

**Public Private Interface in the
Primary Schooling System**

A Study in West Bengal

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Introduction

"If India can why can't we?" Cherished rhetoric from many western enthusiasts of private schooling, particularly in the media and academia. Drawing examples from some of the urban and semi urban pockets of India, they have been highlighting the successes of the "burgeoning private education sector in India" that "holds some surprising lessons for both developed and developed countries alike". They have also drawn illustrations from some other third world countries. Some Indians, too, are very excited about the success of private schooling and, like their western counterparts, are in favour of devolving education to the hands of private entrepreneurs. Some arguments in support of their rhetoric are: (1) the government schools have failed to deliver quality education, and the private schools have been yielding better results. (2) School education has generated debate at an international level where some Left-oriented persons see privatisation as a threat to equity and oppose it vehemently. (3) The different parts of India as an education system, particularly in urban areas, is a selected data across the country and the rural poor and non-poor enrolled their schools while the figures for rural poor are non-existent. (4) 3 percent respectively of the urban poor and non-poor are becoming more and more. (5) However, the growth of private schooling is not a universal trait across the country. For example, the mushrooming of private schools can be seen not only in the towns but also in some of the remote rural areas in Bihar and Jharkhand, but the same does not apply to West Bengal. For instance, a study on the delivery of primary education done by the Pratichi (India) Trust found only 1.5 percent children of the sample to be enrolled in private schools. In contrast to this, in a similar study in Dumka district of Jharkhand 14 percent children from the sample was found to be enrolled in private schools. There are intra-state variations too. Enrolment in private schools in the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) area of West Bengal was much higher compared to other parts of West Bengal.

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Introduction

"If India can why can't we?" Cherished rhetoric from many western enthusiasts of private schooling, particularly in the media and academia. Drawing examples from some of the urban and semi urban pockets of Indiaⁱ, they have been highlighting the successes of the "burgeoning private education sector in India" that "holds some surprising lessons for both developing and developed countries alike".ⁱⁱ They have also drawn illustrations from some other third world countries.ⁱⁱⁱ Some Indians, too, are very excited about the success of private schooling and, like their western counterparts, are in favour of devolving education to the hands of private entrepreneurs^{iv}. The main arguments in support of their rhetoric are: (1) the government schools have failed to deliver quality education, and (2) in sharp contrast, the private schools have been yielding "excellent results". They argue that privatisation of school education would not only help in ensuring and enhancing the quality of education but also reduce the cost of education, as has been found by some researchers in some cases.^v The issue has generated debates at an international level, where some Left-oriented persons see privatisation as a rightist agenda and oppose it vehemently.^{vi}

The emergence of private schools in different parts of India as an alternative to government schools, particularly in urban areas, is a fact. An NCAER study that collected data across the country found that 30 percent of the urban poor and non-poor enrolled their children in private schools, while the figures for rural poor and non-poor were much lower, at 7.8 percent and 9.3 percent respectively.^{vii} Some recent reports show that private schools are becoming more and more of a choice for the urban poor in some parts of the country, such as Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh.^{viii} However, the growth of private schooling is not a universal trait across the country. For example, the mushrooming of private schools can be seen not only in the towns but also in some of the remote rural areas in Bihar and Jharkhand, but the same does not apply to West Bengal. For instance, a study on the delivery of primary education done by the Pratichi (India) Trust found only 1.5 percent children of the sample to be enrolled in private schools. In contrast to this, in a similar study in Dumka district of Jharkhand 14 percent children from the sample was found to be enrolled in private schools. There are intra-state variations too. Enrolment in private schools in the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) area of West Bengal was much higher compared to other parts of West Bengal.^{ix}

As mentioned above, the growing inclination towards private schooling is often attributed to the poor quality of education delivered in the government schools. The poor quality of government schools owing to factors such as poor infrastructure and pupil-teacher ratio, teachers' unionism leading to absenteeism, etc. is contrasted with the better infrastructure and pupil-teacher ratio and higher accountability of the teachers in the private schools.^x While the reliance on private schools due to the lack of faith in the delivery of the government primary schools is true to a considerable extent, as we have seen in Jharkhand, there are other substantial reasons behind this. One of the reasons for preferring private schools to government ones is the penchant for learning English. In the DGHC area of West Bengal almost all the teachers and parents said, "Learning English is very important for higher studies. Nepali, the mother tongue of a majority of the children is the main language of instruction at the primary and secondary levels. However, at the higher level, text books are not available in that language, and thus students have to depend upon the textbooks written in a different language (English, Bangla or Hindi). So people find it convenient that children learn English from the beginning." Many of the parents in Jharkhand also said that they preferred private schools for they taught English, which was very important for future prospects in life. "It not only broadens the opportunity for jobs but also makes the children smart and gives them confidence for a higher degree." A parent from a Santal tribal community said that his son would be able to compete with the non-tribal *Dikus* (whom they consider exploiters) and could challenge them ("*Dikuko sange takrao dareak*"). That the choice of private schools was partly because of English language has also been reported elsewhere.^{xi}

One mode of privatisation that is often put forward is an education voucher system which, "in the broadest sense is a payment made by the government to a school chosen by the parent of the child being educated; the voucher finances all or most of the tuition charged".^{xii} This system, which has also been named the "funds-follow-the child" voucher, is claimed to have been "adopted by developing countries - notably Bangladesh, Belize, Chile, Columbia, Guatemala, and Lesotho - as well as by industrialised countries such as Poland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States", with significant variations in nature and extent from country to country.^{xiii} The supporters of the voucher system believe that privatisation promotes a competitive environment in schooling, which would ensure a higher quality of education, and children of poorer families

can best benefit from these schools with the help of a government voucher which would allow them to get enrolled in the school of their choice. Citing examples from the existing private schools in India they argue that a voucher system would bring about a sea change in the school education scenario, which has so far "failed to deliver either quantity or quality of education".

However, in most of the cases, the advocates of private schooling have selected the examples to suit their needs. For example, an academic paper on the enterprise of education^{xiv} has only chosen the pessimistic findings of the PROBE report (the Public Report on Basic Education, that conducted a survey in five north Indian states), undermining the positive examples, such as from Himachal Pradesh. Also the many achievements of the government schooling system, particularly at the primary level in the southern Indian states like Kerala and Tamilnadu, hardly received any attention. To prove the point some of the examples of the implementation of the voucher system have been cited in a somewhat distorted manner. For example, what has been called a voucher in the case of Bangladesh is in fact a kind of incentive provided to girl students.^{xv}

That the government schooling system in India has many flaws is a proven fact, but India has had some very positive experiences of overcoming these shortcomings, examples of which are found from Madhya Pradesh to West Bengal and Kerala to Himachal Pradesh. The Pratchi (India) Trust has been involved in identifying the problems related to primary education in India and in trying to find possible ways and means to overcome such problems. So far, our studies on primary education have focussed on the government schooling system. The growing tendency of private schooling is an issue that has not quite been looked at in depth. First, the different studies and reports have focussed on school education as a whole - primary education has not been examined separately. Second, the extent of private schools in the rural and semi-urban areas has not been measured scientifically. Third, curiously enough, there has hardly been any mention of private schooling in West Bengal - a state that has many achievements in terms of rural development and poverty alleviation, but at the same time lags considerably behind the desired level of achievement in terms of primary education.

In this backdrop the Pratchi (India) Trust took up a comparative pilot study on the different aspects of schooling in the different types of primary schools in West Bengal in the district of Birbhum. The study aimed to understand the following to draw lessons relevant for policy changes and modifications.

1. Pattern of schooling at the primary level in the rural and urban areas, which would also suggest the extent of private schooling in the respective areas;
2. The differences in the constituencies for different kinds of primary schools;
3. The differences between the different kinds of primary schools in terms of infrastructure, student-teacher ratio, attendance, quality of teaching and learning, governance, and so on;
4. The reasons behind the choosing of different kinds of primary schools;
5. The general perception of people on private schooling.

Study Areas and Methodology

The district selected for the study was Birbhum that lies in the central-west part of the state. Most of the existing works on the increased trend of private schooling have been done in or around the big cities (e.g. Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh, Mumbai in Maharashtra, Patna in Bihar) and the smaller towns and rural areas have received little attention (except for some like Mahua^{xvi} and Hajipur near Patna). The current study focuses on a district away from the state capital. The district has a literacy rate lower than the state average, but at the same time has a town (Bolpur-Santiniketan) with an international centre of learning (Visva-Bharati), established by Rabindranath Tagore. This has created some sharp distinctions between the area surrounding the town and the other areas of the district, particularly in terms of demography and economic life. The town and its surroundings areas have a significant population of urban elites. Also, thanks to the opportunities created through tourism and better connectivity with the state capital (Kolkata), there exists relatively higher economic prosperity in the area. Thus the selection of the study areas offered us the scope to examine the contrasts between the different urban areas of the district as well as with the rural areas.

Birbhum district is divided into three administrative subdivisions and 20 Community Development (CD) Blocks. We selected one block apiece from each of the sub-divisions. All the three blocks consist of both rural and urban areas. The headquarters of all the three blocks are municipal towns while each of them has vast rural areas. The three selected CD blocks were Bolpur-Sriniketan in the south-eastern end of the district, Dubrajpur in the south-western part and Nalhati-I in the extreme north. Thus, we had representations from a wide area of the district.

As the study aimed to measure the extent of private schooling, the research team began the study with the collection of the number of different kinds of primary schools in the three selected blocks. The number of government primary schools (hence forth GPS) was available from the government records. In the absence of any suitable data a census was undertaken in March 2004 to get the number of non-government private and other kinds of schools (NGPS from this point onwards).^{xvii}

After collating the data collected through the census we selected the private and other schools on a random basis, the number of sample schools being determined on the proportionate strength of the schools in each block.

Table 1.1. Selection of the NGPS (private and other non-government schools)

CD Blocks	Total number of private and other schools (samples selected for the study in parentheses)	
	Urban	Rural
Bolpur-Sriniketan	12 (3)	13 (2)
Dubrajpur	4 (1)	2 (1)
Nalhati-I	3 (1)	2 (1)

The total number of the NGPS found in the Bolpur-Sriniketan block was 25, which were distributed on a 13:12 proportion in the rural and urban areas respectively. The figures for the Dubrajpur block were 2 in the rural areas and 4 in the urban areas. In Nalhati block there were 2 NGPS in the rural areas and 3 in the urban areas.

We selected the sample according to the numerical extent of the NGPS in the respective blocks, but in the case of Bolpur the number of the sample was increased for urban areas to compensate for the deficiency in the number of NGPS in the other two towns. We selected the NGPS on a random basis from the list prepared through the census. Among the nine selected NGPS eight were privately-owned primary schools and one run by a local NGO (Non-Government Organisation). After making this selection we picked government primary schools located near the selected private or other schools in order to draw a comparative picture.

Teachers, parents and children were interviewed in each of the selected schools. The Head-Teacher or Teacher-in-charge of all the 18 schools were interviewed. The questionnaire sought information on infrastructure, enrolment, attendance, subjects taught, cost of schooling, students' evaluation, governance, communication with parents about the problems of running the schools, perception about private schools, and so on and so forth. The children were interviewed

for their responses about the performance of the teachers, their liking for lessons and teachers, subjects taught, and so on.

Twelve children and parents from each school were selected for interview, using a stratified random sampling method from the total enrolment in the school. Stratification was done on the basis of academic level of the children (Classes 1 to 4), social identity (SC, ST, Muslim and Others) and gender. The total sample consisted on 108 children enrolled in GPS and 108 in NGPS. A structured questionnaire that included questions on caste, occupation, annual income, total members of the household, number of school-going children, cost of schooling, parent-teacher communication, reasons for choosing a particular type school, and so on, was used for the interviews.

The report is divided into four main parts (with this introduction being the first). The other parts are: The different primary schooling institutions and the extent of private schooling (part 2); Objective conditions of the different schooling systems (part 3); and the delivery of education and quality in different schooling systems (part 4).

The second part deals with the enrolment pattern in the different types of primary schools in the study area, viz. Bolpur-Sriniketan, Dubrajpur and Nalhati-I. The third part deals with issues like school infrastructure, facilities available, pupil-teacher ratio, teachers' qualification, training and salary, cost of schooling, and so on. The fourth part tries to draw a picture of the qualitative aspects of education, such as the rate of attendance of children, parents' view on the performance of different schools, quality of education, assistance at home and private tuition, parents' participation in school governance, correlation between expenditure on education and quality of learning, and choice of different primary schools. The appendix to the report consists of the detailed tables.

It is perhaps needless to mention that the limitation as regards the geographical area of the study did not allow us to draw a definitive representation of what is going on in West Bengal as regards the growth of private schooling. Yet the coverage in terms of urban and rural areas, and the in-depth nature of the study certainly helps us to understand the situation at a suggestive level. We very much hope that, despite the limitations, our study will prove useful at the policy and implementation levels in the primary education sector in the country.

End Notes :

- ⁱ Waldman (2003) and rejoinders to the reports in the New York Times.
- ⁱⁱ Tooley (2002)
- ⁱⁱⁱ Tooley (2001).
- ^{iv} Aiyar (1998, 2002)
- ^v Tooley (2001, 2002)
- ^{vi} Miner (2004). Also other references cited by Tooley (2001, 2002)
- ^{vii} Pradhan K and Roy (2003), Also see De et al (2002)
- ^{viii} Tooley (2002)
- ^{ix} For details see Rana et al (2002, 2003, 2004 and forthcoming).
- ^x Tooley (2002) and other references made by him.
- ^{xi} See De et al (2002)
- ^{xii} West (1997), Patrinos (2000)
- ^{xiii} *ibid*
- ^{xiv} Tooley (2002)
- ^{xv} For details see DPE, Bangladesh (1997)
- ^{xvi} There was a mistake in the report by Amy Waldman in the *New York Times* (November 15, 2003) where the place appeared as MANUA, the place is actually called MAHUA. It is the Block Headquarter of Vaishali district of Bihar.
- ^{xvii} There is little or no data available on private and other schools in West Bengal. The Sarvasikhsa Abhiyan was supposed to collect data on private schooling, but the state office in Kolkata could not provide any. The district office of the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan could not give any data on this, either.

Summary Findings

- The study focused on the rural and urban settlements in Bolpur-Sriniketan, Dubrajpur and Nalhati I Blocks of Birbhum district. Three main types of primary schooling systems were found - Government, Private and non-government schools.
- The share of private and other non-governmental schools in the overall primary education scene was found to be insignificant (less than 3 percent of the reported total enrolment was in these schools, with only 1.5 percent in rural areas). However, in urban areas, the share of these two sectors was found to be 12.3 percent.
- The average enrolment in the different non-government primary schools was found to be much lower (61 children per school) than the government schools (233 children per school).
- Mainly children of upper class and caste background are enrolled in the private schools. Girls' share in the total enrolment of the private schools was much lower (41 girls per 59 boys) than in the government primary schools (46 girls per 54 boys).
- Private schools were better equipped in terms of number of teachers and pupil-teacher ratio. But the government primary schools were much ahead of the private ones in terms of teachers' training (89 percent of the government school teachers were trained, while the figure for the private ones was only 39 percent). However, the private schools employed more female teachers than the government ones, with higher educational qualifications as well.
- There was a large disparity in the monthly salary paid to the private school teachers - it ranged between Rs 500 per month to Rs 11,000 per month.
- Total number of working days of schools was found to be much lower in the private schools compared to the government schools - while in the government schools the number of working days was between 211-240 days, in most of the private schools it was much lower. Similarly, working hours in the government schools was

more than five hours per day, in most private schools it was four hours or less.

