National Focus Group on Problems of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Children

Introduction

This position paper critically examines the contemporary reality of schooling of children belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities who have been historically excluded from formal education – the former due to their oppression under caste feudal society and the latter due to their spatial isolation and cultural difference and subsequent marginalisation by dominant society. There are thus sharp differences between these two categories of population in terms of socio-economic location and the nature of disabilities. However, there is also growing common ground today in terms of conditions of economic exploitation and social discrimination that arise out of the impact of iniquitous development process. Concomitantly, the categories themselves are far from homogenous in terms of class, region, religion and gender and what we face today is an intricately complex reality. Bearing this in mind this paper attempts to provide a contextualised understanding of the field situation of the education of SC/ST children and issues and problems that directly or indirectly have a bearing on their future educational prospects.

The paper seeks to provide a background to the National Curriculum Framework Review being undertaken by the National Council of Educational Research and Training. As such, it looks critically and contextually at educational developments among the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe with a view to arrive at an understanding of what policy and programmatic applications can be made, especially in the domain of curriculum, to improve their situation. The problems are many and complex. The paper attempts but does not claim a comprehensive discussion of the varied nuances of their complexity. What the paper underscores is the need for contextualised, differentiated and sensitive analyses. It rests on the premise that a proper understanding of the problems requires that they be located within wider socio-economic and political processes. Equally imperative is a critical examination of the currently ongoing "structural educational adjustment and reform" with its ensuing package of new approaches and practices.

For a society that had lived for a millennium by a value system based on division and hierarchy, classically manifested in the system of caste-feudal patriarchy, the post-independent Constitutional commitment to social equality and social justice marked a watershed in its historical evolution. A synthesis of two ideologically divergent principles i.e. the principle of merit and the principle of compensation – constituted the modern Indian political discourse on equality and was operationalised in the establishment of democratic socialism and the welfare state. Along with guaranteeing equality of citizenship, the state assumed the primary responsibility for compensating for histories of discrimination, exploitation and marginalisation and providing special support to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. As is well known, the Scheduled Castes (henceforth SC) and Scheduled Tribes (henceforth ST) are not sociological but administrative categories of population identified by the Constitution of India for compensatory discrimination and special protection. They intend to comprise those who were at the bottom and margins respectively, of the Indian social order – viz. caste groups who because of their low ritual and social status in the traditional social hierarchy and tribal groups because of their spatial isolation and distinctive cultures have been subject to impositions of disabilities and lack of opportunity (Galanter, 1984).

Special state institutions were set up for the advancement of SC/ST and various legislations, social policies and programmes were drafted which were geared to their economic and political development and achievement of equal social status. It has been difficult however, to identify these categories in terms of criteria laid down by the state. The 'problem' of the scheduled tribes has been a vexed one, given the various levels of social and cultural distance and varying degrees of voluntary or forced assimilation exploitation and/or displacement. In fact, it has been pointed out by Galanter that just where the line between Scheduled Tribes and non-Scheduled Tribes is to be drawn has not been clear. There are problems of overlap with caste and controversy whether a specific group is more appropriately classified as a ST or SC (ibid, 1984). Policy however treats the SC and ST groups homogenously. Moreover it rests largely on the assumption that mainstreaming is progress, while paying lip service to preserve distinctive cultures, especially of tribals who are coerced into assimilation.

Education was perceived as crucial to processes of planned change. It was seen as the key instrument for bringing about a social order based on value of equality and social justice. Expansion and democratization of the education system was sought, the two primary

egalitarian goals of which were the universalisation of elementary education and the educational "upliftment" of disadvantaged groups. The State's special promotional efforts have undoubtedly resulted in educational progress for the SC/ST especially in regions where policy implementation combined with the dynamism of reform, and most crucially with anti-caste, dalit, tribal and religious conversion movements.

The last two decades have spelt the decline of the Welfare State under the powerful impact of global economic forces and neo-liberal economic policies. The egalitarian ethic underlying planned change and development is being rapidly decimated. The ideology of the Indian State's New Economic Policy emphasizes the pre-eminence of markets and profits. In the context of an elite directed consensus on the inevitability of liberalisation and structural adjustment, the predominant problems and debates of education have undergone major shifts. Structural adjustment have provided the legitimacy and impetus for a number of educational reforms that pose a direct threat to the mission of universalising elementary education and equalising educational opportunity for SC/ST, especially those left behind. The state is withdrawing from social sectors of education and health and delegating its social commitments and responsibilities to private agencies and non-governmental organizations. There is already enough indication that basic educational needs of the SC and ST are getting seriously undermined under the new dispensation adversely affecting life chances of vast sections of those who have yet to make the shift to first generation learning.

Given the above scenario, the importance of bringing into focus educational problems of SC and ST children in the National Curriculum Framework Review can hardly be exaggerated. The discussion in this paper is organised in four parts: Section I provide a backdrop to the main analysis. It captures in brief the social location of SC and ST in a changing social, economic and political scenario. It then briefly examines current trends in educational participation of SC/ST. Next, the paper moves on to a qualitative examination of the contemporary location of SC/ST children in the school setting and to unravel facilitating factors as well as multiple obstacles to their progress. Sections II, III and IV are devoted to understanding the contemporary reality of schooling of the SC and ST children and pertain respectively to issues of educational provision, curriculum and hidden curriculum. These sections are based on data drawn from (i) secondary sources such as the Census, the National Sample Survey, NCERT & NIEPA surveys etc., (ii) academic studies (iii) field-based case studies and iv) experiential accounts gathered from teachers, social activists etc. It attempts to

synthesise findings of academic studies and field reports towards understanding field reality. All sources are listed in the Bibliography and Appendices. It should be stated at the onset that available statistical data varies in terms of quality and reliability, hence data from a number of sources needs to be used in combination to arrive at some reasonably accurate picture. We have attempted to provide such a picture. We have relied more on small-scale quantitative and qualitative studies, though it must be emphasized that there is a dearth of systematic research on several crucial areas. A major limitation of the analysis is the inability to provide a comprehensive picture covering all states of the country. Some regions have been understudied and for others we were unable to gather material which is perhaps available. Section V highlights the general conclusions of the analysis, puts forward key issues that merit serious consideration as well as the major recommendations of the Focus Group.

I. THE SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES: SOCIAL CONTEXT AND CURRENT EDUCATIONAL SITUATION

The Scheduled Castes

The Scheduled Castes constitute around 16 per cent of the Indian population today. There are marked state and regional variations in terms of these proportions. Punjab has the highest proportion at 28 per cent. Among the larger states, (barring the North Eastern, where high tribal concentrations exist) Gujarat has the smallest percentage of SCs at 7.41%. From a sociological point of view, apart from their increasing visibility the most significant contemporary fact concerning the Scheduled Castes is their growing political assertion and identity formation as 'dalit'. As pointed out by Beteille, it is not easy to form a single consistent view of the present position of the Scheduled Castes because the regional diversity is so large and the balance between continuity and change so uncertain[1]. Whereas in the past the social condition of the Scheduled Castes was governed strongly by the ritual opposition of purity and pollution, the calculus of democratic politics has become important today (Beteille, 2001).

Urban migration, education, occupational change and religious conversion have been pursued by the scheduled castes as key strategies of socio-economic emancipation, status change and acquisition of a new social identity. They have achieved varying degrees of success. Anti caste and dalit movements have provided the bases for political consciousness and assertions

of new self-consciousness and new self-respecting collective identities grounded in both moderate-reformist and radical ideologies. Contemporarily, the rigours of pollution, social practices of untouchability and social relations of servility vary greatly in different parts of the country. The widespread upsurge of atrocity signifies continued caste based oppression. Caste and occupation were closely interlinked in the traditional socio-economic order, and the lowest manual and menial occupations were reserved for the SC. The link has gradually been broken but not completely. There have been shifts to caste free occupations. Changes took place with the arrival of new opportunities in rural employment and petty business as well as through education based occupational and social mobility in rural and urban contexts. However, economic exploitation and economic disadvantage and continued concentration in menial occupations continue to sustain and reinforce the degraded social position of the majority of the SC. Rural SC are predominantly landless and impoverished agricultural labour. Women are multiply subordinated.

In general the reduction of disparities and inclusion within "mainstream" urban and rural society has taken place in predominantly stigmatised, exploited and oppressive ways for vast sections of SC, particularly for those located in the relatively more tradition-bound and socio-economically "backward" states/areas. Under the post 90s impact of global processes the poorest SC have been most adversely affected and become more poverty stricken. Studies have pointed out to growing incidence of poverty, rising levels of rural unemployment, wage squeeze, rising levels of mortality and illness as well as declining levels of consumption shares, real wages and consumer monthly per capita expenditure among the SC (Teltumbde, 1996, 2000, 2004; Thorat, 2001, 2002; Nancharaiah, 2002).

The Scheduled Tribes

A conspicuous trait of Indian culture is the survival of tribal society and culture in the midst of a rapidly changing society. Scheduled Tribes who inhabit isolated mountainous regions were not appropriated into the agriculture based kingdoms of the plains, in the absence of easy communication and transport facilities. Kosambi identifies the spread of Brahmanism and its rigid subordination of individual to social function with the spread of a more productive agrarian order. According to the Census of 2001, the Scheduled Tribes, constitute 8.1% of the Indian population. In absolute terms, this comes to some 83.6 million people, classified under 461 different communities. They are spread over the entire country but are most heavily concentrated in central, eastern and north-eastern India. Two broad types of

scheduling viz. area based and community based exist for tribes. Areas under the Fifth Schedule belong to nine major states of western and central region extending from Maharashtra on the West to Jharkhand in the East. Vulnerable tribal populations of some states are left out however, such as in West Bengal, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The Sixth Schedule applies to tribal areas in states of the North East.

Unlike the relatively dispersed SC population, about 90 percent of the Scheduled Tribes are found in a few states. Orissa and Madhya Pradesh have more than 20 percent. More than 50 percent lives in parliamentary constituencies where they form the majority. They are defined partly by habitat and geographic isolation but more on the basis of social religious, linguistic and cultural distinctiveness. The ST occupy a belt stretching from the Bhil regions of western India through the Gond districts of central India, to Jharkhand and Bengal where the Mundas, Oraons and Santhals predominate. There are also pockets of Scheduled Tribe communities in the south and very small endangered communities in the Andamans. Northeast India contains a large proportion of the Scheduled Tribe population, including the different Naga sub-tribes (Sundar, forthcoming 2006).

