

Community - School Interlinks

**Report of a Socio-Anthropological Study of
Primary Education in Five Districts in Karnataka.**

by

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Note and Acknowledgement

This is a preliminary report of a study conducted to understand the links between communities and schools in five districts of Karnataka. Due to unavoidable circumstances, a more detailed study of each of the districts was not conducted. The study focuses on identifying systemic problems in primary education in the state and on identifying ways to address these problems. This study was not meant to be an assessment or evaluation of the whole DPEP programme in the state, though some of the programmes that relate to community conditions are assessed in this study. This research was initiated in 1999 when Ms. Anita Kaul was the Project Director, DPEP-Karnataka. Thanks are to her for her interest and support. The following persons in the different districts helped us visit schools and villages: Shri Dashrath Danoji and Anand Badigar from the BRC, Khanapur, Belgaum; Shri M. H. Donur, DPEP Coordinator, Bijapur, Shri K. Nagaraj Gowda and Sri Amarnath, BRC, Mulbagal, Kolar; Smt. Mai Muneesa Begum, Shri.Kendaganna Swamy and Shri B.L. Vasant Raj from the DPEP office in H.D.Kote, Mysore District. The following NGOs provided us with hospitality and assistance; Grama Vikasa in Mulbagal; MYRADA and Fedina Vikasa in H.D.Kote; Fr. Claude D'Souza and Fr. Paulose of the Centre for Non-Formal Education in Bijapur; and MAYA in Channapatna. Thanks are to S. Dharmendra who helped conduct field research during the preliminary rounds and Ms. G. Mini for help in conducting the final rounds of fieldwork. Special thanks to Ms. Kathyayini Chamaraj who joined us in the final phase of fieldwork, between the months of February and March 2000, and helped in writing the report and to Ms. Saritha Tukaram for compiling the data. Thanks also to Ms. J.N. Sandhya of NIAS for help in typing the report.

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SUMMARY

This report is based on a field study conducted in five districts (Bijapur, Belgaum, Bangalore, Kolar, Mysore) of Karnataka with a focus on understanding community-school interlinks. The study observes local conditions and trends that thwart the establishment of effective schools and schooling in these areas. In addition to noting how economic and social disadvantages prevent marginal communities from accessing schooling, the study calls attention to the range of cultural practices such as child marriage and dowry which further disadvantage girls. The study particularly notes social, economic, political and ecological problems that combine to deny equal educational opportunities to many children. The study identifies trends such as the growth of new tertiary sectors in the economy which absorb child labour and which prevent the universalisation of primary education. Scrutinising the institutional and administrative structures such as the Village Education Committee and the School Betterment Committee (both of which are now replaced by the School Development and Monitoring Committee), the study delineates the problems associated with the functioning of these structures. Based on interviews with teachers the study notes the multiple problems in teacher education which are manifested in the lack of commitment to teaching and in the social distance that teachers have from the students' social contexts. The study concludes by providing suggestions to establish a State Elementary Education System which can overcome the current problems in the state's primary education sector and calls attention to the following issues that pertain to elementary education in the state:

1. There is an urgent need for the government to assess the functioning of schools in the state. Yet the assessment must be holistic and not focus primarily on pupil teacher ratios. Lack of adequate number of children in schools reflects not a lack of demand but the declining conditions of schools.
2. Government efforts to focus and integrate community involvement in the administration of schools must be cautiously implemented. Decentralization of administration requires understanding of the complex realities of ground conditions especially of the political underpinnings of community structures.
3. The state must enhance not only its financial allocations to the education sector but must also implement the prohibition of practices such as child labour and child marriage.
4. The state must provide for schools to have flexible timings which suit the ecological, economic and social calendars of communities.
5. The state must note that it is the most important agency that can help communities/people challenge the cycle of disadvantages, of which the lack of opportunities for education is one of the most persistent one.

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COMMUNITY-SCHOOL INTERLINKS

Report of
A Socio-Anthropological Study of Primary Education in
Five Districts in Karnataka

Section: A

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This preliminary report is based on field research conducted from the month of April 1999 to May 2001. In focussing on community-school interlinks the objectives of this research study were to note the relationship between the social, cultural, ecological, economic and political bases of different communities and the conditions of primary schools in these communities. A key perspective that informs this study is that of attempting to see schools as sub-systems of the communities in which they are located. While most studies focus on the school itself, its functioning, the enrolment, attendance and drop-out levels etc., there is a need to understand the ways in which communities as geo-physical localities, in which members are interlinked by economic, social and political relations, impact on the functioning of schools. More specifically, the ways in which community conditions, relations, and orientations are either conducive to the functioning of schools or are detrimental to the functioning of schools needs to be highlighted.

An understanding of such community-school complexities and trends are pertinent in the context of recent studies¹ that indicate the indispensability of community or people's involvement with education institution building. The UNICEF report² of 1999 says, "Education is coming to be seen less as the exclusive province of governments and more as a vital part of the life of the whole community. Communities that participate actively in the running of an educational facility have more chance to make its service relevant and more incentive to make it successful." For Karnataka, and India as a whole, this is important since the British colonial administration of education and the subsequent government administration of education has meant an increasing bureaucratisation of educational institutions and the erosion of local involvement and contribution to education. If mass primary education is to be a reality then the potential and problems at the ground level and the ways in which education institutions can be built, managed and sustained with involvement from citizens needs to be documented, understood and integrated into government policies.

¹ There is a vast literature on this subject; two seminal ones are those by Beatrice Avalos, "*Teaching Children of the Poor*". UNESCO, 1983. See also; J.H. McGiveney and William Moynihan, "School and Community", *Teachers' College Record*, Vol 74 (2) 1972.

² UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children*. Summary, p.10. 1999.

One of the important ways in which the role and contributions of communities towards elementary education has been enhanced has been since the promulgation and promotion of the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution that assured the institutionalisation of administrative decentralization. In addition, programmes such as the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) have sought to develop primary education through community involvement and participation. In many ways, such decentralised governance and community-linked development of primary education are considered to lay the grounds for the possibility of decentralising (to a certain degree) the management and supervision of elementary education. Yet, the viability of decentralised education management needs to be assessed in terms of the variations in the social, cultural, political and economic conditions of different communities. As studies have indicated, decentralization of primary education holds both promises and problems and there is an urgent need to identify these³. In such a context, a sociological focus on the issues that can enhance or thwart decentralised education management can contribute to the understanding and implementation of such policies.

Recent reports and citizen interventions have indicated the need to take a human rights and child rights-based approach to promoting universal access to primary education. In such an approach, the state bears an onus to provide for the education of all children. An in-depth understanding of community conditions and community-school, and state-community interlinks will also help formulate policies in which the state's promotion of the right to education for all children and the citizens' ability to claim these rights can be better realised.

Perhaps the most important reason for studying community-school interlinkages is drawn from the observation that a new mass thrust for education is building up in the state, as it is in the rest of the nation. Many groups and communities that have largely remained outside the purview of formal education are now seeking to be included in its agenda. In seeking to alter a significant marker (from being illiterates to becoming literates) in their lives, many people now seek to participate and even contribute to the functioning of schools. Research and policy can, then, draw on this new mass surge for education and indicate ways in which programmes can take into consideration the requirements and problems of local communities and communities can, in turn, be made aware of policies and programmes for education.

³ L.McDougall, "Gender Gap in Literacy in Uttar Pradesh: Questions for Decentralised Educational Planning", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol 35 (19). 2000.

II. ISSUES IN KARNATAKA'S PRIMARY EDUCATION

The need for a community-based approach to developing an elementary school system in the state is imperative in the context of the state's contrasting levels and conditions of schools. As is now well known, Karnataka's record in primary education is mixed. While the state as a whole ranks 8th in the nation in terms of literacy, it lags behind the southern states of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu in terms of infrastructure and ranks third among the four states in terms of educational opportunity⁴. The state's record in educational opportunities for the poorest 20 percent of the population compares with that of the states of Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh where there are high levels of non-enrollment⁵. An issue or condition that adversely effects the educational opportunity of children in the state is the fact that child-labour persists in the state in the various, industrial, agricultural, service and domestic sectors. As Leiten notes, Karnataka has the second highest proportion (22 percent in 1991) of children in various conditions of labour⁶. Also, assessments which rank the achievement level of primary education in Karnataka as the lowest in the nation⁷ should be taken seriously as an indicator of the more integral problems of primary education in the state.

Reflecting different historical bases and socio-economic development, there are sharp variations in the literacy levels and educational conditions between the districts of the state. Some districts, such as Dakshina Kannada (83 percent literacy in 2001) and Kodagu (78 percent literacy; 2001) have literacy rates and primary education facilities that stand as some of the best in the nation. Yet, on the other hand, districts such as Raichur and Gulbarga, have literacy rates of 49 and 50 percent respectively which are comparable to that of states such as Bihar and Rajasthan⁸. The reputation of cities such as Belgaum, Mysore, Bangalore and Hubli-Dharwar to be significant education centres often camouflage the educational deprivation in areas that are in the vicinity of these cities. For example, the tribal or adivasi belt of Heggada Devanakote in Mysore district and that of Khanapur in Belgaum district with literacy levels which are much lower than that of the district as a whole are cases in point. The hinterlands are not only not integrated into the educational programmes and institutions of these cities but are often blamed for bringing down the average levels of education achievement in the districts. That within a region there is no uniform spread of educational institutions is observable in the fact that though Karnataka has several organisations and institutions that have large professional education centres, they have not focussed on developing primary education even in the areas/regions where they are well established.

⁴ M.Indira, "Fifty Years of Literacy Development in Karnataka: District Level Analysis", *Journal of Educational Planning and Administration*, Vol XIII (1). 1999.

⁵ Primary Education in India, World Bank, 1997.

⁶ G.K. Leiten, "Children, Work and Education-Part I (General Parametres). *Economic and Political Weekly*, 34 (4). 2000.

⁷ Primary Education in India, World Bank . 1997.

⁸ Census of India, 2001. Government of India. 2001.

In addition, several contradictory indices and trends in the state's primary education need to be reviewed and contextualised. For example, in Karnataka there is no neat correlation between literacy rates and income levels. Districts such as Kolar, Dharwad and Uttara Kannada which have relatively low income levels are associated with higher literacy levels while high income districts such as Mandya and rural Bangalore have lower literacy levels (See Appendix I: District Literacy Levels). While north Karnataka as a whole is considered to be educationally backward, the causes for such conditions and education deprivation in these districts have not been made explicit. So also, some trends such as that in Bijapur which has a high male literacy rate (68 percent, 2001) but a low female literacy rate (46 percent in 2001) and, therefore, the state's highest gender disparity ratio in literacy are not understood⁹.

While most reports and documents note such regional variations in the state, there are no studies or detailed reports that note or explain the factors that account for such variations. Hence, attention to the regional variations and the factors that account for them will help provide a contextualised picture to specific situations and can be the bases on which region specific policies and programmes can be made. In conducting this research in areas where education deprivation is highest and among people who are socially and economically marginal, this report seeks to highlight locally specific issues, whether they are ecological, economic, social, or political, that impact on the conditions and processes of providing primary education.

III. RATIONALE FOR CHOOSING RESEARCH SITES

Out of the eleven districts in which the DPEP programme has been initiated, we chose to study five districts that would represent different ecological, economic and social areas. Kolar, Belgaum, Bijapur, Bangalore, and Mysore districts were selected for study (see Appendix II for Profile of Primary Schools in the Selected Districts). Kolar was selected as it represents a semi-arid district with a relatively new higher income growth rate. As a district with the highest proportion of scheduled castes, we thought it could be representative of large settlements with a mixed caste population. Belgaum, a another border district, was selected as it represents two key issues in educational opportunities. One, Belguam is a heavy rain belt where the impact of ecology on the educational opportunities of children could be studied and the other of also having multiple language groups.

For Bangalore (rural), the township of Ramanagaram was selected as it represents a zone with high child labour and is a satellite town of Bangalore city. Apart from this, a slum in Bangalore metropolis was selected, though the DPEP programme was not implemented here in 1999-2000. This was to include a very important and neglected zone where educational opportunities are minimal for the children living there and a range of complexities related to family and community conditions impact on the children's educational opportunity. Bijapur was selected as it represents a drought-prone area with high out-migration and also has several socio-cultural practices that

⁹ Human Development in Karnataka, Government of Karnataka. Bangalore. 1999.

impact on educational opportunity. For Mysore district, we chose to study H.D.Kote taluka as it represents a hill region and has the highest concentration of tribals in the Mysore area and is also the area where the DPEP has promoted the new "Nali Kali" or joyful education approach to primary education.

While the initial research methodology was to study a single village in each of the districts, we found that a single village did not encapsulate all the issues or problems pertinent to the area. In order to observe and document the range of issues within an area or district, we visited a number of villages and settlements in each district so that a broader understanding of the varied conditions in each district could be made (see Appendix III: Villages and Wards Visited). As a result, this study does not have in-depth details, especially numerical or statistical, for each district nor does it provide a district specific overview. Rather, the focus is on identifying conditions and factors in each area and then linking these to the functioning and conditions of the school/s in the villages and areas we visited. Drawing on observations from these districts, the report provides a broad overview of the social bases of primary education in the state.

The format used in this report is that of stating our broad observations and then substantiating these observations with details from the field sites. Our observations draw on our discussions with a wide section of people, including personnel from the education department, the DPEP personnel, panchayat members, VEC members, parents of school and out-of-school children, teachers, and children. We conclude with suggestions that correspond to the observations made and problems identified.