- Private schools were not found to be following any standard or uniform curriculum. Most of them offered a wide range of subjects – many teachers found them “irrelevant” and “burdensome” – which made these schools attractive to parents. Parents generally believe that children should study “extra” subjects to get ready for future competition. The private schools had an added attraction as parents believed their quality of English education to be better.
- Satisfaction of parents regarding the performance of teachers was relatively higher in case of the private schools than the government schools. The main reason behind this was the better pupil-teacher ratio where teachers could take individual care of the children. However, in some of the schools, teachers were reported to have neglected children from “lowly” backgrounds.
- The average annual cost of schooling per child in the private schools was about six times higher than in the government schools. It added up to Rs 3,396 for private schools and Rs 599 for government schools. Even after adding the government’s expenditure (Rs 1,302 per child annually) to parental expenditure, the per capita annual expenditure on private schooling was about double the expenditure incurred in the government schools.
- Higher cost does not necessarily mean better quality of education. This is borne out by the fact that some children studying in private primary schools could not even write the name of their school or the subjects they studied correctly. This was true – to a higher degree – for children enrolled in government schools as well.
- Sixty-two percent of parents with children studying in private schools had to incur additional costs on private tuition.
- The quality of learning achievement of the children of private schools was found to be relatively better than in the government schools.
- While in case of government primary schools, less than two percent of the children received private tuition from the teachers of the same school (or other government school teachers), in case

- of the private schools 25 percent of the children received private tuition from the teachers of the same school. Some of the teachers (of the same school) were even reported to have insisted that parents to send the children to them for private tuition.
- A strong correlation between the socio-economic background of the parents and the children's level of learning achievement was found. The higher the parents' spending, the higher the children's learning achievement.
- Most parents found the cost of private schooling far beyond their means. A large section said that they would have used the government schools, if only the quality of education was assured.
- The scope for parents' participation in the process of governance in the schooling system was found to be much higher in the government schools.
- A lot of policy modification and change, including making provision for legal power to the school-specific parent-teacher committees, is reportedly needed. Also special emphasis has to be given on enhancing the quality of education in the government primary schools.
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The Different Primary Schooling Institutions and the Extent of Private Schooling

Different Primary Schools

In the study we divided the primary schools into two main categories – Governmentⁱ and Non-Governmentⁱⁱ. The Non-Government primary schools were further disaggregated into two categories, namely Private Primary Schools and Other Primary Schools. They are briefly described below.

Government Primary Schools: The government primary schools are run by the Department of School Education, Government of West Bengal, in co-ordination with the District Primary School Council (DPSC). All the employees of these schools are considered government servants. The education imparted in these schools is completely free of cost. In addition to free education, children are provided with incentives like free books, mid-day meals (in some cases cooked)ⁱⁱⁱ, free uniforms for a section of girl students, etc.

Private Primary Schools: These schools are run entirely by private entrepreneurs. Barring a few, most of these schools were not affiliated to any school education board or council. The syllabus followed is also not uniform – they vary from school to school. These schools do not receive any grant or other support from the government or other agencies. Children have to pay for the tuition and other charges, ranging between Rs 30 and Rs 250 (with session and other regular charges) per month. More on this presently.

Other Primary Schools: Such schools are run with assistance from non-government organisations, individuals, community or other sources. The curriculum followed in these schools generally fulfils the government guidelines. Such schools also usually add something more to the government curriculum. Nevertheless, as in the case of private schools there are many variations between such institutions. Education imparted in such schools is almost free. In addition, children, as in the case of government schools, receive some benefits from various incentive schemes.

Of the nine primary schools (other than government schools) selected for the study, eight were private and one other primary school was run by a local NGO that received funds from various national and international agencies. None of them had any affiliation to any school board. However, two of the private schools had

affiliation for running higher classes (class 5 onward). Children of some of the private and other non-government schools reportedly faced problems in getting enrolled in higher classes in the secondary schools, as the certificates issued by these non-affiliated schools were not considered valid by the authorities of the secondary schools. To overcome the problem, authorities and parents of such schools have developed their own strategies. The private schools with affiliation for higher classes did not face any problem regarding enrolling children in the lower classes (in spite of having no such formal permission). Some other schools also managed to overcome this as the higher schools obliged them by enrolling their children without objecting on the ground of affiliation. In one private school, a few of the parents have also enrolled their children in the local GPS, to avoid the complication of enrolment in higher classes. This shows an inclination on part of some parents to take the opportunity of private schooling. Nevertheless, the number of such parents was not significant and the overlapping figure was so small that it hardly had any impact on the enrolment pattern.

Enrolment in different primary schools

In the three selected blocks the pattern of children's enrolment in the different kinds of primary schools shows that the various non-government primary schools serve only a small section of the children, mainly from the urban areas. The table below gives the details of total enrolment in the different kinds of primary schools in the three selected blocks.

Other Primary Schools: Such schools are run with assistance from non-government organisations, individuals, community or other sources. The curriculum followed in these schools generally fulfils the government guidelines. Such schools also usually add something more to the government curriculum. Nevertheless, as in the case of private schools there are many variations between such institutions. Education imparted in such schools is almost free. In addition, children, as in the case of government schools, receive some benefits from various incentive schemes.

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Table 2.1 Total enrolment* of children in different primary schools in the study blocks**

Block	Govt.		SSK		Visva-Bharati		Total Govt. (As on 31.3.2002)		Private		Other	
	Schl.	Enr.	Schl.	Enr.	Schl.	Enr.	Schl.	Enr.	Schl.	Enr.	Schl.	Enr.
Bolpur	171	25440	35	1939	2	611	206	27379	22	1683	3	111
Dubrajpur	149	22430	23	1273	0	0	172	23708	6	430	0	0
Nalhathi-I	143	29311	40	2202	0	0	183	31513	5	628	0	0
Total	463	77181	98	5414	2	611	561	82595	33	2741	3	111

*The two sets of data may create some problems for making comparison, since the government data was not updated till March 2004, and time did not allow us to conduct a census for all primary schools. Yet these data indicate the pattern of schooling in the study area. Also, the pattern gets further support from our main fieldwork in the sample schools where the data are very much comparable, since they were collected from the respective schools. (See more on this below)

**Source: For government primary schools - DISE Report, DPEP, Birbhum and Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan. For SSK figures, Paschimbanga Rajya Sishu Siksha Mission, Kolkata. For non-government schools - Pratchi's fieldwork done in March 2004.

Table 2.2 Total enrolment of children in the different types of schools in the three selected blocks

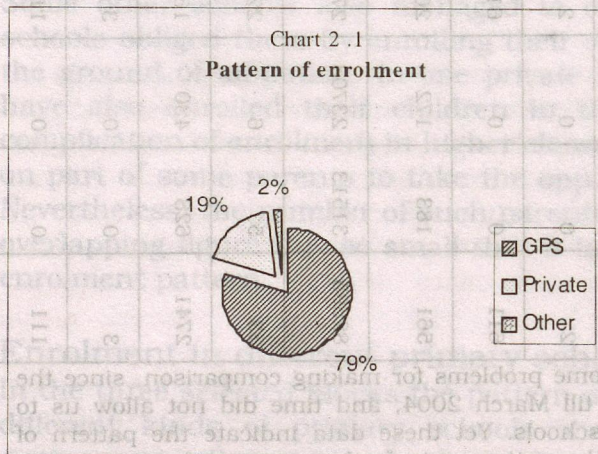
		Number of institutions	Total enrolment	Average enrolment per school
GOVT	PS	463	77181(89.68)	166.70
	SSK	98	5414(6.29)	55.24
	Visva-Bharati	2	611(0.71)	305.5
Total		563	83206(96.69)	147.23
NGPS	Private	33	2741(3.18)	83.06
	Other	3	111(0.13)	37.0
	Total	36	2852(3.31)	79.22
Grand Total		599	86058(100)	116.45

(Figures in parentheses denote percentage)

Not only is the number of private and other non government schools very small in the study area, the enrolment in them is also far

below the number of children enrolled in government schools. The average enrolment per school in the government sector was 147.23 (166.7 for GPS and 55.24 for SSK). Corresponding figures for the private and other schools were 83 and 37 respectively.

This trend is further supported from our main fieldwork where the total enrolment of the 9 GPS was 2095 (average enrolment per school - 232.8) and the figure for equal number of NGPS was only 550 (average enrolment per school - 61.1).



As is evident from the above presentation, the share of NGPS in the total education service delivery is only 21 percent. Almost four-fifths of the total demand is met by government primary schools. Figures of average enrolment of the government schools also belie the argument that the main problem in primary education is that of demand (mainly of

“unconstrained demand”^{iv}. The case is surely of a supply side problem and this can only be solved by establishing more primary schools. The SSK experiment in West Bengal is definitely a step in the right direction, towards facing the supply-side challenge.

Again, not only is it a fact that enrolment in private schools was less, the rate of retention in the private and other schools were found to be very low. From the total enrolment picture we can see that the number of children in the private schools reduces substantially in the higher classes. For example, in the eight selected private schools the average enrolment fell from 19.8 in class 1 to just 10.5 in class 4. In case of the government primary schools, such reduction was less significant – from 58.8 in class 1 to 52 in class 4. The retention rate in the other school was found to be comparatively higher than the private schools. The table below gives the details.

Table 2.3. Rate of average enrolment (standard wise)

	GPS	Private	Other
Class I	58.8	19.8	12
Class II	68.2	16.9	17
Class III	53.8	14.9	14
Class IV	52	10.5	11

One of the reasons behind the low retention rate in the private schools was the problems faced by the parents to get their children enrolled in the higher classes (beyond primary school) because of the handicap in terms of legal formality for the issuing of a school-leaving certificate by the private schools. However, many parents and teachers maintained that it was the high cost of schooling in the higher classes that forces parents to stop their children from attending the private schools.

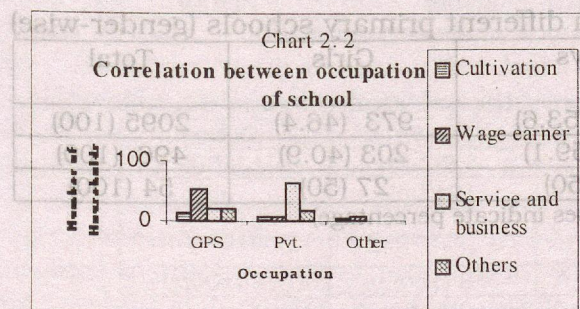
The Different Constituencies of Different Primary Schools

The socio-economic reflection of the enrolment pattern of the selected primary schools for our study shows that the government primary schools are the main option for children from underprivileged communities.^v Children from Scheduled Caste families, comprising nearly 45 percent of the total enrolment in the GPS, form only about 18 percent of the total enrolment of the private schools. Similarly, children belonging to the Scheduled Tribes formed only one percent of the total enrolment of the private schools, while they comprised nearly 13 percent of the enrolment of GPS. In contrast, while GPS had 43 percent of enrolment of children from other castes, the figure was as high as 81 percent in case of private schools. Mention may be made here that the other school was established with the special mission of imparting education among the children of ST communities, hence due to this specific target, the school had a very high proportion of children from ST communities.

Table 2.4. Enrolment pattern according to social categories

	GPS (9 in number)	Private (8 in number)	Other (1 in number)	Total NGPS (9 in number)
SC	932 (44.5)	90 (18.1)	1 (1.8)	91 (16.5)
ST	261 (12.5)	6 (1.2)	52 (96.3)	58 (10.5)
Others	902 (43)	400 (80.6)	1 (1.8)	401 (72.9)
Total	2,095 (100)	496 (100)	54 (100)	550 (100)

(Figures in parentheses denote percentage)



A further classification of the households according to occupation shows that while 78 percent of the total households belonging to the wage earning categories

sent their children to GPS, in case of households with service and business occupation only 24 percent did so. Of the total wage earning households only 12 percent sent their children to private schools. In case of households with service and business occupation the rate of sending children to private primary schools was more than 65 percent.

Similar trends can also be seen from the classification of the households according to their annual income – households with higher annual income had a higher propensity to send their children to *private schools*. On the contrary very few of the households from the lower income category sent their children to private schools. (See Appendix tables for details). While the main reason behind such social and class based division among the parents of children attending different types of primary schools is the cost involved in private schooling (many parents said that they could not afford the high cost of education in the private schools), there are other major reasons too. One of these surely is the accessibility to the primary schools – the burgeoning of private schools was seen mainly in the urban or semi-urban areas, as according to a private school entrepreneur, “setting up of private schools in the rural areas is not at all feasible, since parents of village children can’t afford the cost [of schooling]”. In addition, “enough teachers will also not be available in the rural areas to run private schools,” he said.

Gender and Different Primary Schools

In addition to the socio-economic classification, the divisive nature of the primary schooling system can also be seen from a gender perspective. While a general discrimination against girl students was seen to be prevalent in the total enrolment pattern, the gender bias was more evident in the enrolment pattern of the private schools. While the ratio of boys and girls in the selected GPS was 54:46, in case of private schools it was 59:41. In case of the other school the ratio was perfectly equal.

Table 2.5 Enrolment pattern in different primary schools (gender-wise)

Type of primary schools	Boys	Girls	Total
GPS	1122 (53.6)	973 (46.4)	2095 (100)
Private	293 (59.1)	203 (40.9)	496 (100)
Other	27 (50)	27 (50)	54 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

End Notes : Objective Conditions of Different Types of Schools

ⁱ In many parts of India (unlike in the West where government run schools are called public schools), private schools are often called public schools. Hence, to avoid confusion, we are naming the government-funded schools as government schools.

ⁱⁱ None of these schools receive any government aid or other support, though the existence of such schools in some parts of the district is not unknown. There is a different kind of low-cost schooling system in the form of Sishu Siksha Kendras, which are also run by a government department (Panchayat and Rural Development Department). They are categorised as government primary schools, though we had not had the scope to incorporate them in this study. We have only taken into account the total enrolment figures of the SSKs of the respective blocks to find out the enrolment pattern in the study area. However, we have discussed the functioning of the SSKs at length elsewhere. See Rana et al (2002) and Rana and Das (2003).

ⁱⁱⁱ For details on the mid-day meal programme see Rana K, *The Possibilities of Mid-day Meal Programme in West Bengal*, Paper presented at a workshop organised by the Centre for Social Sciences, Calcutta on 27-28 July, 2004. Also see Pratchi's study on the Impact of the Cooked Mid-Day-Meal Programme (forthcoming).

^{iv} Pradhan and Roy (2003)

^v Similar observations were made by De et al (2002)

Table 3.1 Building status of the selected primary schools

Building Status	Number of Schools	Percentage (%)
Owned	3	3 (87.5)
Rented	3	3 (87.5)
Others	2	2 (58)
Total	8	8 (100)

Table 3.2 Building type of the selected primary schools

Building Type	Number of Schools	Percentage (%)
Pucca	9	9 (100)
Partly pucca	1	1 (12.5)
Kutcha	0	0
Others	0	0
Total	10	10 (100)

Objective Conditions of Different Types of Schools

School infrastructure

Providing adequate school infrastructure at the primary level is a major challenge not only in India but also in most of south Asian countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal. Various studies on primary education suggest that the existing school infrastructure at the primary level is far from adequate¹. In many places, GPS are run without even a building. The present study did not find a different picture. Although all the primary schools visited during the fieldwork of the study had *pucca* structures, the conditions of the buildings varied greatly from one school to another. Some of the GPS buildings were newly built and some of them were found in a dilapidated condition –some even had no doors or windows.