Tribes represent differing levels opposing cultural principle of organising life due to varying histories of assimilation and exploitation (Omvedt, n.d.). Colonialism marked a turning point in the history of tribals. Economic interests of the colonists required large scale acquisition of natural resources, reducing tribals to positions of economic and cultural subservience to non-tribal communities. Forced absorptions have continued to take place at the behest of the aggressive dominant economic and political forces. Analysing the post colonial situation, Desai (1969) classifies the tribes according to various stages of cultural development which gives some broad idea of the variation. Class I are the "purest of pure" ST groups. Problems of the relatively isolated Scheduled Tribe populations are qualitatively different and demand different solutions; class II include those having contact with plains; class III – is the largest section in a peculiar stage of transition. They are looked upon as – "backward" Hindus, ST only in name, having been uprooted from the tribal mode by bonded slavery. Like the Scheduled castes, the consequence of 'mainstreaming' through education and/or employment has occurred for them but largely at the lower echelons. Christian missionaries have been responsible for spreading education among tribal populations in various parts of the country – a development which had diverse social and political consequences for the tribes. Importantly, political assertion, middle class entry and like the SC, is the creation of a gap

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between tribal elites and the rest. Class IV tribes are an old autocracy – for e.g. the powerful Bhil, wealthy Santhal and Oraon, Mundas, who won historical battles of cultural contact. North Eastern tribal society, located in the peripheral extreme eastern region came under both colonial and Christian influences. However, the magnitude of the Christian impact as a motive force to modernization has varied between these tribal regions (Ahmad 2003; Bara, 1997). On the whole, small sections of tribal groups have benefited while majority remain impoverished.

Capitalist onslaught on the tribal way of life by the Indian state and by national and global business interests have brought about further economic ruin. Large scale alienations and dispossession from land and natural resources, and displacement due to mega development projects such as big dams, power plants etc. have pushed the tribals into conditions of stark economic deprivation. Those who once led a bountiful existence now struggle for basic livelihood. As pointed out by Chalam (1993) scores of studies show how these processes have worked in tribal dominated regions (see also Pathy, 2000; Punalekar, 2000; Sundar, forthcoming 2006). Post 90's the flow of funds for Tribal Sub-Plans are declining, worsening the bad situation created by a faulty implementation strategy, since its inception in the Fifth Five Year Plan (ibid, 1993; Sharma, 1994).

What is the contemporary educational status of the SC and ST groups? The following section reviews current state provision and quantitative achievements.

State Provision for Education of SC and ST and Recent Trends in Their Educational Progress

State commitment to the education of SC/ST children is contained in Articles 15(4), 45 and 46 of the Indian Constitution. Article 15(4) underscores the state's basic commitment to positive discrimination in favour of the socially and educationally backward classes and/or the SC and ST. Article 45 declares the state's endeavour to provide free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years. Article 46 expresses the specific aim to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of SC/ST. In its effort to offset educational and socio-historical disadvantage, the Indian state conceived a range of enabling provisions that would facilitate access to and ensure retention of SC and ST children in school. In the initial Five Year Plans, the focus was on making available basic educational facilities such as schools especially in remote areas and providing scholarships

and books. Both Central   and State governments took up the responsibility of special educational provision. The scope of enabling interventions expanded considerably after the Fourth Five Year Plan.

Special schemes pertaining to school education of SC/ST children currently include: i) free supply of textbooks and stationery at all stages of school education ii) free uniforms to children in govt. approved hostels and Ashrams schools, and in some states also for children in regular schools; iii) free education at all levels; iv) pre-matric stipends and scholarships to students at middle and/or high school stage; v) special scheme of pre-matric scholarships for children of castes and families engaged in unclean occupations like scavenging, tanning and flaying of animal skin; vi) girls and boys hostels for SC/ST students and lodging facilities in hostels of backward classes including SC/ST; vii) ashram schools for tribal children started with the intention of overcoming the difficulties of provision in remote regions and also rather patronisingly to provide an environment "educationally more conducive" than the tribal habitat. In addition, several states have instituted schemes such as scholarships to SC students studying in private schools, merit scholarships, attendance scholarships for girls, special school attendance prizes, remedial coaching classes, reimbursement of excursion expenses and provision of mid-day meals. The last has been recommended as an integral element in schooling by the Working group on Development and Welfare of the Scheduled Castes during the Eighth Five Year Plan (Kamat, 1985; Chatterjee, 2000). Several studies carried out in the initial decades after independence and in particular, the landmark Report of the Commission of SC/ST of 1986-87 showed that educational progress till the mid 80's was slow and uneven (Kamat, 1985, Govt. of India, 1990; Velaskar, 1986, Govt. of India, 1998).

The following section attempts to capture the current picture of school educational advance of SC and ST children in the country and the states.

School Participation of SC and ST Children
Our examination of recent trends in enrolment, attendance and drop-out for SC/ST children is hampered by absence of relevant and complete statistical data. The main sources which have been utilised are the Census, Statistical Publications of the Ministry for Human Resource Development, the NSSO, Reports of Commissioner and Commission for SC/ST. We have also drawn upon existing studies (Nambissan, 2000; Sujatha, 1987, 1994, 1996, 2002; Aggarwal & Sibou, 1994; Chatterjee, 2000).

The situation of literacy provides a rough indication of overall educational progress as well as serves as an index of past educational opportunity. Table 1 shows that the rural female ST literacy rate has doubled since 1991 but is still the lowest at 32.4%. Sharp differences persist between the general population and SC/ST population in rural areas.

A nation-wide study of the educational progress of the SCs and STs conducted in the mid-seventies came to the conclusion that, while significant strides had been made, there was still a "long way to go" as far as their educational progress was concerned (Chitnis,1981). While such a nation-wide study has not been replicated, what we gather from educational statistics and from many small-scale and region-specific studies today is hardly encouraging. Examining recent trends in school participation of SC/ST children, the overall picture is of increasing enrolment at all levels of schooling. The sheer number of SC children enrolled at primary and middle levels is 18,53,7423 and 5,85,3823 and respectively in 1995-96. The corresponding figures for ST children are 9,22,4604 and 2,35,3397 (MHRD, 1997).

Education of Scheduled Castes: The growing demand for schooling and its utilization among Scheduled Castes is reflected in the significant increase in both enrolment ratios and attendance rates. Enrolment ratios (percent enrolment of population in age-group corresponding to the standards) as is very well known, are not reliable indicators of educational progress due to considerable inflation caused by over reporting and enrolment of overage children. For the Scheduled Castes in India, the ratios stand at 111.91 percent and 61.33 per cent respectively at the primary and middle levels in 1995-96. They range from a high of 263.3 in Maharashtra to a low of 26.2 percent in Arunachal Pradesh at the primary level. At the middle level, Assam ranks first with an enrolment ratio of 176.16 per cent and Arunachal Pradesh is again last with 17 per cent (GOI, 1996). Among the larger states, where SC population percentage is significant, SC enrolment is poorest in states which are known to be overall socio-economically backward viz. UP, Bihar, Orissa etc.

A better picture of educational progress is conveyed by Table 2 which compares SC enrolment percentage with their population percentage. We find that among the large states also having substantial SC population, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal emerge as poorest performers at the primary level. Their enrolment per cent does not match their percentage in the population. In the rest of the states school participation of SC is satisfactory

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in these terms. However, at the middle level, in as many as eight States enrolment per cent is much lower than population. Surprisingly, this list also includes Tamil Nadu.

Current school participation data for the 6-14 year age group, however, considerably deflates the scenario of impressive gains in enrolment and suggests that the task of enlisting continued educational participation continues to be enormous. Firstly, **Non-attendance** among Scheduled Castes is higher than among the general population rates (around 20 % in the 6-10 and 29 % in the 11-14 year age group in 1998). The corresponding percentages for the general population are 16 per cent and 23 per cent. The percentage of non-attendance is higher in rural (19.3 %) as compared to urban urban areas (9.7 %). It is lower among rural girls as compared to rural boys (23.4 % and 15.4 % respectively) (Nambissan, 2002). Recently however, attendance rates are believed to have risen in hitherto educationally backward states under the impact of a spate of new government schemes and programmes directed at attaining the elusive goal of universalisation of elementary education. Large gains are claimed among SC and ST groups and girl children. In Rajasthan for instance, it is claimed that the increase was to the tune of more than 20 per cent. One will have to await detailed educational data from census 2001 and NSSO to confirm these perceived trends.

Table 4 shows attendance rates for Rural SC boys and girls for the year 1993-94. They lagged behind "other" presumably "forward" caste boys and girls in almost all states where SC population is significant. Expectedly, attendance rates are the highest in Kerala. They are lowest for boys in Bihar – only 46 per cent. Rural girls in Rajasthan are the worst off at an abysmal 21.5 per cent. Rural SC girls also have low participation rates in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh. Gender gaps within the SC are also sizeable in most states except Himachal, Kerala and Assam. It is also important to note that in some state like Punjab for instance, though SC attendance rates are higher than the national rates, the gap between SC and non-SC is quite large. Table 5 shows that for urban areas the gap between SC and others is smaller than that in rural areas. The gender gap is also smaller but in certain states like Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan it is still quite large. This is also true of Maharashtra, an advanced state as far as education of SC is concerned.

Marked disparities also exist within the Scheduled Castes for e.g. between the relatively advanced Mahar-Buddhists and Chambhars on the one hand and the Mangs on the other in Maharashtra. Similarly, between Malas and Madigas in Andhra Pradesh, Pallars and Parayars

in Tamil Nadu, the Ad-Dharmis and Mazhabis in Punjab. In Bihar the Musahars are in a state of acute educational backwardness.[2]

The impact of poor attendance and dropout is readily visible in **completion** rates of elementary schooling, which are far poorer for SC as compared to higher caste groups. NFHS data show that only around 50 percent of children aged 10-14 years (the broad age group allows for late entry and stagnation) completed primary school and 42 percent have completed middle school in 1998-99. Caste-wise desegregation shows that Scheduled Caste children compare poorly with non scheduled caste groups. Only 43 per cent SC children completed primary schooling, and 42 per cent completed middle school in the respective age groups. Corresponding figures for the 'other' castes are much higher at 58 percent and 63 percent (NFHS, 2000).

Another study points to sharp inter-state differences in completion rates of children aged 12 and 16 years. Primary school completion rates for Scheduled Castes are relatively high in Kerala (96 % for SC as compared to 100 % for the other castes). Maharashtra (79.21 %) lags behind Kerala. In Tamil Nadu the rate stands at 41.96 percent. Rajasthan (35.15 %) and Uttar Pradesh (30.52 %) are the most poorly off. However, the proportion of children who completed primary school is relatively low. West Bengal has a most shockingly low completion rate of only 19.28 percent for the SC children aged twelve. Middle school completion rates for sixteen year old SC children range from a low of 21 per cent in Bihar and 31 per cent in Rajasthan to 74 per cent in Maharashtra, 63.89 per cent in Tamil Nadu and 90.8 per cent in Kerala (NFHS and World Bank studies cited in Nambissan and Sedwal, 2002)[3].

Education of Scheduled Tribes: Enrolment ratios for scheduled tribe children stand at 113.03 per cent and 50.04 per cent respectively at the primary and middle levels of schooling in 1995-96. They range from 184.18 per cent in Assam to 12.38 per cent in Goa at the primary level and from 104.7 per cent in Assam to 16.1 per cent in Goa at the middle level. At middle level, the rates come down substantially except in Assam, Kerala and Lakshadweep, where they are over 100 per cent. In Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and West Bengal, they are much higher than the natural average of 50 per cent. Arunachal Pradesh has the lowest enrolment ratios among North Eastern states (GOI, 1996).

