of the education, but also the ability to transform technical challenges into curriculum reforms. Thirdly, utility for a rapidly developing society is related to the citizenship. Becoming a grown up member in the modern society includes the ability and willingness to responsibly participate in the democratic processes and procedures. Therefore, the ambition to achieve political reforms in society becomes not only related to the content in school, but also to how the teaching is conducted. Reforms and programs supporting democracy and participation in societal and democratic processes included not only the matter of content, but also the matter of didactic models and conceptions of learning and participation.

EDUCATION AND POLITICAL AIMS

To make it simple, there has been a shift in the educational conceptions from the idea of education as mainly preserving traditions and a dominating cultural heritage, meant for those youngsters who would become the elite of the forthcoming generation, towards a mass education implementing not only new skills and technological knowledge, but also democratic values for those young people becoming next generation's citizens. Of course, this shift has not been done easily or without efforts. The adaption to a rapidly evolving labor market, constantly asking for new competences, is difficult to combine with the fact that education reforms are very slow and takes lots of time to actualize. A few years ago, the CEO for the Ericsson mobile company claimed that those products being most profitable were not invented eighteen months earlier – an insight about how rapidly the requirements of technological knowledge develops.

While stressing democratic values and participation in civil society, and especially this new instrumentalism claiming the “value” of education as related to technical development and economic progress, the diminishing space in school curricula for “classical values” has been heavily criticized. The progressivistic school has been strongly related to the political ambition to modernize countries, and supporting democratic processes. In a way, democratic values and psychological insights in learning has replaced cultural heritage, arts and literature as the core principles of school. Therefore, the modern school has been said to have a lack of core values, which can be discussed. But, there is often very little room for the concept of *bildung* in the progressive school, due to the stronger emphasis on useful vocational skills.

The ambition to modernize society has been a success – conducting educational reforms is an important part of the strategies for developing countries. However, in Scandinavia (at least), some major disappointments have been identified. First, the ambition to connect school to the needs of the labour market has become more and more problematic due to rapid technical development. We have experienced the introduction not only of new skills, but also of new professions, and of new scientific fields (like bioinformatics, with an intense growth of knowledge in a short period). A more flexible and dynamic labour market, depending on a more globalized economy but also on intense scientific research is a vast challenge for a slow moving education system. So far, the compulsory school system seems to develop much slower than universities and the globalized knowledge based industry. Education reforms obviously take a long time to implement. Therefore, the principle to organize school curricula in accordance to industrial needs have failed, and

some groups of young people have been “educated into unemployment”, due to a stiff and obsolete school system. School is, in one way, a universe in itself.

Secondly, there has been a pronounced ambition to level out social inequalities through schooling. For many years, it is much more likely for children of parents with academic education to take up academic studies. Even if the explosion of education has led to many more students at university, also from non-academic families, there is still a strong social division of students both in secondary school and at universities. For instance, 50 % of all sons and daughters to doctors, and 45 % of children to university teachers follow the Natural Science Program in secondary school. It is much more likely that children with no academic background attend vocational programs in upper secondary school, like the Construction Program or the Child and Recreation Program. Besides, these vocational programs are strongly gender segregated, while those preparing for academic studies, like the Natural Science Program or Social Science Program, are much more gender mixed. (Palme, 2008). A similar pattern is obvious at universities, even if more and more female students now appear on almost all university programs (including law studies). But still, the social division within universities is often obvious. Students from families with a rich academic capital, in the Bourdieu sense, are more likely to study at the most prestigious universities like Uppsala University, KTH or Stockholm School of Economics, preferably following a program in medicine, economics or industrial engineering. Students from families with a lower academic capital more often study at regional colleges, following programs in health care or teacher education.

Lately, research has found that the social inequalities in upper secondary schools seem to increase, mostly due to school vouchers and independent schools, attracting students from educated families. The system with school vouchers has supported the freedom of choice, which has become a vital part of politics since the neoliberal era in the 1990's. These reforms have led to a more diversified school market, which requires interested parents understanding the underlying principles of the school system. The school voucher system has brought more diversified schools, meanwhile many schools becoming more and more homogenous, recruiting students from a narrowed social background. Students tend to choose a school where they can recognize other students as being of the same kind as themselves.

