LOKSHALA PROGRAMME

Reports of Workshops
on
'Concretising Elementary Education As A Fundamental Right'
(February 14-16, 1997)

and

'Local History, Micro-Planning & Community Mobilisation'
(December 13-16, 1997)

held at
Dhubri, Assam

Organized by
Dhubri Science Club

in collaboration with
Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha

with academic support from
Maulana Azad Centre for Elementary and Social Education
Department of Education, University of Delhi

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Prof Anil Sadgopal's pre
2) list of participants
3) Group Reports (edible

LOKSHALA PROGRAMME

WORKSHOP ON
CONCRETISING ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT
AT DHUBRI, ASSAM, 14-16 FEBRUARY, 1997.

TRODUCTION

hree-day workshop on 'Concretising Elementary Education' as a Fundamental Right s organised by Dhubri Science Club, Dhubri, Assam, between 14-16 February 1997, part of the LOKSHALA Programme of Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha (BJVJ) with academic pport from Maulana Azad Centre for Elementary and Social Education (MACESE), partment of Education, University of Delhi.

e Workshop was initiated by the activists of the Dhubri Science Club, who had rticipated in the Manthan Convention, 1994, the National workshop at Solan, Himachal adesh, 1995, workshops on the same theme at Vikram, Bihar, 1995, and Patna, Bihar, 1996.

hubri district is one of the districts where the District Primary Education Programme DPEP) is being conducted by the Central Government, with aid from World Bank and ther agencies as part of the Social Safety Net for structural adjustments. The scope for Block level intervention envisaged under Lokshala Programme appeared limited to the National Organising Committee of BJVJ. The Dhubri based activists, after preliminary interactions with people, were categorical in their conviction that much need to be done in the area of elementary education even in DPEP districts with a holistic approach as envisaged in the Lokshala Programme. The present workshop was therefore proposed to initiate local action for Lokshala Programme.

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE WORKSHOP:

INAUGURAL SESSION

At the inaugural session, around seventy participants comprising of Head Masters, school Inspectors, school teachers, representatives of Teacher Associations, Principals and teachers from Colleges, activists from voluntary organisations and women,s groups, representatives from State and District administration , representatives from the Nagaland and Manipur units of BJVJ and the Lokshala team of BJVJ, Delhi and Department of Education, University of Delhi were present.

The session began with a welcome address by Shri. Mustafa Hussain, General Secretary, Dhubri Science Club, Dhubri. The Chief Guest, Shri. Lal Chand Singhi, Deputy Commissioner, Dhubri district, declared the workshop open. He welcomed the gathering and the idea of deliberating upon CONCRETISING elementary education as a Fundamental Right,even though, in his opinion, this group was perhaps too small to deliberate on such a large issue. The option of making education Fundamental Right existed with the Constituent Assembly, but it was not made a Right because the Founding

Fathers thought that the State was not in a position to deal with this as a Fundamental Right. The question now is: are we in a position even now to deal with education as a Fundamental Right? Can we bring this from Part IV of the Constitution to Part III? By doing this, we make education an enforceable Right. A child gets the right to sue the State for failing to impart education. A lot of preparation is needed on the part of the state machinery to enforce this as a Fundamental Right. It has the following implications:

* The state should provide primary schools in small hamlets, habitations in far-flung areas, so that a five year old is able to reach the school by walking about a furlong.

* All the ancillary arrangements must form part of the gamut of schemes. This may mean more than 4-5 schools in a village; it may also mean a teacher child ratio of 1:10 in these cases.

* We have to calculate the number of children of primary school going age.

* We have to estimate how many teachers are needed. Can we provide that many teachers? These many teachers then come under the State patronage.

* The state's responsibility will also include provision of reading material, toys, books, chalk, black board.

* It may also mean provision of nutrition to the child; so mid-day meal becomes a corollary of education as a Fundamental Right.

* Provision of education in an interesting manner will also be the State's responsibility.

Adding one line to in the Constitution of India, that is education as a Fundamental Right makes it incumbent upon the State to bring school to the door step of the child, provide teachers as per the required ratio, provide nutrition and all educational support material. It means accepting all these requirements as a Fundamental Right. Are we in a position to do this? Are we in a position to ensure that each child goes to school? This programme needs to be conducted in a phased and gradual manner. Fundamental right at least at the primary level should and must be there so that a child develops into a contributing citizen.

Dr. Janaki Rajan, Department of Education, University of Delhi, introduced the Lokshala Programme. Alluding to the Chief Guest,s remarks that this was too small a group to deliberate upon such a large issue, she said that every small effort goes towards the larger effort. In recent times, several such small groups have been discussing this very issue in various parts of the country. When all these discussions are put together, then it becomes possible to make an impact. The Central Institute of Education is greatly enriched by the participation of its members by deliberations of this kind that we are having at Dhubri.

To-day different groups of people ranging from illiterate poor to the well-off sections, divided by socio-economic disparities generally do not have anything in common. But there is one issue in this country on which each and everyone agrees, and that is education Education is a priority in all people's minds.

How to implement this, how to ensure student:teacher ratio of 1:10 when the reality is 1:60 or even 1:120 can be discussed.

The Lokshala Programme puts forward certain principles for action for education. To begin with, Lokshala Programme is all about elementary education, not primary education. The Constitution makes a commitment of free and compulsory education upto 14 years. The task is complex. Even if we were to attempt to get every six-year old to go to school, it calls for major effort.

Lokshala Programme is also committed to linking education with work. to-day's education is meaningless to large sections of society. It does not cater to the needs of the society. There is need to re-organise the curriculum.

Education to-day has also taken on a different meaning. It talks only about literacy, that is reading and writing, and numeracy, that is addition and subtraction. This is being offered as the minimum level of learning (MLL). But when we talk to parents, even illiterate parents particularly women in the slum areas of Jahangirpuri,Delhi, they say that they want their children not just to read and write; but to read and understand books other than the text-books, ability to write with understanding. They want education to their children so that they can lead a meaningful life, form good habits, be able to know the world. all this is a vision of a very different education from what we have to-day. All these can become the principles of the framework of curriculum.

In Lokshala Programme, the thinking is that non-formal education dilutes the commitment to education. The existing Formal school system should be non-formalised. Schools should operate as neighborhood schools. By having many kinds of schools, we have divided society even at children's level.

Government schools will have to be empowered, curriculum will have to be localised and medium of instruction the mother tongue for providing meaningful education. We also need to remember that children come from different cultural backgrounds, and that both boys and girls are to be educated. All this will mean interacting with parents. Dialogue with them helps our understanding of education.

Shri. Bardhan, representative of DPEP. said that DPEP is a programme funded by the World Bank and is functioning in different districts in Assam: Morigaon, Dhubri, Darang, Golpara, Bongaigaon and Koprajhar. The district Project co-ordinator has the following functions:

- Primary teacher-training programme.
- School construction, renovation, additional class-rooms, accommodation, toilets, etc.
- New school construction.
- Resource Centre: Each District has a block Elementary school Office, Block Resource Centre Office, Teacher Development Centre and 25,000 Resource Centres(RCs).
- Village Education Committees (VECs).
- Non-Formal Education Centres(NFEs).
- Early Childhood Education Centres (ECECs).

Prof. Saikia, B.N. College, Dhubri, said that there was relatively less literacy in Dhubri District. To develop women's education, two Mahila Samakhya Programmes were started in the tribal villages in the district where there is 0% literacy rate. Some ECCE Centres have been started. The election enumerator visited an area where he found that out of 750 people, 19 were educated. We need to make a joint effort to develop primary education.

Mr. B.Saikia, Cluster Resource Centre (CRC), DPEP, said that DPEP has activity based learning, skill development, low cost material. school should be attractive to the child. there are 1445 Primary schools in 6 Districts.

Shri. Pradeep Sircar, General Secretary, Prathmik Shiksha Sammelan, Lower Primary school Teacher's Association, said that he had observed the status of teachers since 1961. He had seen so many schools in different areas. The education we provide is poor. The materials we are getting is low grade. We are in a difficult position when we have to use this material to teach the children. There are so many English Medium schools coming up. Parents who have money send their children to such schools. The poorest of children come to government schools.

DPEP is spending so much money. What is the reason behind this? If it is a welfare state, before Education is made a Fundamental Right, there should be one type of school where all children should get one type of education. In the pre-independence period, the British Government provided different kinds of education to different class of people. People of India were divided into different categories; Education divided people. The practice of educating one group in order to rule over others is still prevalent today. The pre-requisite to making education a Fundamental Right is the Common School System. Private schools should be abolished.

DPEP is trying hard to develop primary education now. Educationists from NCERT have taught something about multi-grade teaching from I-V. If we look at statistics on primary education, Non-Formal Education, Adult Education, National Literacy Mission, we understand that DPEP is like a three-legged stool. Two of its legs, relating to the non-formal parts just do not exist in the district. The third leg, the school, is strong. DPEP has launched its programme on this.
There are so many languages spoken in the district; Assamese, Bangla, Bodo etc. I know how difficult is the language problem of the Bodo areas. Multi-language and need for different text-books have been a problem in the Bodo areas for the last 25 years. There has been the problem of the colloquial language of the teacher that is different from the children's. We have to train teachers for this. How to give proper education? Can we do it? Education has been a patchwork in the last 10 years. The best teachers have to become primary school teachers. Teaching is not a profession, it is a sacrificing avocation. The division into pre-primary, primary, middle is harmful to education.

The General Secretary, ME School, said "The child of today is the Father of tomorrow."

Shri. S. Barkalia, Sub-Inspector of Schools, Dhubri, said that there are so many islands called char land of tribal villages where there is 0% literacy rate. DPEP started activity based learning and training for classes I to IV and has given Rs.500 to each teacher for

developing low-cost teaching material for class I. Teaching has started with these materials. There are 1445 lower-primary schools and DPEP has started construction of few lower-primary schools. Within 5 years of the project period of DPEP, the school buildings cannot be completed. Village Education Committees have been started to make teacher-parents-pupil relationships. Short-term training for quality achievement of teachers has started. We have to co-operate with DPEP for the development of primary education.

Shri Wahid Ali, General Secretary, Union of Primary Teachers said that Nehru had committed that that within 10 years, elementary education will be made universal but we could not achieve this goal. 70% of the people in this district are below poverty line. Only economic development of the people can help achieve the goal of UEE. The policy of teacher: student ratio of 1:40 is not kept. DPEP has introduced training in Joyful Learning but this is difficult to practice due to the large number of students. There is no school building, no proper environment. Pre-primary classes have been stopped. Lady teachers and mother teachers have also been abolished. DPEP support is necessary for development.

Shri. Bhupendra Bordolai, DPEP official said that he would rather talk about action plan. 110 Cluster Resource Centres have been constructed in Dhubri district. Block Resource Centres have also been constructed. Toilets, especially for girls , construction of Block Resource Centres in 7 Educational blocks of Dhubri have been started. 24% of the total money is for construction and 76% for teacher-training and evaluation.