Table 3, which compares enrolment percent of ST with their population percent shows that in all states, except in Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan, the situation is satisfactory. At the middle level however, Maharashtra and Gujarat join this group of states. Even in Kerala one notes that ST enrolment percent in standard VI-VIII falls short of population percent, even if slightly so! Net enrolments rates were estimated by the1994 NCAER household survey. The gap between ST and non-ST children in the 6-14 years age group was as large as 17 per cent (World Bank, cited in Nambissan, 2000). Further, according to NCAER survey in rural areas, ST children had the lowest ever-enrolment rates (EER) in 1994 (68% among boys and 52% among girls) as compared to children in general (77% among boys and 65% among girls) and Other Hindus in particular (83% among boys and 71% among girls) (Shariff and Sudarshan, cited in Nambissan, 2000).

Table 4 indicates that rural school attendance rates of Scheduled tribe children are highest in Sikkim, Mizoram, Nagaland, Andaman and Nicobar, Manipur, Meghalaya and Assam. In Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa - the other states where ST population is significant - they are lowest. For ST rural girls in these states they are 27.1, 29.8, 34.2 and 32.3 per cent respectively. In urban areas, the pattern is more or less repeated with the same states doing well and badly.

Drop out among ST continues to be high. A majority of ST children who enrol in class I drop out within a few years of entering school. Official dropout rates of tribal children from school in 1988-89 were as high as 78 per cent between classes I and VIII. Almost 65 per cent of tribal children leave school between classes I and V. Dropout rates are extremely high among girls in general (68 per cent) and tribal girls in particular (82 per cent). Classwise enrolments at the primary stage also suggest that the sharpest drop in enrolment of tribal children is between classes I and II (NCERT 1998 cited in Nambissan, 2000). There exist sharp differences between the states in terms of most indications of educational progress.[4] Intra-tribal variations in education must also prevail as suggested by literacy data. The Naga tribe of Meghalaya is the most highly literate. In Arunachal Pradesh, a huge gap in literacy is indicated between Khamiyargs and Panchan Morpa and in Orissa between Kulies (36.4 per cent) and Mankirdias (1.1 per cent) (Sharma, 1994). Specific studies of educational disparities between and within tribal groups need to be done.

Summing Up and Explaining the Situation of Persistent Unequal Access

Several crucial points directly emerge from the brief survey reported above. Regional studies which we have not reviewed here due to constraints of space have brought out the others points[5]. Firstly, our analysis points out that a significant proportion of Scheduled Caste and an even greater proportion of Scheduled Tribe children continue to remain out of school. This is so even in the younger age group, indicating that accessing basic school is still a problem, especially in certain states and regions which have suffered gross neglect by the polity and State. Secondly, and on a more positive note and notwithstanding the tendency of deliberate overestimation, there is an unprecedented rise in enrolment of both Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes, which indicate a strong desire for education. Thirdly, and a dampener on the situation is that attendance rates at both primary and middle school and completion rates are far from satisfactory. This indicates that dropout, failure are problems that afflict SC/ST children to a far greater degree than the rest and they thus continue to lag behind them in terms of educational attainment. Fourthly, there is great unevenness in the educational participation of the various states, and between regions/pockets. In some states progress is very good for both boys and girls but in others it is very poor. In most states girls are far behind the boys. There are also sharp disparities between rural – urban areas. Even in the relatively advanced states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Punjab there are marked regional, intra SC/ST and gender disparities on all educational indicators. Fifthly, though we have not done a systematic comparative analysis, Scheduled tribes appear to lag behind the Scheduled castes in most of the larger states barring of course the North East. Finally, there is a strong indication that specific regions and specific SC and ST groups face extreme and gross educational deprivation, within which the situation of girls is abominable.

It is clear that the country still struggles to ensure equitable access to SC/ST, while the resolve to universalise elementary education and equalize educational opportunity was to incorporate notions of equality of access, equality of survival and equality of learning achievement. Gender, caste, tribe and class inequalities exist in access, retention and years of completed schooling. Disparities in scholastic achievement – an area where we have little systematic comparative data - are even more glaring as revealed by a few micro studies[6]. In sum, despite considerable quantitative progress, exclusion remains a depressing feature of the educational scenario of SC/ST children.

How do we explain continued failure? Within the scope of present paper one cannot engage this question fully, since the focus is on examining educational factors and processes, which

also underlie the failure. However, we cannot but draw attention to the significance of social structural factors for educational achievement. The brevity of the discussion is not to undermine their significance.

Poverty and exploitation, displacement and forced migration in search of livelihood and economic betterment are some of the consequences that arise out of forces of polarised class formation, expansion of informal economy, As we have noted in Section I earlier, the SC and ST are disproportionately affected by these processes. Socio-cultural practices of exclusion and discrimination continue to define the existence of the poor Scheduled Castes. Scheduled Tribes are increasingly sucked into the vortex of rural and urban exploitation and inequality. Several studies have affirmed that educational inequality (of access and achievement) has multiple bases in the contemporary structures of caste, class, gender and ethnicity evolving in interaction with political economy[7]. They show that caste-class relations and values of cultural oppression are crucial to denial of education. There is a lack of basic material condition including situations of acute poverty. It has been quite emphatically established that a sizeable section of the population is too poor to avail of education which is far from free and entails unaffordable costs (Tilak, 1996, 2000). One recent study with an all India sample has lent ample credence to the assertion that poverty and caste act as fundamental deterrents to education (Jha and Jhingran, 2002). The phenomenon of labouring children exists and so do situations of hunger, under/malnourishment and ill health among low caste/class and tribes. Casteism breeds low self-esteem. Dominant cultural capital, knowledge, skills of schools are lacking among the SC/ST. Their own cultural capital as we shall see is deemed valueless.

Thus, class along with caste and other forms of minority ethnicity are today a fundamental category of social exclusion. For the SC and ST caste, tribal ethnicity and class are reproduced in a variety of ways in relation to school. Traditional systems have undergone tremendous change and assumed complex forms deriving out of the ascendance of capitalist economies and labour markets and of systems of political patronage which thrive in the name of democracy. New socio-political forces combine with the old and mediate through community, family, culture and ideology to adversely affect dalit and tribal communities and influence educational access and participation of their children [Velaskar, 2004(b)].

Gender, the oldest basic category of subordination militates against women and girls of SC and increasingly ST communities. Today Scheduled castes and tribal communities, some of whom have had histories of egalitarianism, are patriarchal. Women hold largely subordinated positions in the modern organisation of public and private labour. The role for girls in such communities is to rear children and carry out domestic labour, i.e. engagement in the reproduction of reproductive order. Girl's education this is not divorced from patriarchal structures of early marriage and motherhood and compulsory productive labour. Education is considered a male cultural resource. Informal labour market is also caste/gender segmented. Dalit women and girls are located in the dual labour market – in agricultural and caste labour in rural areas and informal low paying sector in urban areas. Combined together, the realities of reproductive (domestic) /productive (wage) labour, shape education choices of girls, which are actually choices of their families and communities. Even if the cultural atmosphere is changing now there are real limits. For women, changing caste relations have meant a bleak class reality in which there is no guarantee hence no motivation for education. Despite this we find that girls aspire to an education. Parents also increasingly want them to, with the cultural ideal of a 'better marriage' being the driving force. Thus, larger structures intervene to maintain serious caste / class gender differences in education [Velaskar, 2004(a)].

Clearly, structural constraints are as yet strong and real for the SC and ST. We move now to examine the Indian schooling system and what it offers to SC/ST children.

II. UNEQUAL DIFFUSION AND PROVISION OF SCHOOLING: THE FUNDAMENTAL EDUCATIONAL DETERRENT

Historically, the education of both the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has been adversely affected by the ubiquity of unequal diffusion and provision of schooling. For several decades after independence, their habitations were not adequately provided with educational facilities due to paucity of resources and the gap between the massive scale of the required operation and the political will equally of state and society. The situation improved over the years, yet inadequate provision continues to serve as the most fundamental of educational deterrents to educational participation of SC / ST children. What is most alarming is the reversal today of earlier policy of equitable provision under the impact of structural adjustment. We will examine this issue shortly.

Existing schooling conditions for SC/ST range from non-provision and under provision to the provision of the most inferior facilities, even at the basic primary level. Pre-primary education for them is even more minimal. The spread of schooling is a politico-economic process and disparities in educational access have been the direct consequence of a massively uneven diffusion of schooling. Furthermore, both the spread and organisation of the Indian education system reflect quite clearly the caste-class-tribe-gender stratified structure of society and its hierarchical ideology. The schooling system is organised in a pyramidical hierarchy in terms of quality and social composition (Velaskar, 1992). Urban elite schools rank at the top and rural schools especially those located in SC and ST habitations rank at the bottom in terms of quality. Low caste and tribal children are disproportionately located in the worst schools. The effective result has been continued educational deprivation and exclusion.

There are several dimensions of unequal provision and unequal quality viz:
1. Inadequate availability of schools
2. Poor implementation of school level policies of positive discrimination
3. Poor physical infrastructure of schools
4. Inadequacy of teachers and teaching
5. Poor provision of teaching learning materials

1. Inadequate Availability of Schools
Geographical location continues to be a significant predictor of whether a child will attend school, how far she will continue in school and in what type of school. Schooling within easy access has been relatively poor for the SC/ST children as compared to the general population.

Scheduled Caste families, usually live in spatially segregated clusters or habitations in multicaste villages. These residential patterns have important implications for physical and social access. School provision in predominantly Scheduled Caste habitations is much less as compared to general rural habitations[8]. Upper-primary schooling (schools/sections) is available within an even smaller number of habitations. On the whole, higher caste habitations within larger villages are better provided. In multi caste village, hierarchical norms still govern social relations (Nambissan and Sedwal, 2002). "Social" accessibility is a problem exclusively of Scheduled Castes and of others even worse off like denotified and

nomadic tribes. The point will be further elaborated in the forthcoming section on "Hidden Curriculum".

Scheduled Tribe communities especially those residing in interior and inaccessible areas have had a very raw deal. As Sujatha (2002) points out, interior habitations are small in size, scattered, and sparsely populated[9]. Most of the predominantly ST habitations are bereft of basic infrastructural facilities like transport and communication. The situation improved with the operationalisaton of the Tribal Sub-Plan and got a further boost with the formulation of NPE in 1986. Data from two surveys (Fifth and Sixth of 1986 and 1998) show that the number of habitations having schools within 1 km of habitations has increased and a higher percentage of ST population is covered. The Sixth All-India Educational Survey (1998) shows that 78 per cent of Scheduled Tribe population and 56 per cent of Scheduled Tribe habitations have been provided primary schools within the habitation. Another 11 per cent of Scheduled Tribe population and 20 per cent of Scheduled Tribe habitations have schools within less than 1 km radius. This however, has not solved the access problem because of the difficult terrain. Around one-fifth of total Scheduled Tribe population faces this problem and another 10 per cent have to commute to schools beyond distances of 2 kms (ibid, 2002).

Wider interstate variations exist in the provision of schools at the primary level. Mizoram and Gujarat have the highest percentage of population and habitations covered. Bihar occupies the lowest position and in several states viz. Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh the situation is unsatisfactory with schools located more than a kilometre away. Furthermore a large number of them have schools only at a distance of more than 1 km. The non-availability of middle / high school in the vicinity places further limitations on educational motivations and aspirations of ST children (Sujatha, ibid). Several micro studies also reveal the continued state of abysmal provision in many tribal pockets[10].