Section B:

AN OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

In reviewing the conditions and functioning of primary education in the districts of Kolar, Bangalore (rural), Belgaum, Bijapur and Mysore we observed a new dynamism in the schools. On the whole, primary schools in these areas had received a boost with much of it being attributed to the DPEP programme. Not only had enrolment levels at the districts, as a whole, increased but many people also indicated the extent to which the performance of schools had improved since 1996. The following factors were indicative of the reasons for the new thrust for education among a wide section of people and for the overall boost that the system had received.

1. Awareness building and the new thrust for education:

The DPEP's community mobilisation programme, *kala jatha*, has helped promote the idea that education is accessible to all. In Yellagondanahalli, a village in Kolar district, many low-ranked caste groups indicated that though a school had been functioning in the village for close to a hundred years, they, as members of the low-castes, had not thought it relevant or possible to attend the school. However, after the *kala jatha* and the VEC training, many of their children were now attending the local school whose profile of students had changed from that of catering mostly to

Brahmin children to one that now included children mostly from the low-ranked Bovi and Ad-Karnataka families. A sense of need for education and right to education has been created among the many families that were largely non-literate.

2. Accessibility and Institution-Building:

With the emphasis on building schools within the reach of children, DPEP has built schools within the SC and ST's hamlets during the past five years. In Bijapur, for the first time, schools have been built in *thandas* under the DPEP programme. Similarly, in Belgaum, the DPEP has established 185 new schools out of which 22 are in the tribal areas and 10 are all-girls' schools. The result is the accessibility to schools in communities that are largely non-literate but who are now learning to engage with issues related to the functioning of schools.

*In Golur Hadi, a settlement of 150 houses of the Betta and Jenu Kuruba within the National Park, the DPEP has initiated efforts to build a school in place of one that consists of a raised mud platform with a thatched roof and no walls. This space with no walls or blackboard is meant to house forty children from classes one to two. Replacing the teacher sent by an NGO, the DPEP has recently appointed two full-time teachers, though one of them commutes from Mysore and is therefore not regular. In the settlement, most of the adults are non-literate and are engaged as agricultural labourers in the neighbouring fields and in cultivating their own pieces of land.

3. Teacher and Head Master/Mistress Training:

Many of the persons we interviewed indicated that the new DPEP training had helped revitalise the teaching methods. Teachers expressed that they felt themselves to be not only important members of the education system but their role was also acknowledged. Many believed that the new pedagogy, especially the child-centred teaching methods, helped them to be more creative. Many teachers noted the importance of the Block and Cluster Resource Centres that had aided them in the new teaching methods.

4. Community Contribution and Involvement:

A significant reason for a new sense of school ownership and responsibility among community members was the DPEP's attempt to integrate the community's contribution to schools. In some villages, people very proudly indicated their contribution towards the purchase of land for the school building. As a result, many were more aware of their children's rights to education and of the need for teachers to be accountable to them. DPEP training for VEC members had made a significant impact in communities where the panchayat was active or where there were interested teachers who could establish good rapport with the community of parents (examples are in the section on VECs). Many teachers indicated that some parents now question teachers if they are late or if they have been absent for a prolonged period. Marking a shift from the otherwise indifference of most adults to the functioning of schools, in some communities parents had donated furniture and some teaching aids to schools.

Though these are some of the factors that account for the overall positive trend in Karnataka's primary education, there is need to take into account the fact that there continue to be several problems in the state's primary education system. Focussing primarily on the community bases and on providing an overview of the education system at local levels, and not on any programme per se, this study identifies and details the following as some of the issues that combine to pose problems in the universalisation of primary education.

PROBLEMS IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL SYSTEM IN KARNATAKA:

I. PROBLEMS IN ESTABLISHING PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Education institution building requires at least three key inputs: a support system that consists of committed teachers, administrators, and community members; infrastructure development in terms of classrooms and civic facilities; and a curriculum that is relevant and sensitive to the needs of the community. While it was not within the purview of the study to assess the curricula and the teaching-learning methods of the schools, we assessed and studied issues such as the accessibility of schools, the presence or absence of children in them, and the support system in the areas studied. Broadly, the following issues were central to the problem in the establishment and functioning of primary schools in the areas studied.

Problems of Accessibility:

Statistical data for Karnataka indicates that in 1999, 91 percent of habitations had primary schools within the habitations and 96 percent have primary schools within a distance of a kilometre¹⁰. While such data are repeatedly cited to note the near universal accessibility of schooling, a closer scrutiny and community-based evaluation will indicate those habitations which lack schools, or those in which schools are dysfunctional. It is important to delineate and study the conditions of schools by community basis since there are marked variations in the schools and schooling opportunities between communities. Data for 1993 for Karnataka had indicated that only 33 percent of the habitations of SCs and 39 percent of the ST habitations had schools¹¹. Though the post 1993 phase had been witness to the establishment of schools in most of the habitations, our study, that focussed on some of the poorest communities in the districts, located several settlements or habitations that did not have schools or those in which the conditions and functioning of the schools was far from adequate.

¹⁰ Human Development in Karnataka. Government of Karnataka. 1999.

¹¹ Sixth All-India Educational Survey, National Tables. Vol. Educational Facilities in Rural and Urban Areas. NCERT. New Delhi. 1997.

The following conditions of schools were observed:

The reach of education programmes and services is directly proportional to the economic and social status of communities. Villages and habitations of low-ranked caste and tribal groups are not served with effective schools and schooling.

* Habitations of low-ranked caste groups tend to be outside the periphery of large multi-caste villages. In Karnataka there are 3,244 habitations of scheduled caste groups with a population of less than 500 persons each and only 18 habitations of more than 5,000 population each¹². It is in these habitations, especially those that are relatively small and inaccessible, that there are no schools. The *mazara, thanda, keri* etc., are the outlying settlements that lack primary schools.

*In Kolar, the hamlets, which are called *mazara* and where the low-ranked caste groups live, have the least functional schools. Similarly, until recently most *thanda*, where the lambadi live, did not have schools. The poorest wards in the towns (Bijapur and Ramanagaram) and in Bangalore do not have schools that are adequate in terms of the infrastructure and their capacity.

* In Heggada Devana Kote taluka of Mysore district, many of the settlements in the forest and tribal areas, where members of the Soliga, Kadu Kuruba, Jenu Kuruba, Yerava, and the Parivar Nayaka live, are either without schools or have schools that are largely dysfunctional. Out of the 109 hadis or tribal settlements, twenty-two do not have schools. The schools that exist in many of the others are either dysfunctional or are able to cater to a small proportion of the total school-age population. When much of the local forest was incorporated to form the Rajiv Gandhi National Park, several *adivasi* settlements were displaced from their original habitation within the forest. Settlements within the park are considered "illegal" and any attempt to construct schools (by the local people or the education department) is objected to by the Forest Department.

*All the eight Ashramshalas in H.D. Kote, established and maintained by the government, are only from the I to IV standard. The residential capacity is far less than the number of children from the communities that they supposedly cater to. In the Ashram Shala at Beemanahalli, there is a capacity for only 50 children from the Jenu Kuruba tribe whereas there are more than 160 households in the adjoining colony with approximately 180-200 children of school age. More than- three-quarters of the children from this adjoining colony were not enrolled in the school and most were not employed or working with their parents either.

¹² Sixth All-India Educational Survey. National Tables. Vol. Educational Facilities in Rural and Urban Areas. NCERT. New Delhi. 1997.

In some of the poorest and marginal areas, schools are not located within safe reach of children.

There are several remote areas, in jungles, etc., where no schools have been started though demand exists from the community because of the teachers' inability to access these areas due to bad roads, lack of transportation, wild animals, etc.

*Forty to Forty two habitations in Belgaum district's Khanapur taluka have no motorable roads, only pathways where even bullock-carts cannot go. Even lone travel is not advisable and people commute only in groups. The nearest motorable point is 5-6 Kms by foot. Even if teachers were to decide to stay in these villages, residential accommodation available is unsatisfactory.

*Often children have to face dangers to reach these schools - in Yarabnagar in Ramanagaram, children have to cross an unmanned railway track to reach the UPS. In Mulbagal taluk, children have to cross a highway; in Bheemanahalli, H.D. Kote taluka, children have to face attacks by elephants, in Belgaum dist, they have to cross jungles.

Schools are often affected by the social and political tensions between different groups within a community.

While overt rejection and refusal of rights to education of low-ranked caste groups is not evident, there are many situations and practices in which the functioning of schools and the education opportunity of the children of the low-ranked caste groups are threatened.

* In K.Ugini village, in Kolar district, a Vokkaliga family with political connections, has occupied the new class-room as their residence claiming that "they also need a house". Government schemes such as housing for members of scheduled castes have led to the growth of a certain animosity and resentment among members of the other castes. Despite the local teachers and panchayat members complaint against such misuse of the school building, no action has been taken against the person who reportedly has good political connections.

* In Ramanagaram's Ward 1, tensions and stone-throwing between two caste groups had led to the closure of the school. The children of the lower-ranked castes had feared further disruption and had transferred themselves to another school, though it had meant walking additional distance and crossing a highway to attend the other school.

* Untouchability continues to be practised in many villages. In Bijapur's Gumasagi village, children from scheduled caste groups are made to sit outside the classrooms. In another village (Kadani), SC/ST children are made to drink water from a separate

pot. Similarly, in Alameela village UPS, children from the SC group are not asked to participate on sports day. They were not in school on the school sports day.

* When out-of-school children attended a non-formal school at a local Mutta in rural Bangalore, they were marked out to be "untouchables" and asked to eat separately. As a result, many dropped out of the programme citing ill-treatment.

Many schools, especially those in poor areas, are subject to vandalism.

Desperately poor communities steal the windows, doors and even bricks used for school buildings. In Bijapur town's Shahpet area, the GHPS is subject to vandalism and theft by the members of the local community. Locks are broken open and chairs, tables, charts and equipment are often stolen. The same was reported in Ramanagaram's Model GHPS. In Bangalore's Ragi Gudda slum, a schoolroom, newly renovated by a private organisation, has its windows broken when a brawl broke out between the young men in the lane.

Most elected representatives and bodies and many NGOs do not consider education and issues related to education to be of central importance or concern.

Activities and concerns of many elected bodies and NGOs are concentrated on issues of development such as housing, road-building, water, etc. Issues related to the promotion of education and to that of prohibiting child labour are not on the agenda of Gram Panchayats, Zilla Parishads and Municipal Councils. Most often discussions and activities centre around that of constructing roads, drains, water and street lights. Many NGOs who are working at community levels also focus on income-generation, community mobilisation, gender and development issues. But, many overlook the need for elementary education among the people they work with.

Inadequate schools or inefficient and dysfunctional schools, especially in the areas where the poor live, impose multiple burdens on parents and children.

The failure to establish schools in the areas where the poor and the marginal live accounts for the fact that the children of these communities continue to be outside the school. Inadequate schooling facilities, especially in the slums, has led many parents to enrol their children in schools that are managed by private groups and charitable organisations. This imposes several burdens on the family. First, they have to pay more than what they can afford to for the schooling of their children. Secondly, they are rarely treated with respect by the management and teachers of private and aided schools.

* In Ragi Gudda slum alone, women take loans from visiting money lenders who charge Rs.50 per week for every Rs. 500 loaned to them. And secondly, many have indicated the ways in which their children are humiliated and taunted in schools

where they are easily identified as "slum children". Children are often punished for not paying school fees on time, for not having uniforms, or being dressed inappropriately. While many parents assess these schools as functioning better than the government school, they indicated the costs that they have to bear, which includes term fees, compulsory uniforms, and money for books and stationery.

* In addition, many parents expressed their diffidence and hesitation to participate in PTA meetings, as they had had experiences of being humiliated. Children from the slums were marked out as "slum children" and were often punished for being late, for improper dressing, or were sent home when there was a delay in paying the school fees.

The new "adopt-a-school" programme cannot ensure the improvement or upgradation of all schools. Expecting public and corporate contribution to elementary schools will not be adequate.

* While it is important to integrate the contribution of the public to the development of schools, expecting this to be a scheme to boost the overall improvement of all schools is myopic. While a few corporate houses and individuals have come forth to adopt schools, a majority of schools do not find sponsors. Further such a scheme erodes the idea that schools can be better administered with the involvement of members of the immediate community.

II. COMMUNITY-SCHOOL SCHEDULES

The Government's school schedule that starts the year in June and final exams concluding in April is largely urban-oriented. With no local flexibility in scheduling the school calendar to suit local schedules, there is a lack of synchrony between the school-schedule and that of a local community's economic and social activities. High absenteeism during key agricultural activities such as sowing and harvesting are reported from several areas. In addition, children accompany parents on pilgrimages or participate in local festivals thereby losing more teaching days. In many areas high student absenteeism is attributable to their participation in agricultural activities and in the local religious and social activities.

* In Bijapur, where a large number of fields are at a distance from the village, cultivators set up temporary shelters and live there during winter harvest (Jan-Feb). During these months, children either accompany their parents to the field dwellings and or perform daily chores of delivering food to the field sites. As a result, children are absent during these periods or are late for classes.

* In Kolar children absent themselves during the harvest season and during the tamarind picking season. In addition, collective village activities such as cleaning tanks, lakes or building bunds are also periods when children absent themselves from school.

* The heavy rains in Belgaum district, especially in the hilly Khanapur area, accounts for high absenteeism during the monsoons. Not only are the settlements scattered but the hilly terrain is also not traversable by children during the heavy rains.