The representative from Nagaland, Shri. Mekha, felt that the district level was too small for such a big issue and felt that it should be taken up nation-wide. There were legal implications in making education a Fundamental Right. We should have legal action for failures. There has to be a law that calls for legal action for violating the Constitution. If you can suggest some legal action, it would be useful. An effort must be made to bring out some decision from this workshop. Some consequence has to be faced for not sending children to school. Families concerned need to sponsor the child; we cannot enforce any child to go to school. The economic policy is that unemployed persons can avail of schemes only if he has the qualifications.

The representative from Manipur said that the difficulties in realising Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). If we have all the facilities, will we be successful in achieving UEE? Not until children and people have incentive to send the children to school. We have to work together with the parents and children. We have to join hands.

A Professor from Law college, ~~Nagaland~~ Dhubri said that this issue is not a new issue; it is already enshrined in our Constitution. ashrams and gurukul schools have been replaced by schools. The responsibility of the State machinery will be increased. The Directive Principles are in no way less than the Fundamental Rights. It should be part of the Common Minimum Programme. Duty also comes in. This matter also needs great strategy and discussion. Society is backward in all aspects.

Shri. Hussain, General Secretary, Dhubri Science Club said that he welcomed this workshop and felt that something concrete can be harvested from it.

SESSION I

14.02.1997

The session began with the introduction of the participants. Prof. Anil Sadgopal, National Convenor, BJVJ and Professor in Education, MACESE, Department of Education, University of Delhi, presented the status of elementary education. He began by saying that elementary education is crisis ridden and enumerated them as follows:

Crisis 1: Half of the children and 2/3 of the girls are out of school in the 50th year of independence.

Crisis 2: Those who do go to school, quit within the the first 3-4 years. They are pushed out of school, they do not drop out. the push out rate is 50% in the primary and 65% in the middle school.

Child labour: an analysis of child labour in Gujarat shows that push out rate is on the increase between 91 to 94 by government's own records. In 1994, it stands at 64% an increase of 9%. Assam data needs to be analysed and a possible source is the Handbook on Educational Statistics.

Crisis 3: Those who stay in school are the great survivors. The 35% left over in middle school and the 5-10% in high school learn very little. In 1993, an All India study of 8 states where DPEP was to have started, including Assam was conducted. It was found that in Class V, 80% children could not read one word in their mother-tongue, could not add or subtract. A child in class X could not compute 3/.2, 1/.5 or 4/.5. There is a social dimension to this crisis. A child is freed from the poverty burden of the home and is sent to school. After five years, he has learnt very little and the family has risked their survival for this. It is a question of their very existence. UEE is very closely related to poverty.

Crisis 4: How effectively does the school function as an institution? A study in Madhya Pradesh shows that every school works 64-70 days in a year. Maharashtra and Gujarat average 70 days. In the Aaro hills of Madhya Pradesh, schools do not function on 'haat'(market) days. This means a loss of 52 days. as Sunday is also a holiday, another 52 days are lost. Between July to September, during the monsoons,there is very low attendance. Thus another 90 days are lost. During October-November, in the harvesting season, the school is closed for another 60 days. added to this, the school teacher is engaged in adult literacy mission, leading to further loss of working days. The NCERT curriculum is prepared for 210 working days. What is the function of the school? This has to be understood both by the government and the people.

Crisis 5: working conditions of the school. The work for which the teachers are paid by the government cannot be performed effectively in the school due to the lack of appropriate working conditions. the Fifth educational Survey Report shows that 2/3 of the schools have 2 or less number of teachers against the sanctioned posts. In Timarni Block of Madhya Pradesh, 84% of the schools have two or less than two teachers. This is because a majority of the teachers want posting in urban areas. In this situation, how can we expect that we can have child-centred education for the 5 crore children of

India? The National Policy on Education of 1986 says: Every child of India shall receive child-centred education. We talk of multi-grade teaching not as a philosophy, but as a strategy. There is a difference in the way Digantar, a voluntary organisation in Rajasthan approaches multi-grade teaching and the way DPEP approaches multi-grade teaching. Digantar does not accept the British pattern of classroom. Instead, it organises children's groups according to their interests. When their interests change, they move to another group. This is a positive, constructive philosophy. But in DPEP, multi-grades are being suggested out of helplessness as they cannot ensure even one teacher per school. If this new intervention cannot provide one teacher per class, then it is wrong.

Crisis 5: There is a feeling of helplessness and despair about education. Cheaper ways are often sought for education. There are resources for five star hotels, but not enough resources for even a black-board.

The LOKSHALA Programme has identified to major issues in education: over-centralisation, and the school being designed by national experts with minimal community participation. the planning and envisaging is done in Delhi as also curriculum construction. those whose children have to be educated have little say. for the age group of 15-35 years, there is a separate literacy programme. Out of 18 crore children, 9 crore do not go to school. by 2000, they will grow upto become illiterates adults above 18 years of age. Then literacy classes will be started for them. NLM business will go on into the next century also. It is like mopping the floor of a room when a tap in the room is running. The open tap is like the crores of out of school children. No amount of literacy classes, like the mopping of the floor, will clear the backlog unless we attend to the education of the out-of-school children now, that is, close the tap. In 50 years, the government has not closed the tap. We are attempting this in Lokshala. The attempt is to de-mystify the notion of expertise and bring education back to the people. It is a big task to de-colonize ourselves from the colonial heritage.

In 1931, Gandhi challenged anyone to provide universalisation of education in under a 100 years. That year will be 2031. there are still 34 years left to prove Gandhi wrong. today, if the school roof tile is broken, nobody will replace it because the school is not the community's school. it is the government's school. Lokshala talks about taking the school back to the people.

SESSION II

This session was devoted to deliberations by participants on the following issues:

DPEP has earmarked 40 crores for Dhubri district.
How was education in Dhubri before DPEP when the focus was 7 years of education?
How is DPEP trying to set right the problems in education?
What is your opinion of the DPEP intervention?

Mahanand Singh, Primary School Teachers Association, said that before DPEP, there was 5 years of common syllabus. The 1986 policy talked of 4 years of education and mid-day meals. The DPEP scheme started in 1995 in Assam though it was to start in 1994 and is for III. It should have been for IV-VI. We are told to teach from words to alphabets. Mothers teach their children too.

They teach them simple words like mother, father, sister, brother, cow, etc. There is no child who does not already know the DPEP prescribed words being given at age 6. We need to go beyond that. It is better to go back to pre 1986 policy days. The curriculum for class III is overloaded and makes the child feel like running away. He prefers to fish rather than come to school. We are not yet free of the British educational system. Even today, education prepares you for servility. Instead of spending just 24% on school construction, the budget allocation should be reversed, and 76% must be spent on construction. DPEP must also
consult people and elicit help from the Mahila Samithi.

AHead Master said that there is no plan for classes V-VII in DPEP. It must also be included. The objective of the workshop should include techer pay scales of primary and ME schools. DPEP is for 6-11 years but it should be for 6-14 years. After DPEP has come, there is no talk of the 11-14 age group. We are notpaid for as long as 20 months and this is an issue related to education.
How can you expect regular service without regular pay? The method of teaching and method of spending under DPEP is often not up to the mark. The method of teaching in the school is very different from the method of teaching at home. Education must become a State subject and not on the concurrent list. School management must be a state affair. The Centre must limit itself to broad policies and special schemes. Under DPEP, pre-primary should be compulsory in every school and an assistant teacher must be allocated. the pedagogy suggested by DPEP, of going from sentences to words to letters do not give scope for individual differences among 6 year olds especially when time is limited. At class I there is less reversal of pedagogy but it is still a reversal. The syllabus for other classes is overloaded. They have to learn language, mathematics, science, social sciences. How is it possible in the limited periods. There should be option for choice of subjects.

Another Head Master pointed out that the text-books are supplied very late. They should be supplied free of cost. Floods and other conditions makes the situation worse.

An Assistant teacher said that after DPEP started, officials from Delhi visit the vilages. There is planning from grass-root level. The VECis involved with the Education Department in budgeting, construction activities. By 2000, UEE will be achieved. There is a difference in implementation of DPEP and other programmes. The DPEP curriculum is OK, but the teacher is over-burdened. They have to make models, aids, and they need time. They grudge the fact that after doing all that, they get no extra pay. Teachers do not get their salary regularly. 3-6 years must have pre-primary education. the books are experimental. Teachers give suggestions to suit local needs. Text-books are also better now. Enrolment is also better. At this, two participants interjected and reacted to the statements strongly.

Another Assistant teacher said that MLL is supposed to be minimum level, but even this is maxixmum level for the district. MLL requires 80% attendance and this is difficult for every student. It is also difficult to teach with teacher-student ratio of 1:40. Individual attention is not possible. The teacher's method is the best method. Give facilities, good teacher-student ratio and we will get good education. Equality cannot come through text-book.

A Head Master said that he has not received his pay for 19 months. In 1992 the payscale was 900. After JBT it was 1500. But today the pay scale is still at 900. 50% of the time goes in getting the budget released. One teacher did not get pay for 58 months, and his wife committed suicide along with their 3 children. We teachers are the backbone of the nation. We are not in any way less than the officials of the Directorate. Yet, on an average, a Class IV emplyee gets paid after 18 months, teachers after 10 months and Head Masters after 3 months. DPEP will not be successful in my village. there is no sitting arrangements. The people are very poor and think of food first. Training must be given properly so that the teacher can reply to questions from students satisfactorily. The DPEP method is different from the methods used at home. Under DPEP training, We were taught to teach counting in a certain way with numbers upto 4. when I asked them about other numbers, I was told that research is going on, and they will let me know later. What will I teach my children till then? there is no mid-day meal, so admission is a less. But giving mid-day meal will not result in education.If we stop the English medium in schools, it will be better for education. MLL is a burden for the teacher and student alike.

Another participant said that in DPEP we were told that people will be involved in planning. But DPEP imposed their method on us. They did not consult us. Teeachers of villages are pressured regarding release. There is no record of the expenditure incurred in construction under DPEP. The VEC is preoccupied with money coming into school. not on the curriculum. Teachers are mentally disturbed. They are pressured on all sides. We do not understand what will be the role of the teacher. VECs control the teachers. The VEC keeps an eye on the teacher, demands money from him. Any body can become member of the VEC. the village sarpanch is the President of the VEC. There is 1 member from women's organisation, 1 from gram panchayat, 5 general members and 4 parents in the VEC. We have to invite VEC in school meetings. We should have senior interested members in the VECs. We do not know how the policies were formed. We have asked the DIETs but there is no adequate response. A DIET lecturer said that DPEP will choose and train teachers. If this is the way, standard will be very low. DPEP will not work.