However, all the government primary schools had a considerable area of land adjacent to the building, where children could play. A few schools have taken the initiative to utilise the land to create assets for the school by planting trees. Some of the schools have received funds from DPEP for reconstruction or repair of their buildings. Despite all this, the government schools in general suffered from an enormous problem when it came to housing students during classes. Inadequacy of classrooms, with high levels of enrolment, was a common phenomenon. Teachers mentioned that the problem became acute during the rainy season, since all the students had to take shelter in the rooms and no teaching activities could be done. In three of the GPS we found one or more classes going on under trees. Lack of proper rooms makes it difficult to run classes during the summer as well.

Table.3.1 Building status of the selected primary schools

	GPS	Private	Other
Owned	9 (100)	3 (37.5)	1 (100)
Rented	-	3 (37.5)	-
Others	-	2 (25)	-
Total	9 (100)	8(100)	1 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Table.3.1a. Building type of the selected primary schools

	GPS	Private	Other
Pucca	9 (100)	7 (87.5)	1 (100)
Partly pucca	-	1 (12.5)	-
Kutchha	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-
Total	9 (100)	8 (100)	1 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Out of the eight private primary schools visited, three had their own buildings and three operated from rented houses. The other two were operating from community spaces like a club and a *Thakurbari* (place of worship). As regards the type of buildings, seven were running in *pucca* houses and one under a tin roof. The other school had its own *pucca* buildings. The *private* schools, like the government ones, suffered from the lack of adequate classrooms. While four of the eight schools had more than four rooms the rest had one, two, three and four classrooms respectively. But since enrolment in the private schools was considerably lower than in the government primary schools, they did not seem to face a big problem in terms of availability of space for the children. The other school had separate spaces for four classes. It should be noted here that the other school had no walled classrooms. Instead, it had sheds built in an open space where children can sit and learn while enjoying the open-air facilities. The sufficiency in terms of resources, gathered from various sources, was reflected in the infrastructure facilities of the school.

Table 3.2. Number of classrooms in the selected primary schools

	GPS	Private	Other
One room	1 (11.1)	1 (12.5)	-
Two rooms	2 (11.1)	1 (12.5)	-
Three rooms	3 (33.3)	1 (12.5)	-
Four rooms	3 (33.3)	1 (12.5)	-
More than four	-	4 (50)	1 (100)
Total	9 (100)	8 (100)	1 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

In terms of facilities available, the private primary schools lagged behind the other school. For example, two of the eight schools had no toilet and drinking water facilities, and three of them had no playground. Some of the government primary schools also lacked these basic facilities. For instance, two of the nine GPS had no playground or drinking water facilities. Although all the GPS visited reportedly had some books to lend to the children, none of them had a proper library. The other school had very good facilities compared to the GPS and private schools. The main reason behind this difference was that the other school owns a considerable chunk of land, which is judiciously used for the benefit of the children (such as using it as a playground, providing more space for classrooms, etc.) as well as for the overall development of the school. The land was in use for crop and vegetable cultivation, and growing trees – children were also seen to be involved in the process of production, which provided them the scope for combining fun with learning. While the produce from cultivation

was used for the cooked mid-day meal programme in the school, other sources of income (such as from the sale of trees) were being used to raise the corpus fund of the school. This example can well be replicated in many of the government schools, which own similar assets.

Table 3.3. Facilities available at school

	GPS	Private	Other
Drinking water	7 (77.8)	6 (75)	1 (100)
Toilet	9 (100)	6 (75)	1 (100)
Play ground	7 (77.8)	5 (62.5)	1 (100)
Library	9 (100)*	5 (62.5)	1 (100)
No facilities	-	1 (12.5)	-
Total no. of schools	9 (100)	8 (100)	1 (100)

* The GPS mentioned have some books, but no proper library. Responses not mutually exclusive (Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Teachers

As regards one of the most important components of primary education – the number of teachers in a school, the GPS lag far behind the private schools and the other school. Given the very high number of children in the government-run primary schools, the situation with regard to the number of teachers has become precarious. In addition to the shortage of teachers, the problem of distribution of teachers lay unsolved. While in some of the GPS the number of teachers was more than the number of classes, others have been running with just a single or at most two teachers for four or more classes.

The average pupil-teacher ratio of the studied GPS was 40.3:1, which was better than the average for Birbhum district or West Bengal as a whole (46.2:1 and 54:1 respectively). The studied schools also had a better male-female ratio of teachers (60:40) than the district and state average (85:15 and 75:25 respectively). The variation with the district and state averages also indicates the problem of distribution of teachers – some of the GPS were located in urban areas where both the number of teachers in general and the number of female teachers in particular were higher than in the rural areas.

Table 3.4. Pupil-teacher ratio in the selected primary schools

	GPS	Private	Other
Total students enrolled	2095	496	54
Total teachers	52	44	7
Student - teacher ratio	40.3	11.2	7.7

On the other hand the private primary schools showed a very good pupil-teacher ratio. But as regards the male-female ratio of

teachers, the other school had a very poor record, as opposed to the private schools.

Table 3.5. Male-female ratio of teachers in the selected primary schools

	GPS	Private	Other
Male	31 (59.6)	17 (38.6)	7 (100)
Female	21 (40.4)	27 (61.4)	-
Total	52 (100)	44 (100)	7 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

The distribution of teachers according to their social identity indicates an under-representation of teachers from SC and ST communities in the GPS and private schools. Very few teachers in the private schools came from lower caste backgrounds. But the picture was completely different in the case of the other school where all the teachers came from the SC and ST communities. This, according to the teachers and parents of the school, had created a favourable environment for teaching and learning since "teachers and children not only understand each other better but also inter-mingle in a much friendlier manner. Also since the teachers speak the mother-tongue of the children (Santali), children understand the lessons much quicker and better". On the contrary, as we have found in our earlier studyⁱⁱ, the variation in the social identities of students and teachers can create discriminatory circumstances in primary schooling. In the present study too, many of the parents from lowly backgrounds, in government and *private schools* complained that many a time teachers neglect their children. They also complained about the different inhibitive expressions of the teachers towards the children from lowly backgrounds. The research team also heard some strong comments against children belonging to Hindu lower caste and Muslim communities from teachers themselves.

Educational qualification and training of teachers

The differences among the schools in terms of the educational qualifications of the teachers were quite significant. Although the number of graduate teachers in the GPS was less (31.7 percent) than that in the private schools (80 percent), in terms of trained teachers the figures were almost the reverse. While 89 percent of the GPS teachers had teachers' training certificates, the figure for all the NGPS was only 39 percent.

Chart 3.1 Qualification of teachers of the selected primary schools

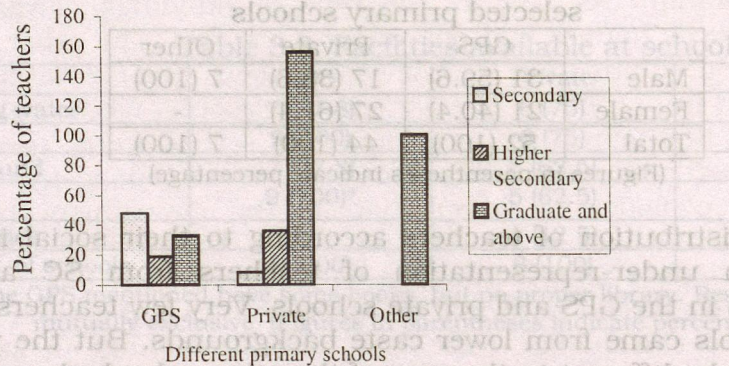
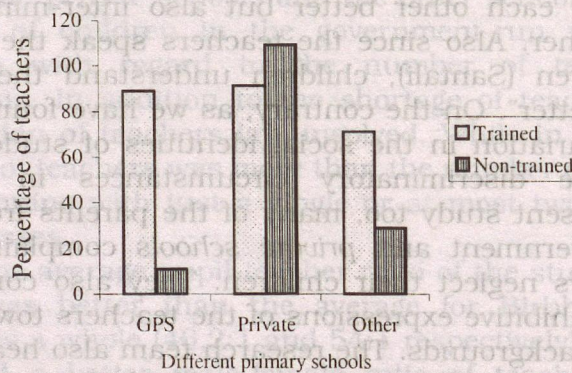


Chart 3.1a Training of teachers



Salary of teachers

While the monthly salary of the GPS teachers varied between Rs 5,050 to Rs 9,745 per teacher, with an average of Rs 7,396, the variation in the monthly salary received by the teachers of the private primary schools was enormous. Of the total of 44 such teachers, 48 percent received a salary below Rs 500 and one teacher (2.3 percent) received a sum of Rs 11,000. Such variation was also present in the other school – between Rs 500 and Rs 5,500 per month.

Table 3.6 Distribution of teachers according to salary
(in the month prior to our visit)

	GPS	Private	Other
Without salary	-	1 (2.3)	1 (14.3)*
Below Rs. 500	-	21 (47.7)	1 (14.3)
Rs.501-1500	-	8 (18.2)	3 (42.8)
Rs.1501-2500	-	4 (9.1)	-
Rs.2501-3500	-	8 (18.2)	-
Rs.3501-5500	5 (9.6)	1 (2.3)	2 (28.6)
Rs.5501-8500	28 (53.8)	-	-
Above Rs.8500	19 (36.5)	1 (2.3)	-
Total no of Teachers	52 (100)	44 (100)	7 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

A large number of private school teachers complained about the salary paid to them, which was "nothing but a pittance". Many of them were also not sure as to how long they would continue giving their "free services" to the schools. However, some of them said that they were happy even with the meagre salary, as they "did not need to earn money, but needed some engagement outside home". Whether the lower salary has any impact on the quality of teaching was not known, although, in some cases, teachers were reported to have made this an excuse for spending less time in school (both in terms of working days in a year and working hours in a day).

Working days and teaching time in the different primary schools

Working days in a year

There was great variation in terms of working days (in the year preceding the study) among the different types of primary schools. Also a great range of deviation was found among the schools of particular types. For instance, the nine GPS we visited during the study could be divided into three distinct sets, with three schools in each, where the working days in a year ranged between 211-220, 221-230 and 231-240 respectively. The variation of working days among the private schools was immense – they varied between below 200 days to above 250 days. However, half had less than 220 working days in the year preceding the study.

Table 3.7 Working days of schools in the year preceding the study

Working days	GPS	Private	Other
Below 200 days	-	3 (37.5)	-
200-210 days	-	1 (12.5)	-
211-220 days	3 (33.3)	-	-
221-230 days	3 (33.3)	2 (25)	-
231-240 days	3(33.3)	1 (12.5)	-
241-250 days	-	1 (12.5)	-
Above 250 days	-	-	1 (100)
Total no. of schools	9 (100)	8 (100)	1 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Working hours in a day

There was no inter-school variation among the government primary schools as far as working hours per day was concerned, since they reportedly followed a uniform work-schedule. However, some variation in terms of working hours of different GPS was found from the responses of the parents (school opened late or closed early, or both). But the working hours of the private schools followed an extremely skewed pattern. School hours varied from less than three hours to more than four hours a day. While a majority (63 percent) of the private primary schools had three to four hours of daily schooling time, the other school had more than four hours for teaching every day.

Table 3.8 School hours

Working hours	GPS	Private	Other
Below three hours	-	1 (12.5)	-
Three hours	-	1 (12.5)	-
Three to four hours	-	5 (62.5)	-
Four hours or more	-	1 (12.5)	1 (100)
Five hours	9 (100)	-	-
Total no. of schools	9 (100)	8 (100)	1 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Subjects taught

Nowadays, the urban middle class has been gradually raising its voice against the heavy load of curriculum, particularly in the private schools (manifestations of which may be seen in the media, literature, and other popular discourses). "The books and stationery the children have to carry to schools is often as heavy as the weight of the child," is a general comment that parents and others make (in reality, it was not entirely

exaggerated). But in the rural areas, one of the main attractions of the private schools seems to be the "extra" books and subjects taught. "Children cannot succeed in future competitive life if they are not provided with extra knowledge," said a parent. The most important of the "extra" teaching appears to be the supposed emphasis given on English. The inclination of parents towards their children learning English is so strong that the West Bengal government had to reinstate English (which the Left Front government withdrew after coming to power) as a subject at the primary level following "popular demand". Parents and teachers of the private schools maintained that although the West Bengal government has reinstated English at primary level, the curriculum was not sufficient to teach the children English and "they need much more than what is taught in the government primary schools". The desire to learn English as a major driving force behind the growth of private schools has also been found in other parts of the country.ⁱⁱⁱ

Apart from English (for which more than one book was often used), the private schools were found to have followed a curriculum with a broad range of subjects. While most of the teachers of the private schools believed that it was essential for the children to "study a range of subjects and books to develop competitive skills", some of them said that the "burden of subjects and textbooks put a lot of pressure upon the children and hinders their natural development". Yet, to bring children to the private schools, "there is no more attractive tool than advertising the exhaustive courses". One of the private schools was found to have incorporated the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* as subjects for teaching. This school has a particular inclination towards a Hindu religious group, known for practising bigotry.

The other school was found to follow a good curriculum with fewer subjects to learn, but with more creative involvement for the children. The school teaches Santali, along with Bangla, in classes 1 and 2, as their Santali-speaking students could not follow lessons in Bangla at the initial stages. The following table gives a comparative picture of the subjects taught in the schools we surveyed.

Table 3.9. Subjects taught in the selected primary schools

	GPS	Private	Other
Standard 1	Bangla, Arithmetic, Environmental Science	Bangla, Hindi, English, Arithmetic, General Knowledge, Drawing, Cultural Activities, Nature Study, General Science, Social Science, Computer	Santali, Bangla, Arithmetic, Cultural Activities, Art and Crafts
Standard 2	Bangla, Arithmetic, Environmental Science, English	Bangla, Hindi, English, Arithmetic, General Knowledge, Drawing, Cultural Activities, Nature Study, General Science, Social Science, Computer, History, Geography, The Ramayana, Sanskrit	Santali, Bangla, Arithmetic, Cultural Activities, Art and Crafts, English
Standard 3	Bangla, Arithmetic, Science, English, History, Geography	Bangla, Hindi, English, Arithmetic, General Knowledge, Drawing, Cultural Activities, Nature Study, General Science, Social Science, Computer, History, Geography, The Ramayana, Sanskrit	Bangla, Arithmetic, Cultural Activities, Art and Crafts, English
Standard 4	Bangla, Arithmetic, Science, English, History, Geography	Bangla, Hindi, English, Arithmetic, General Knowledge, Drawing, Cultural Activities, Nature Study, General Science, Social Science, Computer, History, Geography, The Mahabharata, Sanskrit	Bangla, Arithmetic, Cultural Activities, Art and Crafts, English

Teaching Methods

A general impression among the parents was that the private schools "teach well". However, in most cases, parents were found to be unaware of how the teachers taught in the classes. The research team's observations, barring a few exceptions, found very conventional methods of teaching practised across the studied schools. They include rote learning, writing on the blackboard, reading aloud, giving exercises, etc. Similar observations were also made by De et al (2002) in their study conducted in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Although the idea of "joyful learning" has been much in vogue among educationists and policy makers, it appeared during the fieldwork that learning was seen by children as a task, which they had to fulfil in order to avoid teachers' punishments.