* In H.D. Kote children are drawn into the harvesting activities especially during the harvesting of cotton.

The following table indicates the periods when the work schedule of different regions disrupts or intervenes with the full functioning of schools.

Table I: Community Work Schedule

	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb.	March	April	May
District												
Bijapur		← Sowing →									← Harvesting →	
Belgaum (Khanapur)		← Sowing →								← Harvesting →		
										← Brick-making →		
Kolar			← Harvesting →							← Harvesting →		
Mysore (H.D.Kote)		← Sowing →					← Harvesting →				← Harvesting →	

III. CHILD LABOUR AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

There are several dimensions to understanding child labour and its linkage to education opportunity. An oft-repeated and widely held view is that children from poor families need to supplement their family's income and hence are unable to attend schools. Yet, at the same time, government statistics claim high enrolment figures at schools that imply little or no child labour in the areas. Our visits and discussions with a wide range of people, indicate that the prevalence of child-labour in the state, the absence of children from school and the acceptance of children's absence from school are all issues that need to be addressed immediately.

Child labour is rampant in some areas and contradicts data that claims these children are in school.

Data at many schools and BEO offices claim figures that range from 80 to 90 percent enrolment and attendance figures for school-age children. But, we observed several children to be out-of-school in many of the areas we visited. Also, the actual numbers of children in the classroom was usually only about 50% of the number enrolled.

* Bijapur: A significant proportion of children participate in both family agricultural work and or in animal husbandry. In addition, poor civic conditions, such as the lack of availability of drinking water, firewood, and anganwadis compound the domestic chores that children perform.

* Jeetha or bonded labour is still rampant in Bijapur district and in H.D.Kote Taluk. Children as young as 8 years are bonded to agricultural land-owning families. In both these regions, where a higher dependency on rain-fed agriculture makes for higher agricultural risks, bonded labour, especially for advances in cash and payment in grains, is used by penurious families to tide over periods of food and income shortage. As a result, children are either left to fend for themselves at landed agriculturists' households or their labour is used to provide the family a supplementary income.

* In the sericulture industry in Ramanagaram of rural Bangalore, much of the industry seems to be based on child labour. Children as young as four years work in the filature and twisting units. This is in strong contrast to the usual belief that 'development' will put an end to child labour. Here, development through the introduction of new income-generating industries seems to be based on child labour. In Ramanagaram's poorest ward, Yarabnagar—a predominately Muslim area, more than 50% of the school-age children work in the sericulture units or assist parents in beedi rolling at home¹³. Some teachers indicated the strong correlation between the functioning of the silk industry and that of schools. When the silk industry was low and employment down, the attendance of poor children at school tended to increase.

* In the urban areas, children from Bangalore's Ragi Gudda slum are employed in a range of activities. Boys are employed as helpers, errand boys and garage assistants, and many are in carpentry and construction work. Girls are employed primarily as domestic helpers, often starting off by only accompanying their mothers and then being absorbed into the work. Many are also employed in garment and agarbathi factories. Of all the areas studied, it is only in the urban slums that children combine employment with school. Some children, mostly those above standard IV, were able to do morning and evening jobs such as cleaning cars, watering gardens, dish-washing etc., and also attend schools. Though many school-going rural children help with domestic and production activities of their families, none were formally employed while attending school.

* In Kolar district's K.Ugani village, young boys work in the stone quarries - where they are paid Rs.100/- day. But, since the work is harsh and leaves the hands blistered and cut, many are able to work for only about ten days a month. Girls and women work as agarbathi rollers earning upto Rs.5 per 1000 rolled agarbathis.

* Jaganakote Hadi in H.D.Kote is a resettlement colony of 45 Betta Kuruba families who are completely dependent on agricultural wage labour. Every year, the families migrate to Kerala during the pepper picking seasons, taking even the school-going

¹³ A study conducted by MAYA in Ramanagaram indicates such figures. See *Child Labour in the Sericulture Sector (Bangalore Rural District)*. MAYA. 2000.

children with them. Only 16 children out of about 40 school-age children attend an ashram shala.

Poverty per se is not the singular reason for many parents to not send their children to school

Many parents assume they have a right to the labour and earnings of their children. As result, they see schooling as an opportunity cost and expect that the government should compensate them with an amount equivalent to the opportunity cost they bear in sending their child to school instead of work. The fact of a child dropping-out, because its parents decide that it should do so, works in the long run against the larger interests of the child, its family, society and the nation. Often, some families which are as poor as some others manage to send their children to school instead of work. Many children attend to family labour without foregoing school. Many mothers manage to look after younger children without making an older sibling forego school for this. It appears that the parents' will to enable a child to go to school is largely the determining factor here. This is not to dispute the fact that there are many families which are genuinely in distress, such as single-parent families, families with disabled parents, etc., which need support to enable their children to go to school. In addition, the lack of basic amenities for large sections of the poor, such as piped water supply, clean and easy cooking fuels, child care services, etc., force parents to engage their children in such chores for the family.

Several income-generation schemes such as sericulture, stone quarrying, agarbathi making etc., act as incentives for parents to utilise their children's labour. When such schemes are remunerative they lead to the withdrawing of children from school and to even non-enrollment of children.

Relatively high wage labour as in horticulture and brick-making induce families to withdraw children from school. In Bijapur and Belgaum many families had withdrawn their children, either temporarily or permanently, to have their children work in the brick kilns. Money generated from such employment is used not only for the family's immediate needs but also to repay long-standing loans and to purchase land and other assets.

* Similarly in the sericulture industry in Ramanagaram township, the range of work related to sericulture such as twisting, reeling, cleaning etc., are work that draw predominantly on child labour. As these jobs pay relatively high wages (upto Rs 15 per child per day for cleaning and cooking; Rs 25 for reeling). Parents see this as a more remunerative venture than sending children to school. Pledging children for sums ranging from Rs.3000/- to Rs.10,000- parents violate the rights of children to be educated.

* The fact that a large numbers of children are out of school in Ramanagaram, especially in the poorer areas, is directly linked to the recruitment of children in the

sericulture industry. In the context where such work conditions and production units are not regulated for prevention of child labour, they act as magnets for parents to send their children to work. Even the funding agencies that are supporting the development of these industries do not make it conditional for governments to eliminate child labour to receive the development assistance.

Not all the earnings of children are used for the subsistence or survival of the family. Children's earnings are sometimes considered extra earnings that help families to spend on non-priority items.

* A large number of children are sent to labour because of the disproportionate amounts of money that many poor spend on alcohol and other addictive habits and on celebrating marriages, festivals, etc, which are efforts to improve their social status. It has been revealed by a study¹⁴ conducted by an NGO (MAYA) in Ramnagaram taluka that parents spend up to Rs. 20,000 a year on such non-priority expenditure. These same families then say that they do not have money to educate their children, which may not cost them more than Rs. 1,000 per child per year.

* Parents and employers consider the ages of 8 and 9 as "reasonable" ages for children to be working or employed in a range of activities. The fact that families support children up to the age of eight or so but assign them to work (thereby accounting for their withdrawal from school especially in std III onwards) after this, needs to be reviewed critically.

Teachers, members of the education administration, and members of the local administrative bodies accept these conditions as being related to the abject poverty of the parents and as the only way for the family to survive.

* In all the areas we visited, teachers and members of the education administration saw working children and their absence from school as an inevitable factor of poverty. There were very few instances, where teachers and administrators, attempted to assess the real conditions or reasons for children to be working. As a result, those children, who could be attending school but were not as a result of the apathy and indifference of their parents, were not helped by the administration.

Yet, not all out-of-school children are involved in production activities. Inadequate, ineffective and dysfunctional schools also eliminate children from school thereby leading to high levels of absenteeism and drop-out rates.

¹⁴, *Child Labour in the Sericulture Sector*, MAYA, Bangalore. 2000.

While child labour, in the domestic context and in wage labour, continues to be rampant, attention must also be paid to those children who are out-of-school due to the irregularity or dysfunctionality of schools.

* In Bangalore's Ragi Gudda slum (a non-DPEP area), there are several children between the ages of 6-13 who are not attending school. The local government school is functional in terms of the attendance of teachers, but the school is housed in two separate rooms and is overcrowded. Many parents cite over-crowding at the local government school and the fact that they cannot afford to send their children to the other aided or private schools as factors why their children are out of school.

* In contrast to this, many people indicated the extent to which the DPEP programme had ensured the functioning of schools as compared to their previous irregularity in functioning.

IV. RE-THINKING THE URBAN BIAS IN EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Most statistical data and studies on urban and rural differences in educational opportunity indicate the advantages that urban areas have over the rural areas. This is specifically so in terms of infrastructure and the functioning of schools¹⁵. For Karnataka both infrastructure levels and literacy levels indicate this variation. In 1991 the literacy rate in rural Karnataka was only 47 percent compared to that of 74 percent for urban areas¹⁶. Similarly, a recent survey of out of school children conducted in the state indicated that on an average more rural children were out of school than in the cities¹⁷. While this variation is true for the two areas as a whole, there is the need to rethink the educational opportunity of poor, urban children vis-à-vis those in the rural areas. More than the number of schools in an area, it is important to assess the conditions of the community and its relationship to the school so as to understand the educational opportunities of different children.

In poor urban areas, more specifically the slum and squatter zones, where immigrants and members of the labouring classes live, educational opportunities are fraught with more problems than in a typical, rural context, even if it is also poor.

* Slum areas are considered to be illegal and temporary settlements and hence little or no efforts are made to establish schools within these settlements. As a consequence there are either no government or corporation schools within most of these areas. If there are schools, they are substandard in quality, do not have the capacity to intake all the children in the area and are characterised by high teacher absenteeism.

¹⁵ For details see, J.B.Tilak, *Rural-Urban Inequalities in Education*. CMDR Monograph Series. No. 2. 1992.

¹⁶ Human Development in Karnataka, Government of Karnataka. Bangalore. 1999.

¹⁷ Makkala Sameeksha, office of the Controller of Public Instruction. Bangalore. 2001.

* In Bangalore's Ragi Gudda slum which has about 1400 houses and more than 600 school age children, there is only one primary school that functions out of two separate rooms with a capacity for about eighty students but which cramps in about 120 students. The building itself is donated by a private charitable organisation and only the teachers are sent from the state's education department. Similarly, Bijapur's Sanjay Gandhi Nagar slum and Rangeela Masidi slum do not have government schools. One result of the lack of government schools means that private schools, that are often inadequate in terms of infrastructure and teacher training, mushroom in these areas.

Secondly, unlike rural settlements, slums do not have a definite community identity. Most residents are seasonal migrants and even if they are long-term residents there is always the hope and need to be away from the slum. While community mobilisation by NGOs and local groups has helped in constituting them into interest groups, there is little by way of having a sizeable number of people who can command or demand the services and facilities that are due to them.

*Most slum areas are parts of larger wards and are not necessarily uniform in their constituencies. Most slum residents are mere members of a political vote bank and do not wield any political or administrative clout themselves. As a result, they are not able to assert their rights to have the teachers be accountable to them. Residents, including "leaders" of the slum community are both diffident and afraid to speak to teachers about their absenteeism, or discuss any issue related to the school or to the problems that their children face.

* Family relations and life are also more stressful in urban areas. Many parents work long hours outside the home and are not available to care for or supervise their children. Unsupervised children, especially teenagers, are easily drawn into a web of harmful activities such as gambling, drinking and taking drugs. Our data from the two slums studied indicate a higher drop-out rate for urban poor boys than girls. This is linked to the fact that boys in these areas are absorbed early into the urban informal and tertiary economy. Boys in the slums in Bijapur and Bangalore were employed in a range of activities including rag-picking, vending, assisting garage mechanics, and at construction sites and hotels. As a result, they have less chances of receiving life-long literacy capabilities than girls.

* High levels of distress, marked by frequent unemployment, poor housing conditions and a lack of social support among the slum residents make for turbulent lives. The organisation and endeavour required to send children to school is missing and many children remain un-enrolled. An example of how erosive and debilitating migration to the urban slums is can be observed among new migrants from skilled and service caste groups (potters, weavers, smiths etc). Many of them have lost their livelihoods and occupation in the rural areas and are now part of the urban informal economy and the casual labour force. Though many of these adults, especially the men among them, are educated they are now unable to send their children to school. As a result, there are groups of people among who the younger generation are non-literate.

In this context, understanding the more stressful and more problematic issues of educational opportunities in the urban poor areas can help provide special attention and special programmes that need be designed for these areas.

V. GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

On the whole, Karnataka's literacy rate for women is significantly lower than that for men. (44 percent in 1991 census; 57 percent in 2001 census). Further literacy rates of rural women tend to be much lower than that of urban rates. In districts such as Gulbarga (women's literacy 38 percent 2001 census) and Raichur (36 percent in 2001 census) especially, women's literacy rates were until recently below twenty percent and are below the national average. Contextualising such data in terms of the broader cultural practices in the areas and the functioning of schools, we were able to observe and note the following:

The education opportunities of girls are linked to the economic condition of the household and to the lack of civic amenities and resources in the region.

* Bijapur's low literacy (41% in 1991; 46 % in 2001) for women and high gender disparity ratio are largely due to the fact that the pastoral and agricultural economy and the overall conditions of underdevelopment in the region have led to a greater dependency on child labour than in the other research sites. Both girls and boys are assigned to look after the sizeable herds of cattle and sheep and to assist in the numerous domestic and agricultural tasks. In addition to these, girls also perform a range of household chores that include fetching water, cooking, washing clothes, delivering meals to the fields, tending younger siblings etc.,

In addition to the involvement of children in domestic and non-domestic chores and labour, the practice of child marriage and the subsequent retention of the girl within the home are the major reasons for girls to be withdrawn from school.