What we can surmise from the overall scenario is that though there has generally been a marked improvement in provision over the last few decades, there are still areas and caste and tribe groups that are left out of the provision net. The micro studies referred to above provide better indication about who and where these groups are located. It is critical to address the need of these educationally neglected groups. However, as the following section shows the opposite is in fact happening under the impact of global forces which are destroying all notions of public good.

Impact of Structural Adjustment Policies on Educational Provision and Implications for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes: Structural adjustment policies have led to following developments in education: i) privatisation – i.e. the expansion of private funded educational institutions at all levels of education, ii) narrow skill/knowledge based education geared to meeting the demands of the economy, iii) budget cuts on education and slashing of teacher salaries in the interests of economy measures and positions, and iv) adopting narrow market oriented definitions and discourses of excellence, v) advocating foreign borrowing for funding of basic educational commitments and making education a component of the safety net, vi) involving NGOs as a support or replacement for the state delivery system, and vi) advocation of a state withdrawal from all social sectors including the sector of education (Velaskar, 2003). Studies have noted that private schooling are playing a growing role in elementary education, a fact that government reports and statistics obscure (Kingdon, 1996). There is proliferation of private schools for the poor in urban, mofussil and rural areas. Unrecognised schools, which are not accounted in official statistics, have mushroomed in cities, towns and in the larger villages (Kingdon, ibid). The NCERT survey estimated around 38,000 unrecognised primary schools in rural India (see NCERT 1999).

The policy of privatisation in education has enabled access of SC/ST children to private schools. However, the overwhelming majority of SC children continue to avail mainly of government schooling. According to the Sixth All-India Educational Survey, (NCERT, 1998), 91.3 per cent of SC children in rural primary schools and 64.6 per cent in urban areas were in schools managed by government and local bodies. At the middle stage, a relatively larger proportion of Scheduled Caste children were enrolled in privately managed schools, though expectedly this is more in urban (49.6 per cent) as compared to rural areas (32.9 per cent).

There is a distinct trend towards SC enrolment in private elementary schools. As much as 32 per cent of the increase in primary school enrolment among Scheduled Caste boys was accounted for by private unaided (PUA) schools between 1986 and 1993. In rural areas PUA schools accounted for a relatively smaller proportion of the increase in enrolments during this period, around 7 per cent for Scheduled Caste boys and 4 per cent for Scheduled Caste girls (Tilak and Sudershan cited in Nambissan and Sedwal, 2002). However, the commercialisation and commodification of education that privatisation entails, results in poor

educational effects for SC/ST children. In a desperate bid to stay in the struggle for mobility, they avail private education in the faith that it is better quality education. In actuality however, private education for the poor is largely of an inferior quality. The cost is exorbitant and the sacrifices made to meet them are not eventually worth them (Velaskar, 2003).

State response to growing public demand for 'quality' education has been to launch innovative efforts on behalf of hitherto neglected segments, such as Lok Jumbish of Rajasthan and EGS of Madhya Pradesh etc. They have had some visible positive impact. In Madhya Pradesh for instance, the number of formal primary schools increased from 16,548 in 1990-1 to 18,716 in 1998-9. During the same period Alternative Schools, 10,626 EGS schools, and 1133 TWD schools have been established. As a result number of schools nearly doubled from 19,295 in 1992-93 to 34, 131 in 1998-99. There is also the case of West Bengal however, where the state government sponsored alternative system of Shishu Shiksha Kendras is having encouraging results (Jha, 2002). However, impacts of alternative schools and educational innovations need to be continuously and carefully assessed. Leclerq's critical evaluation of functioning of the Education Gurantee Scheme in SC and ST dominated districts of Madhya Pradesh sounds a worthy caution[11].

2. Poor Implementation of School Level Policies of Positive Discrimination

A crucial dimension of unequal provisioning is the woeful implementation of the enabling programmes meant to facilitate and support the schooling of SC and ST children. For several years after independence, many of these programmes had a very limited implementation, and their operation suffered from stark bureaucratic apathy. Yearly reports of the Commissioner for SC/ST and of other groups set up from time to time to look into welfare of these groups and academic studies have brought the situation to light. It is undeniable that despite several shortcomings, special schemes had a key role to play in facilitating social mobility and status change for SC and ST and the creation of political leadership. However, the coverage of programmes continues to be inadequate and there is no monitoring arrangement for the actual operation of these programmes, quantifying achievement targets and determining financial outlays. Thus, the actual benefits are limited and accrue largely to the relatively more powerful and better off SC and ST groups. Poor implementation reduces them much more (Kamat, 1985; GOI, 1990). Quantitative expansion usually occurs as a result of political pressures and enhanced awareness. Gross inadequacies continue to exist aggravated by the changing socio-economic context and nature of the state.

Pre-Matric Scholarships: While the programme of scholarships and stipends has significantly grown, there are some weaknesses which have to be noted carefully. The coverage under the assistance programme increases as one moves up the educational ladder. Every SC and ST student subject to certain conditions is eligible for a pre-matric scholarship. But at the higher secondary level the coverage is much smaller and there is hardly any assistance at the elementary level. This has created a situation in which those people who have been able to cross the initial hurdle at the primary and secondary level are able to move up with comparative ease but those who are unable to cross even the first hurdle are doomed for life. There is also great delay in receipt of scholarship (Sharma, 1994).

Ashram Schools: Despite the fact that the vast majority of tribal children study in government day schools, a fair-sized achievement both in terms of money and coverage is claimed for Ashram schools. The SC/ST Commissioner reports have provided some data on the functioning of the schools. The inefficiency, mismanagement, nepotism and corruption besetting the Ashram Schools are well documented by B.K. Roy Burman years ago and B.D. Sharma more recently. They have commented upon the shortcomings of the voluntary agencies who run Ashram schools, pointing out the sub-standard level of education given in these institutions, poor hostel facilities, the use of inmates as unpaid, forced labour, etc. (Roy Burman cited in Kamat, 1985; Govt. of India, 1990). Other observers have also noted evils rampant in the system.

A few recent studies have given detailed accounts of the appalling living and educational conditions prevalent in ashram schools in Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. Poorly constructed structures, overcrowding, lack of basic provisions such as toiletries, uniforms and fans for children, alienating environments, inadequacy of number and quality of teaching staff, lack of regular inspection are some of the problems that have been highlighted (Kumar, 2004; Gare, 2000;Gogate, 1986; Furer-Haimendorf, 1989; Saldanah, 1990; Sharma & Mathur, 1992; Ananda, 1994; Sujatha, 1983). Clear vested interests from politically- influential sections among tribal groups as well as others have developed in sanctioning and management of Ashram schools leading to many malpractices and much corruption. On the whole, the schools have reached out to very small proportions. Only the relatively better off tribal groups seem to access them and there are limits to how much they

can increase general access for tribals. For girls insecurity has been mentioned as a major deterrent.

Hostels: Provision of hostels is crucial for increasing access to middle and higher levels of education. Coverage of hostel schemes has substantially risen, indicating that a genuine demand for separate lodging and boarding arrangements exists for facilitating the pursuit of education among SC/ST communities. Reports of Commissioner of SC/ST – attest to this. Systematic studies are few and far between. One study conducted among centrally sponsored hostels in Maharashtra and Gujarat showed over utilisation and over crowding and that living conditions are unhygienic, quality of food poor and medical facilities nil, for the residents (Wankhede, 1987). With the increased demand for hostels, caste based organisations are now important providers of such facilities. We have gathered from personal accounts as well as studies that there is a trend towards increasing politicization in the provisioning and functioning of such hostels and the need to address the issue of how conducive the environment is for students (Ransubhe, et al., 1997; Gare, 2000).

Mid Day Meal Scheme: Though the scheme does not fall in the purview of positive discrimination policies, we consider it here due to its potential importance for enrolment of largely impoverished SC/ST children. The scheme which originated in Tamil Nadu in 1982 is currently implemented across the country. A recent study conducted in Chattisgarh, Rajasthan and Karnataka noted an immense positive impact in terms of higher enrolment and attendance levels. Apparently it signified the end of classroom hunger. The study however did not specifically report on SC/ST children (Dreze & Goyal, 2003). Interestingly however, a study evaluating the scheme's recent performance in Tamil Nadu itself, suggests that it may not be currently having a significant impact on educational attendance or enrolment. Moreover, it noted that implementation is poorer in schools whose social composition is predominantly Scheduled caste (Swaminathan et al, 2004).

Furthermore, in our Focus Group's personal interactions, rural teachers (both dalit and non-dalit from Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka) brought up the issue of caste discrimination in the course of cooking and eating practises by non-SC/ST children, their parents and teachers (Chaudhary, Personal Account, M.P.). At the same time it was felt that if positively handled, such situations could be used to break archaic notions of pollution and prejudices.

Despite the several weaknesses that we have pointed out there can be no doubt that the positive discrimination provisions in education for SC/ST have played an important role in enabling access to higher levels of education. However, the relatively more politically powerful and economically better off have largely availed them. There is a growing tendency for the special benefits to circulate within the SC/ST elites and effective access is limited and difficult for others.

3. Poor Physical Infrastructure of Schools

A majority of studies suggest that physical/infrastructural facilities are totally inadequate and particularly deplorable in schools accessed by SC/ST, including the private schools. As mentioned earlier the majority of SC/ST children are in regular government schools. Buildings are dilapidated or badly in need of repair and basic furniture and teaching equipment is non-existent or of pathetic quality. There are of course state and regional variations. The poorest of physical infrastructure and basic amenities afflict schools in remote tribal areas. There is also a high incidence of very poorly and irregularly functioning schools. We have reports from rural Punjab, Orissa, and Rajasthan's SC and Tribal dominated districts that reveal shortage of basics such as classrooms, drinking water facilities and teachers. Reports of neglect, indifference, greater teacher absenteeism from dalit and tribal dominated schools have accumulated, pointing to the grim reality that exists on the ground. Exceptions too have been noted, for example studies of Garhwal, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Kerala show that there are several regions in which the SC/ST have a fairly good provision for education. In certain areas in Maharashtra for e.g., Zilla Parishad schools are fairly good (Berntsen, 1990)[12].

Further, it is important to break the common misconception that rural schools are necessarily worse than urban. There are indications from Maharashtra that government rural schools may be in far better shape than urban municipal schools. This is so because most rural schools have a mix of higher and lower castes/classes whereas in urban areas where the choice of school is greater, the municipal schools cater almost exclusively to the poor, lower castes and tribes[13].

4. Inadequacy of Teachers and Teaching Transaction

A highly inadequate teaching force has been a most critical element of unequal provisioning. Teacher-pupil ratios in schools frequented by SC/ST have been much higher than those in

other schools meant for higher caste villagers. Multigrade teaching often amounts to very limited teaching or no teaching at all !

The problem of insufficient number of teachers has been compounded by the problem of unmotivated teachers, which is reflected in the phenomenon of teacher absenteeism. Teachers for SC and ST children primarily belong to non-SC or non tribal backgrounds. They are highly irregular in attending since they live outside the villages. This is a common feature in schools located in remote areas. There are reports of `paper schools' which remain closed during the year and yet others for years on end especially in remote tribal areas. This is the situation particularly in remote tribal areas. A study of tribal education conducted in eighteen villages from seven states showed that teacher absenteeism was rampant in tribal areas of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. It was common for teachers to mark fictitious attendance of children (Jha & Jhingran, 2002). Leclercq noted that in the EGS school in SC and ST dominated district of Madhya Pradesh multigrade teaching was generalised. The quantity of teaching was problematically low and quality was equally a key deficiency (Leclercq, 2003).