Prof. Anil Sadgopal said that MLL was planned not in Guwahati, not in Delhi. In fact it was not planned in India at all. It was planned in the Institute of Education, Hamburg, Germany. This is now being implemented in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Another participant said that there are no Bangla, no hindi medium books in DPEP. The 40 crore World Bank loan is not charity. There are no statistics . We do not know how it as decided to give 40 crore for this district. In 5 years we have to be successful. Money has been taken on loan for DPEP in this district. Education will soon go out of our hands unless we intervene. We cannot just go for training, collect Rs.25 and come back to school. If no improvement takes place in education, then, in the future, it is we who will be blamed. The public will not understand. It is not enough to sing and dance with class I children for 40 days. If at this age, I just sing and dance with class I, what will happen to children in other classes? A primary teacher is recruited by paying Rs.900. Even a Class IV employee gets more.

In 1995-96, we were given training in class I. for class II, there are no books in Bangla or Hindi. There are some books in Assamese. We are slowly finishing off teaching through mother tongue. It would have been better if DPEP had first conducted a survey and then started the programme.

Venture schools are being run by private organisations. There is no DPEP and no mid-day meal scheme. Why are private schools exempt? DPEP is meant for 50% of those going to school. What about those who do not?

The main objective of DPEP is Universalisation of Primary Education. This means two things:

1) Bring all children to school.
2) Retain them in school.

SESSION III
16.2.1998

SUMMARY OF THE WORKING GROUP SESSIONS:

Dr. Janaki Rajan summarised the preceding sessions as follows:

* Parents blame the teachers and the teachers blame the parents for the state of education in schools. Neither group is satisfied eith the state of affairs.

* Parents and teachers are in favour of flexible curriculum.

* Remedial measures are necessary for those who do not do well. Text books must be provided on time.

* Education is costly; it invoves books, uniforms, and compensation for jobs which cannot be undertaken as children are in schools.

* Vocational training must be part of the formal system.

* Location of schools is not conducive to regular participation in schools by children. An example of this is the location of a school across the national highway, requiring that 6 year olds have to cross this highway to reach the school; this is so hazardous that the children do not go to school.

* Teacher-student ratio is high and is not conducive to provision of good education. A ratio of 1:25 is needed.

* The priority needs of the government schools is more facilities, teachers and infrastructure rather than training.

* English must be taught apart from mother-tongue.

* Teachers should respect students.

* Government school officials should visit schools and community and should listen to parents and teachers.

CONCLUDING SESSION:

FUTURE VISION FOR CONCRETISING UNIVERSALISATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION:

A member of the Dhubri Science Club said that Dhubri district is backward in all respects. The initiative for changing this must come from the people. We invited BJVJ and DPEP to organise this workshop. we have to work for the implementation of new thought, improvement of education, decentralisation, the common syllabus. Primary school is today not the school of the people, but of the government. People send their children to school even though they have no food to eat. Guardians do not attend meetings; the purpose of this workshop is to understand how to involve parents. We seek the co-operation of all of you in helping us in our efforts.

The implementation that is undertaken in DPEP is not in accordance with the planning. Initially in the training of DPEP, primary teachers and voluntary organisations were invited. Now, they do not involve voluntary organisations. The Voluntary organisations are asked to fill a form and they are evaluated in this manner. Mahila Samakhya is on; initially they were contacted but after that they were not contacted again. This has to be seen in the context of some areas where DPEP is working where the female literacy rate is 0%. Even when voluntary organisations have approached DPEP on their own but they have not been involved.

We have been working in the villages as part of BJVJ activities. Initially, people asked us how much money will we give them.But as we explained what we are trying to do, they began to work with us. It is only when we interact with people on a continuous basis that we will be able to bring about changes. Since we cannot do this in all areas, we want to work in one Block.

Debitola is a development Block under Goripur. this consists of Bodo, Raba and Rajvanshi- Gwalparia Muslims. We want to work in this one Block on an experimental basis, and show how this work can be done.

Shri. Pradeep Sircar, General Secretary, Lower Primary School Teacher's Association, said that the teachers are with us in this initiative. we will support and work in whatever way it is required. But I request you not to abandon this midway. It is not in our tradition to give up work half-way. Kothari Commission has weakened us. Missionary people are very sacrificing people. On behalf of my association, that we will support and ork with you in everyone of your efforts. I thank you and assure you that we are with you.

Shri. Sabito Habo, representive from Nagaland said that in the last three days he had been closely observing the proceedings. Nothing can be changed unless there is respnse from the people. It is the responsibility of the people of the North-East to realise what we are and what we can do.

As I travelled from Nagaland to Dhubri, I observed how different Assam is from Nagaland. There are better facilities, infrastructure, communications in Assam. we need to develop educational consciousness, be it the parent or be it the teacher.

Governmonat officials, parents, teachers, voluntary organisations, business groups, all have to work to-gether. Teachers should be examples to the others. There are many complex problems in Nagaland. The families and parents want to send their children to school, but there are no schools.

at this workshop I see that the people of the nearby villages have extended support to you, and so have the government officials, voluntary organisations, head Masters, teachers and others. I think something has been inculcated in the minds of the people for the upliftment of life. I feel convinced that work can be done from the way you have organised this programme. You have our moral support in this endeavour.

Prof. Anil Sadgopal said that threr is now a Dhubri District Resource Group, Assam State level Lokshala Resource Group, and Prof. K.K.Sharma, who is with us here is engaged in developing a North-east Regional Resource Group.

A special possibility is that the UGC will be able to provide a Teacher-fellow for the Lokshala Programme for two years. This individual will be working full-time on Lokshala. The person will learn, become sensitised and also play an overall organising role in the Lokshala Programme. ther will be a Lokshala Steering Committee. There is need to involve primary and middle school teachers. There must be recommendations to the government that these teachers must be engaged in this work and spared from the Total Literacy Campaigns. There must be documentation of your efforts, and these must be published.

LOKSHALA PROGRAMME

Report of Workshop
on
'Local History, Micro-Planning & Community Mobilisation'
(December 13-16, 1997)

held at
Dhubri, Assam

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SCHEDULE CUM RESUME OF THE WORKSHOP

13th December — Morning Sessions:Inauguration 12 Noon to 1.45 pm

The workshop was inaugurated by Dr.Dhrub Chakraborty. It was followed by an exposition of the Lokshala by Akshay Kumar, Lokshala Karmi from Jehanabad (Bihar). through his experiences of Jehanabad. Dr.Ashok Kumar Das, Chief Medical Officer and Mr. Yogesh Das, Distt. Planning Officer and Mr. Tapash Pramanik of Nehru Yuva Kendra, Dhubri also spoke on the occasion and wished the workshop success.

13th December — Afternoon Session 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Prof. K.K.Sharma, who had arrived by then, was in the Chair and with the help of Akshay Kumar the session was conducted. Prof. Sharma and Akshay Kumar spoke about the Lokshala. This was followed by the participants introducing themselves alongwith their views on UEE in general and Lokshala in particular. They also introduced their Gram Panchayats (GPs) and villages. Fifteen participants gave their introduction. Out of these five gave detailed introduction while the remainder, most of whom were females, gave their names only.

On the 13th evening the Delhi team arrived; their train was late by 8 hours.

14th December — Morning Session : 10.30 a.m. to 2.00 p.m.

The Resource Team that had arrived from Delhi the previous evening was introduced and the proceedings from the earlier day were resumed. Participants introduced themselves and their villages and GPs. At the end of the session Panchayat-wise groups were made (with some Resource Person in every group) to discuss and formulate major issues within their GPs.

Afternoon Session — It was decided that no break be taken. People had their lunch quickly group by group. At about 3.30 p.m. this exercise was completed and 4 groups were able to present their reports alongwith some discussion. Datta Savle spoke about

planning etc. as he was to leave that night. Since the participants were going back to their villages, the sessions were only upto about 5 p.m.

15th December — Morning Session : 10.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m.

Group reports continued to be presented and discussed in the morning session. Five reports were presented :

15th December — Afternoon Session : The session was devoted to local history. Besides Dr. Tripta Wahi, Dr. Ganguli, Dr. Uddalaka Datta and Mr. Arun Kumar made brief presentations. There was a good discussion on the issue.

At the end it was decided that participants from the GPs would prepare maps of their respective Panchayat areas with certain specifications. It was also decided to have a field visit the following day.

16th December — Morning Session

Field Visit : There was a visit to Asharikandi village from 7.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. The village was seen/observed by the team. As scheduled the morning session started around 11 a.m. This session was devoted to women's empowerment Ms. Shashi Mouraya was the main speaker. There was a sharp exchange among the Resource Persons. This was followed by a study of the maps of various GPs.

16th December — Afternoon Session : It was devoted to planning. Dr.Ganguli spoke about UEE etc. The same groups were formed as had been formed on the 14th, but with no Resource Persons. Each GP made their own plan. Simultaneously the Resource Persons had a meeting about certain issues which were exercising their mind including the National Workshop scheduled for January 1998.

After the groups had prepared their action plans all reassembled to discuss the same. After the plans were reported there was a closing session in which Dr.Uddalak Datta and Ms. Meghali gave their views about the workshop. Dr. Wahi summed up the main issues that had emerged, Ms.Shashi Mourya presented the certificates and Mr.

Debashish moved the vote of thanks. At the end three songs were sung by all - two in Assamese and one in Hindi.

The workshop was attended by about 45 persons from the GPs and the Dhubri Science Club. Around 25 participants attended all sessions. There were ten Resource Persons. One had to go after two days and one could come only for one day. One UGC Fellow could not attend the workshop due to her daughter's illness, but there was no intimation from the other UGC fellow for not coming. Prof. K.K.Sharma had brought one person as a special invitee on his own initiative.

Dr. Uddalak Datta and Ms. Meghali all through did instant translation in the workshop.

The Resource Persons who had come from outside stayed in the Gurudwara.

13th December — Inaugural Session 12.00 noon to 1.45 p.m.

The workshop was inaugurated by Dr.Dhrub Chakraborty. It was followed by Sh. Akshay Kumar placing the Lokshala within the socio-economic and political context. He expressed his firm belief that in the context of present social situation in which ideological and organizational weaknesses are almost fully seen the process of Lokshala is feasible. To Akshay Kumar Lokshala's concept of school empowerment through community empowerment appears to be the only way out in which 80% people of a *qasba* could/ would repose faith.

After this Dr. Ashok Kumar Das, Chief Medical Officer, Mr.Yogesh Das, Distt. Planning Officer, Mr. Tapash Pramanik of Nehru Yuva Kendra, Dhubri, spoke on the occasion. They wished the workshop all success and gave assurance, with some suggestions, of their continued support to Lokshala.

Afternoon Session : 2.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

In this session Prof. K.K. Sharma and Mr. Akshay Kumar spoke about elementary educating in general and about Lokshala in particular in the context of UEE. They gave their opinions along with their introductions. Following this fifteen persons gave their introduction. They were requested to give information about their GPs and villages. However only five persons gave details of their GPs and villages; the remainder only gave their names.

1. Abdur Rahim Sheikh, cultivator, Shilairper GP stated that the DPEP is destroying education system. In a school of 250 students and 2 male teachers in the LPs, when the question of necessary infrastructural needs was raised, the same has not been considered till date.