Cost of schooling

School charges

Some people argue that private schools have greater potential to deliver quality education at a cost much lower than is incurred in government schools.^{iv} Here we will briefly examine the variations in costs involved in different kinds of schooling. While the GPS, as mentioned earlier, are free primary schools, the other types of schools charge fees from students. However, the fees charged by the other school are nominal and ultimately the cost of schooling in the other school was found to be the lowest – even lower than that of the GPS. This will be discussed below. While the GPS did not charge any fees from students the mean annual charges per student in the private schools and the other school were Rs 1,446 and Rs 132 respectively. Details of the various heads of accounts are given below.

Table 3.10 Annual amounts charged by different non-government schools (in Rs.)

Heads of accounts	Private	Other
Fees	1116.3	120
Exam. Charges	41.8	0
Session charges	275.0	0
Puja	12.9	0
Others (students' cooperative)	0	12
Total	1446.0	132

Total cost of schooling

School charges are only a part of the cost of schooling. There are several other components like books and stationery, private tuition, uniform, transport and so on.

Although the government primary schools are free and do not collect any user charge from the students, parents of children going to the GPS do have to spend some money, particularly for private tuition, stationery and uniforms. Hence, totally free primary education, in effect, does not exist. However, a huge difference between the GPS and *private schools* in terms of cost of schooling was found in our study. While the mean annual cost of schooling per child was Rs. 599 in the case of the GPS, for the *private schools* it was Rs 3,396. In case of the *other school* it was only Rs 347. A large variation in the cost of schooling was also found among different social groups. While the expenditures incurred by the ST communities was the

lowest, it was the highest among other caste Hindu communities as we can see from the following table.

Table 3.11 Average cost of schooling in the selected schools
(in Rs.)

	GPS	Private	Other
SC	577	2084	-
ST	247	1110	339
Muslim	600	4083	
Hindu others	789	3659.4	432
Average	599	3395.6	347

Again, as we look at the expenditure pattern of schooling, we see that a large part of the expenditure is on account of private tuition - both for GPS and *private schools*. In the GPS the share was more than one third of the total cost of schooling.

As can be seen from the table below the main reason for the low cost in the *other* school was the absence of private tuition - none of the children reported to have taken private tuition, since it was not needed. "Teaching in the school is sufficient, in addition a group of young villagers provide some extra assistance outside the school without charging any money," said a teacher. Several parents also corroborated the statement.

Table 3.12 Expenditure on different heads of accounts for schooling
(in Rs.)

	GPS	Private	Other
School fees	0	1115.9 (32.9)	127 (36.6)
Books	2.90 (0.5)	328.0 (9.7)	0
Stationery	178.90 (29.9)	372.9 (11.0)	220 (63.4)
Private tuition	409.10 (68.3)	968.6 (28.5)	0
Transport	0	411.4 (12.1)	0
Others	7.60 (1.3)	199.2 (5.9)	0
Total	599 (100)	3395.6 (100)	347 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

It was found that the cost of private schooling was very high - about six times higher than that in the GPS. Even if we add up the government expenditure per child at the primary level - which was Rs 1,302^v, the combined expenditure (parental and governmental) per child in the government primary schools was much lower than the expenditure in the *private schools*. Parents, both in rural as well as urban areas, have rightly pointed towards the high cost of schooling in the private sector that they could not even imagine to afford.

It can also be seen from the pattern of expenditure that the high amount charged by the private schools is notwithstanding the fact that children have to take private tuition for "better performance". Thus parents have to pay double for their children's education in the private schools.

Again, if the cost of schooling on account of private tuition could be wiped out from the GPS system the parental cost of schooling can be reduced to a large extent. This is surely not an impossible task. We have come across government primary schools where dedicated teachers in close association and coordination with parents and the larger community ensured a high quality of education, and children did not need any extra inputs from private tutors. However, such examples are not very common, and as we have discussed at length in our earlier reports, the quality of education is hardly ensured in the GPS and this creates a regrettable reliance upon private tuition (as in West Bengal) or private schooling (as in Jharkhand).^{vi}

ⁱ PROBE (1998), Haq and Haq (1998), CAMPE (1999, 2001), Rana et al (2002), De et al (2002)

ⁱⁱ Rana et al (2002, 2004 and forthcoming)

ⁱⁱⁱ See De et al (2002) and Waldman (2003a)

^{iv} Tooley (2001) and other sources cited by him.

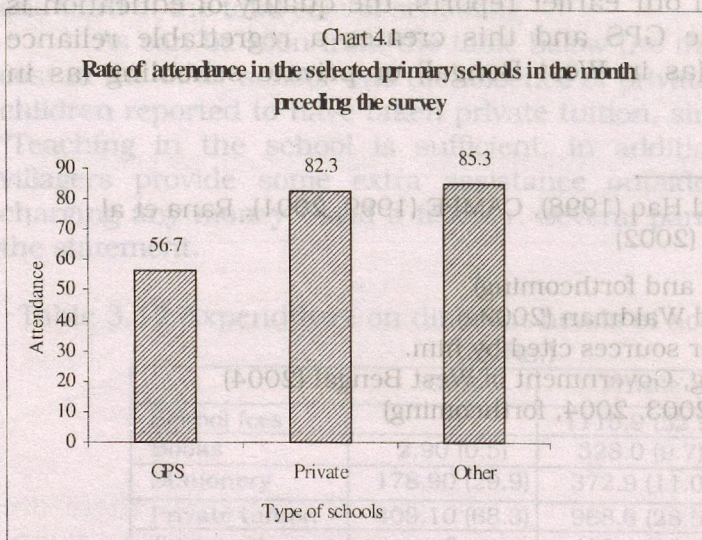
^v Department of Planning, Government of West Bengal (2004)

^{vi} See Rana et al (2002, 2003, 2004, forthcoming)

The Delivery of Education in the Different Types of Primary Schools

Attendance

Ensuring attendance in the government primary schools is a serious problem that has been raised in several studies, including the PROBE Report and the Pratiche Education Report I. State governments and other agencies concerned with primary education have also agreed with this diagnosis and taken different measures to enhance the rate of attendance. Yet, despite some improvements seen in the present study compared to our earlier study (6 percentage points - from 51 to 57 percent), the success rate in this area is still far from satisfactory.



The attendance rate in the *private* and *other* school were found to be better than that in the government primary schools. In the present study we collected the attendance records from all the surveyed primary schools for the month preceding our visits and computed the average rate of attendance for each type of primary school. The monthly average attendance data showed that the performance of the selected *other* school, as regards the attendance of children, was the best among all kinds of primary schools with 85 percent attendance. This was particularly remarkable given the socio-economic status of the households the children came from - almost all of them belonged to *adivasi* families with very low annual income. The *private* schools studied had 82 percent attendance. But, in case of the GPS, the rate was much lower - 57 percent.

The poor rate of attendance of the ST children was highlighted in many different studies. The present study also found that while the attendance of other caste children in the government primary schools was 59 percent, in case of the ST children it was only 52 percent. For

the SC children the figure was 56 percent. Again, there was considerable difference found in the attendance of boys and girls in the government primary schools. While the attendance of girls from SC and ST communities was lower in the GPS, in case of the children from other social identities it was much higher.

Table 4.1 Attendance percentage of children in different types of primary schools (caste and gender-wise)

	GPS	Scheduled Caste			Scheduled Tribe			Others			Total		
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Private		74.3	89.1	78.7	67.1	95.2	76.4	83.4	78.6	81.3	83.1	80.9	82.3
Other		-	91.3	91.3	83.3	85.3	84.3	100	-	100	84.6	86.1	85.3

Understandably, children in *private schools*, who generally came from upper income category households, did not have to face the problems encountered by the poorer students, owing to poverty and other socio-economic factors like poor educational background of the families. In most of the cases, children of the GPS, particularly girls who belonged to the lowly backgrounds, were reported to have engaged themselves in many different kinds of work from domestic chores to income generating ones. More importantly, most of the parents of such backgrounds maintained that they could not even provide a little food to the children before going to school. Many of the children told us that they had not eaten anything before coming to school, while many of the absentee children said that they were doing some work outside the school (like cattle herding, etc) to earn some food for themselves and their families.

The availability of food, it seems, is the most vital factor affecting the rate of attendance. This is also confirmed from the findings from the *other school*, where both the parents and teachers strongly affirmed that the cooked mid-day meal served in the school was the main driving force behind the very healthy rate of attendance in that school. Also different studies conducted on the impact of cooked mid-day meal programme in the government primary schools suggest that there has been substantial improvement in the rate of

attendance of SC and ST children after the introduction of cooked mid-day meals.¹

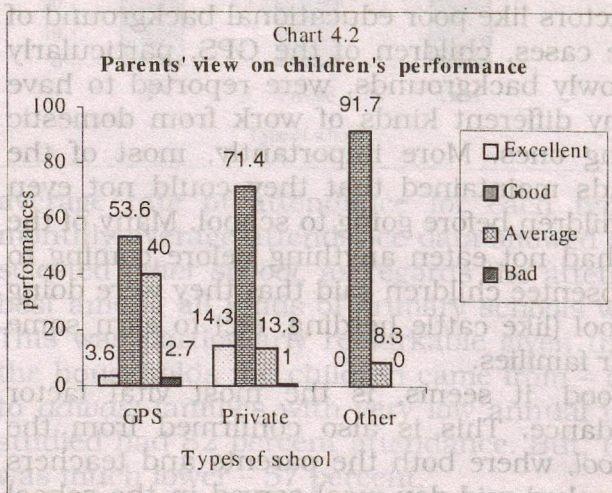
Nevertheless, it is the actual functioning of primary schools that plays a very important role in the attendance of children. Parents perceived the functioning of *private* and other non-government primary schools to be better and this was the main reason for the regularity in attendance in these schools. The case of the government primary schools in general was otherwise. The exception to this pattern in both kinds of schools proves the point. While the rate of attendance in one of the poorly performing private schools was less than 60 percent, in case of a GPS where the teachers ran the school with dedication and the quality delivered was much better attendance was above 75 percent.

Hence, to ensure the attendance of children in primary schools, the menace of hunger as well as the poor delivery of education have to be addressed.

Parents' view on the performance of schools, teachers and children

Views on children's performance

While asked about their perception regarding the performance of their children a large section of the parents of GPS children said that they



performed well or average. Among the 110 respondents of GPS going children, the majority of the parents (except those belonging to the ST communities) described their performance as good (53.6 percent) and another large section said that their children did averagely well in learning (40 percent). Only about four percent of the parents ranked

¹ For details see Rana (2004), Also see Govt. of WB & UNICEF (2003), Dreze and Goyel (2003), DA, Murshidabad (2003), Pratichi Research Team (forthcoming), et al

their children as excellent performers.

Again, caste-wise disaggregation of the opinions of the parents showed that no ST parent considered his or her child to have performed well. Rather they said that the performance was average. The main reason behind this was that a majority of the ST children could not even attend school regularly owing to their poor economic background. In addition, many of the parents were simply unaware of the performance of their children for they themselves were incapable of evaluating their children's learning achievements and a large section of them believed that their children simply "could not perform well". "Those who have the money can send their children to the private tutors; we are poor people and thus cannot afford money. How can our children do better?" was the response of an *adivasi* parent.

Similar responses were found in some other wage earner households, irrespective of their social identities. It seems that the belief in the power of money to buy education has spread its roots very deep inside society, and it manifests itself in the expression of loss of faith in free primary education.

In the private schools, a majority of the parents said that the performance of their wards were either excellent or good (14.3 and 71.4 percent respectively). However, about 13 percent of them said the performance was average. The respective figures (Excellent, Good and Average) for the other school were, zero, 92 and eight percent. Mention may be made here that many of the parents had made their assessment based on a notion that "*private schools* impart good teaching", and further probing showed that a considerable section of the parents of private school children (as well as others) seldom made an objective assessment of the performance of their children.

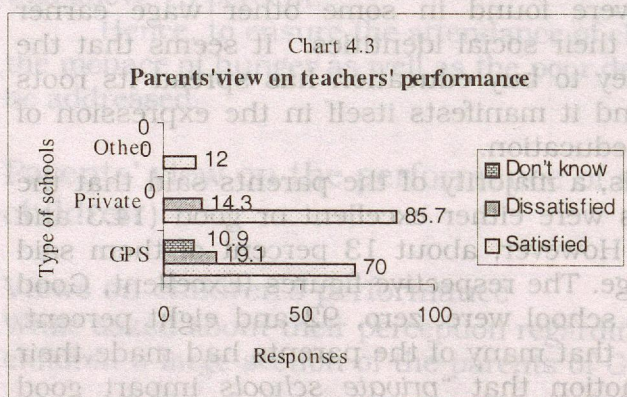
Views on the performance of the teachers

When asked about the performance of the teachers of the concerned schools and the level of satisfaction about their teaching, 70 percent of the parents of GPS expressed satisfaction. Nevertheless, 19 percent of them expressed clear dissatisfaction and 11 percent could not even comment on the issue. The reasons for dissatisfaction mainly arose due to the irregular attendance of the teachers, lack of care for the children, and so on. Sometimes parents complained that teachers asked children to perform personal services for their teachers, including massaging their feet, plucking grey hairs, cleaning the hair of lice and so on (these typical Indian "luxuries" are still quite common, particularly in the countryside). Mainly SC and ST children were reported to have been employed for such services. This obviously has adverse effects on the teacher-student relationship, and

* See Hains et al (2002, 2003 and 2004)

sometimes this was said to be one of the main reasons for dropout and irregular attendance. In case of the other school the responses were very impressive and the rate of parents' satisfaction over the performances of the teachers was 100 percent. The majority of the parents (86 percent) whose children attend private schools were reportedly satisfied with the teachers' performance. The dissatisfied parents said that the teaching and learning quality in the schools was not up to the mark. Also some of them complained about the teachers' discriminatory attitude towards the children from lower economic and social backgrounds. Another serious grumbling was that some of the teachers of private schools insisted that parents send their children to those particular teachers for private tuition.

It may be worth a mention that the responses based on parents' perceptions are indicative – not definitive – in nature.



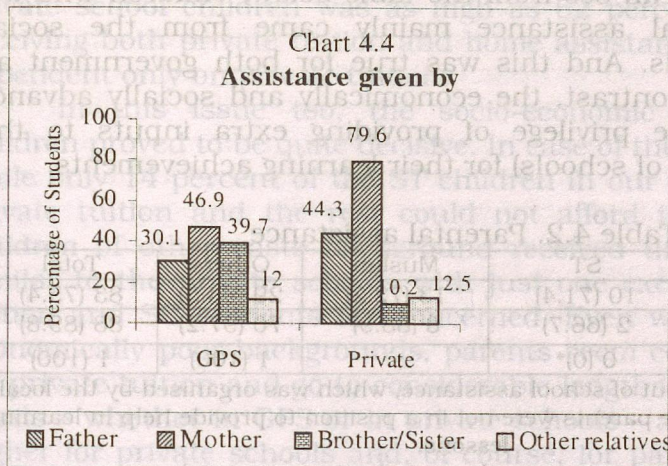
Many of the parents had very little idea about what was taught in the schools and many simply expressed their opinion on the performance of teachers and children on the basis of plain belief, without any clear basis.

For example, some of the parents said that since the private schools were “charging money they ought to teach better”. Again, some of the parents said that teachers were “educated persons and hence know better how to teach the children”. Some said that the private schools were teaching English, and hence they should be teaching well.