* Child marriage is rampant in Bijapur district as it is in the other north Karnataka districts of Bidar, Raichur, and Gulbarga. There is a strong cultural bases to the performance of child marriages. Linked to its ritual corpus of conducting puberty rites for girls is the notion that the performance of a marriage of a girl will lead to the enhanced accrument of merit (*punya*) to the parents. Such cultural ideas have consolidated to make child marriage a much adhered and wide-spread practice in the area and is currently practiced by a large number of castes that includes the Jangama Lingayats and all the other Lingayat sub-groups and other castes.

* While grooms typically are older, and are not withdrawn from schools, girls are withdrawn from school both at marriage (often as young as 7-8 yrs) and on reaching puberty. In the village of Rampura, two girls had been withdrawn from class IV as they had been married. Only one continued to attend class. In the other villages in

Sindgi taluka also, girls had withdrawn from school as they had been married. While withdrawal of girls at puberty typically occurs after standard five, there are instances where girls from the 3rd standard onwards are not permitted to attend schools, when the schools are not in the habitation.

The decline in age at marriage of girls is linked to the spread and increase in the amount of dowry.

* While the practice of child marriage remains a problem in some districts, there is the disturbing trend of decreasing age at marriage for girls even among communities that did not practice child marriage. For example, unlike caste Hindu societies, tribal groups did not practice child marriage or have the dowry system. Both seem to have entered the tribal groups at H.D.Kote. In Beemanahalli village, many girls had been married between the ages of 13-14 yrs. We met many who had become mothers at 15 years. Our observations led us to note the decline in girls' age of marriage among many groups, including the adivasi.

* In an attempt to overcome the future risks of increased dowries, parents marry girls at early ages. The result is the withdrawing of girls from schools at ages at early ages and their subsequent retention in the homes.

* Teachers, elected members, and officials of the education administration seem to accept child marriage as a personal, cultural practice which they cannot criticise. Girls who have been married and who are withdrawn from school, are not sought to be re-enrolled. Teachers, especially, see child marriage as a personal and private issue of the family to which they cannot object.

The growth of private and aided schools has lead to a gender based differentiation in school options within families. In urban areas where these options are more easily available, poor households send boys to aided or private schools and girls are enrolled in government or corporation schools.

* In both the urban and rural areas where private schools had mushroomed, we observed that some families had opted to send their children, primarily boys to the private schools. However, in many cases girls continued to be sent to government schools. This gender-based differentiation in school opportunity and experience will enhance the capability differences between genders.

VI. RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

In a state where members of religious minorities form about 15 percent of the population¹⁸, of which Muslims are 11 percent, attention needs to be paid to their educational levels, opportunities and problems. But, more than making a direct link between religion and the educational levels of a group, it is important to situate these

¹⁸ 1991 census

groups in their socio-economic conditions. Many of the religious minorities seem to be living in degraded, less-developed conditions with less economic opportunities than other religious groups. Most of the areas we visited where Muslims lived did not have anganwadis.

* K.Ugini - a predominantly Muslim village in Kolar had no anaganwadi. Most of the Muslims in the area were agricultural workers and quarry-workers, while women supplemented the household theme with beedi rolling. The government Urdu school remained largely dysfunctional with high student and teacher absenteeism.

*In Hosanagara village in Sindgi Tq in Bijapur, all the children of the Muslim Jathgar families do not attend school. As buffalo traders, the adults earn an adequate income and children assist only on market days. On other days, the children are found to have plenty of time. Yet, there seems to be a rejection of the value of formal education. As the Headmaster of the village school pointed out, despite incentives of free books, uniforms and grains given to them, the children from these families did not attend school. The school too had been improved greatly, its surroundings cleaned up and child-centred, activity-oriented teaching methods employed. The enrolment rate of the school had increased tremendously due to this over the years, but despite the school providing quality education, it could still not attract the children of the Jathgar families indicating that a good quality school is in itself insufficient to attract all children. Similarly, many of the Jathgar families in Madhbhavi village did not attend school even though there was an Urdu school in the village.

* Most of the Urdu schools in Bijapur were considered to be dysfunctional. The same was also in Kolar's Mulbagal Taluk where only eight out of 38 Urdu schools were considered to be functioning adequately. Personnel from the department of education noted high teacher and student absenteeism to be accountable for the poor performance of these schools.

* The use of Kannada as a medium of instruction may be a problem in some areas. In Khanapur in Belgaum District, the Gandhinagar ward members of the Muslim community had withdrawn their children from the local Kannada, government school and were awaiting the sanctioning of funds for a different school.

* In the predominantly Muslim ward of Yarabnagar in Ramanagaram, the local Urdu Primary school is housed in a rented building that consists of a rough and unfinished brickroom. Efforts by members of the local community to have a school built, since the past three years, have been futile. The BEO's office seems unsympathetic to the community's request for a school and while the official sanction has been made the actual work on the school is yet to begin. Meanwhile, more than 50% of the children in the ward work in the local silk twisting units.

* In Bangalore's Ragi Gudda slum, members of the Christian community were able to access education through the church and some international charitable organisations. However, in contrast to the opportunities and support afforded to them, the same was not available for Muslims.

VII. SEASONAL MIGRATION:

Migration, both seasonal and permanent, impacts on the educational opportunities of children. This is more evident in those areas that are both underdeveloped and subject to droughts and other climatic hazards that compel people to resort to migration and which disrupts the educational opportunities of children. The lack of local flexibility in the school schedule compounds the impact of migration on school attendance and functioning.

*In Ragi Gudda, the urban area, in Bangalore children accompany their parents on their annual visits to their natal/villages, festivals periods, such as Pongal and Ugadi are when most long-term absence is observed.

While seasonal and temporary migration and employment in some industries, with relatively higher economic remuneration, leads to an improvement in the economic and social status of the household - it is often at the cost of children's education.

* At the Lambadi thandas in Bijapur, whole families are recruited by an agent and taken to towns in Maharashtra, such as Satara, Kolhapur, Sholapur and Pune to work as construction labour when they have no agricultural work in the village. These families earn up to Rs. 20,000 to 30,000 in three months, the children earning about Rs. 3,000 each. Some of these families have managed to buy land and also build houses for themselves with this money within a few years. But their earnings are at the cost of the children's education opportunity.

* In H.D.Kote, many of the landless agricultural workers, (both, caste persons and tribals) migrate to the plantations in Coorg between the months of November to February. As a result many children are withdrawn from school to either accompany their parents or to work in the plantations.

*Migration after the Kharif harvests, during the (Months of Oct-March) is widespread in Bijapur district. Many of the poor households, irrespective of caste, migrate to the sugarcane belts, construction sites, orchards and brick kilns in Maharashtra and south Karnataka. While some households leave young children behind to elderly grandparents, it is not unusual for children above eight years to be withdrawn from school. In all the villages we visited in Bijapur: Rampura, Malkadevanahatti, Madhbhavi and Hosanagara there were children who had been withdrawn from school.

* In Bijapur, many houses in the thandas or hamlets where the lambadi live are locked during the migration season and only those families that have older family members to look after school children permit their children to continue their schooling. In one thanda, a newly built DPEP school lay empty and abandoned since no children were in the thanda to attend schools.

* Labour recruiters who visit areas/villagers do not prevent under-age children from joining the work force. As a result, many children who, according to the teachers, are good students and are keen on studies are withdrawn from school to join the pool of migrant workers.

* Teachers accept migration of children as a legitimate reason for absence from school. In all the districts we visited, children who have dropped out from school are considered to be migrant children, even when many of them are in the vicinity. Apart from 'School in a Bag' approach that is being promoted in H.D.Kote taluka which enables individual and time differential learning, none of the schools had special provisions for migrant children who had returned to the village/area but remained out of school.

Section: C

I. EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

This section focuses on issues related to the administration of primary schooling. The focus is not all aspects of the administration and instead provides a review of the attitudes, views and opinions of the key persons in the education system such as the teachers and the education administrators. Some of the key orientation and programmes of the DPEP that relate to the interactions with local communities of children, parents, and elected representatives are reviewed here.

1. THE PROBLEM OF LOW PUPIL-TEACHER RATIOS:

Assessing the economic viability of schools primarily through pupil-teacher ratios, the government has identified close to 2000 schools as having very low ratios and therefore not being viable. There are two key issues that reflect on or have led to schools having low pupil teacher ratios. First, many government schools that were functional and adequate have, due to a variety of reasons, become dysfunctional and inadequate. Many parents have withdrawn their children from such schools and therefore there are very low enrolment levels at such schools. Though the growth of private schools and the parents' opting to send their children to such schools is also true, the fact is not that there is no demand for schools and schooling in those areas as much as that the schools have become dysfunctional. Second, by withdrawing teachers or support to these schools or even closing these schools the government overlooks the inability of many parents to send their children to private schools. Far more than assessing schools in terms of current attendance rates, the government must focus on linking the presence of children within the locality or vicinity of a school to the establishment and maintenance of school/s in the area. Instead of closing down schools with low enrolment rates, the government must focus on attracting more students to them.

2. DEPLOYMENT OF TEACHERS:

It has been rightly observed that there are more teachers in the urban areas than in the rural areas and, more especially, schools in the marginal areas such as the thandas or forest areas do not have adequate numbers of teachers. Teachers are reluctant to be posted to these places and often see them as only punitive or undeserved postings. High teacher absenteeism largely accounts for this, though the Government's policy of providing options has helped decrease some of the problems. However, the government needs to develop a policy of incentives for teachers to be assigned to remote areas and villages. Without such support, teachers will not opt to be in such places.

3. TEACHERS' RESIDENCE AND ABSENTEEISM

Most teachers do not reside in the vicinity of the schools to which they are assigned. Subsequently problems in commuting are often cited as one of the key reasons for high teacher absenteeism and for the low number of teaching hours per day. Parents do recognise that non-local residence and commuting problems are reasons for teachers to be late or even absent from school. Yet, many also note that teacher absenteeism is not linked to only this. Some teachers who are locally resident or residing in the vicinity are also frequently absent. On the obverse, there are teachers who despite long commutes come to the school regularly. Therefore, no neat correlation could be made about teachers' residence and attendance pattern.

One factor that seems to have enabled communities to ensure that teachers attended schools were the recent empowerment of VECs. Where VECs were active or had vocal community members, teacher absenteeism had been effectively stemmed.

4. ATTITUDES OF EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS

The attitudes and interactions of many members of the education administration are yet to reflect the objectives of the education programme.

The new training programmes for education personnel has helped generate information and know-how about the DPEP programmes and its management. But the attitudes of some members of the bureaucracy and teachers did not reflect the spirit of DPEP, which was to provide education for those excluded, especially members of SC and ST communities. Some officers and even teachers expressed opinions and views that are indicative of their own deep personal biases and prejudices against certain communities. Anti-Muslim sentiments were evident in a regional DPEP office. The personnel employed there first claimed they did not know the names of Muslim Corporators, since "they had strange names"; and the educational problems of these areas were considered to be due to the family structure of the people, who "had many wives and often did not look-after the children of the

first wife". Similarly, an upper caste teacher referred to members of the Golla community as "uncivilised", and many other teachers and education department personnel were both indifferent and ignorant about the life conditions of members of the low caste and tribe groups. Some high caste teachers accepted the low learning and achievement levels among some students as being due to their low caste status.

* Parents, especially, indicate the degree to which many teachers are indifferent and even hostile to children from poor families. Many parents complain that their children fail to master even the alphabets at the end of seven years of schooling in a government school.

* In Ramanagaram, a few parents indicated that their main problem was with the government school teachers who do not care enough about their (poor) children. They complained that the teachers did not question the child about its absence when it played truant, did not review the child's homework, punish the child 'enough' when it failed to do its work, or 'discipline' the child enough when it misbehaved. In short, there was total indifference on the part of the teachers to the child's existence, which, they believed, was not the case in the private schools.

Teachers often come from class and caste backgrounds that are very different from that of the children who attend government schools.

Teachers continue to be drawn from relatively higher caste and class background than that of the communities which send children to government schools. This difference in background accounts for several tensions and problems between teachers and the community of parents.

* Teachers often fail to understand and respond appropriately to the difficulties of illiterate parents and the needs of first-generation learners. Teachers in government schools pointed to the total indifference of most of the parents towards the education of their children, not realising the constraints posed by illiteracy and irregular incomes of parents. They consider parents to be apathetic and indifferent to their children and their education. They note that some parents did not even know in which class their child was studying, did not supervise their homework, and did not visit the school to discuss with the teacher about their child's progress. Female teachers speak about the difficulty of addressing parents who come drunk to school. They see these as indicators of the apathy and indifference of parents towards their children.

* Teachers also observe the high student absenteeism to be due to the laxity of parents who permit children to absent themselves for trivial reasons, such as a household ritual, a wedding in the neighbouring village, 'ur jatre', etc. Teachers see the parents willingness to permit children to miss school and migrate for long periods to other places on seasonal as a laxity on their part. These same parents are seen as those who later complain about their children's poor performance.

* Parents' visits to the school only to receive uniforms, books and grains are seen by the teachers as a sign of their demands over the school. Some teachers cite instances

of parents enrolling their children in 2-3 schools to avail the incentives from different schools.

* Several teachers were resentful of the additional incentives that the children of SC and ST groups received from the government.