2. Shah Jamal Sheikh, Teacher,Alom Ganj GP and village said that the people regard the present education system not only useless but also as destructive of old value system because after receiving education for fifteen years, they get alienated (get cut off) from their traditional work and customs. Neither do they succeed in getting other jobs. The

teachers, the community and the government hold each other responsible for this situation.

3. Dohindra Raba, Debitala GP, social worker. He said that in their area the non-government (Venture) schools have spread all over. The only reason for this is that the unemployed youth believe that with the passage of time these schools will get government recognition. For this reason the main organizer of the school is continuously running after their MLA and the other unemployed youth look after the school.

4. Pradeep Kumar Barman, unemployed youth of Madai Khali village of Ashari Kandi G.P. gave his view that major impediments in the way of education are economic reasons. Therefore, it is imperative that economic developmental activities be linked with education. Simultaneously, the guardian should be made sensitive to understanding the causes of these problems and ways out. Only on the basis of this the community can intervene in education.

5. Ayanaluddin Ahmed, Lecturer, Alamganj Rangamati College informed the workshop that in this region there is absence of ideal teachers since appointments are made in an irregular manner. There is a great shortage of essential resources in schools. Administration has become slack towards school work, but even then the guardians have developed no sensitivity towards the problem. Therefore, it is essential that teachers, students and guardians should work together.

Those who introduced themselves by their names included Pila Bala Rabha, (Village Balbari), Rahini Bala Raba (village Balbari), Feroza Khatun (Baraibari, Geramari GP) Kohinoor Begum (Dalshingheralga), Marzina Khatun (Baladmara), Siriza Begum (Baladmara) Anu Kumari Barman (Matiabag), Gita Rani Roy (Matiabag), Salma Khatun and Najma Khatun from Darchowka Part I.

14th December — Morning Session : 10.30 a.m. to 2.00 p.m.

After Prof. Sharma introduced the Resource team that had arrived the previous evening the proceedings from the earlier day were resumed. Participants from the GPs introduced themselves and gave information about the status of education and general socio-economic complexion of their villages and GPs.

1. Wahayuddin Zamanullah of Ashari Kandi, himself a school science teacher, in a school, talked about the problems of Adult Education, Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) and DPEP. He stated that Adult Education has been involved in bungling and no proper training has been conducted at any level. The DPEP has also been a failure. They have been continuously engaged in training teachers and that too only for class I. Since there are only one or two teachers in every school, schools are paralysed. A lot of money is being poured into DPEP but no useful purpose is being served. He gave the example of the definition of a triangle being asked from a student who could define the triangle, but on being asked to give an example from life, stated 'I am handsome'. He further stated that while so much money is going into useless DPEP trainings, teachers have not been paid salaries over a long period ranging from one to two years. He gave the example of a cow having been stolen by a teacher in desperation and when he was interrogated in the local *thana* he said that he had not been paid for several years and for the previous two months there was not a morsel of food and no local shopkeeper was willing to give him things on credit any more. The *thana* let him go. In such circumstances people think of joining the AASU knowing fully well that not everyone can become Prafulla Mohanta. No one thinks about students and teachers. Education does not enable people to get jobs. Older brothers on not being able to get jobs, take out their younger brothers from school. That kind of education is needed after going through which one does not have to search for jobs. Education should be given about irrigation, farming, fishery etc.

2. Shah Jamal Sheikh - GP Alom Ganj, village Garusthan. He said that the name of the village means Kabristan. He gave the history of the name. Several hundred years ago, one Shahabuddin and others in the course of clearing jungles, reached a place

where there were lots of graves They settled there Now there is a BSF camp. 50% of the villagers do labour in their camps The remainder do agricultural work and also go out to work for others

When they do not/cannot habilitate themselves, how can they send their children to schools Girls go to work in other people's houses. Survival and food comes first and education later. There is tremendous poverty and large population Population control should be taught. DPEP has done nothing - only 40 crores have been spent! These days even guardians do not respect teachers and therefore, how can students respect them. Teachers do not get salaries for months. Recalling how in his school days he once hurt himself with a spade because he thought he would impress the teachers by doing hardwork he went on to say that it was part of the curriculum to work a piece of land in his days. Now, he thinks, the education system is making students useless. They are forgetting how to work with hands.

3. Sabruddin Sheikh of Jhalernlgea Part I Dakhin Gramer said that those who have passed matric have gone to Guwahati for rickshaw pulling; child labour is rampant; young girls are sent to towns as maids on contract basis; small business is also there (selling fish & vegetables); 80% is landless labour. In agriculture season there is the bondage of the Mahajan and in non agricultural season, they work as labourers in Guwahati.

4. Abdur Rahmanullah : Ghegher Alga - general comments were similar to no.1. It is not a question of making elementary education universal, but of making it compulsory. Teacher - student interaction is essential; this is flood affected area with no irrigation facilities, these must be created; unemployment problem is acute; if there are no jobs people will become Ulfa. There is no industry.

5. Umritsar Raba : Ambari village Debitala GP. 6 villages have one LP. Mostly self cultivators, there is no wage labour, village conditions are not bad. 4 maticulates in salaried jobs. High school and college are in Gauripur which is 15 kms. away. There are 50 women in a handloom training centre getting 300/- p.m. stipend.

6 Ganesh Chandra Das of Ashari Kandi spoke of three main categories— farming, tiny business and landlesses, terracota artisans 70% population is SC (labour + fishing), terracota artisans are OBC

DPEP is there but it is not doing anything; problem of unemployment is there.

After these presentations Panchayat-wise groups with some Resource Persons and Science Club people were formed to discuss major issues within their Panchayats. The following groups were made :

Group 1	Ashari Kandi	Pranab Kumar Barmen	Reporter
Group 2	Alamganj	Shahjamal Hontora	Convener
Group 3	Shilairper	Abdur Rahim and Zafiur Rahman	Reporter Convenor
Group 4	Uttar Gramari	Farad Ali Iriza Begum	Reporter Convenor
Group 5	Dakhin Gramari	Safiuddin	Convener
Group 6	Debitola	Rahidna Raba Amritsar Raba	Convener Reporter
Group 7	Tipkai	Niran Chandra Bramha	
Group 8	Boribari	Anwar Hussain	

Nearly two hours were spent is discussion and preparation of reports which were presented subsequently in the afternoon session. There was no break in the session; lunch was taken group by group.

14th December — Afternoon Session : 3.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Group I : Composition : fishermen, MOBCs & agriculturists; they cannot afford education. Amongst MOBCs there is more unemployment which is the major problem of the entire Panchayat. Dropout rate is high. ME has far less students than LPs. Because the educated

ones can not get job, it gives no incentive to others to attend school. Most parents are illiterate. Migration to these villages from other places due to land erosion, which factor compounds the existing problem. If different curriculum is followed and one doesn't have to look for jobs only then we will go to school. Stipend for meritorious students are sought. Fisheries are needed.

Group 2 : The GP comprises of 8 villages in which there are 16 LPs (only 5 are granted). better off children go to the granted schools. Most children are too poor to go to school. More boys as compared to girls go to school. Now rice is being given and when that stops, students stop going too.

There is no meeting between guardians and teachers. Teachers are often sent out on government work. Educated people from the villages migrate to cities and sever their links with the village. Teachers are deceits and shirkers.

Solutions suggested : Interaction between educated persons, teachers and guardians. Secondly, family planning should be introduced; students should respect teachers. Young people should have good behaviour and imbibe some good values. The village community should monitor government funds for their villages.

Group 3:Shilairper: It has 2 distinct and disparate sets of villages: a. Debitola - 7 villages. b. 3 villages near Gauripur town.

They are linked together for administrative convenience. (a) has very few facilities in comparison to (b) which is far more developed because of its proximity to Gauripur. The Debitala set of villages is the most backward of all Panchayats. 85% are illetrate and there is high dropouts in each class. Most people have to get their children to work for livelihood.

Whosoever gets education from poorer families do not get jobs. Rate of female education is very low; educated persons try to migrate. Elected representatives never bother to show up. Even the GP President has not visited the village.

The history of the NWDPRA (National Watershed Development Project of Rainfed Area) project of 22 lakhs was given; no development on this count ever took place, money remains unaccounted for. One person from this group reported the matter at various levels without any substantial result.

Suggestions : Since most children are working during the day time, it is imperative that there must be night schools. There must be more teachers. Scientific education for agriculture and irrigation should be given. The government has a lot of money and even if 50% of what has been spent, had been spent properly there would have been considerable development.

Group 6 : Debitola : (presentation was made in Assamese) socio-economic background by way of ethnic diversity was given - Raba, Garo, Bengalis (Hindus & Muslims), wood cutters and liquor-makers. There are very few schools. There are problems of communication unemployment, forest environment & pollution.

Among the solutions suggested was the abolition of free meal and free education. Government is spending much more money than the missionary schools but the latter are functioning much better.

Datta Savle's comments on these reports in view of planning

He said he is trying to understand the problem. Within one Panchayat there is so much diversity that it is difficult to give one model of Lokshala. There are tribals, non-tribal groups, migrants, etc. Is it possible that one school model, one text-book, one system of pedagogy would be able to give education to them all? What is to be taught, how it is to be taught will vary from location to location. The running theme has to be the kind of education that would relate itself with life-experiences. The existing text-books do not give us that scope. All panchayats do not have schools. There are differences even within Panchayats. There should be as many Lokshala models as there are divergences.

The existing education disempowers people. Planning has to be based on our

strength and not on our weakness. Out of 10 lakhs villages half do not have schools Before the Britishers came it was society that was talking of education. Each society has to work to solve its problem and education is the medium for that. The movement of Lokshala talks of changing society.

To understand our problems is also a kind of survey. Whatever has been stated in the groups should be discussed in the village and the *chaupal* for this should be the school and the master should be the recorder. He shared many of his experiences from other parts of India.

15th December — Morning Session : 10.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m.

Group reports from the previous evening were continued

Group 4 (i) Population, 10,000; Literates 40-45% illiterates 70% or so; land 30-35,000 bighas; cultivated land 20-25 thousand bighas; for agriculture water is needed, there is no arrangement for that.

ii. Members of Mahila samiti have got weaving training. The Samiti has no place and hence no subsequent activity has been possible.

iii. High rate of population; but there are no *karkhanas* and, therefore, no source of income.

iv. There are brick *karkhanas*, but those working in these remain unwell. Also brick making destroys surrounding agriculture; it adversely affects horticulture also. There are ten bricks kilns; some are against rules but there is connivance between administration and owners; landless do not object since it gives them some work; cultivation is precarious because of floods. Bricks makers' children also work at the same place.

v. Almost all homes have H/S passed boys. But since there are no jobs available, these boys are cart or rickshaw pullers - the latter in Guwahati.

vi. 8-9 villages combined have 2 LPs and 2 MEs and each school has about 500 students. Each school has three teachers. More schools are needed.

vii. Serious shortage of drinking water exists; some solution is needed.

viii. There is a girls H/S school which is a venture school. Because of non-recognition there are lots of problems.

ix. Attractive play toys, games, sports kits, books, slates, pencils etc. are needed for children in schools.

x. There are very poor people. Food is needed; income generation schemes/financial aid is needed; the government should assist.

xi. Poor people need kerosene oil, clothes etc. tree plantations also.

xii. If you people can give all these corruption in our place will end.