Nevertheless, the suggestive responses give some indication of the performance of the different kinds of primary schools. We can see that the relatively poor performance of the government primary schools is gradually creating an inclination towards the private schools.

Assistance in learning outside the school

Parents as well as primary school teachers rarely believe in the adequacy of learning through classroom lessons. The popular notion was that, “*baccake to barite paratei habe; schooler paray ki aar hoi?*” – “The child must be given extra assistance at home; the teaching



private tutors. In the present study we will examine whether and how far this notion is applicable to the non-government primary schools. We will also try to draw a comparison between the government and non-government primary school children as regards assistance in learning outside school.

Assistance at home

One of the major complaints of the primary school teachers, particularly of the GPS was that children of many of the households did not receive any assistance at home and that was the main reason for their poor performance (since, according to them, it was not possible for them to teach all the lessons in the classroom because of the high number of children vis-à-vis shortage of teachers). Our earlier studies had found that it was mainly the children from socially and economically backward households who suffered from such lack of parental assistance because of (1) the low level of educational achievement of the parents, and (2) lack of time for such support after providing the bread for the family, which did not allow them to assist the children at home. In this study we found that a considerable number of children (25 percent) of the GPS schools (who mainly came from poor families) did not receive parental assistance.

On the other hand the number of children of private schools who did not receive parental assistance was ten percent. The case of the other school was different – very few of the parents were actually able to give assistance at home, but some local youths and schoolteachers imparted extra-school assistance to all the children free of cost.

² See Rana et al (2002, 2003 and 2004)

Again, as we can see from the table below, children who were deprived of parental assistance mainly came from the socially backward households. And this was true for both government and private schools. In contrast, the economically and socially advanced sections enjoyed the privilege of providing extra inputs to their children (in all kinds of schools) for their learning achievements.

Table 4.2. Parental assistance

	SC	ST	Muslim	Others	Total
GPS	31 (66)	10 (71.4)	13 (72.2)	29 (93.5)	83 (75.4)
Private	8 (57.1)	2 (66.7)	8 (88.9)	70 (97.2)	88 (89.8)
Other	-	0 (0)*	-	1 (100)	1 (100)

*They received some out of school assistance, which was organised by the local community. Most of the parents were not in a position to provide help in learning lessons.

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

The educational level of parents also seemed to play an important role in the learning achievement of children. For example, in case of caste Hindu households mothers were found to have assisted the children most, which was not the case among the SC or ST households. It was often said that even educated fathers spent little time in helping children with their lessons but, in almost all cases, educated mothers never seemed to fail in this "important duty". Among the SC and ST communities very few of the mothers had even the minimum level of education that would enable them to help their children. In the case of private school children, mothers, thanks to their socially and economically advanced backgrounds, played a major role in assisting children at home. This is illustrated in the graphic.

However, for many of the parents – educated or otherwise – home assistance was not felt to be sufficient for their children's learning achievement and a large section of them relied upon paid private tutors to do this.

Private Tuition

Reliance upon private tuition was found among children from all kinds of primary schools. The dependence of children of the GPS on private tuition was found in 62 percent cases, where 45 percent of them had received both private tuition and home assistance and 17 percent of them depended exclusively on private tuition.

While the poor quality of teaching in the government primary schools apparently justifies this reliance upon private tuition, it was quite surprising to note that the figure for private tuition among the

private school children was as high as 62 percent, with 54 percent receiving both private tuition and home assistance and eight percent dependent only on private tuition.

In this issue too, the socio-economic background of the children proved to be quite decisive. In case of the government schools while only 14 percent of the ST children in our study benefited from private tuition and the rest could not afford it, 77 percent of the children of other caste background received this benefit. This was similar to the private schools with just one exception where private tuition and SC students are concerned. Even when they come from economically poor backgrounds, parents seem convinced of the need for private tuition and go to considerable lengths to ensure it for their wards – whether in GPS or in private schools – although the figure is higher for private schools and, of course, for parents who can afford it.

Table 4.3 Extent of private tuition

	GPS	Private	Other
SC	30 (63.8)	12 (85.7)	Not applicable
ST	2 (14.3)	1 (33.3)	0
Muslim	12 (66.7)	6 (66.7)	Not applicable
Others	24 (77.4)	42 (58.8)	0
Total	68 (61.8)	61 (62.2)	0

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

That the dependence on private tuition is a cruel phenomenon in the primary education sector in West Bengal is a proven fact. And more appalling is the fact that parents who send their children to expensive private schools with the hope of getting better education cannot rely upon what is taught in school – they too have to bear the burden of the extra cost of private tuition in addition to the high expenditure incurred on regular schooling (fees, books, stationery, uniforms, transport, etc.). As the parent of a private school going child said, "There is no way out. One has to arrange for private tuition, or the child won't learn anything. The school is a mere formality – *baccake jete hoy, jaay* – the child attends the schools as part of routine, [not to learn]." As mentioned above, a section of the parents complained that some teachers of the private schools insisted that they send their children for private tuition to particular teachers of the schools where children were enrolled. Teachers reportedly threatened the parents that they would not allow their wards to appear for the competitive scholarship examinations (*britti*), and would influence their results for the worse should the parents not

sent children to them [the teachers] for private tuition. This has had a major influence on the parents. Twenty five percent of the children of private schools, who took private tuition, reportedly received it from the teachers of the same schools. In case of the GPS the figure was only 1.5 percent.

This reliance upon private tuition clearly shows that primary schools – be they government or private – hardly perform their duties towards the children; where more than 60 percent of the children depend upon private tuition one can imagine the kind of responsibility the schools shoulder. It is also quite clear that even private schooling cannot deliver on quality, if private tutors or parents do not aid the child substantially. Understandably, such paid assistance (outside the school) is beyond the ability of a large section of the parents particularly in the rural areas, but also in the urban areas, and hence the system cries out for some major overhauling that would make the schools effectively functional.

Learning achievement of children

The quality of education delivered and the level of learning achievement of children are the major concerns in the primary education sector not only in India, but also in the developing countries particularly in Southeast Asia³. The present study also tried to focus on the quality of education delivered in the different types of primary schools. However, the differences in terms of infrastructure, number of teachers and other considerations hardly allow a real comparison between the GPS and other kinds of schools. Yet, the study team tried to draw a picture of the learning achievements of children in different types of primary schools by conducting a quick appraisal of a group of children from the studied schools. The team set different questions for the children of different classes (classes 2 to 4), but the questions for a particular class were applied to all the schools, regardless of their type. The uniformity in setting the questions, notwithstanding some bias in favour of the non-government schools, which enjoy much better facilities for teaching, reveal some interesting facts.

Before carrying out the appraisal, the team collected the evaluation sheets of the children from the respective schools. In the appraisal, the team members asked the children to answer some very simple questions pertaining to what had reportedly been taught in their classes. Three subjects, Bangla, English and Arithmetic, were

³ Haq and Haq (1998), CAMPE (1999, 2001), PROBE (1998), Rana et al (2002, 2003, forthcoming)

chosen for evaluation. The appraisal was liberal in manner, and it can be seen from the table below that in some cases children scored better in the appraisal than in the school assessment.

Table 4.4 Learning achievements of children of different types of primary schools (according to the school and the study team's appraisal).

Range of scores (out of 100)	GPS		Private		Other	
	Scores as per school's evaluation (in %)	Scores as per the study team (in %)	Scores as per school's evaluation (in %)	Scores as per the study team (in %)	Scores as per school's evaluation (in %)	Scores as per the study team (in %)
81-100	15.7	20.9	58.3	44.9	7.8	16.7
66-80	18.0	13.6	20.0	17.3	19.6	25.0
51-65	21.7	30.0	12.1	20.4	23.5	33.3
36-50	17.6	16.4	5.1	9.2	31.4	8.3
21-35	17.4	11.8	3.4	3.1	11.8	8.3
0-20	9.6	7.3	1.1	5.12	5.9	8.3
Total no. of children assessed	1,736	110	494	98	51	12

It can be seen from the above table that some of the children from all the different kinds of schools have achieved the score below the minimum level of scoring 36 marks. The proportion of such children was found in higher numbers in the GPS, but the presence of such children in the private schools cannot be overlooked.

Also it was unfortunate to note that some of the children even could not even write their own name or the name of their school. Such poor performance of children was found in all kinds of schools, but the number was found to be higher in the GPS. The following table shows the details.

Table 4.5 Writing skills of the children

	GPS	Private	Other
Can write own name	108 (98.2)	98 (100)	12 (100)
Can write own class	61 (55.5)	92 (93.8)	10 (83.3)
Can write own school name	56 (50.9)	78 (79.6)	9 (75)
Total no. of children	110 (100)	98 (100)	12 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage; Responses not mutually exclusive)

As was found in this as well as other studies, the class and social background of the children play a major role in determining their level of learning achievement. That the children from lower caste and class backgrounds suffered most from the poor quality of learning was crystal clear. As mentioned above, they could neither get enrolled in paid private schools, nor could they afford private tuition outside

the school. Eighty percent of the children achieving better levels of learning, as found in this study, were supported (irrespective of their school background) by private tutors. On the other hand, more than 75 percent of the children scoring marks lower than 36 (out of 100) did not get assistance from private tutors. Again, such children were not fortunate enough to receive parental assistance as they often belonged to families of first generation learners. Even children whose parents spent a major share of their hard earned money to pay the fees for private schools but could not afford private tuition had to face such class discrimination in primary schooling.

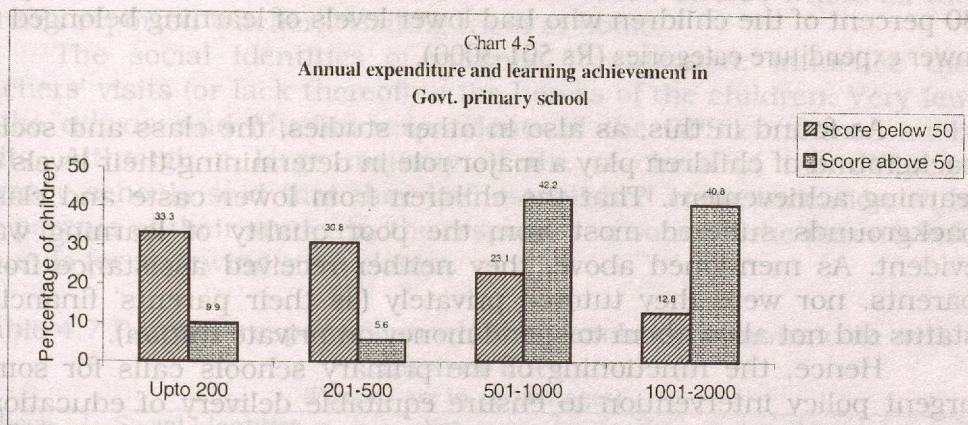
Correlation of Annual Expenditure and Learning Achievement

That primary education has ceased to be free is an appalling reality. Several studies have found that the children of the free government primary schools have also to spend substantial amounts on learning lessons. Such cost involvement in learning achievement is often cited as an example of the weaknesses of the government schools and argument for private schooling to be strengthened. But the fact is that even paid *private schools* have not been able to deliver equality in education. We can see from the table below that the learning achievement of children – in almost all kinds of schools – depended upon the level of expenditure incurred by their parents. Except for the other school, in both the other kinds of school the expenditure pattern largely determined the level of learning. Of course the expenditure incurred in the GPS was much less than that in the private schools – while the average annual expenditure per child in the GPS to achieve excellent scores was Rs 720, in case of private schools the amount was about six times higher. Similarly we can see that the lowest scoring child could spend much less than the best one – in case of the GPS it was Rs 306 and in case of the private schools it was Rs 984, more than three times higher.

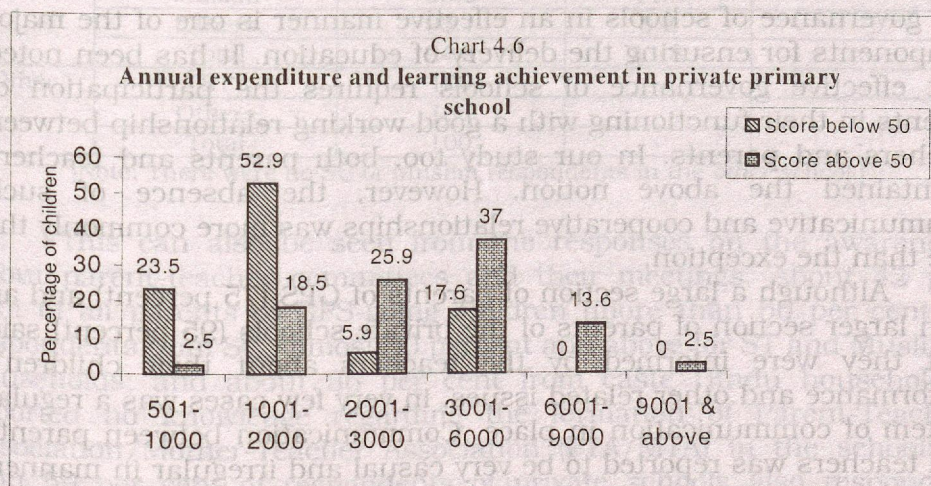
Table 4.6 Quality with average annual expenditure

Ranks According to Scores	Expenditure Incurred Annually		
	GPS (Rs)	Private (Rs)	Other (Rs)
81-100	719.74	4192.7	402.0
66-80	647.33	3552.9	352.0
51-65	661.76	2899.8	349.5
36-50	499.17	2098.3	312.0
21-36	484.62	1378.3	312.0
0-20	306.5	984.0	-
Total average	598.54	3395.6	349.5

The correlation between annual expenditure and level of learning can also be seen from the graphic below. The share of the GPS children who spent below Rs 200 a year consisted of only ten percent of those who scored more than 50 (out of hundred). Contrarily children who spent between Rs 1001- 2000 formed 41 percent of the total children who scored above 50.



On the other hand, a large section (33.3 percent) of the poorly performing children (scoring below 50 out of hundred) came from the poor families who spent below Rs 200 a year. Children from the higher expenditure group (Rs 1001-2000) formed only 13 percent of those who performed poorly.



The correlation between annual expenditure and level of learning is more evident in the case of the private school children.

While only three percent of the lowest annual expenditure group - Rs 501 -1000 (in case of the private school going children this was the lowest annual expenditure) - could score more than 50 out of hundred; the figure was 53 percent for the children of higher annual expenditure category (Rs 3000 - 9000 and above). Contrarily, children who performed poorly (who scored below 50) formed only 20 percent of the higher expenditure categories (Rs 3001-9000 and above), while 80 percent of the children who had lower levels of learning belonged to lower expenditure categories (Rs 501-3000).

As found in this, as also in other studies, the class and social background of children play a major role in determining their levels of learning achievement. That the children from lower caste and class backgrounds suffered most from the poor quality of learning was evident. As mentioned above, they neither received assistance from parents, nor were they tutored privately (as their parents' financial status did not allow them to spend money on private tuition).

Hence, the functioning of the primary schools calls for some urgent policy intervention to ensure equitable delivery of education. The present system, in both the government and the private sector, creates a particular class of children where merit is bought - not developed. The private schooling system is particularly exploitative with high annual expenditure necessary, particularly to achieve quality, which many parents simply cannot afford.