II. *DECENTRALISED EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION STRUCTURES*

The Government of Karnataka has recently introduced the School Development and Monitoring Committees (SDMC) as a substitute for the Village Education Committees and the School Betterment Committees. While the observations made below pertain to the functioning of the VECs and the SBCs, it is important to note that details about the functioning of these continue to have validity as they represent the functioning of decentralised administrative structures. First of all, it is important to note that the introduction of the SDMC has only added to the confusion in involving communities in the administration of schools. For one, the idea, concept, and functioning of VECs were about to take root and much of this is now displaced by the introduction of the SDMC. Replacing the SBCs of the urban areas was much needed, as they were not in place and the Nagar Palika Act does not stipulate the role and administration of decentralised bodies in primary education. Yet, on the other hand, there has been no clear-cut decision as to who will head the SDMC and this has led to a lot of confusion. For example, several schools in Bangalore were told to wait for the local corporator or for the legislator to attend the first SDMC meeting. Not only did none of them turn up for the meeting but there was a lot of contestation among local people to become members of the SDMC. More importantly, by empowering parents to monitor and sanction the attendance of teachers the SDMC has added to the teachers' complaint that they are not trusted and have too many people to be accountable to.

What an evaluation and re-working of the structures to enable community participation and administration of primary education needed and needs to do are to recognise the ground level complexities in the functioning of such structures.

More specifically it is important to recognise that such structures are superimposed upon the workings of local power relations and therefore attention should be paid to addressing these problems.

Therefore, in order to identify and detail some of the problems linked to the functioning of such structures, we retain our observations on the functioning of the VECs and the SBCs.

The formation and activities of Village Education Committees (VECs) in Karnataka owes much to the DPEP programme, which sees the involvement and contribution of community members to the school/s as central to the effective functioning of schools. A key programme, aimed at integrating the community in the management and functioning of primary schools, has been that of forming and training members of

village communities into Village Education Committees (VECs). Several positive interventions in improving the overall accessibility and quality of primary schooling in eleven districts of Karnataka have resulted from the formation and training of VEC members in the state. While in many cases this has resulted in a sense of ownership among community members and has led to greater accountability and hence better performance on the part of the teachers, there are many contexts in which the functioning of the VECs itself has not been effective.

With reference to such conditions, more attention needs to be paid to members of groups who are economically and socially marginal and disadvantaged, and to the interlinks between the programme's reach and the conditions in different communities. The functioning and viability of new structures and bodies such as the VECs are largely dependent on a range of social and political factors. An understanding of these will enable us to assess the potential of such decentralised bodies to contribute to primary education and to suggest ways in which the limitations or problems of VECs and other organisational mechanisms and bodies can be addressed.

The VEC if formed and functioning is an effective and enabling body that can contribute positively to the performance of schools.

* We visited some communities and villages in which the formation of VECs had contributed positively to the functioning of the schools. For example, Lakkebail in Khanapur district (Belgaum) - the VEC not only meets regularly but has a positive relationship with the village school and its teachers. The school had enrolled all the children in the village and the classrooms were well maintained. Members of the VEC expressed satisfaction with the attendance of the teachers and the learning levels of the children. With the assistance of the VEC, the school has a walled compound, a hand-pump for water, and a garden maintained by students.

Another school, (Gandhinagar DPEP school, Khanapur, Belgaum district) though located in a poor semi-urban area, had an active VEC. The school functioned regularly and the teachers held themselves accountable to the VEC members. The children, even from the I Std., showed high levels of literacy and numeracy. It was also generally true, (except in some schools, such as in Rampura, Bijapur district) that children who had remained in the school till VII Std, did show very developed writing and numeracy skills and also marked levels of self-esteem and alert and polished behaviour. In contrast, the out-of-school children came across as apathetic and lacking in self-esteem.

Though members of the education department and the DPEP indicate and acknowledge the positive functioning of some VECs, it is important to assess the functioning and contribution of VECs closely. For eg: Sathigegundi village in H.D Kote taluka was presented by DPEP personnel as representing an effective and functioning VEC which had led to the village to have total enrollment of children and to the smooth and satisfactory functioning of the school. While the school itself seemed to be good; with interested teachers, high student attendance and positive

evaluation of its functioning by the parents, on closer enquiry, it was found that most of the children of the village's SC hamlet were not attending the school. And, the universal/full enrollment claimed by the members of the education department and school teachers was for that of the village's dominant group who were Vokkaliga - Jains.

*It was reported that in some villages, the children of VEC members do not go to the government school but to 'convent' schools. Parents considered these VEC members to lack a genuine interest in the functioning of the schools and in developing it. There is a move to dissolve such VECs and have only those persons as members whose children attend the local government school.

While the SDMC, with its stipulates of including parents whose children attend the school as members, does avoid such problems, there is now the new problem of actually selecting parents who will be active and interested in pursuing the responsibilities of the SDMC.

Many a time, VECs are not inclusive of the low-caste groups within their locality.

By regulation, VECs are to have representatives from low-ranked caste groups such as SCs and STs. However, HMs who constitute these committees, often with the suggestions made by village leaders, tend to overlook the members from SC and ST groups.

* In some villages, teachers noted that dominant caste members oppose the appointment of SC/ST teachers (Bijapur district). In such instances, the functioning of VECs, constituted by SC or ST teachers, do not have the same leverage as those constituted by higher caste teachers.

The functioning and responsibilities of many VECs tends to be restricted to that of occasional get-togethers and celebrations of national holidays.

Many of the so called 'functioning' VECs were active only during the national holidays Republic Day, Independence Day or Diwali. Several VEC members thought that these occasional meetings when sweets were distributed to the children to be the only roles of the members. Many did not meet for the stipulated monthly meeting and did so only occasionally in a year.

VEC training has not been uniform in all the DPEP districts. Hence, the performance of VECs is also varied across the districts studied.

In our interviews with officers and personnel from the BEO and DPEP offices, we gathered that VECs were considered to be active in Kolar and Belgaum districts and as also in H D Kote taluka. However, the VECs in Bijapur - were considered to be largely dysfunctional. As a DPEP administrator noted, only about 15-20 out of 619 VECs in the district could be considered to be functional. This was confirmed by our visits to villages in which the VECs were not functional. In Rampura village, male

members of the community complained that not only were VEC meetings never conducted but the school (GLPS) itself was dysfunctional. The HM, however, displayed a book which showed that VEC meetings had been conducted and signatures of members taken. On query, many indicated that no VEC training had been imparted to them. While many complained about the frequent absence of teachers and the poor/low learning abilities/skills of their children, they were not aware of the rights of the VEC to enquire or regulate the functioning of the local school.

*Teachers and VEC members often blame one another. While teachers say that VEC members do not attend meetings, VEC members claim that they are never informed about meetings.

*It was reported that some VEC members, who are co-signatories with teachers for signing cheques, expect commissions for releasing money for school betterment and also allow teachers to take a share.

Many VECs do not actively engage with problems of children who are out-of-school and with other problems related to the functioning of schools.

*No assistance, additional support, or attention are given to families who do not send their children to school. In villages where children from the SC/ST areas are out-of-school - little or no efforts are made by VEC to re-enroll them and to bring children into schools.

*In instances of villages not having an anganawadi, VECs are not willing to come forward to form balawadis paid for by the community. They would rather wait for the government to sanction and provide an anganawadi. Similarly, problems such as inadequate rooms, teacher absenteeism, lack of facilities, drop-out children, etc., are not sought to be resolved by the VEC. Much of these problems are also extendable to the functioning of the SDMC.

*In Ragi Gudda's GLPS., (Urban Bangalore) - a non-DPEP area/zone-the SBC was non-existent and non-functional. Even committed and active parents had not heard of an SBC. Until recently, meetings with parents were not called and no formal meeting members of the community's leaders and the school's teachers did not take place. The local corporator has only visited the school just prior to the corporation elections and does not keep a regular interest in the welfare of the school. The corporator notes his contribution to be towards improving the civic facilities of the area; indicating the improvement in roads, electricity and public water taps as evidence of his contribution. But the role and position of the corporator remain unclear with the formation of the SDMC. For example in the first SDMC meeting held in August 2001, not only was the corporator absent but the people identified as members (as different from the ten selected parents) were not all present. Yet, even here there was no clear evidence as to who had the authority to ensure the receipt of government allocated funds (such as scholarships) or to enforce regulations about the functioning of the schools.

What the details of the problems in the functioning of VECs, and now the SDMCs, indicate is the extent to which such structures have as their objective the need to decentralise administration, make teachers accountable to local members and undo the bureaucratisation of schooling. Yet all these cannot be realised without prior, intensive and careful training and orientation programmes which will enable people to understand the rules of these structures and be able to execute them.

III. DATA COLLECTION AND MICRO-PLANNING EXERCISES

1. DATA COLLECTION: Right from the school to the Block level is ridden with problems. Most schools do not maintain accurate and updated data on enrolment and drop-out figures. Though recent policies and programmes require schools to also note the number of out of school children in the vicinity, such details are not available in most schools. In fact, headmasters and headmistresses are not impressed upon to maintain and record updated data about the school and its immediate community. The Department of Education also does not pay adequate attention to data collection and tabulation. This lacunae is particularly glaring in the non- DPEP areas. Even in Bangalore, it is very difficult to get data about wards and schools and details about schools and children from the Block Education Offices.
2. Though the recent publication of the Handbook of Statistics on Education¹⁹ is welcome, there are problems in the collection of data itself. For example, the findings of the recent survey of out of school children made by the Office of the Commissioner of Public Instruction²⁰ is not very reliable. The survey indicates that there are about 10,53,744 children between the ages of 6-14 (accounting for 11.72 percent of children) who are out of school in Karnataka. For Bangalore (urban) the survey indicates that there are about 33,302 children out of school, that is about 3.72 percent children in the whole city.

Such data does not reflect the actual numbers of out of school children in the poverty zones. In addition, both the conduct of the survey and data compilation were very haphazard in the urban areas and the data does not stand up to both popular assessments of the number of children who are out of school in the city and to independent surveys. A survey conducted by the NGO *Paraspara* in 13 areas of Malleswaram constituency indicates that there are 9737 children in 17 slums who are

¹⁹ *Shaishenika Anki Amshegala Pakshinota* [Handbook of Education Statistics and Data]. 1999-2000. Office of the Commissioner of Public Instruction. Government of Karnataka. Bangalore. 2001.

²⁰ *Makkala Sameekshe* [Survey of Children]. Office of the Commissioner of Public Instruction. Government of Karnataka. Bangalore. 2001.

out of school. Of these, 52 percent attend school, while 11.6 percent are in conditions of wage labour and the rest, 37 percent, are neither in school nor in wage labour. In a survey conducted in five urban poverty zones of Bangalore (see Appendix V for details), we found approximately on an average about 15 percent of children from the poverty areas to be out of school. In fact new poverty zones where the residents were recent migrants from villages and were employed in the urban informal sector had large numbers of children out of school. In some of the poverty zones between 29-48 percent of school-age children were out of school. In a survey conducted by NIAS in Ragi Gudda of all households with school-age children, it was noted that 31 percent of children were out of school.

Failure to document and provide accurate and up-to-date data on schools and children is a major drawback in the administration of education in the state.

3. MICRO-PLANNING EXERCISES: Micro-planning exercises were formulated by the DPEP so as to provide the education administrators with insights into the socio-economic, cultural and other local factors that influence enrolment and retention of children in primary schools. But the current orientation and manner in which micro-planning is done has several limitations which need to be identified and rectified. If the MP exercises are to be the bases for an action agenda to ensure UEE in every village or area, then close attention must be paid to its methodology and orientation.

The micro-planning exercises are not inclusive of all sections of the communities they cover.

Often, the micro-planning exercise involves a few prominent members of the village well known to the education department officials. It does not involve all sections in the village; it often excludes the SC/STs and women. The dominant castes' perspectives tend to be different from that of the SC/STs.

Often, discussions preceding the micro-planning exercise get reduced to discussing about who will provide the food for the five-day exercise, who will cook the non-vegetarian meal, etc. Hospitality becomes a mode of servility towards the officials to gain favours for the village; the villagers do not demand the services due to them from the bureaucracy as a right.

The micro-planning exercises do not have an action plan in-built into them and thereby many have become mere exercises.

The micro-planning exercises do not involve any 'plan'. It is mostly a gathering of data. No strategy or action plan is evolved at the end of it on what needs to be done to tackle the problems identified within the school, the village or in relation to the children and their families. There is also no setting of a time-frame within which the

actions will be undertaken and there is no delegation of responsibilities. Lists of drop-outs are drawn up but there is nothing mooted in the form of a solution for each drop-out child.

*For instance, it may be found that a child is working in a filature unit. There is no action either to bring the child under the National Child Labour Project or to inform the labour inspector about this who could in turn file a case against the employer and recover Rs.20,000 as compensation to be used for the education of the child. In fact, a recent circular from the Labour Commissioner appoints even education department officials as labour inspectors authorised to file cases under the Child Labour Act, which is not being made use of by any education department official.

*No use is made of much of the socio-economic and cultural data gathered during the exercise. For instance: a break up is given of the number of families that possess more than or less than a certain quantity of land. This is not further elaborated to show the percentages of all land holdings held by the rich Vs the poor that would make the extent of unequal distribution of land more explicit. This break-up of figures is also not used to initiate any process of granting of land to the genuinely needy child labour families.

*A lot of more detailed data that could have been gathered in an exercise that lasts four days is not gathered. For instance, prevailing wage rates for adults and children, socio-economic status of child labour families, actual reason for dropping out etc., are not included in the micro-plans.