Dysfunctional and poorly organized school environments, inadequate number of teachers, inadequate teaching quantum ranging from absence of teaching to the adoption of most conventional and uninteresting teaching methods together makes for a situation where the teaching transaction is poor and inadequate. Poor teacher competence is also a critical negative factor. Even trained teachers are not necessarily `good' teachers. Both their knowledge and skill levels are unsatisfactory. Kerala too is no exception to the situation of low teacher quality! (Thomas, 2001)[14]. At the same time however, poor working conditions which can demotivate and demoralise even the most motivated of the primary school teacher need to be highlighted. Teachers are expected to work in isolation under harsh conditions. Worse still their teaching function is dislodged by compulsion to perform all kinds of government work. Bureaucrat-teacher relationships undermine the dignity and status of the primary school teacher, which in turn interferes with their teaching role.

In comparison to the state and much private effort on behalf of the underprivileged, the missionary effort, although not free from inadequacies, appears far more efficiently organised – both in terms of the quality of education provided and the management of institutions (Kamat, 1985). This is perhaps the principal reason for the major influence they wield in educational and other matters in Scheduled Tribe areas. Several studies have noted significant

educational progress among Christian tribals or in areas where missionaries are active in school provision (Toppo, 2000; Bara, 1997; Heredia, 1992). Contemporarily, neo-right Hindu organisations have emerged as major contending forces and are aggressively pursuing tribal constituencies through a vast network of schools in several states (Sundar, 2002, 2005; Kumar, 2004; Saldanah, 1990;).

5. Poor Provision of Teaching Learning Materials.

Teaching- learning material- blackboards, chalk, texts and other reading material, laboratory equipment, instructional aids are always in short supply, of poor quality or simply non-existent.

Teaching Learning Conditions: Decline and Dilution

While everyone expects education to respond effectively to old and new challenges, we have seen that all essential ingredients of education are missing! The infrastructure for education and its quality is worsening by the day. Current policy changes such as budget cuts, ban on the new recruitment of teachers, and a growing reliance on contract teachers have compounded the crisis caused by historical neglect. Despite some quantitative gains considerable qualitative setbacks are being experienced by neglected regions and peoples. Further the "minimum levels of learning" model compromises quality in no uncertain measure. The exclusive focus on the 3 R's creates an unhealthy dichotomy alluded to by Lawton, between the cognitive and affective domains (Lawton, 1977). Issues of educational quality are integral to both "effective" equal opportunity and democratic value formation, but are grossly neglected.

III. CURRICULUM, PEDAGOGY AND EVALUATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR SC & ST CHILDREN

This section firstly examines curriculum as a mediator of dominance and hegemony, exploring ideological issues in the selection and structuring of knowledge and in pedagogic practice. Secondly we focus on the issue of representation of subaltern groups, culture and ideologies. The concept of curriculum is used here to designate the experiences pupils have under the guidance of the school. Most issues in this area are predicated upon the assumption that appropriate school experiences can indeed make a significant difference to learning and

lives of SC/ST children. Content of curriculum and internal operations are thus key issues that need to be addressed. Also very important are related areas of pedagogic methods, assessment and evaluation.

In India, curriculum and the content of education have been central to the processes of reproduction of caste, class, cultural and patriarchal domination-subordination. In post independence educational policy, modification of content supposedly aimed at indigenisation resulted in Brahmanisation as a key defining feature of the curriculum. Brahmanisation has been evident in the emphasis on (1) 'pure' language, (2) literature and other "knowledge" of society, history, polity, religion and culture that is produced by higher castes which reflects Brahmanical world view and experiences and Brahmanical perspectives on Indian society, history and culture, and (3) high caste, cultural and religious symbols, linguistic and social competencies, modes of life and behaviour. Furthermore, the overarching stress has been on eulogizing mental as against manual labour. The heavily gendered nature of school curricular content was evident in that women's specialised knowledge and skills systems found no place in it or in the general curricular discourse. Rather they were used for devaluation and stereotyping of the female sex in curriculum. Curriculum is thus urban elite male-centric and bereft of the country's rich cultural diversity. There has been a corresponding devaluation of "lesser" dialects, cultures, traditions, and folklore of dalits and adivasis as also of peasantry. The second defining feature of the curriculum on the other hand, was its 'colonial' character which privileged western modernization. The ideology however was adopted in truncated, superficial ways – the emphasis being on the incorporation of knowledge of Western science and technology, viz. that of the "hard Western sciences", the English language and Western styles of life. The pursuance of liberal, democratic socialist values even though enshrined in the Indian constitution was largely notional in the curriculum.

Curricular structure and culture of the colonial model has remained unchanged. The defining features of the structure are: full time attendance of age specific groups in teacher supervised classrooms for the study of graded curricula. Full day schools, compulsory attendance, unconducively long time–span of classes and vacations, served as deterrents, being ill suited to educating SC/ST children, especially in the initial years when access was just being opened up and availed. Poor and SC/ST households depended on children for domestic work or other productive work whether or not to supplement household earnings. Today, things have changed substantially and large numbers of parents are prepared to forego children's

labour and send them to school. However school organisation and curricula have not been sensitive as yet to fundamentally different economic situations, life aims and social circumstances of children belonging to poorer strata households or communities in the shaping of the school structure. Culturally, school norms of attendance, discipline, homework, tests and exams, and cognitively ethnocentric demands of concentration on and memorisation of the content of the text by `rote', all prove problematic for SC/ST children (personal account, teacher M.P.). Furthermore, the curriculum itself as a tool of cultural dominance and hegemony has an alienating and intimidating impact (Velaskar, 2005).

Curriculum and the Scheduled Castes:

For the Scheduled Castes who have sought education as a mechanism to transform as well as enter "mainstream" (read dominant) society, the central questions are of representation of their knowledge and culture and the critiquing of dominant knowledge and value systems of their lived reality and of social relationships based on dominance/subordination and exclusion. Dominant forms of inequality and hierarchy are made invisible in the discourse on common nationhood and common and equal citizenship, which the school curriculum propagates. But for the Scheduled Castes the heart of the matter is structural oppression, not cultural difference. Thus understandings of oppressive aspects of our traditional and contemporary structures, the historical construction of groups and communities are made invisible by the curriculum and not subjects of key curricular importance.

Krishna Kumar's studies have focussed attention on how the dominant groups' ideas about education and the educated get reflected in the curriculum. Following the curriculum, Indian texts uphold symbols of the traditional, male dominated feudal society and its obsolete cultural values and norms. However, that the value content of education is out of tune with the reality of the changing, dynamic India is a matter of choice – a choice consciously or unconsciously made by those selecting textbook material from the available body of literature and by those creating it. Worthwhile knowledge is that which is linked to the values and lifestyles of dominant groups! (Kumar, 1983, 1989, 1992).

Ilaiah has vividly described how knowledge and language are rooted in and structured around productive processes of lower castes and around socio-cultural surroundings of their habitat. This knowledge and skill based vocabulary, which is very highly developed, finds no place in the school curriculum. Nor do stories, music and songs, values, skills, knowledge, traditions,

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cultural and religious practices (Ilaiah, 1996; personal account, Karnataka teachers). Contemporary dalit literature is similarly disregarded. Lives, values and norms of upper caste Hindus which are strange and alienating for the lower castes, continue to be dominantly present. To quote from Ilaiah, "right from early school upto college, our Telugu textbooks were packed with these Hindu stories. Kalidasa was as alien to us as the name of Shakespeare. The language of textbooks was not the one that our communities spoke. Even the basic words were different. Textbook Telugu was Brahmin Telugu, whereas we were used to a production-based communicative Telugu. It is not merely a difference of dialect; there is a difference in the very language itself" (Ilaiah, 1996).

The dominance of epistemology and content of the politically powerful intellectual classes makes curricular knowledge ideologically loaded. While Gandhi, Tagore and Krishnamurti – all from the high castes - have received national attention as indigenous educational philosophers, education has not incorporated the anti-caste-patriarchy and anti-hegemonic discourses of Phule, Ambedkar, Periyar or Iyotheedas. Curriculum does not reflect upon the historical significance of caste, gender and tribe, nor of the challenges posed to it by dalit epistemology, knowledge and protest. This should have been done through literature and social science curricula.

Phule saw education as a potent weapon in the struggle for revolutionary social transformation. For him, the purpose and content of education were radically different from both Brahmanical and colonial models of education. His ideal was an education that would bring an awareness among lower castes of oppressive social relations and their hegemonic moral and belief systems that pervaded their consciousness…. an education that would instill western secular values, encourage critical thought and bring about mental emancipation. It would fulfil practical needs but would be broad based enough to inspire a social and cultural revolution from below (O'Hanlon, 1985; Velaskar, 1998). During the course of the long struggle of dalit liberation, Ambedkar developed an ideology that incorporated a critique and reinterpretation of India's cultural heritage, a rich philosophy drawn from a wide range of social thought and an action programme which lay an equal stress on social and cultural revolution as it did on the economic and political one (Omvedt, 1994). Like Phule, he defined the purpose of education in terms of mental awakening and creation of a social and moral conscience. Education was also a means of overcoming inferior status and state of mind, of wresting power from the powerful. Thus, the Ambedkarian agenda for education included: (a)

creation of capacities for rational and critical thinking, (b) socialisation into a new humanistic culture and ideology, (c) development of capacities and qualities necessary for entry and leadership in modern avenues of work and politics, and (d) inculcation of self-respect and aspirations to respectable lifestyles in which demeaning traditional practices would have no place (Velaskar, 1998).

Clearly Phule-Ambedkarian ideology went way beyond narrow modernisation and technocratic impulses. It gave pre-eminence to ideology and values, Western in origin but critically adapted towards emancipation of India's downtrodden. Ilaiah, in fact, argues that these values are equally indigenous, constitutive of lived-in realities of dalit bahujans (Ilaiah, 1996). Dalit and non-Brahman leaders drew on western philosophical traditions to build an ideology and praxis of revolutionary transformation of the Hindu social order. It aimed at establishing a socialist social order underpinned by a new morality, based on values of liberty, equality, fraternity and rationality (Omvedt, 1994, Gore, 1993).

School curriculum in India failed to reflect these expressions of new moral order. It does not need any great study to show that the national or state school curricula or teacher education curricula were never guided by these radical visions. The Scheduled Castes and their issues and problems have remained peripheral to the curriculum and their representation if at all has been weak and distorted.