Prof. K.K. Sharma - 'You are demanding all this of the government. Cannot people do all these things of their own'?

Reply - 'There is no agriculture, there are floods. Whatever agriculture was being carried out has ended due to brick making. Skilled labour for brick - making is coming from outside - primarily from Bihar. Small mafia is frightening. Administrative machinery is having nexus with it'. Information given in response to a query - brick kilns have to be in a fallow land but this is not so here; outsiders are owners and workers/labour is local.

Children from better off sections go to school. Those who are considered well off are 30-40 bigha land owner (Bigha is 20 katha) plus those who do service and *diwani*.

Group 5 : Dakhin Grameri - 10 villages; 70% cultivators; 25% labourers/landless tenants; 5% service class.

Low lying, water logged, flood prone, area; backward; no roads. Each year crops are affected by floods, hence economy is affected and guardians are not able to provide education; number of schools is not sufficient.

8 LPS (6 granted + 2 venture), 6 MES (4 ungranted) 1 HS (not granted). 40% children go to school.There are more than 50 matriculates, 30 intermediates, 20 graduates and 2 post graduates; tremendous unemployment exists and people are fed up of this situation and therefore they have 'repulsive' attitude towards education.

There is no infrastructure in the schools;

There are 5-7 households with 60-70 bighas of land and the remainder have 7-8 bighas on an average. Suggests that if communication facilities are improved, if school is provided hamlet wise, enrolment pattern may go up. There is water on the way to the school and therefore, children cannot go to school.

Sometimes the area is affected by drought. Girls do to school, but more boys go to school.

Group 7 : Polaj Gurhi Panchayat - a tribal village - presented by Niran Chandra Brahmo (Bodo). The village has two harvests; majority cultivating on their own land. There are floods from small rivers which are useful for agriculture. GP is of seven villages and each village has at least one LP- sometimes more. There are 2-3 teachers in each LP; all children are going to school now. DPEP has made some intervention - it has even constructed school buildings. Both males and females are involved in agriculture; textiles is a cottage industry; textile production is primarily for their own use and it is not market oriented; irrigation is not necessary; perennial floods perform that purpose; high land techniques are there.

A good number of tribal people are in armed forces. There is a good deal of self sufficiency - 75% of it is there. They prepare their own food - rice horticulture; fishing is part of life - each family catches fish for itself. Only if there are family needs and extra money is needed, fish or some textiles are marketed; aericocoon are made and sold if needed.

Electricity is there but communications are poor. Forest is disappearing (these are government forests).

Group 8 : Barai Bari - Anwar Hussain; It is a riveraine area. No irrigation; paddy, jute and mustard are grown. 120 households; all are Muslim; population is decreasing due to erosion/floods. There is no permanent boundary of land holdings (Chaur area); there are Bhatia Muslims - 20% cultivation, 80% combination of landless labour coupled with other labour and rickshaw pulling in Guwahati. Among these 80% there are some matriculates and educated persons. There are jobless youths who have done M.A.

LPS 8 (6 granted; 2 ungranted); 4 ME (2 granted 2 ungranted).

H/S one-ungranted

Land holding pattern on an average is 3-10 bighas; only 10-12 households have above 50 bighas; communications are non-existent; education is desirable, but economic development must accompany it; education on scientific agriculture should be there.

During the discussions it was stated by several participants that they had not understood the concept of Lokshala.

15th December — Afternoon Session : Local History

Dr. Tripta Wahi gave the main presentation on local history. Her presentation was based on her concept paper (Annexure 1). However, the presentation was done in relation to the issues that had emerged locally in the group reports. The issues of water, floods, erosion, land holdings, fishing, education, songs, games etc. came up for discussion and presentation. The question of Brahmputra not having been trained (absence of human intervention for checking continuous calamity) also emerged as a major issue for discussion.

There was a lot of excitement among the participants on the subject of local history. It evoked a great deal of interest.

During the course of discussion Dr. Uddalak Datta made a largish and interesting intervention through some puzzle activity which was aimed at suggesting interlinkages among various facets of life, but these had to be worked out through application of mind. Unfortunately his spech was not translated into English (he himself was one of the translators) and hence there are no notes with us.

Mr. Arun Kumar made a brief intervention and talked about the utility of history and then of local history. He pointed out how so far history has been written primarily by the privileged sections and how they have written their own history. He gave the example of the history of the Indian National Movement's presentation in the school text-books

which represents a monolithic view. It is represented as the history of the Indian National Congress and that too only of the leaders of the INC. It is given out as if only the leaders fought and that too only their leaders. The meaning of local history is not to provide the local details of the nationalist narrative, but their own understanding of freedom. The whole exercise of knowing and writing people's history is a source of empowerment.

Dr. Ganguli who spoke in Bengali/Assamese talked about two kinds of sources - primary and secondary; these have to have internal/external criticism/evaluation. He further talked about what constitutes data and facts to be substantiated through primary and secondary sources. He also asked the house to look into what is true and what is false. Then came the periodization of Indian history which began with Vedic period and thats how we reached modern India. He spoke about education system in the Vedic age and he concluded by talking about scientific ways of doing history.

16th December 1997

Field Visit : 7.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. There was a field visit to Ashari Kandi village which has a high percentage of fishermen, terracota artisans and landless labour; several participants visited the house of the terrocata artisan who is a national award recipient. This is a period of vacations in schools. Some participants visited the fishermen's hutments where many girls were making nets. We learnt that several of these girls go to school. The jute producers were engaged in the process of sorting out jute which was spread out all over the village. Mr. Akshay Kumar spoke to a few villagers about the state of government school in the village. The venture school is housed in a small hut type structure which does not have the capacity of seating more than 30-35 students at the most. Also it was evident from the condition of the make-shift structure that classes cannot be held there when it is raining.

On returning to Dhubri the workshop straight away started with the issue of women's empowerment and no discussion was done on the field visit.

Morning Session — Women's Empowerment : 11.15 a.m. to 1.30 p.m.

Ms. Shashi Mouraya was the main speaker in the session on women's empowerment. She began by stating that the session concedes that women are not empowered. Everywhere women have a secondary status. Even in groups such as dalits, tribals who themselves are marginalized by the dominant groups, the status of women is secondary. She pointed out that in the workshop there were fewer women than men. Even those who are present are doing very little speaking. She pointed out certain indicators which reflect the status of women in Indian society. To begin with even before the girl is born, the sex is ascertained and she is killed through foeticide. If she is born, her birth is unwelcome. She receives less education than boys in the family. In her parents' house she is regarded as someone else's wealth (*paraya dhan*). She is taught to stay at home. Even the dreams that she dreams are limited within that circle. It is often stated that women are women's enemy. Woman is made by society and it is not God who moulds her. Who she would talk to, what kind of clothes she would wear, where she would go, how she would go

etc. are all decided by others for her. A large percentage of girls do not go to school and their drop out rate is higher than that of the boys. Education is not central to her life. But when she does study and takes up job, she does the household work too. There still exists division between outside and household work. Why education does not talk of changing woman's role in society. For keeping the same role, new roles appear in different situations. She gave the example of schools, particularly in villages, where during the recess male teachers go out to take a *pan* or smoke or stroll but female teachers stay in their room. This role model gets effectively communicated to students. In this context she mentioned that if girls in the workshop were not speaking, it is not their fault, somewhere their confidence has not been built. Even educated women with good service lack confidence. When girls want to become doctors/engineers etc, they are discouraged. Education is also linked with marriage and dowry as is also apparent from several reports presented in the workshop. She emphasized that women do not have decision-making power; decisions are made by men. A telling example given was that women wear jewellery, they have the right to wear, but cannot sell their jewellery. The right to sell is with the man.

Discrimination is seen everywhere in public life. Even public toilet facilities are absent for women. Hardly any female doctors are found at block level; for women in the fields engaged in back bending work there are no doctors . In the male dominated society, it is the father's and not the mother's name that is given with the child's name. There is no place for mother's name anywhere. Woman has to always live under some man's shadow - it is the father, then husband and then son. Attempts are being made to change the situation, but if there is imbalance in the weighing scale, attempts to change the situation are limited. Divorce amongst Muslim women and the practice of *iddat* is weighted entirely against the woman.

The speaker found women's position analogous to a cow which is tied with a rope whereby it can eat only within a certain circumference and cannot go out of it. She sang a song which calls upon women to be determined to seek their freedom. The house joined her in singing of this song.

She concluded by stating that women have to take their decision by careful and conscious thinking of changing their position. She urged the female participants to speak up and take part in planning and decision - making. She also stated that men too would have to make conscious effort on this issue if they wish to change society. She said that the caged bird is not able to fly immediately when it comes out of the cage. Learning to fly is a slow process for such a bird.

Initially there was slow reaction to the presentation. Anwar Hussain of Shilairper said that they would try to ensure that freedom is given to women. That freedom and rights are siezed and not given became the focus of discussion. In the course of discussion it was repeatedly maintained by several male participants that not every woman is dominated by man. Dr. Ganguli, when invited by Prof. Sharma to comment on this issue, stated that there are many instances of wives' harassing their husbands and, therefore, we must not generalize about male domination. He also talked of good status of women in Indian history and society. It was also stated that she is put on a high pedastal and she is Lakshmi and she is given much respect in Indian society.

Another point that came up for discussion was that woman is woman's enemy. Shashi Mouraya referred to her earlier point that woman is moulded by society. She further stated that women are divided into several forms such as unmarried, married, widow, barren, prostitute. Such forms have been created by those who have power and it has been done to maintain their own power. Under the circumstances where there is very little power for women, when they do find themselves in a position to exercise some power, they do exercise it against women e.g. mother-in law over a daughter-in-law.

Prof. K.K. Sharma made a long statement after this. He stated that in the context of women's empowerment, women's exploitation/oppression would have to be checked and they would have to be protected. But woman's silence is not necessarily a sign of her slavery; silence has its own strength; silence is gold and humility is woman's jewel. He added that gender role has been made by nature, woman gives birth and the activities of nurturing and bringing up the child are linked to that role given by the nature. Educated mother's role is within that context. This is important for child's mental development. It

is necessary to work out how to protect women from oppression.

In a changing society there are some accepted/assumed notions, these cannot be generalized. In Indian culture women have a special place; with material development new things have come up and social changes are taking place some of which are good and some are bad. We have to ensure that we keep good values and stop bad things. The question is how to make society dynamic. It has been stated that woman is under the shade of man, but some faculties are given by nature to woman and not to man. In the western society the divorce rate is high, but in Indian society it is different. Indian society has its own accepted norms.