* Often, the findings of all micro-plans are the same; there is very little variation between the plans and many are even worded in the same language, indicating that these are stereotyped exercises. The pie-charts showing time-use of school-going and non-school-going children are almost identical for all villages. All work done by children is captured under only two heads, agriculture and housework. These do not give break-ups of times spent on individual tasks such as grazing, fuel or fodder gathering, water fetching, cooking, etc.

* More differentiated data needs to be collected regarding availability of basic amenities in the villages, for instance, on the number of houses with piped water supply, the average distance to borewell, the kind of fuel or fodder being used, etc., as many children spend a lot of time on fetching water, fuel and fodder which are often deterrents to children attending school. The data collected needs to be used for devising strategies for improving the availability of basic amenities or for providing alternatives.

*There is no effective follow-up of the micro-planning exercise. The main objective appears to be to start an NFE centre which has the debatable objective of providing a parallel stream of poor quality education for poor children, which accepts child labour as inevitable and considers this option as good enough for the poor. The whole approach is a negation of a child rights-based approach and a negation of the principle of equality of opportunity. If opening an NFE centre is the sole objective, there is no need to do micro- planning to do this. Even the NFE centre is opened only if there are more than 15 children available to attend them. Thus in Gollana

Beedu and Sattigehundi villages (H.D. Kote taluk) nothing was done about the drop-outs after the micro-planning exercise since there were less than 15 drop-outs in both the villages. Also, there is no follow-up on promises made by community members during micro-planning exercises. In Rampura village, Bijapur, a community member who promised to make a donation to the school for a particular item never did so.

*Children may be found to be looking after younger sibilings at home which prevent them from attending school. This fact is not utilised either to link the family with an existing child care centre or to initiate a process for getting or starting a *balwadi* at the village, if there is none.

*Several micro-planning exercises revealed lack of class rooms, toilets, drinking water, science kits, tool kits and other essential teaching equipment in several schools. But there was no evidence of these having been provided by the government as a follow-up to the exercise.

IV: TEACHER TRAINING AND ORIENTATION

The DPEP teacher training programmes have contributed significantly towards improving the teaching-learning methods in school and in attempting to develop a more child-centred approach to education and in enabling teachers to develop and integrate their own skills into the teaching transactions. As many teachers indicated to us, the new teacher training provided by the DPEP and the subsequent support provided by the Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) and the Block Resource Centres (BRcs) had significantly changed their teaching methods and relationship to the students. They had not only felt more involved in the teaching but were able to develop their own skills and interests. In fact, many classrooms in the DPEP schools were a pleasure to visit. They not only contained several new teaching aids such as charts and diagrams but a lot of the children's work such as drawings, paintings, paper craft etc., were displayed. In addition, the encouragement of including singing, dancing and poetry recitation as part of the curriculum has meant that there is a certain joy and enjoyment among children when they perform these. Much of these new "joyful learning" methods made these classes and schools a positive contrast to those schools that had not benefited from these new techniques.

Yet, the sudden thrust on improving teaching-learning methods has meant that teachers are subject to a flurry of teacher training programmes which in some ways is not fully conducive to encouraging the teachers' creative and individual skills. Many teachers indicated that the new methods left them confused and some even noted that they had lost confidence in their own styles of teaching. One teacher noted that she was afraid to come to school as she was not confident anymore about her teaching skills and her ability to manage the classrooms.

While some criticisms about the new teaching-learning methods can be attributed to problems in receptivity and the general hostility and resistance to new methods, there is need to be cautious about the speed and extent to which new methods erase all earlier methods and also

erode the confidence of teachers. There is need to ensure that the new methods do not become absolute models in themselves thereby preventing genuine creativity and engagement among teachers.

TEACHER TRAINING AND SOCIAL ORIENTATION:

But, the DPEP training programmes for teachers do not train teachers to understand different communities, and their socio-economic problems, such as poverty, that keep children away from school. Nor are teachers given any insight into how to handle these issues.

The teacher training programmes have not focussed on sensitising teachers to understanding and relating to the community of parents and children among who they were expected to serve.

*Training in these aspects is given only to the VEC members and HMs. The whole training is inward-looking, focused on making learning more joyful for the children who already attend school. The idea is that making the school more attractive will automatically attract non-enrolled or drop-out children into the school.

*Many headmasters and headmistresses do not have statistics regarding drop-out rates of their school at hand. They look in several cupboards and into various files before they are able to cull out the figures to even say whether their drop-out rates are increasing or decreasing. They do not readily have a list of the drop-outs in their village. They are unable to say off-hand whether increases or decreases in enrolment are due to changes in rates of drop-outs or due to in or out-migration. Though they have the figures somewhere in their cupboards, many Headmasters/mistresses and even DPEP officials say that these figures will be available only when the CPI or DPEP central office computerises/consolidates the figures and makes it available to them.

*As noted in our earlier section on attitudes towards parents, we found that many teachers were unsympathetic and even hostile to the life and culture of children and their parents. Such attitudes hinder the development of rapport between teachers and the community and are largely responsible for the lack of support for teachers on the part of parents. Where teachers have established good rapport with parents and are considerate to them, they are treated with respect and parents co-operate with them on issues related to the performance of their children. Teachers are often silent spectators to the phenomenon of school drop-outs though the law empowers them to investigate children's absence.

4. The Karnataka Education Act stipulates that teachers can take several steps to ensure the universal enrolment and attendance of children in schools. Teachers can enquire into the absence of students, receive applications for granting exemption, conduct enquiries as to whether a reasonable excuse for non-attendance exists, and if none exists, then issue attendance orders to the parents to present the child in the school. But the failure to enforce these provisions has

resulted in the problems of child labour, as well as that of "nowhere children" (who are neither in school nor at work), becoming gargantuan and the resources invested in the education system getting wasted.

CONCLUSION:

In focussing on the community contexts of elementary education, we have observed the extent to which schools and schooling are impacted by larger socio-economic factors. Addressing these issues will help establish schools as key institutions that can ensure equal educational opportunities to all children. Our study indicates the extent to which several new and positive inputs have been made by the DPEP and which need to be sustained. Some of the new teaching learning methods, teacher training, VEC training, the establishment and functioning of block and cluster-level resource centres, social mapping exercises and the mobilisation and awareness building programmes have all contributed to enhancing the establishment and functioning of schools and educational opportunities for many children.

Yet, more attention needs to be paid to addressing the social contexts that account for the fact that many children continue to be excluded or eliminated from educational opportunities. Perhaps, the most important aspect is the sense of agency that needs to be integrated into the functioning of the education department in that it must see itself as having the right to play a proactive role in ensuring the presence of all children in school. For the department to do so, it needs to revise its stand on several issues. First, there must be a revision or erasure of the idea that poverty alone accounts for the non-attendance of children in schools. Accepting poverty of the parents as an excuse for the absence of children from school is to legitimise the prevalence of child labour. Secondly, it must enforce those laws that see the employment of child labour as violating the basic and fundamental rights of every child. There is also the need to make communities understand that child labour is neither inevitable nor irremediable and that it is only a question of bringing about the necessary will to actualise this vision. An environment has to be created in which child labour becomes socially unacceptable and school-going the norm. Thirdly, the state must empower its members (administrators and teachers) to take an active interest in the enrolment and retention of all children. Such an orientation requires the administration and the teachers to be able to assess issues such as child marriage, bonded labour, migration of children etc., not as personal and inevitable factors but as social issues that can and should be alleviated. Hence changing community attitudes towards child labour and basic education become crucial in universalising elementary education. Social mobilisation is the process of making all sections of the community accept the vision that all children without exception should be in school and that no child should work for its living.

Finally, in recognising the role and contributions of communities towards the establishment and functioning of elementary schools, the state and the department of education must recognise the dual perspectives required in this context. On the one hand, there is the need to recognise and build on the idea that communities need to be involved and integrated into the functioning and management of schools. In relation to this, the contribution of the community, in terms of providing land, building

materials or financial support, and in participating in organisational bodies such as the VEC or SBC to regulate the functioning of schools are important and should be continued. Yet, this attempt to generate a sense of ownership and responsibility of communities towards the development of a collective social good should be qualified in terms of the very characteristics of communities. As our study indicates, not all communities are able to contribute or manage schools on their own. Communities that are socially, politically and economically marginal will not be able to engage with institution-building as much as other communities. This is very clear in the context of communities such as the *adivasis* and low-ranked castes, most of who are non-literate. These communities require additional assistance and capacity-building programmes that will enable them to develop their skills in contributing towards education institution building. Until such capabilities are developed, the state must bear the onus of being the key provider and the key regulator of elementary education. In addition, the state must formulate policies that will allow for local flexibility in terms of the timing and scheduling of school activities and in the development of the curriculum.

There is an urgent need to recognise the potential and problems of different communities and formulate policies that will enable a synergistic relationship between communities and schools. To do so, the state must provide those conditions and structures that will enable people to challenge the cycles of disadvantages within which they are embedded. Only attention to these disadvantages will help in the formulation of appropriate policies that can become the bases for developing an educational system that will cater to the needs of communities and will be more socially appropriate. Bearing this broad perspective in mind, the following suggestions are detailed so that a long-term and integrative policy for a state elementary education system can be made.

*Section : D***SUGGESTIONS: TOWARDS A STATE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION SYSTEM:**

There is an urgent need for the state to formulate and implement a long-term and intensive strategy to institutionalise a State Elementary Education System (SEES). In instituting a state elementary education system, the state must recognise that the regional and community problems in educational opportunities need to be addressed and *a system that assures equal access to a quality education for all children needs to be established*. In discharging this task, the state can draw on the responsibility and links of the decentralised administrative structures and formulate a policy that will develop schools as key institutions in all communities. Establishing schools that are functional and which disseminate quality education to all children can be the cornerstone of the state's endeavour to be recognised as a pioneering and developed state. In terms of this, it is imperative for the state to see education, especially elementary education, as the foundational sector that will enable a more broad-based and durable development to take place.

The need of the hour is for the education department to come up with a phased and time-bound action plan for making a State Elementary Education System possible.

I. ENHANCING EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS, OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESSIBILITY:

If tribals living in remote areas do not have access to schools, if poor Dalits are unable to make ends meet and hence send their children to work, and if girls are denied education because of the cultural biases against them, then, these are the very constraints and disadvantages that need to be challenged. And it is these conditions that the education department and the state in general need to address directly so as to ensure the rights to education for all children in all regions of the state.

Oversight of the ground conditions in which schools function and the continuance of schooling for only a section of the population will constitute a violation of the child rights-based approach to education. The state is bound by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to always work in the best interests of the child and not in that of its parents, family, employers or anyone else. Unless the education department begins to see the difference between 'education being a fundamental right of a child' and 'education being a mere need', it will be impossible to universalise elementary education. All the strategies of the education department have to be driven by this basic premise, otherwise all its efforts will remain incomplete attempts which do not do justice to the child.

1. State Funds for Education:

For the year 2001-2002, Karnataka allocated only 14 percent of its total budget to education, indicating a further decline from the previous year's allocation of 16 percent of its budget for education. These allocations are lower than the national average and compare very poorly with other states which have enhanced their budgetary allocations to the education sector and have subsequently improved their elementary education. Karnataka's Draft IX Five Year Plan (1997-2002) document of the Education Department lays great emphasis on enhanced investment in the social sector, as it regards education as the sine qua non to enable the disadvantaged to have access to markets in the light of economic reforms. However, the actual budgetary allocations for primary education have shown a decrease in the Nineties. It is absolutely important for the state of Karnataka to increase this allocation²¹.

There is a need to sustain essential funding for activities that have contributed positively to enhancing educational opportunities in the state. For example, many of the DPEP programmes for establishing links with and mobilising communities, such as Kala Jathas, VEC training, etc., have been scaled down due to lack of funds. These programmes have been effective and have acted as catalysts in forging state/department-community links to support primary education. These programmes should not only be retained in the districts where they have been initiated but can also be promoted in the other districts.

2. Social Mobilisation:

Our study indicates that members of most communities recognise the need for education. What is required to be addressed now is the ability of all communities, especially the most marginalised communities, to be able to assert and access their rights to education. If the social mapping exercises (micro-planning) conducted by the DPEP are revised to be more inclusive of all members of the community and have an action plan integrated into them, then MP is an indispensable and necessary first step in this direction. These make the community aware of the problem in its midst and shown up the need for concerted and integrated action. These exercises need to be universalised and strengthened in all communities. The social mapping needs to be followed by intensive campaigns through various forms, Kalajathas, street theatre, etc, as part of a coherent action plan. These need to be followed up by intensive door-to-door campaigns to motivate parents, especially those whose children are out of school. These measures need appropriate institutional mechanisms to be created at community level. These need organised cadres of volunteers and support structures from among children themselves, youth groups, teachers' association, women's groups, etc working in support of child rights.

²¹ Since several studies and reports have noted in detail the financial allocations to education, this report will not address the same issues here.

3. Accessibility:

Several measures are necessary in order to assure the easy accessibility of schools to all children.

1. Amend the Karnataka Education Act (1993) to make it obligatory on the state to provide schools within prescribed distances and to provide adequate infrastructure, toilets, etc., in schools. If it is not possible to run a school in a particular remote area due to inaccessibility of terrain, it should be mandatory to provide a residential school in that area so that neither the teacher nor the children need to commute daily. Alternatively, it should be made mandatory for the state to provide transportation to the children to enable them to attend the next nearest school.