Parents' Participation in School Governance

The governance of schools in an effective manner is one of the major components for ensuring the delivery of education. It has been noted that effective governance of schools requires the participation of parents in their functioning with a good working relationship between teachers and parents. In our study too, both parents and teachers maintained the above notion. However, the absence of such communicative and cooperative relationships was more commonly the rule than the exception.

Although a large section of parents of GPS (75 percent) and an even larger section of parents of the private schools (95 percent) said that they were informed by the teachers about their children's performance and other related issues, in very few cases was a regular system of communication in place. Communication between parents and teachers was reported to be very casual and irregular in manner. Also a large section of the Muslim parents of private schools complained that they were not kept informed by teachers. The mode of communication (of the teachers with the parents) followed a varied

pattern. While a majority of the respondents of GPS mentioned that they were informed through their children (either verbally or through notes) and also through home visits (by teachers), in case of the private schools a large section of parents said that the main mode of communication was sending notes written in the school diaries of the children. Seldom did private school teachers visit parents at home. The picture was completely reversed in the *other school*, where all the parents reported teachers' visiting them at home.

The social identities of parents, it appeared, influence the teachers' visits (or lack thereof) to the homes of the children. Very few of the *adivasi* and Muslim respondents of the GPS confirmed such visits. Although a large majority of the teachers of the different primary schools said that they had established communication with the parents of their students, the responses of some of the parents left grounds for reviewing such claims.

Table 4.7 Parents' responses on whether teachers communicate with them or not

(Figures are in percentages)

Schools	Social Identities	Yes	No	Don't know
GPS	SC	72.3	27.7	-
	ST	78.6	14.3	7.1
	Muslim	83.3	16.7	-
	Others	71	29	-
	Total	74.5	24.5	1
Private	SC	100	-	-
	ST	66.7	33.3	-
	Muslim	55.6	44.5	-
	Others	93.1	8.2	-
	Total	94.9	11.8	-
Other	ST	100	-	-
	Others	100	-	-
	Total	100	-	-

[Note: There were no SC or Muslim respondents in the *other school*.]

This can also be seen from the responses on the awareness about parent-teacher committees and their meetings. About 42 per cent of all parents of GPS-going children (more than 50 per cent of respondents from SC; almost 30 percent and above for ST and Muslims households; and about 36 per cent from caste Hindu households) reported no knowledge regarding the formation of Parent-Teacher Association/Mother-Teacher Association (PTA/MTA) in the school; a high 59 per cent of respondents of private schools also responded negatively in this regard. It is worth a mention that a considerable section of respondents of different type of institutions had no idea about PTA/MTA at all - irrespective of their caste background.

According to the teachers, all the GPS had one or other kind of parents' committees (PTA/MTA) in the schools, but in case of the private schools only 25 percent reported to have such committees. Again, while 100 percent of the GPS teachers said that parent teacher meetings were held in the school, in case of the private schools the figure was 86 percent. While 56 percent of the GPS teachers said that they held monthly parent-teacher meetings, such occasions were found only in 14 percent cases in the private schools. However, as regards attendance in the meetings, according to the teachers, a large number of parents in the private schools attended the meetings (attendance above 50 percent was reported in 86 percent cases), but in case of the GPS the figure was only 22 percent.

Some variations were found from the responses of the parents when asked about the parent-teacher meetings in the respective schools. In case of the GPS 71 percent of the parents confirmed the meetings, while 23 percent replied in the negative and 6 percent expressed their lack of awareness. In case of the private schools the respective figures were 79 percent, 20 percent and one percent.

Only 46 percent of the parents of the GPS confirmed the monthly meetings (teachers reported 56 percent). In case of the private schools, parents' response in the affirmative was 12 percent (teachers reported 14 percent).

As regards attending the meetings 72 percent of the GPS parents said that that they attended the meetings when invited. The attendance rate was higher in case of the ST and Muslim parents. In case of the *private schools* 83 percent of the parents reported to have attended the meetings when invited.

While asked about the reasons for not attending the meetings, the majority of the respondents of all types of schools (who didn't attend meetings) said that it was due to lack of time that they could not attend meetings. However, many of the respondents of GPS belonging to SC communities complained "*amader dake na, borolokder dake* (we are not invited, they only invite rich persons)".

There were certain differences in the agenda or the points discussed in the parent-teacher meetings. Parents of GPS reported that three points were mainly discussed: (a) improvement of children's education; (b) children's attendance; and (c) cleanliness of the children. Development of infrastructure was not a major point for discussion. Parents of NGPS on the other hand, highlighted two points, one was the discussion regarding the children's education and another important point was the infrastructure development of the particular school. Some parents pointed out that increment in school fees was also discussed in the meeting.

Parents' visits to school

It was overwhelmingly expressed by all the different school authorities that parents kept contact with teachers. Only 22 per cent of the GPS authorities responded negatively. According to the authorities of the different schools, the majority of the parents visit the school. The rate of visits to school by parents was particularly high in case of the *private schools*. Some teachers of *private schools* mentioned that as parents paid good money for their children's education, they were very conscious of the need to justify such expense (*Paisa diye parachhe, khoj to nebey*). In case of GPS, the rate of visits to school by parents, as reported by the teachers, was comparatively low.

What can be deduced from the above discussion is that the communication between parents and teachers in the *private schools* was slightly better than that of the GPS. Nevertheless the extent of monthly meetings and home visits by teachers in the *private schools* was less than that of the GPS, though the other modes of communication were found to be more alive. It was appalling to hear from some of the parents, mainly of the GPS, that they were not even invited to join meetings. The level of awareness about the holding of meetings was also quite low in all cases, except for the other school.

Nevertheless, the inclination towards attending the meetings and taking part in school governance by extending cooperation was found to be very high among the parents of GPS. Unlike the private and other non-government schools, the GPS teachers have a certain accountability towards the education department. Unfortunately, as was found in many studies, teachers could manage to reduce the accountability because of the failure of the government inspection system. Also, the absence of an effective mechanism to involve parents in school governance and making teachers accountable to them has created a vacuum in the functioning of the GPS. The high level of parents' inclination towards joining in the process of the governance of their children's schools can be exploited to make the system more effective, by empowering parent-teacher committees with legal provisions.

Choice of School

The small number of private or other non-government schools, particularly in rural areas (but also in some urban areas), has given little choice to parents as regards the enrolment of their children in school. However, it was found from the study that many of the parents sending their children to government primary schools had an inclination towards enrolling their children in private schools. While

asked whether they would enrol their children in private schools if they were available in their respective localities, 28 percent of the parents replied in the affirmative. Interestingly, a large section of the SC (32 percent) and ST (43 percent) parents were clearly inclined towards educating their children through private schools. Perhaps their experience of the (non)functioning of the government primary schools biased such parents towards the better and equitable service that they hoped the private schools would deliver. As one of the parents said, “*amader baccake bhalo kare paraina, baralokder baccakei sudhu parai*” (“[teachers] do not take care of our children, they only look after the children of the rich families”). Also, in addition to the discrimination made in the delivery of education, “*amader chheleder chhotolok bale, mare, gaal dai. Paa tipa karai, paka chhul bachha karai*” (“[teachers] address our children in derogatory terms, they beat and swear at them. [They] make them massage their [teachers’] feet, and pick out their grey hairs”). Unfortunately such depressing statements were more commonly found than not.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding this tendency among some of the parents towards private education, they were found to have enrolled their children in GPS, even in areas where private schools were available, as they lacked the necessary affluence to bear the cost of private schooling. A majority of (72 percent) of the parents of GPS attributed their choice to their poor economic condition. The number of such parents was higher among the SC, ST and Muslim communities (72, 71 and 78 percent respectively).

Table 4.8 Reasons for sending children to GPS

	Responses of the parents of GPS				
	SC	ST	Muslim	Others	Total
Poor economic condition	34 (72.3)	10 (71.4)	14 (77.8)	20 (67.0)	78 (72.2)
Need government pass certificate	4 (8.5)	-	2 (11.1)	3 (10.3)	9 (8.3)
Better quality in GPS	5 (10.6)	1 (7.1)	1 (5.6)	4 (13.8)	11 (10.2)
For longer school hour in GPS	-	-	-	1 (3.4)	1 (0.9)
No PPS in locality	7 (14.9)	2 (14.3)	2 (11.1)	5 (17.2)	16 (14.8)
Others	-	-	1 (5.6)	3 (10.3)	4 (3.7)
Don't know	1 (2.1)	2 (14.3)	1 (5.6)	-	4 (3.7)
Total Respondents	47	14	18	29	108

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage; Responses not mutually exclusive)

While the main reason behind choosing GPS for enrolling their children was the financial status of the parents, interestingly, in case of the non-government schools, apart from the major reason of ensuring of quality of education, a range of other reasons were also given by a

considerable section of the parents. For example 27 percent said that private schooling would make their children strong in English, another 27 percent believed that non-government schools took individual care of the children and 19 percent believed the private schools would induce discipline and better cultural values among the children. The table below provides details.

Table 4.9 Reasons For Sending Children to Private School.

	Responses of parents of private and other schools				
	SC	ST	Muslim	Others	Total
For better quality of education	13 (92.9)	13 (92.9)	5 (62.5)	55 (76.4)	86 (79.6)
For good discipline/cultural dev. of children	-	1 (7.1)	2 (25.0)	18 (25.0)	21 (19.4)
To be strong in English	3 (21.4)	1 (7.1)	2 (25.0)	23 (31.9)	29 (26.9)
Reputation of school	1 (7.1)	11 (78.6)	-	7 (9.7)	19 (17.6)
Due to transferable jobs of parents	-	-	-	2 (2.8)	2 (1.9)
Individual care and security of child	1 (7.1)	2 (14.3)	3 (37.5)	23 (31.9)	29 (26.9)
Bad quality of GPS	3 (21.4)	-	-	1 (1.4)	4 (3.7)
Get practice of schooling from early age	-	1 (7.1)	-	17 (23.6)	18 (16.7)
Can enquire about children's progress	-	-	-	1 (1.4)	1 (0.9)
Total number of respondents	14	14	8	72	108

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage; Responses not mutually exclusive)

But, contrary to the aspiration of some of the parents of government school-going children (who desired to send their children to *private school* provided there was such opportunity), a majority of the parents of private and other non-government primary schools maintained that they would prefer to enrol their children in the government schools, provided the quality of education was ensured. For many of the parents the cost of schooling was very high. To quote a parent who represented many, "*Aage bhebecchilam bhalo habe, bacchar bhabisyat tairi habe. Kintu aar tana jachhena. Sansaraer bhabisyat andhakar.*" ("I thought that [enrolling the child in private school] would be beneficial, it would build the future of the child. But I cannot bear [the expenditure] anymore. Now the future of the family is uncertain.")

Table 4.10 Preference of school (provided the quality of education is ensured in the government primary schools)

	Responses of parents of private and other schools				
	SC	ST	Muslim	Others	Total
GPS	12 (85.7)	7 (50.0)	7 (87.5)	52 (72.2)	78 (72.2)
NGPS	2 (14.3)	6 (42.9)	1 (12.5)	20 (27.8)	29 (26.9)
Don't know	-	1 (7.1)	-	-	1 (0.9)
Total respondents	14 (100)	14 (100)	8 (100)	72 (100)	108 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Twenty seven percent of NGPS parents want their wards to continue in the same school even if government schools offer the same standard of education.] While some of them strongly believed that the state of affairs in the government primary schools cannot be changed at all ("*Bhagaban o badlate parbena*" - "Even God cannot change things [in the GPS]"), some simply did not want to enrol their children in government primary schools "filled with lower class children". Some parents believed that they had achieved higher social status by enrolling their children in *private schools*, which status they did not want to lose. The inclination towards learning English was also a priority among many of the parents who believed that the acquisition of English would only be possible in *private schools*.

It was interesting to note however, that a large majority of parents in both GPS and NGPS (70 percent and 64 percent respectively) wanted Bangla as the medium of instruction. Twenty percent and 34 percent of the parents of the GPS and NGPS respectively wanted English to be the medium of instruction. What they wanted was special emphasis on learning English. Most of the parents believed that although English has been re-introduced as a subject at the primary level (in government schools) the environment in the GPS was not favourable for learning English. Many of them believed that learning English needed a lot of "discipline", which was a compulsory component of the private schools unlike in the case of government schools. A proud parent told us that his son was studying only in class 2, but he could speak English. He was not entirely wrong. The child could say "good morning" and "thank you", but could not write the name of his school in either Bangla or English!

For many of the parents the cost of schooling was very high. To quote a parent who represented many: "Age bhabechom pholo habe bacher bhajant four habe. Kuli kor jachera Sanshodhan bhajanant chokeri. (I thought that enrolling the child in private school would be beneficial, it would build the future of the child. But I cannot bear the expenditure anymore. Now the future of the family is uncertain.)"

Table 4.10 Preference of school provided the quality of education is ensured in the government primary schools.

Response of parents of private and other schools	GPS			NGPS		
	ST	Muslim	Others	ST	Muslim	Others
Yes	12 (50.0)	7 (87.5)	52 (72.3)	2 (14.3)	6 (42.9)	33 (58.0)
No	10 (40.0)	1 (12.5)	19 (27.7)	12 (85.7)	8 (57.1)	23 (42.0)
Total	22	8	71	14	14	56

A Concluding Remark

In so far as the choice of different schools for primary education was concerned, the quality of education was the most important aspect influencing the same. The poor quality of education delivered in many of the GPS forced some of the parents to opt for private schools, which were perceived to deliver better quality education. This perception was found in a higher degree among the parents of children in government primary schools who did not have any practical experience of private schools.

On the other hand, the negative correlation between annual expenditure and quality of education in some private schools created a reverse trend among some private school parents.

It would be imprudent to consider private schooling as the alternative to public schools, since a vast majority of parents cannot bear the cost of private education, even if a voucher system is introduced (where the government may issue education vouchers to the parents which would enable them to get their children enrolled in schools of their choice). The feasibility of such a system is remote mainly for two reasons: (1) private schooling would involve a far larger amount of parental expenditure than vouchers could offer, and (2) the possibility of establishing private schools in the rural and underprivileged areas of the country is still nothing more than a delusion.

The need of the day, as felt by the respondents in large numbers, was to make immediate policy interventions (including participation of parents in the governance of primary schools of various kinds) and create access to schooling for all children (by establishing more schools and providing better facilities in them, including an optimum student-teacher ratio) while ensuring quality education in the government schools.

An encouraging fact is that some work is in progress in this direction. For example, the Birbhum District Primary Education Council has developed some exemplary model schools. These have a cohesive programme involving parents in school governance (including the implementation of the mid-day meal programme). This ensures high attendance among students and teachers, raises the quality of education in the school, eradicates the evil of private tuition, makes maximum use of the landed assets of the school to create a corpus fund, enabling it to overcome the hurdle of the paucity of funds to a certain degree, and so on. Such local level initiatives with larger public participation, supported by larger government programmes (the launching of the SSK programme and

the implementation of the mid-day meal scheme, etc) could drastically improve the public delivery of primary education. And a better delivery of education is the only alternative for government schools.