Curriculum and the Scheduled Tribes:

Like the SC, curriculum does not acknowledge cultural rights of the Scheduled Tribes who are denied their own culture and history. School curriculum fails to take account of tribal cultures as autonomous knowledge systems with their own epistemology, transmission, innovation and power. Kundu gives the example of children being set to write essays on the circus, or being trained to write letters through mock missives to the police asking them to take action on disturbance by loudspeakers during exams. While adivasi children may know a great deal about animals, they are unlikely to have ever seen a circus; where the police are usually feared as oppressors and electricity is erratic, if at all available, enlisting police support in keeping noise decibels down is a most unlikely situation (Kundu,1994 cited in Sundar, n.d.). Not only are the knowledge and linguistic and /or cognitive abilities that Scheduled Tribe children possess ignored – e.g. the capacity to compose and sing spontaneously, to think in riddles and metaphors and their intimate knowledge of their

environment – but schooling also actively encourages a sense of inferiority about Scheduled Tribe cultures (Sundar, ibid). Like the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes rarely feature in textbooks, and when they do, it is usually in positions servile to upper caste characters; or as 'strange' and 'backward' exotica (Kundu, 1994; Kumar, 1989).

The 'cultural discontinuity' between school and home draws attention to the rigidity of school organization and the emphasis on discipline and punishment in contrast with socialization practices and the lives of children, as reasons for non-attendance. Sujatha cites the case of community schools in Andhra where there was closer interaction with parents, weekly holiday was in tune with the local weekly bazaar, and school holidays coincided with tribal festivals. The school was observed to show positive results (Sujatha 2001, cited in Sundar, n.d; see also Singh, 1995).

The Language Question:

Despite several policy documents and a constitutional provision (350A) recognizing that linguistic minorities should be educated in their mother tongue at primary level, there is practically no education in Scheduled Tribe languages. This includes even those like Santhali, Bhili, Gondi or Oraon which are spoken by over a million people (Nambissan, 2000). Although states in India were organized on linguistic grounds, political powerlessness of Scheduled Tribes prevented the formation of states based on tribal languages. They are confined to minority status within large states and are compelled to learn the state language in school. Primary teachers are predominantly from non-ST communities. And despite the pedagogic significance of initial instruction in the mother tongue, teachers do not bother to learn the tribal language even after several years of posting (Kundu, cited in Sundar, n.d.; Saxena, 1995; 1975; Toppo, 1979; Furer-Haimendorf, 1989). The general picture at primary level is often one of mutual incomprehension between ST students and their non-ST teachers. Several studies have pointed to the significance of the language question at the primary levels.

Quite apart from the pedagogic problems this creates – such as destroying the child's self esteem, and reducing the possibilities of successful learning in later years, the denigration of Scheduled Tribe languages amounts to denigration of Scheduled Tribe worldviews and knowledge. The education system with its insistence on a common language as a means of achieving a common nationhood has been instrumental in the destruction of tribal language,

culture and identity. Even outside the school, educated youth often speak to each other in the language of the school, perhaps to mark themselves off from their 'uneducated peers'. Several languages, especially those spoken by small numbers, are dying out. Loss of a language means the loss of a certain way of knowing the world. Experiences of schooling of tribal children in Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra have revealed the displacement of Bundelkhandi, Gondi and Warli by Sanskritised Hindi, Telugu and Marathi respectively (Sundar, n.d.; Saxena, 1995; 1997; Furer Haimendorf, 1989; Saldanah, 1990; also Karnataka teachers' experiences).

Depending on levels of cultural absorption and adaptation however, several Scheduled Tribes may not look to schools to teach in their home language. Indeed, for many Scheduled Tribe parents, the main advantage of schooling is that it gives access to the new languages, new occupations and a new life and enables interaction with the non-tribal world (Grigson, 1993; Patwardhan, 2000; Saldanah, 1990). But wherever Scheduled Tribes have been politically mobilised to celebrate Scheduled Tribe identity, they have been more clear and open in their demand for education in indigenous languages (Patwardhan, 2000; Nambissan, 2000).

The Alienating Impact of School Regimen: The school regimen of timing, discipline, hierarchy is especially alien to tribal children socialized in a world where individuality is respected from early on, and where parent-child interactions are relatively egalitarian (Sarangapani 2001). Kundu (1994) points out that testing procedures too are based on urban middle class values – the competitiveness and system of rewards that examinations represent is often culturally anomalous to Scheduled Tribe children who are brought up in an atmosphere of sharing. Furthermore, learning among ST children is usually intimately connected to the work process – children learn the names and medicinal uses of many plants and trees while accompanying their parents on foraging trips in the forest [Sarangapani, 2003(a)]. When children are away at school, especially when they are sent to residential schools, they lose connection with this world of labour and their capacity to learn from it. Several studies have attested the alienating effects of language, school structure and ethos[15].

Implications of Recent Hindu Cultural Nationalist Influences on Curriculum
In the recent past a serious concern has been the 'Hinduisation' of the curriculum, its adverse implications for all children but most particularly to religious minorities and SC/ST. A deliberate policy move towards Hinduisation of the school which occurred at the behest of

neoright national government's policy meant its specific framing within Vedic values and thought. However, even prior to that when there was no overt intent of curriculum or text to be grounded in dominant religious culture, the fact that most educational action teachers are Hindu made curriculum Hinduised (Ilaiah, 1996). It influenced the manner in which annual days or other school events are celebrated. Breaking a coconut and lighting incense at the base of the flag pole on Republic or Independence Day is common practice. Additionally, distinctive Scheduled Tribe names are changed to standard Hindu names (Sundar, n.d.; Lobo, personal account).

IV. HIDDEN CURRICULUM AND SC/ST CHILDREN

The term "hidden curriculum" is used to mean the tacit teaching of dominant cultural norms, values and disposition towards maintenance of ideological hegemony (Apple, 1979). Within the Indian school scenario, the concept might actually be a misnomer because processes of cultural domination and caste class, tribe and gender relations that shape school organisation, culture and classroom interaction are all too visible.

In the school and in classrooms, teacher-pupil interaction is central to teaching and learning processes. Teacher's social background (caste, religion, language), affect their interactions with students. Middle class higher caste teachers are very unhappy with the environments of schools for the poor and are poorly motivated to teach children of the poor, particularly of SC/ST background, who are `derogatorily' categorised as uneducable.

We have now an appalling body of evidence that suggests that teacher's preconceptions, bias and behaviour, subtle or overt, conscious or unconscious, operate to discriminate against children of SC/ST background[16]. Teachers are observed to have low expectations of SC/ST children and girls and a condescending and downright abusive attitude to poor children from slums. Teachers also have stated or unstated assumptions of "deprived" and "deficient" cultural backgrounds, languages and inherent intellectual deficiencies of SC/ST children. They follow discriminatory pedagogic practices of labelling, classifying and teaching styles and operate on the basis of "realistic" perceptions of low caste children's limited cognitive capacities and life chances. For e.g. teachers beliefs about Mushar children in Bihar are that they are just not interested in education and that they do not have any 'tension' in life (Kumar, 2004). Such presumptions set effective and in the teachers' view legitimate limits to

their teaching effort. Levels of hostility and indifference to dalit/tribal cultural traits and value systems are high. Discriminatory behaviour manifests itself in numerous ways. Teachers perceive dalit and adivasi children in a negative light, see them as unclean, dishonest, lazy, ill-mannered etc. The children could be criticized for their clothes, the dialect they speak, the abhorment of uncouth habits of meat eating and alcohol consumption, the ignorance of their parents and even the colour of their skin! They are punished and shouted at in efforts to discipline and "civilize" them!

Several studies have noted that SC children do not encounter practices related to untouchability in school (Jodhka, 2000, 2002; Shah, 2000). However others point to varied forms of direct and subtle discrimination. For instance, Artis, et al. (2003) find that in village schools of Gujarat, SC children are forced to sit at the back, actively discouraged to participate in class, are subject to food and water taboos. Similar experiences exist for village schools in Karnataka (Eddie Premdas, personal account). Tribal children too are victims of 'caste like' discrimination as a study conducted in the tribal village of Harda (M.P) has pointed out. Teaching Korku children is considered as good as 'teaching cows' by teachers. Non-adivasi children do not mix with them or drink water from the same tap! (Balagopalan, 2003). In relation to dalits, teachers refuse to correct their notebooks. Complaints to headmaster results in beating of children. Indeed teacher violence against dalit children is widely reported.

Like the children, dalit and tribal teachers also suffer humiliation and discrimination (Jha and Jhingran, 2002; Heredia, 1992; Samavesh, 2003; Jodhka, 2000, 2002). They are largely isolated or compelled to form their own separate social circles. They also find themselves succumbing to dominant religio-cultural practices in a bid to avoid conflict and gain acceptance (Chaudhary, personal account). A disturbing tendency noted by several studies and further substantiated by poignant personal narratives is the use of children as servants by high caste teachers. Children are assigned a range of menial tasks – from cleaning and sweeping the school to fetching "paan" and cigarettes for the teacher (Artis et'al, 2003; Talib, 1998, 2000; Sachidananda, 1989). They assign SC/ST children menial jobs and shift the onus of low learning on children and their families. Tribal children have been punished for talking in their own languages. There is an undue obsession with language purity and correctness (Saxena and Mahendroo, 1993; Kundu, 1990, 1994). Placing disadvantaged students in 'better quality' schools doesn't seem to solve the problem. Studies have suggested that

feelings of isolation, alienation and experiences of discrimination do neutralize the impact of better facilities.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The above survey of the field reality of schooling of SC and ST children propels the conclusion that state policy and bureaucracy together serve to provide quantitatively the most inadequate and qualitatively the most inferior education. While expansion of government schooling has undoubtedly represented a shift from mass exclusion to mass inclusion, it has been an incredibly delayed, weak and highly discriminatory inclusion. Grossly unequal provision, accompanied by an alienating curriculum and disinterested and discriminatory teaching learning process seem to have kept alive the traditional Brahmanical principle of closure. SC/ST children are largely "cooled out" at the primary level itself. There occurs an effective physical exclusion of SC/ST children or they achieve low levels of schooling, which do not necessarily reflect learning.

It appears that given the present trend of the state's abdication of its responsibility for mass education, and depleting provision, the situation of disadvantage thus will not only persist for the SC/ST, there will be a widening of the relative gap between them and the higher castes and classes, in both the quantities and qualities of education. We need to urgently respond to this situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

At the very outset it must be stated that for policy and programmatic changes that we have recommended can only succeed if equality and justice are firmly brought back on the educational agenda. In any event, there is enough indication, given the requirements of scale and sustainability, of the dire need for establishing full fledged, high quality regular schools in educationally impoverished areas. This need can hardly be fulfilled without massive funding and committed state support, the creation of a nurturant environment and active encouragement of a public education system by society. The relationship between cultural and educational goals needs to be publicly debated with a view to come to terms with question of cultural hybridity and cultural difference and a host of epistemological and ethical

issues. Development of culturally sensitive policies and programmes is the key concern. This is important particularly in the context of the caution sounded by researchers about difficulty of making schools closer to tribal childrens' worlds.

Specifically the recommendations of the Focus Group are as follows:

Institutional Context

a) Provision: We strongly reiterate the need for equitable provision in terms of quality of schooling at different levels, educational infrastructure and other facilities, qualified teachers, teaching learning materials, texts and others. It is crucial to enhance the autonomy and working conditions of teachers, and teacher self-esteem. All non-teaching work load must be taken off the teacher. The educational environment of substandard dysfunctional schools must change for any meaningful and effective curricular reform.

b) We recommend the need to identify areas and groups which continue to suffer marked exclusion and neglect to enable a more focussed implementation of positive discrimination policies. We also emphasize the need to invest greater financial and educational resources for their educational development.

c) School Organisation: There is need for flexibility in school structures and cultures. School times, calendars and holidays must keep in mind local contexts.

d) The school system requires a more generous and efficient provision of facilities meant for SC and ST children. It is important for all concerned to engage with those struggling for rights of these communities, especially those committed to their educational advancement.