As noted earlier, the state needs to go beyond the reliance on the Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) to assess the viability of schools. Low enrolment in many government schools reflect the fact that poor administration and poor quality of teaching have led to the decline of schools and therefore to the withdrawal of children from these schools. Instead of assessing such schools as redundant or non-viable to the system, the government needs to revitalise schools with low PTRs to turn them into viable, neighbourhood common schools.

2. The integration of Std V into the primary schools was a much needed restructuring of schools. Yet, considering only for Stds I to V as the primary education classes has an in-built mechanism of elimination. A large percentage of schools in the state are from only Stds I to V and only 60 percent of habitations have schools up to upper primary levels²². Among the SC habitations, only 33 percent have upper primary schools. The lack of an upper primary school in a significant number of settlements, means that schooling is provided to a majority only up to std V which is not the standard and level that will ensure life-long literacy. A minimum of seven years of schooling (upto Std VII) and till the age of 14 will ensure life-long literacy capability. In addition, the state needs to take into serious account the fact that only 59 percent of children who enrol in school make it to Std V and of these only 26 percent make it up to the X Std²³.

Hence the emphasis should shift from seeing Std IV as the basic minimum to that of seeing education upto Std VII as the required basic minimum of schooling. Such a system needs to be formulated on the bases of the rights of all children to a quality education that will add to the social opportunities and capability development of its citizens.

²² Sixth All-India Education Survey. NCERT, New Delhi. 1999

²³ Ibid

3. There is also the tendency to view the period of compulsory primary education as having to be limited to Classes I-V. If the period of compulsory education is meant to be for all children until 14 years of age, then the capacity of upper primary schools should be the same as that of lower primary schools. That the capacities of upper primary schools are less than that of lower primary schools shows that officials presume and accept as given that there will be a large number of drop-outs after the IV Standard and have hence also programmed the infrastructure accordingly to cater to fewer students.
4. The prescribed minimum distance to an upper primary school is higher than that prescribed for a lower primary school. But, as we have seen in our field study, the dangers of having to cross highways, railway tracks, jungles, etc., to reach an UPS, definitely act as deterrents, especially to girls, to continue with their education. Every effort has to be made to convert as many LPSs as possible to UPSs. This measure alone will reduce drop-out rates after IV Std. considerably and ensure education up to VII Std. at least. The law should be amended, even in this case, to say that where an upper primary school is not available within the prescribed distance, transportation should be provided to the next nearest school, until such time as an UPS is made available within the prescribed distance.
5. In order to ensure access to an elementary education system the state needs to implement the following inputs and orientations are implemented:
 - provide access to all LPS children within 1 Km and within 2 Km to all UPS children
 - ensure 100% enrolment in the age group 6-14 years
 - provide atleast one teacher for every 30 children in each LPS and each HPS
 - expand the range of supportive, mobilisation and training programmes to all the districts.

4. Flexibility

There is an urgent need to allow for greater flexibility in the functioning of schools especially in terms of scheduling the classes. Flexibility should be based on the idea that the education system responds to the legitimate and practical needs of the community without throwing the children out of the mainstream education system. As the UNICEF Report of 1999 notes "...if schools are to improve the quality of their offerings and are to be more responsive to the needs of the communities they serve, the schools have to be given more autonomy to assess and resolve their own problems"²⁴.

1. Since there are often clashes between the ecological, agricultural, work, and ritual schedules of many communities, there is the need to allow for a region specific school schedule that will fit in with the community's schedule of activities. Such flexibility can be devolved to the district level and district specific school calendars can be formulated with the minimum and maximum number of school days specified.

²⁴ UNICEF, *State of the World's Children*. 1999.

2. Care should be exercised before new school timings are initiated. The recent discussion to fix the state's school timings from 8 to 12 has not been received with enthusiasm. Most teachers and parents felt that the proposed shift in timings of primary schools to 8 a.m to 12 noon would be detrimental to the children. There would be no one at home to look after them when they go home at 12 as most parents work till 6.00 PM. Children would be left to their own resources and hence get into bad company. Or the other effect would be that children would be put to work from 12 noon onwards till late in the evening, exhausting them and giving them no energy or time to study in the evening.

II. PROHIBITING CHILD LABOUR

In 1997, Karnataka was assessed by the central government as having about 26 lakh children who were out of school²⁵. However, the most recent state-led survey indicates that about 11 percent of children, that is about 10, 53,744 children between the age groups of 6-14, are out of school²⁶. A large number of these out-of-school children are child labourers, employed in the unorganised sector. While child labour is prohibited and illegal, it is a law that is blatantly violated. The state needs to implement the law both strictly and effectively.

1. State directives that seek to abolish child labour need to be implemented. For example, a recent circular of the Labour Commissioner makes several education department officials (as also Revenue department officials, etc.) inspectors under Section 17 of the Child Labour Act. This gives them full authority to prosecute employers who employ children and to make them pay Rs. 20,000 as compensation into a Child Labour Welfare Fund to be used for the education of the child. Employment of a child during school hours in any sector, irrespective of whether it involves hazardous or non-hazardous work, domestic or informal-sector work, is banned under the Karnataka Education Act.
2. Exemptions to the implementation of the law need to be revised. This very same Act which prevents employers from employing children notes, under Rules pertaining to Section 15 of the Karnataka Education Act, that 'a child may be exempted from attending school if its parents are poor and need the earnings of the child or if the child has to mind its younger siblings because its parents have gone to work". This whole clause allowing exemptions to be granted to poor children needs to be deleted as it legitimises and accepts the social bases of denying children their rights to education .
3. The law also calls upon the education department to penalise employers who employ children during school working hours and thus prevent the children from attending school (KE Act). But the punishments stipulated under the KE Act are so ludicrously low (Rs. One per day in the case of parents up to a maximum of Rs. 100 per year and Rs. 25/- in the case of employers) that there is no way that

²⁵ Sixth All-India Education Survey. 1998.

²⁶ Survey of Children, January 2001. Office of the CPI, Bangalore. 2001.

these amounts can act as deterrents against violations. There is a clear need to enhance these punishments to deterrence levels for the employers and to strictly enforce them.

4. There is a general feeling that fines against parents are not fair given the prevailing levels of poverty. But if incentives are provided to parents in view of their poverty, there is no reason why they should not be compelled to send their child to school. But if it is felt that such penalties on parents are repugnant, then it would be advisable to delete such penalty provisions on parents, as non-enforced laws only make a mockery of the judiciary and the executive. The education and/or labour departments should also get employers or their associations to sign statements stating that they will henceforth eschew child labour, rehabilitate all those already in their employment at their own cost, and employ adults in place of the children.
5. Laws covering migrant and contract labour do not stipulate anything pertaining to school-age children of migrant families. There is a need to amend these laws to ensure that the onus of providing educational facilities to migrant children should be on the employers and contractors bringing migrant labour. Workers need to be informed about the minimum wage and other laws that apply to them so that they receive what is their due. This will enable them to send their children to school.
6. If a reasonable excuse for non-attendance does exist (if the parent is disabled, single or desperately poor), then the law should prescribe that the state should either subsidise the family adequately on condition that it sends the child to school. Or, alternatively, the state should take responsibility for the child and its education, for instance, by giving the child a scholarship with a supplement for living expenses or placing it in a free government hostel, if the child consents.
7. Rehabilitation of child labourers costs the government four times the amount that it would have cost the government to provide primary education to the child²⁷. Instead of bearing the double burden of providing infrastructure for primary education which is wasted by under-utilisation and then paying again for creating infrastructure to rehabilitate the child, the state needs to establish a system that is inclusive of all children into a single system.

III. STRENGTHENING THE DECENTRALISED SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES:

If the community is to play a larger and more responsible role in the functioning of elementary education, then the role of the structures, whether they be VECs, SBCs, or SDMCs, and their responsibilities needs to be fine-tuned and promoted.

²⁷ UNICEF, *State of the World's Children*. 1999.

2. The process of formation of such decentralised structures needs to be more transparent. The members selected need to have more legitimacy in the eyes of the community. The process of selecting only those who are well known to the teachers or to members of the education department must be stopped. An open process by which the community itself discusses the role and responsibility of the structure (whether it is a VEC or SDMC), chooses the members, and then holds the members accountable for the functioning and quality of the school needs to be devised.
2. Training for such structures should involve members and should include the dissemination of information regarding their right to call for meetings (and not wait for the HM to do so), to look into records, to hold the teachers accountable, etc.,. The members' tendency to see their role merely in decorative terms. i.e., in organising school programmes on Independence Day and Republic Day, needs to be dispelled. So also their tendency to look merely at infrastructure needs of the school by way of classrooms, compound wall, toilets, etc. While these issues are no doubt important, the members need to be re-oriented more strongly on the meaning of child rights, on the structural, socio-economic and cultural constraints within society and the community that are keeping the marginalised out of school. Their training should also provide them with examples of successful models adopted by other villages in stemming the problem of drop-outs and in devising practical and feasible solutions for them.
3. Training should be followed with making it mandatory for each unit/structure to conduct social mapping (through participatory action research) of their villages and to chart out a time-bound action plan based on the findings of the social mapping exercise. It should be emphasised in their training that the objective of the PRA exercise is to find a solution to the problem of each and every drop-out child in their village. Time-bound action plans of every village/zone/ward should be deposited with their respected decentralised unit, whether it is the office of the panchayat or the ward council which should review the progress made to achieve the goals set out.

IV. INCENTIVES FOR SCHOOLING AND SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN IN DISTRESS.

While government support in the form of free text books, monthly grains and uniforms is extended to all children upto std IV and is an important source of incentives, there is a need to revise the incentives and scholarship schemes. The department and the state need to take into account the fact that many children face distress within family situations and require additional assistance to tide over these crises.

1. Government teachers support the incentive schemes, such as 3 Kg rice, saying that these always have a positive effect on attendance. Many teachers note the general improvement in enrolment and attendance as linked to this scheme and

observe that some children attend at least for a week before the 3 Kg coupon is to be distributed. But many teachers advocate a mid-day meal programme as being superior to the free grains scheme as they are aware that many children come with empty stomachs to the school and are unable to concentrate or learn much because they are hungry. Some other teachers, however, note that this would make children attend school only during mealtimes, as has happened with the anganwadis. However, if the high absenteeism of children, especially in the poverty zones, is to be curbed then a mid-day meal scheme is probably the more valid alternative. There is an urgent need for the State of Karnataka to re-start the midday meal in schools. As other studies have noted, midday meals act as import inputs or incentives for parents and children and have contributed significantly to improving the attendance rates at schools and also enhancing the health conditions of children.

2. Many children are withdrawn from school when a parent, especially the father, dies or when there are crises in the family. Assistance, especially monetary and in kind, should be given to such children to ensure their continual attendance in school. A child-in-distress fund should be available to which all Gram Panchayats, BEO's offices, teachers and the VECs should be able to apply for.
3. Several teachers voiced the opinion that placing children from poor families in free government residential schools, especially in areas with high concentrations of SC/ST population, is the most optimal incentive that can be given. But the existing residential schools are corruption ridden and poorly managed. Attaching hostels to regular schools and making teachers monitor them is a better solution they suggest. Teachers suggest that at least a few models should be created using this strategy.
4. Another useful incentive that teachers suggested giving bank loans for self-employment to those who have passed VII Standard (this is being offered already by some municipalities). Or this could be in the form of a lump sum amount for self-employment to all BPL children who complete eight years of schooling. This would be a good incentive for children to complete VII Std. Another alternative would be to provide loans to BPL parents for ensuring eight years of primary education of their children. These incentives are far superior to the one currently being mooted by the Centre, i.e., of providing free education up to degree/Ph.D level to girls, etc. When the majority of poor girls are not even completing IV Std., offering incentives up to degree level to girls will ensure that these are all cornered by the well-off. The state has an obligation to ensure that all children complete at least VII Std. and this has to be ensured first, with a combination of compulsion plus necessary incentives, before higher levels of education are subsidised.
5. The use of economic incentives that include in-kind payments to encourage school attendance, such as, free school lunches, books, clothes, waiving of fees, etc. need to be continued. In addition, funds to eliminate child labour; such as cash stipends, apprenticeships and other school/work combinations, income generating activities for parents and community development programmes for backward areas are necessary in situations of poverty.

6. Economic incentives for schooling are more likely to be effective when they are combined with other activities to form a comprehensive approach which also includes, for example, awareness raising, improving the quality and availability of schools and community involvement.
7. The practice of giving incentives such as school uniforms only to the SC/ST children from Std. V to VII has caused a lot of problems. Teachers feel that making this distinction among such small children sows the seeds of casteism in the children who are denied the incentives. Their young minds cannot understand why they are being denied the incentives even though they are as poor as the SC/ST children. The teachers feel that, since almost all children who attend government schools are from families that are below the poverty line or just above it, it would be better not to make distinctions between the children and to provide incentives uniformly to all of them.
8. Several problems were noted about the scholarship schemes in existence. In some cases, the scholarship amounts are as negligible as Rs. 50 and Rs. 75 per year. The parent has to often spend more money coming to the taluk headquarters to apply for the mandatory caste certificate, income certificate, etc., required for claiming these scholarships. Teachers have been asked to do these jobs collectively for all children but they rarely do so. When a child who is sent to labour can earn these amounts in a day or two, teachers question the ability of these scholarships to act as deterrents to child labour.

V. ENHANCING GIRLS' RIGHTS TO EDUCATION

The state needs to initiate and implement several programmes in order to bridge the gender gap in elementary education.