Nevertheless, private schools can serve a small fraction of the society - the wealthy. Still, there is a great need for regulatory measures to check the reckless functioning of such schools. Also, more accountability and transparency is necessary in their functioning, the importance of which has been felt across the country.¹

An encouraging fact is that some work is in progress in this direction. For example, the Bidhan District Primary Education Council has developed some exemplary model schools. These have a cohesive programme involving parents in school governance (including the implementation of the mid-day meal programme). This ensures high attendance among students and teachers, raises the quality of education in the school, eradicates the evil of private tuition, makes maximum use of the landed assets of the school to create a corpus fund, enabling it to overcome the hurdle of the paucity of funds to a certain degree, and so on. Such local level initiatives with larger public participation, supported by larger

¹ See De et al (2002), Rajagopalan (2004), Krishnakumar (2004)

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List of the studied Primary Schools

• Private Primary schools

Bolpur Sriniketan Block

Urban

1. Golap Primary Education Centre -Nichupatti
2. Radharaman memorial institution (Happy home)- Dakshin palli, Santiniketan
3. Shishu Niketan- Jambuni.

Rural

4. Netaji Shishu Shiksha Niketan - Supur

Dubrajpur Block

Urban

5. Anandadhara Sishu Niketan - Lalbazar, Rural
6. D.A.V. Public School - Hetampur Rajbati

Nalhati I Block

Urban

7. Durgadevi Maskara Saraswati Sishu Mandir

Rural

8. Haridaspur Sri Sri Ramkrishna Sishu Sikha Niketan

• Other Primary School

Bolpur Sriniketan Block

Rural

9. Rolf Schombes Vidhyasram - Ghoshaldanga, Sattore

• Government Primary School

Bolpur Sriniketan

Urban

1. Srinanda Primary school Jambuni
2. Kalikapur GSFP
3. Sudhamaye Junior Basic School Rural
4. Supur G.S.F Primary School
5. Srichandrapur Mangobinda Junior Basic School

Dubrajpur

Urban

6. Lalbazar Primary School Rural
- 7.1 NO. Hetampur Rani Brajabal Primary School

Nalhati

Urban

8. Nalhati Junior Basic School Rural
9. Haridaspur Primary School

Appendix Tables

Background Information

1. Caste wise distribution of sample households

	GPS	Private	Other	Total
SC	47 (43.5)	14 (14.6)	-	61 (28.2)
ST	14 (13)	3(3.1)	11 (91.7)	28 (13)
Muslims	18 (16.7)	8 (8.3)	-	26 (12)
Others	29 (26.8)	71(73.9)	1 (8.3)	101 (46.8)
Total	108 (100)	96(100)	12 (100)	216 (100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

2. Caste wise distribution of population

Caste	GPS	Private	Other	Total
SC	241	76	-	317
ST	77	11	48	136
Muslims	101	45	-	146
Others	163	373	4	540
Total	582	505	52	1139

3. Caste & gender wise distribution of Primary School going children

Caste	Male	Female	Total
SC	54	66	120
ST	27	25	52
Muslims	24	30	54
Others	82	73	155
Total	187	194	381

4. Caste wise distribution of interviewed children

Caste	Male	Female	Total
SC	29	32	61
ST	17	11	28
Muslims	10	17	27
Others	57	47	104
Total	113	107	220

5. Literacy Status

Other					Private					GPS					Insttn.
Total	Others	M	ST	SC	Total	Others	M	ST	SC	Total	Others	M	ST	SC	Caste
7 (58.3)	-	-	7 (63.6)	-	9 (9.4)	-	1 (12.5)	2 (66.7)	6 (42.9)	36(33.3)	-	5 (27.8)	10 (71.4)	21 (44.7)	Illit.
2 (16.7)	-	-	2 (18.2)	-	1 (1.0)	1 (1.4)	-	-	-	11 (10.2)	3 (10.3)	1 (5.6)	1 (7.1)	6 (12.8)	Lit.
-	-	-	-	-	6 (6.3)	2 (2.8)	-	-	4 (28.6)	13 (12.0)	3 (10.3)	4 (22.2)	1 (7.1)	5 (10.6)	Prim.
2 (16.7)	-	-	2 (18.2)	-	6 (6.3)	3 (4.2)	2 (25.0)	1 (33.3)	-	21 (19.4)	9 (31.0)	3 (16.7)	2 (14.3)	7 (14.9)	Upper prim.
1 (8.3)	1 (100)	-	-	-	16 (16.7)	14 (19.7)	2 (25.0)	-	-	19 (17.6)	11 (37.9)	3 (16.7)	-	5 (10.6)	Secnd.
-	-	-	-	-	10 (10.4)	8 (11.3)	1 (12.5)	-	1 (7.1)	5 (4.6)	1 (3.4)	2 (11.1)	-	2 (4.3)	HS
-	-	-	-	-	38 (39.6)	34 (47.9)	1 (12.5)	-	3 (21.4)	3 (2.8)	2 (6.9)	-	-	1 (2.1)	Grad.
-	-	-	-	-	10 (10.4)	9 (12.7)	1 (12.5)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Post Grad.
12 (100)	1 (100)	-	11 (100)	-	96 (100)	71 (100)	8 (100)	3 (100)	14 (100)	108 (100)	29 (100)	18 (100)	14 (100)	47 (100)	Total

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

6. Caste wise occupation

Institution	Caste	Cultivation	Wage Earner	Service	Business	Petty Trading	Others	Total
GPS	SC	3 (6.4)	32 (68.1)	3 (6.4)	1 (2.1)	7 (14.9)	1 (2.1)	47 (100)
	ST	3 (21.4)	7 (50.0)	4 (28.6)	-	-	-	14 (100)
	M	3 (16.7)	6 (33.3)	2 (11.1)	2 (11.1)	5 (27.8)	-	18 (100)
	Others	4 (13.8)	8 (27.6)	2 (6.9)	7 (24.1)	6 (20.7)	2 (6.9)	29 (100)
	Total	13 (12.0)	53 (49.1)	11 (10.2)	10 (9.3)	18 (16.7)	3 (2.8)	108 (100)
Private	SC	-	5 (41.7)	2 (16.7)	2 (16.7)	5 (41.7)	-	14 (100)
	ST	-	3 (100)	-	-	-	-	3 (100)
	M	1 (12.5)	-	1 (12.5)	4 (50.0)	1 (12.5)	1 (12.5)	8 (100)
	Others	5 (7.0)	-	27 (38.0)	29 (40.8)	3 (4.2)	7 (9.9)	71 (100)
	Total	6 (6.3)	8 (8.3)	30 (31.3)	35 (36.5)	9 (9.4)	8 (8.3)	96 (100)
Other	SC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	ST	4 (36.4)	7 (63.6)	-	-	-	-	11 (100)
	M	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Others	1 (100)	-	-	-	-	-	1 (100)
	Total	5 (41.7)	7 (58.3)	-	-	-	-	12 (100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

7. Caste and Income group wise distribution of households

		Below	Rs. 15001	Rs. 25001	Rs. 40001	Rs. 60001	Rs. 80001	Above	Total
		Rs. 15000	to Rs. 25000	to Rs. 40000	to Rs. 60000	to Rs. 80000	to Rs. 100000	Rs. 100000	
GPS	SC	18(38.3)	20(42.6)	6(12.8)	1(2.1)	2(4.3)	-	-	47(100)
	ST	6(42.9)	2(14.3)	3(21.4)	2(14.3)	-	1(7.1)	-	14(100)
	M	5(27.8)	5(27.8)	5(27.8)	-	2(11.1)	-	1(5.6)	18(100)
	Others	4(13.8)	8(27.6)	7(24.1)	5(17.2)	4(13.8)	-	1(3.4)	29(100)
	Total	33(30.6)	35(32.4)	21(19.4)	8(7.4)	8(7.4)	1(0.9)	2(1.8)	108(100)
Private	SC	5(35.7)	2(14.3)	3(21.4)	3(21.4)	-	1(7.1)	-	14(100)
	ST	2(66.7)	1(33.3)	-	-	-	-	-	3(100)
	M	-	1(12.5)	1(12.5)	1(12.5)	1(12.5)	1(12.5)	3(37.5)	8(100)
	Others	-	3(4.2)	12(16.9)	11(15.5)	8(11.3)	18(25.4)	19(26.8)	71(100)
	Total	7(7.3)	7(7.3)	16(16.7)	15(15.6)	9(9.4)	20(20.8)	22(22.9)	96(100)
Other	SC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	ST	7(63.6)	3(27.3)	-	1(9.1)	-	-	-	11(100)
	M	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Others	-	-	1(100)	-	-	-	-	1(100)
	Total	7(58.3)	3(25.0)	1(8.3)	1(8.3)	-	-	-	12(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

Infrastructure

8. Materials available

	GPS	Private	Other	Total
Blackboard	9(100)	8(100)	1(100)	18(100)
TLM	9(100)	4(50.0)	1(100)	14(77.8)
Toys and Games	9(100)	6(75.0)	1(100)	16(88.9)
Total no. of schools	9	8	1	18

Responses not mutually exclusive

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

9. Caste wise distribution of teachers according to caste

	GPS	Private	Other	Total
SC	8(15.4)	4(11.1)	4(57.1)	16(15.5)
ST	-	-	3(42.9)	3(2.9)
Muslim	2(3.8)	3(8.3)	-	5(4.9)
Others	42(80.8)	37(84.1)	-	79(76.7)
Total	52(100)	44(100)	7(100)	103(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

10. Distribution of the teachers according to their educational qualification

	GPS	Private	Other	Total
Secondary	25(48.1)	3(6.8)	-	28(27.2)
Higher secondary	10(19.2)	6(13.6)	-	16(15.5)
Graduate and above	17(32.7)	35(79.5)	7(100)	59(57.3)
Total	52(100)	44(100)	7(100)	103(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

Perception on performance

11 Parents' perception with the performance of the children

Institution	Caste	Excellent	Good	Average	Bad	Total
GPS	SC	2(4.3)	24(51.1)	19(40.4)	2(4.3)	47(100)
	ST	-	5(35.7)	8(57.1)	1(7.1)	14(100)
	M	1(5.6)	13(72.2)	4(22.2)	-	18(100)
	Others	1(3.2)	17(54.8)	13(41.9)	-	31(100)
	Total	4(3.6)	59(53.6)	44(40.0)	3(2.7)	110(100)
Private	SC	2(14.3)	8(57.1)	3(21.4)	1(7.1)	14(100)
	ST	1(33.3)	2(66.7)	-	-	3(100)
	M	1(11.1)	4(44.4)	4(44.4)	-	9(100)
	Others	10(13.9)	56(77.8)	6(8.3)	-	72(100)
	Total	14(14.3)	70(71.4)	13(13.3)	1(1.0)	98(100)
Other	SC	-	-	-	-	-
	ST	-	10(90.9)	1(9.1)	-	11(100)
	M	-	-	-	-	-
	Others	-	1(100)	-	-	1(100)
	Total	-	11(91.7)	1(8.3)	-	12(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

12. Parents' perception with the performance of teachers

Institution	Caste	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Total
GPS	SC	32(68.1)	8(17.0)	7(14.9)	47(100)
	ST	8(57.1)	2(14.3)	4(28.6)	14(100)
	M	14(77.8)	4(22.2)	-	18(100)
	Others	23(74.2)	7(22.6)	1(3.2)	31(100)
	Total	77(70.0)	21(19.1)	12(10.9)	110(100)
Private	SC	14(100)	-	-	14(100)
	ST	2(66.7)	1(33.3)	-	3(100)
	M	7(77.8)	2(22.2)	-	9(100)
	Others	61(84.7)	11(15.3)	-	72(100)
	Total	84(85.7)	14(14.3)	-	98(100)
Other	SC	-	-	-	-
	ST	11(100)	-	-	11(100)
	M	-	-	-	-
	Others	1(100)	-	-	1(100)
	Total	12(100)	-	-	12(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

Assistance

13. Children getting assistance at home

Institution	Caste	Getting	Not Getting	Total
GPS	SC	31(66.0)	16(34.0)	47(100)
	ST	10(71.4)	4(28.6)	14(100)
	M	13(72.2)	5(27.8)	18(100)
	Others	29(93.5)	2(6.5)	31(100)
	Total	83(75.5)	27(24.5)	110(100)
Private	SC	8(57.1)	6(42.9)	14(100)
	ST	2(66.7)	1(33.3)	3(100)
	M	8(88.9)	1(11.1)	9(100)
	Others	70(97.2)	2(2.8)	72(100)
	Total	88(89.8)	10(10.2)	98(100)
Other	SC	-	-	-
	ST	11(100)	-	11(100)
	M	-	-	-
	Others	1(100)	-	1(100)
	Total	12(100)	-	12(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

14. Children taking Private tuition

Institution	Caste	Taking	Not taking	Total
GPS	SC	30(63.8)	17(36.2)	47(100)
	ST	2(14.3)	12(85.7)	14(100)
	M	12(66.7)	6(33.3)	18(100)
	Others	24(77.4)	7(22.6)	31(100)
	Total	68(61.8)	42(38.2)	110(100)
Private	SC	12(85.7)	2(14.3)	14(100)
	ST	1(33.3)	2(66.7)	3(100)
	M	6(66.7)	3(33.3)	9(100)
	Others	42(58.3)	30(41.7)	72(100)
	Total	61(62.2)	37(37.8)	98(100)
Other	SC	-	-	-
	ST	11(100)	-	11(100)
	M	-	-	-
	Others	1(100)	-	1(100)
	Total	12(100)	-	12(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

15. Identity of Private tutor

Institution	Caste	Teacher of the same school	Teacher of the Other (Govt.)	Teacher of the Other (Pvt.)	Others	Total
GPS	SC	-	1(3.3)	-	29(96.7)	30(100)
	ST	-	-	-	2(100)	2(100)
	M	-	-	-	12(100)	12(100)
	Others	-	-	-	24(100)	24(100)
	Total	-	1(1.5)	-	67(98.5)	68(100)
Private	SC	8(66.7)	-	-	4(33.3)	12(100)
	ST	1(100)	-	-	-	1(100)
	M	-	-	-	6(100)	6(100)
	Others	4(9.5)	1(2.4)	1(2.4)	36(85.7)	42(100)
	Total	13(21.3)	1(1.6)	1(1.6)	46(75.4)	61(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

Quality

16. Frequency of evaluation

	GPS	Private	Other	Total
Weekly	-	1(12.5)	-	1(5.6)
Quarterly	-	2(25.0)	-	2(11.1)
Six- monthly	5(55.6)	4(50.0)	1(100)	10(55.6)
Annually	-	-	-	-
Four times in a year	1(11.1)	-	-	1(5.6)
Five times in a year	3(33.3)	1(12.5)	-	4(22.2)
Total number of schools	9(100)	8(100)	1(100)	18(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

17. Method of evaluation

	GPS	Private	Other	Total
Written	9(100)	8(100)	1(100)	18(100)
Oral	9(100)	8(100)	1(100)	18(100)
Observation	2(22.2)	4(50.0)	1(100)	7(38.9)
Total number of schools	9	8	1	18

Responses not mutually exclusive (Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