School Curriculum

a) Curricular goals must emphasise critical thinking and critical evaluation and appreciation of Indian society and culture. Equal opportunity for intellectual growth, cognitive development, social and emotional development of underprivileged children must be sought. Curriculum must aim at promotion of creative talents, productive skills, dignity of labour, underlined by values of equality, democracy, secularism, social and gender justice.

b) Curricular content: An approach rooted in critical theory and critical multiculturalism is essential to critique the unjust social order, to indigenize and incorporate diverse cultures and prevent loss of valuable cultural heritage. We must make a commitment to the preservation of all languages as a matter of communities' cultural rights as well as of national pride.

c) Curriculum should lead to identification and creativity, not alienation. There is need to incorporate all creative arts, crafts and oral expression, especially those rooted in indigenous knowledge and skill systems.

d) Curriculum must develop a critical social science and humanities; content aimed at the achievement of curricular goals. A balance between curricular subjects is essential.

e) There is need to develop critical multicultural texts and reading material.

Pedagogy

a) Incorporation of diverse pedagogic methods and practices towards enhancing learning and democratic classroom practice is essential.

b) We need to develop constructive critical pedagogy and specific guidance on classroom practices with a view to eschew discrimination against children on the basis of caste, class, tribe, gender, identity/ ability etc.

c) Improvement is required in the affective climate of school, to enable teachers and students to participate freely in knowledge construction and learning.

d) There is need to develop pedagogic practices that aim at improving self esteem and identity of SC/ST.

e) Non-graded instruction with judicious use of tests for evaluation of learning may be considered.

f) Making available a wide range of texts and other reading and instructional material is absolutely essential.

Language

a) Home languages must be made the media of instruction / communication in the early years of school education. They must be seen as integral to creating an enabling school environment for children and crucial for the process of learning. The pedagogic rationale is that moving from the known to the unknown facilitates learning. Language is a critical resource that children bring to school and aids thought, communication and understanding.

b) Home languages in classroom process is also essential to build child's self-esteem and self confidence.

c) Transition to regional language will be facilitated through learning of home language.

d) Where there are more than one tribal languages used in any village, we recommend the use of the regional lingua franca or the majority language after consultation with villagers.

e) Teacher training must include the stipulation that teachers pass an exam in a local language. Earlier ICS officers posted to tribal areas had to pass exams in one tribal language. This seems to have died out.

Enhancement of Teacher Education, Teacher Competence and Teacher Social and Self-Esteem

a) There is a great need to strengthen teacher education, its overall knowledge and value base and practical training. Teachers must be thoroughly equipped with subject

knowledge and critical pedagogy skills. There is need to incorporate a foundational base of strong critical social science and humanities knowledge which is governed by democratic egalitarian perspectives in teacher education curricula. Special attention needs to be paid to social sciences and humanities including new emergent areas of dalit / feminist critical theory, tribal studies, cultural studies etc. We need to shift from narrow behaviouristic perspectives, and question archaic psychological concepts and constructs, for e.g., the IQ theory.

Teachers also require experiential knowledge through field work about the lives of SC, ST and other marginalized groups, to understand cultures, school-home linkages and ensuing facilitators and constraints. Together this would help confront unfounded beliefs and stereotypes as well as gain sensitivity towards SC and ST communities. Teachers' attitudes need to be challenged on a scientific, historical, sociological and experiential basis, to help them understand their own socialization.

b) Teacher education curriculum needs to incorporate an understanding and appreciation of cultural diversities in particular the history of rich cultures and traditions of marginalized communities, histories of their protest and struggles and their constructive contribution to nation. An understanding without essentialising diverse identities and the recognition of the interplay between identity of child, culture and learning will enrich curriculum.

c) The pedagogic context within an increasingly segregated system of school requires that teachers be professionally equipped to address diverse educational needs of children, in particular of first generation learners.

d) The strengthening of teacher education content on the lines suggested above will enhance social status and respect for the teaching profession and community.

e) Recruitment to teacher education programmes must be made more rigorous to enable entry of those suited and motivated to teach children.

f) Teacher education needs to be made more accessible in 'backward regions'/tribal areas.

g) We need to focus on developing competent teachers within SC and ST communities, particularly women.

Research:

We need to undertake educational research that will further illuminate problems and provide more indepth understanding of the educational issues of SC/ST children.

Endnotes:

[1] For insights into the contemporary social situation of Scheduled Castes in seven States of the country see Beteille, A. (ed.) Special issue of Journal of Indian School of Political Economy, 2000.

[2] Many studies of the Scheduled Castes have brought out socio-economic disparities between caste groups. See for eg. Jodhka (2000) for Punjab; Jha (2000) for Bihar; Shah (2000) for Gujarat; Wankhede and Velaskar (1999), and Wankhede (2001) for Maharashtra; N.Sudhakar Rao (n.d.) for Andhra Pradesh; Pandian (2000) for Tamil Nadu etc.

[3] Data on inter-state variations on education of the Scheduled Castes is available in various reports of the Commissioner and Commission for SC/ST. However, the data has been of a variable quality. Furthermore, the task of preparing reports has been erratic over the past two decades.

[4] Note 3 applies to the situation of Scheduled Tribes also.

[5] These studies include those of Chalam (1993); Dreze and Sen (1995); Ahmed (1984) for tribal regions; Sachchidanand (1989, 1997) for Bihar; Chitnis and Velaskar (1988), Velaskar (ongoing) for Maharashtra; Behera (1999) for Orissa; Mathur (1992) for Kerala; NIAS (2002) for Tamil Nadu; Aggarwal and Sibou (1994) which gives an all India analysis as well as focusses on Uttar Pradesh; studies for various other states are available in Vaidyanathan (2001).

[6] See for e.g. Aikara (1997); Sharma (1997); Berntsen (1990).

[7] Studies which have pointed to caste/class, gender, cultural constraints to educational access and attainment. These include:

   a. **The All-India studies** reported in Govinda, (2002); also see Probe,(1999); Jha and Jhingran, (2002); Vaidyanathan, (2001).

   b. **Studies for Central and North India:** See Kaul et. al., (1991) for Delhi; Raj Tilak (1995) for H.P.; Agarwal (1992) for Lucknow city; Lakhera (n.d.) for Garhwal, all the above cited in NCERT. See also Talib (2003) for Delhi; Mukul (1999) and Kumar (2004) for Bihar; Lidhoo (1987) for Kashmir.

   c. **For South India:** Furer-Haimendorf (1989) for Andhra Pradesh; Halbar (1986), Rao (1988), Eswaraih (1996), Rama Krishnaiah (1997) for Telegana, cited in NCERT; Parameswara (1990) for Karnataka; Krishnaji (2001) for Tamil Nadu.

   d. **For East India:** Acharya (1987) for Bengal; Bhargava (1987), Sahoo (1989), Padhy and Satpathy (1989) and Biswal (1991) for Orissa; Toppo (1978) and Rana and Das (2004) for Jharkhand.

   e. **For Western India:** See Shyamlal (1987), Gaur (1990) and Bairathi (1991) for Rajasthan; Solanki (1993) for Dadra and Nagar Haveli, cited in NCERT; Henriques and Wankhede (1985),

Wankhede (1998), Sreedhar (1999), Velaskar (1998, 1999, 2004, 2005) for Maharashtra.

[8] For each population slab, including those with more than 5000 persons, a relatively smaller proportion of Scheduled Caste habitations had primary schooling when compared to rural habitations in general. Only 15.3 per cent of predominantly Scheduled Caste habitations that had a population of less than 300 persons as compared to 21.4 per cent of general rural habitations within the same population slab had primary schools/sections within them in the year 1993 (Nambissan and Sedwal, 2002).

[9] Nearly 63.4 percent of Scheduled Tribe habitations have less than 300 people covering one-fourth of total Scheduled Tribe population. While 22 percent of Scheduled Tribe habitations have less than 100 inhabitants, the population covered by these habitations is only 3.82 percent of the total Scheduled Tribe population (Sujatha, 2002).

[10] See Sujatha 1987, 1994, 1996); Govinda (2002); Probe (1999); Jha and Jhingran (2002).

[11] Several other researchers and serious observers of the educational situation have commented upon the decline in primary educational enrolment and attainment in recent years despite the launch of massive and highly funded educational programmes. See for eg. Berntsen, (n.d.); Sharma (1999); Kumar et.al (2001); Jha and Jhingran (2002); Also refer studies cited in end note 12 below.

[12] Studies on unequal provisioning , availability and quality of schools include:

a. K. Sujatha (1994, 2000); Kingdon (1996); Thakur (1997); Nambissan (1997, 2000, 2002); Probe (1999); Govinda (2002); Jha and Jhingran (2002). For a useful survey of literature on the quality of education in various parts of the country see Bhatty (1998).

b. **North India and Central India**: Kailash (n.d.); Leclerq [2003 (a)] for M.P.; Jodhka (2000, 2002) for Punjab; Talib (2003) for Delhi; Sachidanand (1989) and Jabbi and Rajyalakhsmi (2001) for Bihar; Abrol (1988) for Jammu cited in NCERT; Kundu (1990) for Central India; Pande (2001) for Uttaranchal; Srivastava (2001) for U.P.

c. **South India:** Furer Haimendorf (1982,1989) and K. Sujatha (1994, 1996) for Andhra Pradesh; Kundu (1990) for South India; Duraiswamy (2001) for Tamil Nadu; Thomas (2001) for Kerala.

d. **East India:** Padhy and Satpathy (1989); Pasayat (2000); Bhargava (2001); Khora (2002) all cited in NCERT for Orissa; Toppo (1979, 2000) and Rana and Das (2004) for Jharkhand.

e. **Western India:** Shah and Joshi (1985) and Kumar (2004) for Gujarat; Sreedhar (1999), Panse (n.d.), Velaskar (2002), Wankhede (1998), Kulkarni (2001), Gogate (1986), Ransubhe

(1997) for Maharashtra; Shyamlal (1987); Bhargava and Mittal (n.d.); Gaur (1990) cited in NCERT, Nambissan (2001) and Majumdar (2001) all for Rajasthan.

[13] The state of urban schools is reported in studies surveyed in Bhatty (1998); see also Banerji (1997, 2000); Berntsen (1990); Wankhede (1998).

[14] There are studies galore that point to underprovision of teachers and teacher availability, quality and teaching time. For the all India studies see endnote No.6. Region wise studies are as follows:

   a. **North India:** Rahul (1999); Leclerq (2003) and Chaudhary L.N. (personal account) for M.P.; Talib, (2003) for Delhi.

   b. **South India:** Furer Haimendorf, (1989); Eddie Premdas (personal account) and Shri P.K. Abdul Lateef , Shri F.C. Chega Reddy, Shri K.H. Girish (Teachers from Karnataka), (personal account).

   c. **East India:** Khora (n.d.) and Debi (2001) for Orissa; North East India – Maitra (1993) for Arunachal Pradesh; Kabur (1985) for Manipur; Rana and Das (2001) for Jharkhand.

   d. **Western India:** Kulkarni (1980), Henriques and Wankhede (1985), Saldanah (1990), Berntsen (1990) and Ranasubhe (1997) for Maharashtra; Kumar (2004) for Gujarat; Shyamlal (1987) for Rajasthan.