1. Since accessing schools that are at a distance from the habitation is a problem for many girls, the state must enhance girls' access to education by upgrading more LPSs to UPSs. It must also provide, where and when necessary, transport for girls, have more female teachers and provide separate toilets for girls in school.
2. Since the condition of civic facilities directly impacts on the educational opportunities of girls, it is important for the state to enhance communities' access to piped water supply, alternate cooking fuels and fodder. The BEO's offices, including the inspectors, can take note of the existence or the lack of such facilities as factors that need to be addressed by the state.
3. The state can make anganwadi timings coincide with school timings. It should encourage people and groups to start and maintain their own community balwadi where there is no anganwadi by employing a local unemployed woman.
4. The state needs to implement the minimum age of marriage (for girls 18 years) more vigorously. Since the regions where child marriage is rampant are identified

(in the case of our study area, it is Bijapur, while the practice is widespread in the whole north Karnataka belt), the state needs to direct several departments to work against the practice of child marriage. Media coverage, vigilance at all levels including remote villages, awareness building during panchayat training, VEC, SBC and teacher training, and empowering Gram Panchayats and local bodies to initiate action and levy fines for conducting child marriages are some ways in which the issue needs to be tackled.

5. An example of a programme that seeks to eliminate child labour and ensure the entry of the children into schools is that of the work of the MV Foundation in Andhra Pradesh. The MV Foundation has fostered child rights protection committees in every village, school girl committees in every school, teacher's associations, mother's groups, girl youth groups etc. These programmes provide organised support to individual girls in distress who are perhaps being forced into child marriage against their will. More specifically, they provide societal support to the child wishing to assert its rights against parents and if necessary take support from law enforcement bodies such as police. Subsequently such efforts convert the issue of child marriage from being a 'personal' or 'family issue' into a 'community' issue

VI. RE-ORIENTING TEACHER TRAINING

1. Measures and programmes for making the school an attractive place need to be supplemented by training teachers to be able to address attitudinal and socio-economic problems of parents and communities. Teachers must be made conscious of the need to have a better understanding of the social and cultural backgrounds of parents and children. Our study indicates that teachers are often contemptuous of the social background of the communities in which they teach and are unable to understand the inability of many parents, especially the non-literate, to be more conscious of issues related to schooling. While teachers are not sensitive to this dimension of the culture of the parents, they seek to be tolerant and understanding of practices such as child marriage, bonded labour etc., which effect the educational opportunities of children. Both, training and policies need to revise this contradictory orientation of teachers. The importance of being sensitive and tolerant of the culture and personalities of parents must be integrated into the teacher training programmes. Yet, at the same time, training must note the importance of teachers not accepting as legitimate and as excusable the cultural factors of early marriage, gender biases and parental neglect in sending children to school as personal and cultural factors which they cannot address.

VII. IMPROVING SUPERVISION AND REVIEW OF SCHOOLS

1. It is observed that within the education department, there is insufficient co-ordination between different sections. For instance, while the BEO and his team of school inspectors concentrate on looking into whether infrastructural needs of the school are in place, whether teachers are attending school regularly and whether registers and records are being maintained properly. The DPEP/BRC officials look exclusively at the use of teaching-learning materials, development of teaching aids, the quality of the education being provided, and the training of teachers, etc. But both seem to be paying insufficient attention to linkages with the community and the factors external to the school which determine whether children remain in school or not.
2. There is also insufficient acknowledgement of the fact that the problem of drop-outs cannot be handled by the education department alone and that the department needs to work in co-ordination with several other departments, such as labour, women and child development, rural development, social welfare, etc. What is needed is convergence of services of all these departments on the drop-out child's family. This necessitates that the education department be part of an inter-sectoral team of grassroots-level functionaries who liase with one another to provide community convergent action (CCA).
3. One way to sustain standards and quality of schools is to initiate awards for schools at the zonal levels. Schools can be evaluated for their functioning, attendance levels, maintenance of infrastructure, teachers' performance and children's achievement levels. These awards can be publicised and they can act as internal mechanisms for establishing quality and standards in schools.

VIII. DECENTRALISED GOVERNANCE - ROLE OF ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

1. Our field studies indicate the low involvement of local bodies themselves, apart from the sole GP member on the VECs, with the community and education department in matters related to education. Leadership for mobilising various sections of society and carrying them forward on a common agenda of child rights at community level (and for heading the coordination committees at all levels constituted with the participation of all sections of society) could best lie with these decentralised organs of local governance created by the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments.
2. The education department alone cannot carry the onus for universalisation of elementary education. The elected representatives and bodies have to be made responsible for the achievement of UEE since primary education has now been made an obligatory function of Panchayat Raj Institutions. However, the corresponding Nagarapalika Act for the urban areas has nothing to say about the responsibility of urban local bodies with regard to primary education. This is a

serious lacuna that needs to be rectified through an amendment at state/central level.

3. Primary education needs to be made a standing agenda of local body meetings. A system of incentives and disincentives can be introduced to make local bodies assume responsibility for primary education, take the lead in social mobilisation and take pledges to make their areas 100% literate and child labour-free.

IX. BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS FOR EDUCATION

1. Even if co-ordination between various departments is achieved, it has to be also noted that the responsibility of establishing and maintaining effective schools cannot be borne by the state alone. Our field studies also note the insufficient involvement of other societal actors, such as corporate houses, employers, trade unions, etc., in addressing issues of elementary education. What is required for the universalisation of elementary education is a societal movement involving all sections of society. This requires new institutional arrangements to be created which encourage the participation of various societal actors, such as elected representatives, community groups, corporate/business establishments, employers' associations, trade unions, academia, NGOs, media and other civil society groupings.
2. One suggested format could be to have district, taluk and grama panchayat-level coordination committees on which all sections of society are represented. All the representatives on these bodies need to arrive at a consensus on a non-negotiable agenda of child rights that they would wish to see realised in the district, taluk, grama panchayat levels. Thus instead of the education department ploughing a lonely furrow, it could draw on the support of these various actors to create a synergy of forces to carry the agenda on child rights forward.
3. The education department needs to draw on the availability of a large pool of retired professional persons who would be willing to contribute to the development of education. At the district and block levels, it is possible to identify people who can be called in to render services for teacher training, VEC training etc., In addition, there are several retired people who can be stand-ins or substitute teachers when the regular teachers are on leave or are absent. The BEOs offices, and DPEP offices can develop a rooster of such persons and request their help periodically.

X. DEVELOPING A STATE SCHOOL INFORMATION SYSTEM

1. There is a great need to employ modern Information Systems to better understand, document and respond to community-school issues. Efforts are already on in the Education Department to use appropriate software, for instance to keep track of teacher: pupil ratios in various schools and make appropriate transfers of teachers. On the same lines, data collected through micro-planning, information regarding accessibility of schools, infrastructure needs of every

school and about drop-out children needs to be stored and held at decentralised levels, such as the block. Allocation of resources, supervision and other support services to the neediest and most deprived areas can be prioritised through these measures. Data on low enrolment and attendance schools should include details about the socio-economic background of the schools, reasons for low performance etc.,. The data can be updated through six-monthly reviews and inputs from headmasters/headmistresses and VEC or SBCs/SDMCs.

APPENDIX I

KARNATAKA DISTRICT LITERACY LEVELS

LITERACY RATE		
District	1991	2001
Bangalore	76.3	83.91
Bangalore (R)	50.2	65
Belgaum	53	64.42
Bellary	45.6	58.04
Bidar	45.1	61.98
Bijapur	55.1	57.46
Chikmagalur	61	72.63
Chitradurga	55.5	64.88
D Kannada	75.9	83.47
Dharwad	58.7	71.87
Gulbarga	38.5	50.65
Hassan	56.8	68.75
Kodagu	68.3	78.17
Kolar	50.4	63.14
Mandya	48.1	61.21
Mysore	47.3	63.69
Raichur	36	49.54
Shimoga	61.5	74.86
Tumkur	54.5	67.19
U Kannada	66.7	76.59
Karnataka	56	67.04

Source: Census of India 1991, 2001.

APPENDIX II

DISTRICT-WISE PROFILE OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS:

BANGALORE URBAN:

	Government	Aided	Unaided
No of schools	1312	553	898
No of teachers	6324	4030	8616
No of students	2,30,134	1,77,600	3,44,267
School:teachers ratio	1:4.82	1:7.28	1:9.59
School:students ratio	1:175	1:321.1	1:383.3
Teacher:students ratio	1:36	1:44	1:39.9

BANGALORE RURAL:

	Government	Aided	Unaided
No of schools	2515	28	171
No of teachers	8658	235	1046
No of students	229878	12370	31340
School:teachers ratio	1:3.4	1:8.3	1:6.1
School:students ratio	1:91.4	1:441.7	1:183.2
Teacher:students ratio	1:26.5	1:52.6	1:29.9

BIJAPUR:

	Government	Aided	Unaided
No of schools	1466	115	224
No of teachers	6624	824	871
No of students	292044	33625	30780
School:teachers ratio	1:4.5	1:7.1	1:3.8
School:students ratio	1:199.2	1:292.3	1:137.4
Teacher:students ratio	1:44.08	1:40.8	1:35.3

BELGAUM:

	Government	Aided	Unaided
No of schools	2888	33	348
No of teachers	13593	178	1822
No of students	475655	20588	76740
School:teachers ratio	1:4.7	1:5.3	1:5.2
School:students ratio	1:164.7	1:623.8	1:220.5
Teacher:students ratio	1:34.9	1:115.6	1:42.1

KOLAR:

	Government	Aided	Unaided
No of schools	3295	62	317
No of teachers	9688	496	2361
No of students	203691	22357	71023
School:teachers ratio	1:2.9	1:8	1:7.4
School:students ratio	1:61.8	1:360.5	1:224.04
Teacher:students ratio	1:21.02	1:45.07	1:30.08

MYSORE:

	Government	Aided	Unaided
No of schools	1897	118	271
No of teachers	7716	835	1901
No of students	176360	46631	74481
School:teachers ratio	1:4.06	1:7.07	1:7.01
School:students ratio	1:92.9	1:395.1	1:274.8
Teacher:students ratio	1:22.8	1:55.8	1:39.1

Source: *Shikshanika Anki Amshagala Pakshinota*, [Handbook of Education Data and Statistics] 1999-2000.
Sarvajanika Shikshana Elakhe, Government of Karnataka
Bangalore, 2001.

APPENDIX III

LIST OF VILLAGES AND WARDS VISITED

No.	DISTRICT NAME	VILLAGE/AREA IDENTIFIED
1.	Bangalore (Rural) Tq: Ramanagaram	Yarrabnagar Ward Gandhinagar Ward
2.	Bangalore (Urban)	Ragi Gudda Slum
3.	Belgaum (T.q:Khanapur)	1.Khanapur 2.Balogi 3. Lakkebail 4. K.Hubli
4.	Kolar (Tq: Mulbagal)	1. Yelagondana Halli 2. Butlabhavana Halli 3. K.Ugini 4. Allalsandra
5.	Bijapur (Tq: Bijapur)	1. Madhabhavi 2. Malakadevarahatti 3. Rampura 4. Hosapura 5. Bijapur Town 6. Kavahalli
6.	Mysore (Tq: H.D.Kote)	1. Bhogepura 2. Golur Hadi 3. Beemanahalli 4. Sathigegundi 5. Jaganakote Hadi

APPENDIX IV

PERCENTAGE OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN - DISTRICT WISE.

District	OOS children (6-14)			% of OOS children in the district
	Boys	Girls	Total	
Karnataka	506481	547263	1053744	11.12
Raichur	53637	63255	116892	26.73
Gulbarga	88706	97291	185997	25.76
Koppal	27017	31119	58136	22.18
Bijapur	40891	40442	81333	18.53
Bellary	34512	39063	73575	17.9
Bagalkot	22978	27285	50263	15.13
Bidar	19819	22980	42799	12.42
Chamarajanagar	8548	8553	17101	12.08
Gadag	10085	11227	21312	11.75
Haveri	13339	13124	26463	10.16
Kodagu	4198	4082	8280	9.73
Davangere	14272	14724	28996	9.07
Chitradurga	11144	12349	23493	8.81
Belgaum	30190	34336	64526	8.45
Mysore	18539	19232	37771	8.45
Dharwad	8977	8862	17839	8.31
Uttar Kannada	9335	9523	18858	8.25
Kolar	15641	17977	33618	7.41
Chickmagalur	6354	6537	12891	6.8
Shimoga	9996	8822	18818	6.69
Hassan	8972	9155	18127	6.32
Tumkur	11814	12437	24251	5.54
Bangalore rural	8534	7902	16436	5.2
Mandya	7773	7082	14855	5.18
Bangalore urban	17552	15750	33302	3.73
Dakshina Kannada	2639	3113	5752	1.95
Udupi	1019	1041	2060	1.14

Source: *Makkala Sameekshe*, [Survey of children] January 2001.
Sarvajanika Shikshana Elakhe, Government of Karnataka
Bangalore, 2001.

APPENDIX V

PERCENTAGE OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN IN SELECTED POVERTY ZONES IN BANGALORE

Name of Area	Ward No.	No. of Households	No. of school going children	No. of out-of-school children	% of Out-of-school children
Lingarajpuram	88	167	376	61	13.9
ISRO slum		210	428	83	16.11
Markondiah Layout	45	112	231	98	29.5
Ramkrisha Seva Nagar	24	224	466	128	21.5
Rajagopal Nagar slum	24	223	243	226	48.1

Source: Household survey conducted by NIAS, May - August, 2001.