18. Method of teaching

		Use black board	Read from text book	Give exercise	Rote learning	Game and plays	To read allowed	Others	Total
GPS	SC	43 (91.5)	45 (95.7)	31 (66.0)	2 (4.3)	-	15 (31.9)	2 (4.3)	47 (100)
	ST	13 (92.9)	13 (92.9)	7 (50.0)	-	-	5 (35.7)	-	14 (100)
	M	16 (88.9)	17 (94.4)	15 (83.3)	2 (11.1)	-	14 (77.8)	-	18 (100)
	Others	31 (100)	26 (83.8)	18 (58.1)	2 (6.5)	3 (9.7)	15 (48.4)	2 (6.5)	31 (100)
	Total	103 (93.6)	101 (91.8)	71 (64.5)	6 (5.5)	3 (2.7)	49 (44.5)	4 (3.6)	110 (100)
Private	SC	13 (92.9)	11 (78.6)	14 (100)	1 (7.1)	-	8 (57.1)	4 (28.6)	14 (100)
	ST	3 (100)	3 (100)	3 (100)	-	-	2 (66.7)	-	3 (100)
	M	8 (88.9)	9 (100)	9 (100)	1 (11.1)	-	6 (66.7)	-	9 (100)
	Others	53 (73.6)	66 (91.7)	66 (91.7)	7 (9.7)	1 (1.4)	41 (56.9)	6 (8.3)	72 (100)
	Total	77 (78.6)	89 (90.8)	92 (93.9)	9 (9.2)	1 (1.0)	57 (58.2)	10 (10.2)	98 (100)
Other	SC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	ST	11 (100)	11 (100)	9 (81.8)	-	1 (9.1)	7 (63.6)	-	11 (100)
	M	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Others	1 (100)	1 (100)	1 (100)	-	-	-	-	1 (100)
	Total	12 (100)	12 (100)	10 (83.3)	-	1 (8.3)	7 (58.3)	-	12 (100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

19. Do teachers punish the children?

Institution	Caste	Yes	No	Total
GPS	SC	46(97.9)	1(2.1)	47(100)
	ST	14(100)	-	14(100)
	M	17(94.4)	1(5.6)	18(100)
	Others	28(90.3)	3(9.7)	31(100)
	Total	105(95.5)	5(4.5)	110(100)
Private	SC	13(92.9)	1(7.1)	14(100)
	ST	3(100)	-	3(100)
	M	7(77.8)	2(22.2)	9(100)
	Others	63(87.5)	9(12.5)	72(100)
	Total	86(87.8)	12(12.2)	98(100)
Other	SC	-	-	-
	ST	11(100)	-	11(100)
	M	-	-	-
	Others	-	1(100)	1(100)
	Total	11(91.7)	1(8.3)	12(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

20. Mode of punishment

	GPS	Private	Other
Scold	99(94.3)	82(95.3)	11(100)
Slap	97(92.4)	72(83.7)	11(100)
Holding of ear	74(70.5)	71(82.6)	10(90.9)
Total number of respondent	105	86	11

Responses not mutually exclusive (Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

Governance of school

21. Do school authority update the parents regarding the performance of children

	GPS	Private	Other
Yes	8(88.9)	8(100)	1(100)
No	1(11.1)	-	-
Total number of school	9(100)	8(100)	1(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

22. Way of updating (teachers' view)

	GPS	Private	Other
Parent-teacher meeting	7(77.8)	6(75.0)	1(100)
Sending report card	1(11.1)	2(25.0)	-
Sending note to the parents	2(22.2)	3(37.5)	-
Personal communication at home	3(33.3)	4(50.0)	1(100)
Personal communication at school	2(22.2)	2(25.0)	-
Others	-	1(12.5)	1(100)
Total number of school	9	8	1

Responses not mutually exclusive (Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

23. Way of updating (parents' view)

Institution	Caste	Teachers' visit at home	Inform by the children or through diary	Parents' visit at school	Meet any where other than school/ home	Total number of respondents
GPS	SC	17(50)	18(52.9)	3(8.8)	6(17.6)	34(100)
	ST	3(27.3)	8(72.3)	1(9.1)	-	11(100)
	M	3(20.0)	9(60.0)	1(6.7)	4(26.7)	15(100)
	Others	11(50.0)	9(40.9)	3(13.6)	5(22.7)	22(100)
	Total	34(41.5)	44(53.7)	8(9.8)	15(18.3)	82(100)
Private	SC	8(57.1)	5(35.7)	1(7.1)	2(14.3)	14(100)
	ST	2(100)	-	-	1(50.0)	2(100)
	M	1(20.0)	3(60.0)	3(60.0)	-	5(100)
	Others	13(19.4)	33(49.3)	21(31.3)	5(7.5)	67(100)
	Total	24(27.3)	41(46.6)	25(28.4)	8(9.1)	88(100)
Other	SC	-	-	-	-	-
	ST	7(63.6)	5(45.5)	-	-	11(100)
	M	-	-	-	-	-
	Others	1(100)	1(100)	-	-	1(100)
	Total	8(66.7)	6(50.0)	-	-	12(100)

Responses not mutually exclusive (Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

24. Presence of Parent/Mother-Teacher Association in school (Teachers' responses)

	GPS	Private	Other
Yes	9(100)	2(25.0)	-
No	-	6(75.0)	1(100)
Total number of school	9(100)	8(100)	1(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

25. Presence of Parent/Mother-Teacher Association in school (Parents' responses)

Institution	Caste	Yes	No	Don't know	Total
GPS	SC	12(25.5)	25(53.2)	10(21.3)	47(100)
	ST	2(14.3)	4(28.6)	8(57.1)	14(100)
	M	4(22.2)	6(33.3)	8(44.4)	18(100)
	Others	14(45.2)	11(35.5)	6(19.4)	31(100)
	Total	32(29.1)	46(41.8)	32(29.1)	110(100)
Private	SC	6(42.9)	8(57.1)	-	14(100)
	ST	-	2(66.7)	1(33.3)	3(100)
	M	-	8(88.9)	1(11.1)	9(100)
	Others	21(29.1)	40(55.6)	11(15.3)	72(100)
	Total	27(27.6)	58(59.2)	13(13.3)	98(100)
Other	SC	-	-	-	-
	ST	-	8(72.7)	3(27.3)	11(100)
	M	-	-	-	-
	Others	-	-	1(100)	1(100)
	Total	-	8(66.7)	4(33.3)	12(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

26. Does school authority hold meeting with parents (Teachers' responses)

	GPS	Private	Other
Yes	9(100)	7(87.5)	1(100)
No	-	1(12.5)	-
Total number of school	9(100)	8(100)	1(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

27. Does school authority hold meeting with parents (Parents' responses)

Institution	Caste	Yes	No	Don't know	Total
GPS	SC	35(74.5)	11(23.4)	1(2.1)	47(100)
	ST	8(57.1)	1(7.1)	5(35.7)	14(100)
	M	12(66.7)	6(33.3)	-	18(100)
	Others	23(74.2)	7(22.6)	1(3.2)	31(100)
	Total	78(70.9)	25(22.7)	7(6.4)	110(100)
Private	SC	9(64.3)	5(35.7)	-	14(100)
	ST	1(33.3)	2(66.7)	-	3(100)
	M	7(77.8)	2(22.2)	-	9(100)
	Others	60(83.3)	11(15.3)	1(1.4)	72(100)
	Total	77(78.6)	20(20.4)	1(1.0)	98(100)
Other	SC	-	-	-	-
	ST	10(90.9)	1(9.1)	-	11(100)
	M	-	-	-	-
	Others	1(100)	-	-	1(100)
	Total	11(91.7)	1(8.3)	-	12(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

28. Interval of meetings (Teachers' responses)

	GPS	Private	Other
Monthly	5(55.6)	1(14.3)	-
Quarterly	1(11.1)	-	-
Occasionally	3(33.3)	6(85.7)	1(100)
Total number of schools	9(100)	7(100)	1(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

29. Interval of meetings (Parents' responses)

Insttn.	Caste	Monthly	Quarterly	Half yearly	Occasionally	Don't know	Total
GPS	SC	14(40.0)	1(2.9)	3(8.6)	14(40.0)	3(8.6)	35(100)
	ST	4(50.0)	1(12.5)	1(12.5)	2(25.0)	-	8(100)
	M	7(58.3)	1(8.3)	1(8.3)	2(16.7)	1(8.3)	12(100)
	Others	11(47.8)	1(4.3)	4(17.4)	7(30.4)	-	23(100)
	Total	36(46.1)	4(5.1)	9(11.5)	25(32.1)	4(5.1)	78(100)
Private	SC	1(11.1)	-	1(11.1)	7(77.8)	-	9(100)
	ST	-	-	-	1(100)	-	1(100)
	M	2(28.6)	1(14.3)	2(28.6)	1(14.3)	1(14.3)	7(100)
	Others	6(10.0)	9(15.0)	9(15.0)	35(58.3)	1(1.7)	60(100)
	Total	9(11.6)	10(13.0)	21(27.3)	44(57.1)	4(5.2)	77(100)
Other	SC	-	-	-	-	-	-
	ST	1(10.0)	3(30.0)	2(20.0)	4(40.0)	-	10(100)
	M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Others	-	-	-	1(100)	-	1(100)
	Total	1(9.1)	3(27.3)	2(18.2)	5(45.5)	-	11(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

30. Rate of attendance in the meeting (teachers' response)

	GPS	Private	Other
Below 10 percent	1(11.1)	-	-
10 to 25 percent	2(22.2)	-	-
25 to 50 percent	4(44.4)	1(14.3)	-
50 to 75 percent	2(22.2)	2(28.6)	-
Above 75 percent	-	4(57.1)	1(100)
Total number of school	9(100)	7(100)	1(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

31. Do parents attend the meeting

Institution	Caste	Yes	No	Total
GPS	SC	24(68.6)	11(31.4)	35(100)
	ST	6(75.0)	2(25.0)	8(100)
	M	10(83.3)	2(16.7)	12(100)
	Others	16(69.6)	7(30.4)	23(100)
	Total	56(71.8)	22(28.2)	78(100)
Private	SC	4(44.4)	5(55.6)	9(100)
	ST	1(100)	-	1(100)
	M	6(85.7)	1(14.3)	7(100)
	Others	53(88.3)	7(11.7)	60(100)
	Total	64(83.1)	13(16.9)	77(100)
Other	SC	-	-	-
	ST	10(90.9)	1(9.1)	11(100)
	M	-	-	-
	Others	1(100)	-	1(100)
	Total	11(91.7)	1(8.3)	12(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

32. Reason for not attending meeting

Institution	Caste	No time	Not invited	Due to illness	Total
GPS	SC	8(72.7)	3(27.3)	-	11(100)
	ST	2(100)	-	-	2(100)
	M	-	1(50.0)	1(50.0)	2(100)
	Others	7(100)	-	-	7(100)
	Total	17(77.3)	4(18.2)	1(4.5)	22(100)
Private	SC	5(100)	-	-	5(100)
	ST	-	-	-	-
	M	1(100)	-	-	1(100)
	Others	5(71.4)	1(14.3)	1(14.3)	7(100)
	Total	11(84.6)	1(7.7)	1(7.7)	13(100)
Other	SC	-	-	-	-
	ST	-	-	1(100)	1(100)
	M	-	-	-	-
	Others	-	-	-	-
	Total	-	-	1(100)	1(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

33. Point discussed in the meeting

	GPS	Private	Other
Improvement of children education	29(51.8)	48(75.0)	7(63.6)
Children attendance	25(44.6)	2(3.1)	5(45.5)
Child care at home	16(28.6)	5(7.8)	2(18.2)
Regarding school problem	6(10.7)	37(57.8)	3(27.3)
About giving assistance and Private tuition	2(3.6)	1(1.6)	-
Others	4(7.2)	10(15.6)	2(18.2)
Don't know	7(12.5)	7(10.9)	1(9.1)
Total number of respondents	56(100)	64(100)	11(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

34. Problems faced by the teachers to run the school

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

	GPS	Private	Other
Inadequate classroom	4(44.4)	1(12.5)	-
Absence of non teaching staff	1(11.1)	-	-
Inadequate teacher	3(33.3)	-	-
Non co-operation among the teachers	1(11.1)	-	-
Lack of parents awareness	1(11.1)	1(12.5)	1(100)
Lack of infrastructure	4(44.4)	5(62.5)	-
Certificate problem	-	2(25.0)	-
Poor attendance	4(44.4)	-	1(100)
Misconduct by local people	1(11.1)	1(12.5)	-
Fund crisis	1(11.1)	8(100)	-
Problem with VEC/ other committee	1(11.1)	1(12.5)	-
Political problem	1(11.1)	-	-
No problem	1(11.1)	-	-
Total number of respondents	9	8	1

Choice of school

35. Will parents (of GPS going children) enrol their children in Private primary schools if available in the locality

	SC	ST	Muslim	Others	Total
Yes	15(31.9)	6(42.9)	3(16.7)	6(20.7)	30(27.8)
No	32(68.1)	8(57.1)	15(83.3)	23(79.3)	78(72.2)
Total number of respondents	47(100)	14(100)	18(100)	29(100)	108(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

36. Parents' (of GPS going children) choice of school if the cost of schooling remains same

	SC	ST	Muslim	Others	Total
GPS	17(36.2)	5(35.7)	6(33.3)	11(37.9)	39(36.1)
NGPS	28(59.6)	7(50.0)	10(55.6)	18(62.1)	63(58.3)
Don't know	2(4.3)	2(14.3)	2(11.1)	-	6(5.6)
Total number of respondents	47(100)	14(100)	18(100)	29(100)	108(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

37. Preference of medium of instruction in school

Instrtn.	Caste	Bengali	English	Hindi	Santali	Don't know	Total Respondents
GPS	SC	34(72.3)	10(21.3)	1(2.1)	-	2(4.3)	47(100)
	ST	8(57.1)	1(7.1)	-	3(21.4)	2(14.3)	14(100)
	M	14(77.8)	2(11.1)	-	-	2(11.1)	18(100)
	Oth	20(68.9)	9(31.1)	-	-	-	29(100)
	Total	76(70.4)	22(20.4)	1(0.9)	3(2.8)	6(5.6)	108(100)
Private	SC	11(78.6)	3(21.4)	-	-	-	14(100)
	ST	2(66.7)	1(33.3)	-	-	-	3(100)
	M	3(37.5)	5(62.5)	-	-	-	8(100)
	Oth	42(59.2)	28(39.4)	1(1.4)	-	-	71(100)
	Total	58(60.4)	37(38.5)	1(1.0)	-	-	96(100)
Other	SC	-	-	-	-	-	-
	ST	10(90.9)	-	-	4(36.4)	-	11(100)
	M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Oth	1(100)	-	-	-	-	1(100)
	Total	11(91.7)	-	-	4(33.3)	-	12(100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

Category	SC	ST	M	Oth	Total
Problem with VEC/ other committee	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	4(33.3)
Political problem	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	4(33.3)
No problem	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	4(33.3)
Problem with VEC/ other committee	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	4(33.3)
Political problem	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	4(33.3)
No problem	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	4(33.3)
Problem with VEC/ other committee	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	4(33.3)
Political problem	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	4(33.3)
No problem	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	1(11.1)	4(33.3)

38. Choice of school

Category	SC	ST	M	Oth	Total
Yes	15(37.5)	15(37.5)	15(37.5)	15(37.5)	60(37.5)
No	32(77.5)	32(77.5)	32(77.5)	32(77.5)	128(77.5)
Total number of respondents	47(100)	47(100)	47(100)	47(100)	188(100)

39. Parents' (or GPS going children) choice of school if the cost of schooling remains same

Category	SC	ST	M	Oth	Total
GPS	14(33.3)	14(33.3)	14(33.3)	14(33.3)	56(33.3)
NGPS	28(66.7)	28(66.7)	28(66.7)	28(66.7)	112(66.7)
Don't know	2(4.7)	2(4.7)	2(4.7)	2(4.7)	8(4.7)
Total number of respondents	44(100)	44(100)	44(100)	44(100)	170(100)