AIMS QUESTIONED

During the last decades, an intense discussion has taken place concerning contradicting goals and aims of education in school. The need to follow up education reforms have led to the need for new evaluation programs,

evaluating not only students but also local schools and administrative systems. In Sweden, a new authority, The National School Inspectorate, has the main task to evaluate schools and how they relate to national curricula, aims and goals within the legal frames. This development takes place in an international context. International comparative projects like the PISA and TIMSS have become more and more important when discussing and evaluating reforms and national curricula.² This vast interest for evaluations and rankings are obvious on the system level as well as on the individual level. Grading has become much more important when it comes to assessing if schools are successful or not, and when parents use the voucher system to select school for their children, grading is often an important aspect.

One reason for this growing interest in international comparisons is that the “logic of competence and competition” as expressed in the PISA reports has become very influential in politics of education (Uljens, 2007). This shift supports the core concept of the Bologna Process, supporting comparability of students and of education systems, and promoting movability.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS EDUCATION AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

The university system has grown enormously. However, the students’ strategies and how they navigate through university studies is often related to their social background. Elite programs in law and economy at the most prestigious schools recruit students from highly educated families to a much larger extent than teacher education programs or shorter technical programs. So the social structure within university becomes more and more diversified and complex, and the education system in secondary school and in university tend to reproduce the social structure in society.

Even if not surprising, these results also show that there is a vast difference in attitude towards schooling between those groups who have more cultural capital and those who have less cultural but more economic capital. For the first group, it is more usual to consider education as a personal, individual project, based on the idea of self-expression and “finding yourself”. Education is not seen as a very goal oriented project, since the overall aim is to find yourself, and to set up a more or less “unique” way through life. Therefore, university studies can take longer time, and does not have to follow a predicted program. It is more important for those students to “grow as individuals” rather than fulfilling their exams within a predicted time. On the other hand, students from families with more economic capital, preferably studying economics or law, are more

² www.oecd.org/pisa

competitive, claiming that differentiated grading systems for student achievements are fair since they prepares students for the competition taking place in business life. For those students, target aims are crucial, and they often prefer a specific set of goals to achieve. Explicit expectations and demands, stipulated goals and a grading system that rewards those who achieve the best results are appreciated and work well with their professional ambitions.

This shortly described gap can be understood as a gap between different social groups and their different attitudes towards education – education as a personal *bildung* project or as an investment for a forthcoming professional career. We can understand this gap as an illustration of how different social groups, having accumulated different kinds of symbolic capital, tend to approach the education system in rather different ways. But it can also be seen as a way to understand the tension between the ambition to adapt education closer to the on-going globalization of the economy, or a resistance against education only as a tool for economic and industrial competition. Utility versus *bildung*. This gap illustrates how the discussions regarding the increased interest for tests, ratings and rankings have exposed a shift from a focus on education as a tool for liberation and emancipation, to a focus on education mainly as a production of measurable outcomes.

GOALS, AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

One important difference between these two positions can be found in how the curricular goals are expressed. On one hand, we have several examples on curricular goals stressing familiarity with a stipulated body of knowledge. Acquaintance with literature, art or other subjects is seen as the highway to developing the individual, and preparing the students for a life full of unpredictable challenges. Within the progressivistic school, the overall aim was to prepare students for a developing and changing society, based on technical development and democratic values. School could then be seen as preparing students for a post school life by refining their awareness of values in life such as democracy and equality. With this approach, aims and goals were often considered as vague. Besides, many curricular aims and goals in school are obviously no aims, but *areas of activities*.

On the other hand, we find how curricular goals more often become expressed as competences – students are supposed to be prepared to act and to navigate in an unpredictable world by refined skills and competences. The reason for this shift can be described in several ways. Competences can be identified and described as learning outcomes – the measurable result of education. One reason for this is the expressed ambition within the framework of EU (The European Union) to achieve a better comparability and equality between university education systems in Europe. The utmost

reason for this is the ambition to strengthen the European position in the world, economically, socially and technically. (Keeling, 2006). By synchronizing higher education systems by constructing similar levels, degrees and grading systems, the comparability between universities and education programs in different countries will be simplified. This will support the overview of the education market. Besides, the international mobility among students as well as employees will benefit from a more comparable education system.