[15] Apart from the studies cited in the text we have several insights from personal narratives of teachers and social activists who have spent long years working for the education of tribal children (see Appendix c.)

[16] Most studies in the area focus on teacher attitudes to and interaction with SC/ST children. See Chitnis & Naidu (1981); Pande & Tripathi (1982); Kumar (1989); Nanda (1994); Velaskar and Abraham (1995); Saxena (1995, 1997, 1998); Sreedhar (1999); Talib (2003); Leclercq [2003 (a)]; Balagopalan (2003); Samavesh (2003); Artis et'al (2003); Kumar (2004); Premdas (personal account); Chaudhary (personal account); Berntsen (personal account).

Appendix Tables

**Table-1: Literacy gains during 1991-2001 among various
demographic categories**

	2001**	1991*	Gain
Rural Female ST	32.4	16.0	16.4
Rural Female SC	37.6	19.5	18.1
Rural Female Non-SC&ST	50.2	35.4	14.8
Rural Male SC	53.7	46.0	7.8
Rural Male ST	57.4	38.5	19.0
Urban Female SC	57.5	42.3	15.2
Urban Female ST	59.9	45.7	14.2
Total Literacy	64.8		
Rural Male Non-SC&ST	74.3	63.4	10.9
Urban Female Non-SC&ST	75.2	67.5	7.7
Urban Male ST	77.8	66.6	11.2
Urban Male SC	77.9	66.5	11.4
Urban Male Non-SC&ST	87.6	83.4	4.2

** Calculated from Census 2001 PCA
*Selected Educational Statistics 1999-2000, MHRD

Table – 2: Scheduled Caste Enrolment as Percentage of Total Enrolment at Primary and Middle School levels in India and the States (in 1995-96).

States	Scheduled Caste		
	Per cent SC Pop	**STD. I-V**	**STD. VI-VIII**
Andhra Pradesh	15.93	20.6	16.5
Arunachal Pradesh	0.47	0.09	0.1
Assam	7.40	11.8	13.9
Bihar	14.55	15.03	10.9
Goa	2.08	2.5	1.6
Gujarat	7.41	10.0	9.7
Haryana	19.75	23.8	17.0
Himachal Pradesh	25.34	25.6	18.6
Jammu & Kashmir	0.0	9.3	9.7
Karnataka	16.38	17.6	14.5
Kerala	9.92	10.9	11.3
Madhya Pradesh	14.55	15.6	12.2
Maharashtra	11.09	15.3	13.4
Manipur	2.02	2.2	1.8
Meghalaya	0.51	2.0	2.0
Mizoram	0.10	0.0	0.0
Nagaland	0.00	0.0	0.0
Orissa	16.20	19.0	15.0
Punjab	28.31	38.9	28.0
Rajasthan	17.29	14.6	15.6
Sikkim	5.93	5.8	5.3
Tamil Nadu	19.18	19.9	16.5
Tripura	16.36	17.9	15.9
Uttar Pradesh	21.05	15.9	13.8
West Bengal	23.62	21.6	16.0
Andaman & Nicobar Island	0.00	0.0	0.0
Chandigarh	16.51	32.1	25.1
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1.98	1.8	3.5
Daman & Diu	3.81	4.3	4.6
Delhi	19.05	21.7	18.4
Lakshadweep	0.00	0.0	0.0
Pondicherry	16.25	19.9	21.7
India	16.33	16.9	14.3

Source: Computed from Selected Educational Statistics (1995-96), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Delhi, Government of India.

Table – 3: Scheduled Tribe Enrolment as Percentage of Total Enrolment at Primary and Middle School levels in India and the States in 1995-96.

States	Scheduled Tribe		
	Per cent ST Pop	STD. I-V	STD. VI-VIII
Andhra Pradesh	6.31	7.7	4.1
Arunachal Pradesh	63.62	73.7	64.1
Assam	12.82	18.3	17.0
Bihar	7.66	8.6	6.7
Goa	0.03	0.1	0.2
Gujarat	14.92	15.3	11.0
Haryana	0.00	0.0	0.0
Himachal Pradesh	4.22	4.2	3.0
Jammu & Kashmir	0.00	0.0	0.0
Karnataka	4.26	5.8	4.4
Kerala	1.10	1.3	1.0
Madhya Pradesh	23.27	17.5	10.5
Maharashtra	9.27	9.7	6.1
Manipur	34.41	35.4	27.8
Meghalaya	85.52	78.8	78.3
Mizoram	94.72	99.0	99.4
Nagaland	87.74	100.0	100.0
Orissa	22.21	21.0	13.2
Punjab	0.00	0.0	0.0
Rajasthan	12.44	10.3	11.1
Sikkim	22.39	21.0	20.0
Tamil Nadu	1.03	0.9	0.7
Tripura	30.95	33.1	23.4
Uttar Pradesh	0.21	0.2	0.2
West Bengal	5.59	5.5	4.5
Andaman & Nicobar Island	9.53	8.1	7.1
Chandigarh	0.00	0.0	0.0
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	79.26	80.7	69.2
Daman & Diu	11.49	14.4	11.8
Delhi	0.00	0.1	0.1
Lakshadweep	92.62	97.8	96.3
Pondicherry	0.00	0.0	0.0
India	8.01	8.4	5.7

Source: Computed from Selected Educational Statistics (1995-96), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Delhi, Government of India.

Table - 4: School Attendance Rates (%) among Rural Children in the Age Group 5-14 years (1993 – 1994)

States	Attendance Rates					
	SC		ST		Others	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Andhra Pradesh	64.3	44.5	53.8	27.1	71.7	56.0
Arunachal Pradesh	--	--	79.2	57.6	63.4	55.3
Assam	75.4	70.8	80.7	77.6	75.9	71.7
Bihar	46.0	22.5	50.8	29.8	63.5	44.1
Goa	*	*	*	*	86.4	89.7
Gujarat	77.5	65.3	70.3	57.3	78.6	62.6
Haryana	76.6	56.6	48.8	40.6	85.0	71.7
Himachal Pradesh	87.6	82.1	87.5	57.9	91.8	83.9
Jammu & Kashmir	87.5	63.9	34.3	16.6	85.0	75.7
Karnataka	65.7	50.5	66.9	53.3	76.2	67.6
Kerala	96.0	88.5	65.2	67.7	92.9	94.0
Madhya Pradesh	57.6	37.0	48.6	34.2	70.4	52.5
Maharashtra	83.8	72.8	67.1	56.8	86.4	76.7
Manipur	--	--	80.5	76.4	93.4	92.1
Meghalaya	*	--	76.4	74.9	56.7	50.9
Mizoram	--	*	83.3	92.2	51.4	45.0
Nagaland	--	--	93.2	90.2	66.8	88.1
Orissa	67.9	43.9	51.0	32.3	76.5	68.0
Punjab	68.6	59.2	62.2	48.9	88.4	83.6
Rajasthan	58.1	21.5	54.7	16.6	76.8	41.1
Sikkim	100.0	64.7	100.0	100.0	89.6	88.4
Tamil Nadu	76.9	71.2	76.9	72.1	85.6	76.6
Tripura	87.9	83.2	76.1	73.6	86.7	86.6
Uttar Pradesh	59.7	31.5	66.2	34.5	69.9	49.4
West Bengal	67.9	56.9	47.1	38.7	71.1	65.9
Andaman & Nicobar	73.4	100.0	76.2	85.5	90.5	86.9
Chandigarh	94.8	66.0	--	--	99.8	91.4
Dadra Nagar-Haveli	91.8	100.0	67.7	45.1	100.0	100.0
Daman & Diu	--	--	89.2	100.0	98.4	91.6
Delhi	*	*	--	--	89.4	96.2
Lakshadweep	100.0	91.7	85.5	94.1	--	--
Pondicherry	95.7	100.0	--	--	80.5	100.0
All India	64.3	46.2	57.9	40.9	74.9	61.0

Source: Employment and Unemployment Situation Among Social Groups in India, 1993-94: NSS 50th Round, National Sample Survey Organisation, Department of Statistics, Govt. of India.

Table - 5: School Attendance Rates (%) among Urban Children in the Age Group 5-14 years (1993 – 1994)

States	Attendance Rates					
	SC		ST		Others	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Andhra Pradesh	88.9	77.2	73.3	53.8	86.3	81.4
Arunachal Pradesh	*	*	*	*	88.8	93.1
Assam	71.6	84.3	80.6	96.6	83.8	82.6
Bihar	66.2	50.9	73.1	56.8	81.1	76.9
Goa	--	--	--	--	94.9	84.4
Gujarat	83.1	80.7	88.7	74.1	87.8	83.9
Haryana	68.8	66.0	*	--	89.3	91.0
Himachal Pradesh	90.7	90.8	*	*	91.8	89.5
Jammu & Kashmir	81.3	81.4	*	*	94.9	97.2
Karnataka	86.2	78.8	86.3	87.3	87.9	86.4
Kerala	95.5	98.3	100.0	100.0	94.9	94.3
Madhya Pradesh	82.9	67.9	73.3	66.0	89.6	85.2
Maharashtra	82.3	68.6	89.0	65.4	90.8	89.4
Manipur	90.5	100.0	95.6	100.0	95.9	98.5
Meghalaya	83.2	100.0	96.9	95.3	94.8	84.6
Mizoram	--	*	94.1	95.4	100.0	100.0
Nagaland	*	*	94.9	95.3	74.7	69.1
Orissa	74.6	65.4	59.5	52.0	86.9	81.5
Punjab	78.9	73.7	59.8	100.0	92.3	91.9
Rajasthan	66.9	46.4	94.9	74.2	86.5	74.3
Sikkim	*	*	*	*	93.6	92.4
Tamil Nadu	87.2	80.7	100.0	100.0	88.8	88.5
Tripura	82.1	88.9	87.0	37.7	89.0	90.5
Uttar Pradesh	68.0	57.0	52.7	71.6	78.9	70.2
West Bengal	76.4	63.2	76.4	54.9	86.1	81.1
Andaman & Nicobar	100.0	76.1	87.6	91.4	93.1	92.2
Chandigarh	69.1	83.8	--	--	93.0	92.0
Dadra Nagar-Haveli	*	*	84.3	50.7	72.5	100.0
Daman & Diu	--	--	*	*	87.1	97.1
Delhi	67.2	85.3	77.7	100.0	91.6	91.2
Lakshadweep	--	--	94.8	93.6	60.3	100.0
Pondicherry	89.5	71.2	--	--	94.5	96.7
All India	77.5	68.6	79.7	69.7	86.8	83.0

Source: Employment and Unemployment Situation Among Social Groups in India, 1993-94: NSS 50th Round, National Sample Survey Organisation, Department of Statistics, Govt. of India.

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