There was a very sharp reaction to Prof. Sharma's views. Mr.Arun Kumar stated that it was a highly disputed matter and that he had refrained from speaking earlier because he did not want to project differences of the Resource Persons in the meeting. He stated that he found the views of Prof. Sharma so unacceptable that he must openly dissociate himself from the podium. He insisted that his dissent be formally recorded. He said that he does not know what is gender question, but understands that birth- giving is a biological fact. The subsequent things are society related. The fact of giving birth does not state what the woman has to do. 'Is it part of our biology that we take decisions regarding women?' Society and education teach a specific role. Whenever some change is there, Indian culture begins to shake. Personal examples are one thing, social structure quite another. Let men become gods. The change that we are contemplating is how to transform 'goddesses' into human beings'. He referred to a Sanskrit *shloka* wherein it is maintained that God resides where women are worshipped. Since the Vedic times women have been enchained by having been made into objects to be venerated and worshipped. We want them to have freedom as human beings. He also referred to examples of male parenting.

Dr. Wahi made the point that she agreed with all that has been said by Arun Kumar, but it is also a fact that there are both good and bad aspects of these developments. These are related to the nature of changing Social Formation. The pertinent issue is who will decide what is good and what is bad for women. Is man going to decide this

question for the woman or the woman will decide it for herself? And if the woman is going to decide, which section of women or whether women and men will decide it together for a more just and egalitarian society for all? The discussion ended here.

Afternoon Session 2.15 p.m. to 5.45 p.m.

The session was devoted to planning. The groups formed on the 14th were continued for planning but with the difference that there were no Resource Persons in any group. Before the groups began their planning exercise, Prof.K.K.Sharma invited Dr.Ganguli to speak on elementary education and Lokshala's perspective. Dr. Ganguli stated that literacy rate is linked proportionately with the GDP and that education and development are linked. He further stated that non-economic factors also affect education; if social, cultural and political go up, literacy rate also goes up. After Dr.Ganguli's presentation the groups began their work.While various groups were planning their work, the Resource Persons had a meeting outside the room to discuss certain issues about which they were feeling very concerned.

There was a heated discussion among the Resource Persons. There was a strong opinion that the agenda of the National Workshop was not clear. The nature and purpose of the proposed field visits is also not clear. The same must be clearly spelled out much before the workshop. It was also felt that the objectives of each session should be discussed and worked out much in advance. In the absence of clarity, human and financial resources get wasted. It was also felt that finances must be arranged much in advance so that arrangements can be made accordingly. In the absence of advance planning everything moves haphazardly. Another point of discussion was the selection of Resource Persons. It was generally felt that the Resource Persons must be familiar with the ideas of the Lokshala and their views should not be contrary to the basic position of the Lokshala. It was suggested that vision was not clear to lots of people including persons of the Science Club, Dhubri, Orientation workshop for ourselves for clarifying vision should be held.

The question of dates of the proposed National Workshop came up for specific

discussion in view of the fact that they fall in the month of Ramzan. It was suggested that it may be ascertained whether this would affect participation in the National Workshop since more than 50% of the participants are from Muslim background. Debashish felt that if proper arrangements were made keeping in view their specific requirements, it should be all right. Nonetheless he undertook to ascertain the participants' views. Suggestion also came for an advance team for reviewing action according to action plans.

After the groups had prepared their plan of action, all reassembled for their presentation. The following action plans were presented. These were presented in Assamese and were concurrently translated.

Group I : Ashari Kandi (i) In sorting out education there should be a seminar/interaction with guardians. (ii) There are educated unemployed persons; we should think of small scale industry and co-operatives for solving economic problems; solution to economic problems will help children go to school. (iii) Night schools are essential since most children work during day time. (iv) Meritorious students should be appointed as teachers; most teachers are incompetent since at present teachers are appointed through bribery.

Group II :Gheger Alga - (i) Will work on local history (ii) will try to identify experts who would be interested in this work (iii) The group will go to illiterate guardians and discuss with themwhy they don't send their children to school. (iv) The group would try to collect proverbs from the locality. (v) It will try to address itself to the problem of unemplyoment.

Group III :Alam Ganj - Kabaristan

(i) They will work on local history and will try to find out how graves were there on these mountains.

(ii) Will contact the peasant/cultivator for economic problems.

(iii) Will try to have discussion with guardians who do not send their children to school; will find out reasons for that and would try to pursuade them to send their children to school.

(iv) Will keep an eye on teachers in view of irregularity in teaching.

(v) Will try to develop school environment, i.e. infrastructure. Will seek information why books etc. are not given to children; will write to news papers and the Minister about the issue; will write to the Minister even for reference books.

(vi) For local development women's awakening is essential; will have discussion on the issue and will set up Nari Samiti etc.

(vii) The educated will distribute among themselves the responsibility of teaching the illiterates.

(viii) Will collect folk lore.

Group IV : Shilairper

i. Will try to find out about the government schemes for their Panchayats. After this they would try to ensure proper utilization of funds e.g. DPEP.

ii. Since this is a flood affected area and there is no proper irrigation, they would try to evolve community thinking on it.

iii. Will establish direct communication between the government and the community.

Group IV : Debitala

i. Outcome of the Lokshala - will try to communicate these ideas to their village.

ii. The community will keep a vigil on the teachers.

iii. Children who do not go to school or drop out of the school - will try to find out reasons for that.

iv. Will go to elderly people to find out about their history.

v. Will motivate the educated to stay in the village and do agriculture.

vi. A rubber plantation has been started by some young men in about 200 bighas. It has not matured yet; once it becomes successful, they will try to involve the local poor.

Balladmara Village

i. Will do local history

ii. Will try to find out why children do not go to school or drop out.

iii. Will try to find some solution by themselves for the unemployed.

iv. Collect local songs.

v. Promote education.

vi There is land, but no irrigation; will try to find out solution for that.

vii. Communicate their ideas, which they have got in the workshop, to their community.

Sater Alga :

i. Will find out local history from older generation.

ii. Literacy rate is lowest in the area - will get together to discuss solutions for the problem.

iii. Origin of their village particularly its name.

iv. Discuss with older people about huts/houses/livelihood in earlier times.

v. Flood affects their very being due to erosion; will find out how many times in their memory the land has been eroded.

vi. Will do agricultural history in detail.

vii. Night schools for students above fifteen.

viii. Will find out why children do not go to school.

Dhakin Gramera

i. Identification of non-school going children before the academic session starts; will approach the Head of the family to find out reasons for not sending children to school.

ii. It there are reasons such as children not having clothes, they will provide these from the community.

iii. With set up a Shiksha Abhyan Committee under the Science Club, Dhubri.

Ambari

i. They will try to improve agricultural methods.

ii. Connecting road of PWD is not pucca yet - they will discuss it with the government.

iii. There is drinking water problem. They will contact the Local Public Health Engineering Deptt. and will ask the government to improve drinking water facilities.

iv. Venture school teachers are politically motivated; these teachers should not be politically motivated.

v. Infrastructe of the venture LP schools is poor and they cannot be run during the rainy season; will try to collect donations for their improvement.

vi. The guards of forests are not protecting forests and they will compel the guards to protect the forests.

Valedictory Session

After the action plans were presented, the concluding session began Dr. Uddalak Datta and Ms. Meghali were requested to speak about their impressions etc. of the Workshop. They spoke in Assamese. No translations were made and, therefore, there are no notes. Dr. Tripta Wahi was requested to sum up the main issues that had emerged from the workshop. She began by stating that the continuous presence of so many participants was a clear indication that the people of the area were seriously concerned about the state of education and related issues. In Assam there is an unusual situation in which the community is raising schools (venture schools) although the primarly purpose behind this initiative appears to be providing employment to the educated unemployed. Poverty of the region has been brought out by all and the problem of unemployment of the educated youth is integral part of that. It has also emerged clearly that the educated youth is leaving their villages and sever their relations with their roots. The poverty of the region, it seems, is related to agriculture being unstable due to floods and low lyingphysiognomy. Dr. Wahi further said that she was ignorant of the fact till she came here that the river Brahmputra has not been trained unlike other Himalayan rivers. It was clear from all presentations that peoples' lives are seriously affected by precarious agriculture and therefore, almost all groups have suggested human intervention in water for drainage and irrigation. As far as education is concerned, people are clear that schemes such as DPEP have meant a waste of huge funds without any substantial benefits to the community. Even other government schemes meant specifically for the development of the area have not been implemented properly and adequately. She also stated that gender disparities are apparent in all spheres. The gender issue is a very important issue, but an issue in which there are tensions. However, such tensions have to be accepted in their stride as they reflect complex social reality. Presence of so many girls was very heartening, but their participation in the workshop was minimal. So their active participation in future should be attempted. She further stated that the reports and the action plans make it clear that people are concerned about the state of education. However, they also make it clear that they view education in the context of larger socio-economic reality; suggestion of night schools by several groups is integral to such an overview of education.

She said that the Resource Persons have benefitted a lot from their interaction with the participants. It is apparent that every situation is a process of learning at different levels for all concerned.

After this Ms. Shashi Mouraya was requested to present certificates to the participants. At the end Mr. Debashish thanked the participants and institutions and persons who had helped in the organisation of the workshop. Dr. Wahi moved a vote of thanks for Mr. Debashish, members of the Dhubri Science Club and the BJVJ who had organized the workshop very successfully. Abdur Rahim of Shilaiper read out a poem he had composed on the workshop. The workshop concluded by singing three songs.

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S.NO.	NAME (IN BLOCK LETTER)	ADDRESS	PROFESSION
29.	GITA RANI ROY	Vill. Mathabag P.O. Gauripur	Student
G.	SHILAIRPER		
30.	MD. ABDUS SAMAD SK	Vill. Branamtar, Shilairper P.O.Shilairper	Cultivation
31.	MD. ABDUR RAHIM SK	Vill.Darchowa P.I. P.O. Shilairper	Cultivation
32.	MISS NAZMA KHATUN	Vill.Darchowka P.I. P.O. Shilairper	Student
33.	MISS SALMA KHATUN	Vill. Darchowka P.I. P.O Shilairper	Student
34.	MD. ABDUR RAHMAN SK	Vill. Searchowka P.II P.O Shilairper	
H.	DHUBRI		
35.	DR.ASHOK DAS	Dhubri	Doctor
36.	ASHOK KR. DEWAN	Dhubri	I.T.O
37.	SUDIP SARKAR	Dhubri	Activist
38.	JOYDEEP BHATTACHARJEE	Dhubri	Activist
39.	SUBRATA PAUL	Dhubri	Activist
40.	BIJON DAS	Dhubri	Activist
41.	DEBOPOM CHAKRABORTY	Dhubri	Activist
42.	SARUP	Dhubri	Activist
43.	SURANJAN KUMAR KAR.	Dhubri	Activist

ANNEXURE : III

Workshop

on

Local History, Micro-Planning & Community Mobalisation for UEE

From December 13-16, 1997

under the Lokshala Programme

Organised by Dhubri Science Club & B.J.V.J.