One interesting aspect of this endeavour (to coordinate the national university systems) is the introduction of homogenous aims and goals – expressed as learning outcomes (Adam, 2006). Learning outcomes can be seen as an ambition to clarify that education on the university level must end in an identifiable result. The students (as well as the teachers) are entitled to know in advance what the main goals are, but also what are the expected competences that the students are expected to show after the course is finished. One reason for this is that stipulated learning outcomes emphasize the strong connection between the teaching and learning processes. “Learning outcomes also indicates the assessment dimension as crucial. Learning outcomes contribute to every aspect of the Bologna agenda (every action line) as they play an underpinning role (a common methodological approach) in the clear expression of the teaching - learning - assessment relationship, as well as the transparent expression of qualifications, qualification frameworks, quality, and their associated tools...”(Adam, 2006).

The introduction of learning outcomes as the main curricular structure also represents the ambition to integrate academic and vocational training, and developing lifelong learning qualification frameworks (Davies 2006, Dunkel 2009). It is not only a tool for restructuring course curricula. These reforms, described as the Bologna process, together have had a large impact on the curricular structure in universities, but also on how assessment strategies are discussed and organized.

LEARNING OUTCOMES QUESTIONED

Shortly, the Bologna process has stressed the description of student achievement. However, since the learning outcomes are fairly precise and written in advance, so that a student can understand what are the *outcomes* of the planned course, students’ achievement become more predictable. And this predictability opposes the aspects of education described as a free enterprise, or the *bildung* (if *bildung* is not only reduced to the incorporation of a standardized set of knowledge) as understood as the free searching for coherence, overview and meaning – a journey with an unknown ending. (Broady, 1992) It may be argued that vocational training is based on other assumptions than *bildung* in this broad sense. Vocational training has a more

instrumentalistic focus, preparing for a flexible and uncertain labour market, however also developing professional skills and ability to navigate in a complex world. Vocational training must adapt to the needs of the labour market, but must also prepare students for a life in an uncertain and unpredictable world. This leads to the conclusion that entrepreneurship is the fundamental stone upon which vocational training is built.

One important aspect of learning outcomes, as understood in the Bologna context, is the close relation to assessment. Learning outcomes must be assessable, as well as students' achievements. Therefore, student achievement is almost always assessed in relation to prescribed goals on the course level. These assessment systems themselves tend to support the stiffness of the education system, not adapting it to new needs.

However, when the education system becomes more predictable and depending on prescribed outcomes, we can foresee the risk that ambitions to create such a system may lead to the opposite, a very stiff and rigid system not taking in consideration the fundamentals of creativity, or students' (or teachers') ambition to explore the unknown. It is said that the best innovations are made by mistake. All good innovations must, just like good art, contain a certain piece of surprise, of the unexpected. How well does this room for the unexpected go with the prescribed and prescribing learning outcomes? Is there a risk that originality and the ambition to question the academic doxa is neglected, when the course curricula are dominated by the ambition to prescribe for the student what to learn, and what skills to achieve? Ironically, the ambition to prepare students to an ever changing world, an unpredictable and globalized labour market, and, not least, new business models (even if the "New economy", suggested in the late nineties was not as new) is leading to an education system based on predictability, in advance prescribed and expected outcomes, where students' ambitions to combine unexpected areas of knowledge is aggravated.

When discussing the risk of educational stagnation and rigidity, the concept of *bildung* can still be of interest. However, this may be not as a reminder of older traditions, accumulating volumes of historical facts. There is a challenge exploring how the social, cultural and economic needs in modern society can be reflected in education. When the network society prefers flexibility and connections between unexpected areas of social life, universities still tend to rely on their own logic – not fulfilling the needs of the surrounding society. (Nowotny, Scott, Gibbons, 2001). Such systems as described above strengthen this development.

In many areas, we can see how borders between traditional areas of knowledge and social practices are transcended. New ways and techniques for communication contribute to a much more intense communication – often unpredictable. When the innovators of the modern cellular phones included

the SMS function in the phones, they had no idea how important this way of communication would be. Within the field of arts, there is no longer use discussing the border between “classical” genres and “popular”, in music, in literature or in art. The social, technical and economic conditions for producing and distributing artefacts of art are radically changing, due to the development of the Internet. In such a society, flexibility and movability not only refers to the globalized economy and labour market as we understand it today, but to challenged borders between economy, arts and students free search. Developing societies will benefit more from an educations system taking these aspects in consideration.

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