Academic Support From : MACESE, Dept.of Education, University of Delhi

Resources Persons :

1. Prof. K.K. Sharma
2. Datte Savle
3. Dr. Tripta Wahi
4. Akshay Kumar
5. Shashi Mourya
6. Dr. Dhrub Chakraborty
7. Sandhya Das
8. Dr. Uddalak Datta
9. Debasish Dutta
10. Arun Kumar

S.NO.	NAME (IN BLOCK LETTER)	ADDRESS	PROFESSION
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31.	MD. ABDUR RAHIM SK	Vill.Darchowa P.I. P.O. Shilairper	Cultivation
32.	MISS NAZMA KHATUN	Vill.Darchowka P.I. P.O. Shilairper	Student
33.	MISS SALMA KHATUN	Vill. Darchowka P.I. P.O Shilairper	Student
34.	MD. ABDUR RAHMAN SK	Vill. Searchowka P.II P.O. Shilairper	
H.	DHUBRI		
35.	DR.ASHOK DAS	Dhubri	Doctor
36.	ASHOK KR. DEWAN	Dhubri	I.T.O
37.	SUDIP SARKAR	Dhubri	Activist
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39.	SUBRATA PAUL	Dhubri	Activist
40.	BIJON DAS	Dhubri	Activist
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BHARAT JAN VIGYAN JATHA

LOKSHALA PROGRAMME

Debitola Field Laboratory (Dist. Dhubri, Assam)

Progress Report (2000-2001)

The LOKSHALA Programme continued from May 2000 to January 2001 in the Debitola Field Laboratory in Dist. Dhubri, Assam. The Programme was conducted under the collective guidance of Dhubri Science Club, Centre for Rural Appropriate Science & Technology (CRAST), the District-level LOKSHALA Co-ordination Committee and the Block-level Ad-hoc LOKSHALA Committee. In this process, the Panchayat-level Study-cum-Planning Group and the *Mahila Samaj* (a village-level women's group) played the major role.

The LOKSHALA activists in Debitola Development Block identified some Panchayats and villages in each of these Panchayats for focussed attention this year. This was accompanied and followed by intensive interaction with community members, especially women whose children are either out of school at present or are likely to be `pushed out' soon. The interaction allowed us to collect valuable information regarding people's perception of the problem of the children leaving school without completing it and what concrete steps need to be taken.

The aim of this interection was to understand (i) the people's perception of the social and pedagogic character of the education system; (ii) the nature of social intervention and other educational devlopment programmes required for transforming the educational situation; and (iii) the expectations of the people from education of their children. As part of this dialogue on education, the people of Debitola Block have provided many significant and constructive answers to educational problems. We have also gained an understanding of the socio-economic conditions of the area and how these are related to educational issues.

From the middle of January 2001 to June 2001, the field work had to be halted in the entire Block due to the worsening of the extremist problem. Also, the floods and the Assembly Elections interrupted the LOKSHALA process.

The methodology of interection with the community comprised the following activities:

i) Village-level/group meetings.

ii) Building-up the LOKSHALA organisation.

iii) Socio-educational surveys.

iv) Workshops and training programmes.

v) Documentation of Local History & Peples' experience.

Social Inervention Process :

a) Organisational Build-up

The LOKSHALA organisation is the bedrock of social intervention in education. The Block-level activists helped in forming 30 village-level organisations and 15 women groups. They also identified a group of people from the villages who will act as a resource group of the LOKSHALA Programme. This group led the investigation of different issues related to elementary education and tried to understand people's perceptions in this regard. They also explained the importance of community intervention and eventually control over the local school in achieving Universalisation od Elementary Education. The type and number of the existing LOKSHALA organisations are given below :

Village-level organisations	- 30
Panchayat-level organisations	- 04
Resource Group	- 01
Village-level Women Groups	- 15
BJVJ Basic Units	- 12

b) Surveys and Studies

The LOKSHALA organisations conducted various surveys and studies of the schools, children, parents and the village communities. Educatioal data from Government Departments and semi-governmental organisations were also collected. The purpose of the surveys and studies was :

- to know the status of education in the Debitola Block through a sample survey (not completed);
- to document the perceptions of the children and the parents regarding educational policies and programmes;
- to understand the impact of the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) being undertaken by the Govt. Of India under the sponsorship of the World Bank (on-going programme);
- to investigate the status of the out-of-school working children (see Annexure for report on children engaged in brick field and boat services in Debitola Block); and
- to formulate a programme of social intervention in the school system for achieving UEE.

c) <u>Workshops and Training</u>

Organised workshops and training programmes on various educational issues as detailed below:

- Women Empowerment Shivirs to systematically interact amongst the emerging women groups of Debitola and also to build up a network of those neighbouring villages who have not yet constituted their respective *Mahila Samaj*.

- 15 women and 10 male activists of Debitola Block participated in Women Empowerment Workshop (North-East Region) held in Dhubri in June 2000.

- Workshop on Local History Collection; the participants undertook a Study Programme named as `A Study of the Children Engaged in Brick Field and Boat Services in Dhubri District' (see Annexure).

- Orientation workshop for Sample survey for understand the status of elenentary education in Debitola Block.

- Participated in `Peoples Science Convention on Education, Devlopment & Globalisation' held in Delhi in November 2000.

d) Village-level Meetings and Micro-planning

The LOKSHALA Village-level Committees held meetings during the year in around 70 villages with the community and community organisations. Village-level activists were identified who helped prepare a village-level micro-plan for action for the Debitola Block.

BJVJ-LOKSHALA Basic Units organised 15 local-level one-day meetings on developmental issues in order to systematically intervene in the deliberations of the Panchayati Raj institutions and the ongoing educational and devlopmental programmes of the Debitola Block.

e) Review and Follow-up

All LOKSHALA groups met with the District-level LOKSHALA Co-ordination Committee each month to review the progress of various programmes and to plan the next step.

Annexures : I. A Report on the Study of Children Engaged in Brick Field and Boat Services in Dhubri District.

II. Month-wise Activities Undertaken in the Debitola Lokshala Field Laboratory.

MONTH-WISE ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN IN THE DEBITOLA LOKSHALA FIELD LABORATORY

(2000-2001)

Month & Year		Activity
May 2000	-	Co-ordination Committee meeting
	-	LOKSHALA Women Group formation at village & Panchayat-level
	-	One-day long Block-level LOKSHALA planning meeting
	-	LOKSHALA activist discussion in 20 villages about LOKSHALA programme
	-	10 village-level LOKSHALA organisations formed
June 2000	-	Block-level *Mahila Samaj* meeting
	-	Women's organisational activity started through collection of information on women local issues with respect to gender.
	-	2-day long Block-level LOKSHALA Women Empowerment Shivir at Silarpar; 65 women participated.
	-	3-day long Workshop on `Women Empowerment Workshop-NE' at Dhubri, Assam; 15 women and 10 men from Debitola partticipated.
	-	Joint review meeting of all LOKSHALA groups of Debitola with the LOKSHALA Co-orditation Committee.
	-	Through village-level meetings, the activists covered 15 villages in this month and 5 village-level *'Mahila Samaj'* & 7 village-level LOKSHALA Committees formed.
July 2000	-	Identification of women activists for field work.
	-	Planning for collection of women's history of struggle with respect to the issues of gender.
	-	Workshop on Local History Collection

August 2000	-	Conducted personal interviews of Brick Kiln child labour.
	-	One-day planning meeting with field activists for undertaking Sample Survey for status of education in Debitola Block
	-	Finalisation & Field Testing of the survey questionnaire.
	-	Women Groups conduct systematic interactions amongst the emerging Women Groups in the neighbouring villages in order to build-up a network of concerns and solidarity linkages.
	-	10 village-level LOKSHALA committees and 2 panchayat-level ad-hoc committees formed.
September 2000	-	Planning and follow-up meetings for the study programme and boat services; children also included in this process.
	-	12 BJVJ local Basic Units formed.
	-	Orientation Workshop for Sample Survey.
	-	Bolck-level review and planning meetings.
October 2000	-	LOKSHALA and B.J.V.J. local unit organised 15 one day local public meeting for systematically intervene in local devlopmental programmes and micro planing and also they nominated 2 members, one male and one female for attending the National People's Science Convention at Delhi
	-	Secondary data collected from various Govt. Department and semi Govt. Department.
	-	Block-level *Mahila Samaj* meeting and discussed their devlopment of their previous work and prepared a future working plan.
November 2000	-	Participated in the BJVJ National Convention at Delhi in the first week.
	-	After attending the Delhi Convention, all groups of LOKSHALA followed-up on their activities in light of the enriched perspective

		and shared their experience with the local activists and communities.
December 2000	-	One leaflet printed in local languages and distributed among the people for community mobilisation & spread of LOKSHALA massage.
	-	A Dialogue Process started with other NGO's, DPEP and other Govt. Department for understanding the LOKSHALA process.
	-	Study programme completed.
	-	5 village-level LOKSHALA Committees formed.
January 2001	-	One-day meeting organised among all women groups;
	-	LOKSHALA village/Panchayat/Block-level groups active for preparation of instrumentalities of `Raijor Darbar' (People's Court).

BHARAT JAN VIGYAN JATHA

LOKSHALA PROGRAMME

Debitola Field Laboratory (Dist. Dhubri, Assam)

TOWARDS ALTERNATIVE CURRICULAR FRAMEWORK AND RELEVANT ELEMENTARY EDUCATION THROUGH SOCIAL INTERVENTION

Plan of Action (2001-2002)

Background

During the last two decades, the Dhubri District has experienced unprecedented activity in the social sector. Building upon the small library and science movements that were part of its heritage since the sixties, the Dhubri Science Club mobilised activists, scientists, teachers and students for participation in several science popularisation activities. This process culminated in the two Vigyan Jathas in 1987 and 1992 organised by Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha (BJVJ) and Bharat Jan Gyan Vigyan Jatha (BJGVJ) respectively, thus establishing an identity of the Dhubri Science Club as equal partner in national efforts.

In 1994, the DPEP (i.e. District Primary Education Programme) began in Dhubri District as a World Bank-funded Project. Dhubri was one of the first districts in India to be selected under DPEP. The implications of the DPEP design were immediately apparent. Based upon a theoretical analysis of the DPEP, the Debitola LOKSHALA field Laboratory was the first group in Dhubri District to draw public attention to the negative impact that such a plan would undoubtedly entail. Its concerns included the following features of DPEP:

- DPEP was dependant on a World Bank loan.
- Rather than focussing attention on the need to transform the mainstream school system, the DPEP was promoting a parallel system of alternative schools for poor children.
- The World Bank impact was overbearing and there was a need for an indigenous and people-based vision such as the LOKSHALA Programme to counter this.

Despite its existence since 1994, when we assess the DPEP programme in Dhubri, the following points emerge :

- DPEP promised that every child will have access to primary education. Seven years later, the situation of schooling in Dhubri District is worse than what it was before. This is evident from their own reports.
- Of the children who did enter the schools through DPEP, the number of children actually attending the school and learning is not assessable.
- Although DPEP claims to be founded on community involvement, the community was not involved in its evaluation.
- DPEP started the 'Alternative Schools' which are nothing but euphemism for a cheap and unstable arrangement for engaging child labourers in the evening after day's labour through an under-qualified, underpaid and untrained para-teacher.
- DPEP, though claiming to generate community involvement, ignored the traditionally run community schools called 'Venture Schools' on the ground that these are started by a group of 4-5 youth (as if the local youth is not part of the community!).
- DPEP claimed to have introduced joyful learning in all the primary schools of the district. It was further claimed that local language was used in early primary years. Yet, in reality, only a few local language words are used by the teacher while the bulk of teaching in Class III is conducted in Assamese which is the mother tongue of a small community in this district. No effort was made to introduce local languages such as Rajbanshi, Boro, Rabha, Santhali, Garo and Bengali.
- Subject-based books are made in the State language viz. Assamese while Bengali and Boro are used only as language.
- DPEP's commitment that primary education shall be through the mother tongue, was not fulfilled.
- DPEP made text books, so did the State Education Board. Neither provided the books on time. The ones that reached the schools first were taught. Teachers are confused as to which books to use.

- Although DPEP claims to have introduced a regional element in the text books, it does not reflect the socio-cultural character of Dhubri District.
- The architectural design of schools is standardised in DPEP and not according to the number of children in the school. Although the DPEP-made classroom is attractive, the provision made for such rooms is entirely inadequate. This has divided the children between those sitting in the DPEP rooms and those sitting in the old rooms or, still worse, in the verandah.
- DPEP did generate awareness of those teachers in the system who were innovative and made it possible for some good field-level activists to emerge. However, it did not know how to utilise their full potential.
- If the DPEP had fulfilled its goals, there would have been no need for the Sarva Shiksha Abhijan (SSA). However, Dhubri is preparing full-steam for SSA.

It is clear that much needs to be done in Dhubri's schools. This is all the more critical now since the DPEP is now being sought to be upscaled and continued now in the guise of Sarva Shiksha Abhijan (SSA).

It is nessary to take stock of the status of education in the district today?

The community groups must now evaluate this in their respective localities. This may be followed by organising educational conventions successively at the Panchayat- and Block-levels in order to compile data on educational status, consolidate people's perceptions and issues and formulate action plans for social intervention in Government programmes.

This will lay the foundation of an educational movement in Dhubri District, which will then be able to play an interventionist and monitoring role with respect to the soon-to-come SSA or any other Government initiatives.

The many ethnic and linguistic groups in Dhubri have an identity crisis. It is important to start a dialogue process first within each such group and then among themselves. The dialogue will include their language, history, skills and technology, bio-diversity of their habitats, their customs. as well as their culture-specific expectations from education.

This process is expected to throw up a substantive 'mass' of local knowledge which can provide the base for community intervention in re-formulation of the curriculum framework and re-designing of the textbooks.

This process will also help build people's capacities to negotiate with the Government as to what may be and what may not be acceptable in the school curriculum and the ways in which the schools function at present.

In this perspective, participatory documentation and conservation of biological diversity of the Debitola Block will serve as entry points to link the school curriculum with the geo-cultural diversity of the region.

PROGRAMME ELEMENTS

I. Alternative Cirriculum Framework

What is knowledge? The nature and sources of knowledge will determine the social and pedagogic character of the curriculum. The curriculum invariably reflects the ideology of the State. The curriculum framework released by the NCERT on Nov. 14, 2000 is an apt example of it. This curriculum framework does not recognise the plural forms of valid knowledge systems as part of the rich and diverse Indian heritage. That is exactly why 'We the People' must work towards evolving an alternative to this State-sponsored hegemony over knowledge.

In order to move towards such an alternative, we propose to institutionalise a dialogue process amongst various multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-religious community groups of Debitola Block with the help of local activists. The process will document the community knowledge in languages, social history, skills, agriculture, technology, bio-diversity, child development, schools etc.

The knowledge so documented will be critically analysed and compared with the Government-prescribed knowledge in the school curriculum. The report of this exercise will be used as a concept paper for building up a community-based constructive discourse on alternative curriculum framework.

The entire exercise will comprise the following components :

1. Orientation Workshop for Resource Persons and field activists.
2. Institutionalised dialogue amongst various language, ethinic and religious groups of Debitola Block.
3. Documentation of people's knowledge in its plural forms.
4. Report writing.

5. Workshop for presentation, analysis and improvement of the Report.

6. Educational Convention at Block-level for public affirmation of the findings of the Report and formulation of a plan for evolving a curriculum framework and writing of text material.

II. SCHOOL PROFILES AND EMPOWERMENT

In the LOKSHALA Programme, it is contended that, unless and until the community is taken into confidence and involved, education can not be transformed. This approch will be applied in planning and preparing of the profiles of about fifty schools of the relatively remote areas of the Debitola Block. The profiles will cover the historical, infrastructural, socio-cultural, pedagogic and curricular aspects of the schools.

Fifty village-level activists will be identified from the field laboratory area. They will participate in a 3-day workshop-cum-training programme in order to involve them in designing the profile tools and to train them for conducting the necessary field work. A team of two activists will cover one school according to a one-month long field plan formulated by themselves during the workshop. This will be followed by another one month of work for consolidation and analysis of the data for writing the report.

The individual school profiles will be presented at village meetings through posters, street theatre, folk songs, story-telling and other such modes to evoke a public debate. Special efforts will be made to involve, children, youth and women, particularly from the weaker sections of society. These social segments have direct interest in the transformation of the education system as it has excluded them so far. The village debates will lay the basis for building up an understanding of a local plan for social intervention for school empowerment. These plans will be shared through educational conventions at Panchayat and Block-levels in order to start a social movement for concretising education as a fundamental right in the Debitola Block.

The following activities will be undertaken :

1. Workshop-cum-Training Programme (3-day long) for field activists (about fifty) for designing school profile tools and conducting field studies.

2. Field Work (one month).

3. Consolidation and analysis of data and report writing.

4. Village meetings for sharing of school profiles through creative modes followed by public debate and formulation of a plan of social intervention for school empowerment.

5. Panchayat and Block-level educational conventions for starting a social movement for concretising education as a fundamental right.

6. Dialogue with and public pressure on the State Education Department and State-level leadership of political parties for necessary space for social Intervention in the education system.

III. Community Bio-diversity Gardens

Activities relating to conservation of bio-diversity will be undertaken with school children, teachers, village youth, women and an advisory group of community members. The garden will be started on land surrounding the village school. Plant species from the neighbouring revenue and forest lands will be identified and the planting material will be brought to the school garden for being planted and taken care of by the children. Special effort will be made to collect different varieties of the same species so that the diversity of the germ plasm is conserved. With the help of the local advisory group, the children and teachers will prepare a Bio-diversity Register of their locality. Information regarding the ecology, planting techniques, names in different languages, related folk lores and proverbs and economic/medicinal uses of the plants will also be compiled, recorded in the Register and continuously enriched. This entire exercise needs to be organised as part of the curriculum relating to EVS at the primary stage and science at the upper primary stage.

The major activities may be summarised as below :

1. Identification and collection of planting material of plant species growing in the neighbouring revenue and forest lands.

2. Planting the material in school's Bio-diversity Garden under the guidance of the community-based advisory group.

3. Children to investigate the botanical name of the plants along with their names in various languages.

4. A Bio-diversity Register of the locality to be maintained by the school along with notes on the ecology, planting techniques, verncular names,

related folk lores and proverbs and economic and medicinal uses of the plants.

5. In Grades IV & V, the children will undertake a more detailed study of how the plant or its specific parts are utilised and processed and their relationship with society; this study may include exploration of the harmful plants too and how to deal with them.

6. Putting up Scientific & Cultural Information Board on each species.

7. With the help of the Gram Sabha and/or Panchayat, an information and plant multiplication centre may be established and attached to each middle school.

8. Each year, the school will organise a Bio-diversity Fair wherein scientific, literary and cultural games and competitions relating to the local bio-diversity will be the main features.

IV. EDUCATION *JATHA*

An Education *Jatha* will be organised in each *Panchayat* with the basic objective of providing moral support to the teachers, children, women and the activists who have participated in the LOKSHALA process and also sharing their experiences and perceptions with the wider public. Later, a Block-level Education *Jatha* may also be organised chiefly to articulate the educational concerns issues for the social and political leadership at the area and also to pressurise the District administration for appropriate response.

V. EDUCATION CONVENTION

The basic philosophy of LOKSHALA i.e. *Sangharsh aur Nirman* will define the framwork for the Education Convention to be organised at the Panchayat and Block-levels. The Convention will provide a public platform for consolidation and analysis of the village-level experiences in a wider perspective. This exercise will, hopefully, raise issues of education policy rooted in the local experience of social intervention.

Annexures : I. Proposed Month-wise Activities (2001-2002).

II. Budget Estimate (2001-2002).

MONTH WISE ACTIVITY

1ST QUARTER	1ST MONTH	Diologue & interaction with different ethinic & linguestic group Field Activiest Orientation Workshop for 50 schools profile.
	2ND MONTH	Diologue & interaction with different ethinic & linguestic group Field material Ready for 50 schools.
	3RD MONTH	Workshop for Resource Person for alternative cirriculum framework One Month Field Work for 50 schools profile
2ND QUARTER	4TH MONTH	Field material Ready for alternative cirriculum framework Report writing of 100 schools profile
	5TH MONTH	Field activiest orientation workshop for alternative cirriculum framework Workshop on Report presentation, analysis and Prepared ***Education Memorandum.***
	6TH MONTH	Field work for Documentation of peoples' knowladge, interection with children & survey Start activity of Bio - Diversity Garden in school Report Printing of 100 school profile
3RD QUARTER	7TH MONTH	Field work for Documentation of peoples' knowladge, interection with children & survey Bio - Diversity Garden in school
	8TH MONTH	Report writing of alternative cirriculum framework Formation of presure Group.
	9TH MONTH	Report writing of alternative cirriculum framework Diologue process start with Education Department and other Govt official.
4TH QUARTER	10TH MONTH	Workshop for Report presentation, critical analysis and Report finalise. Diologue process continue with Education Department and other Govt official.
	11TH MONTH	Diologue process continuewith Education Department and other Govt official. Preparation of Educational Rally
	12TH MONTH	Educational Rally preparation of Educatioal Conference

Educatioal Conference

E. Thematic Package

Report

CABE Committee on "Free and Compulsory Education Bill and Other Issues Related to Elementary Education"

Index to Additional Background Papers

1. Extracts of Provisions of the Constitution of India that have a bearing on elementary education
2. Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted by the UN General assembly in November, 1989, and acceded to by the Government of India in December, 1992)
3. Report of the Group of Experts on the Financial Resource Requirements for Operationalising the proposed 83rd Constitutional Amendment Bill making the Right to Free and Compulsory Education upto the age of 14 years of Age a fundamental Right
4. The following papers written by and received from Prof. Anil Sadgopal, Member: -
    i. Deconstructing Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2003
    ii. Legitimising Exclusion and Inequality in Education
    iii. Extract from "Globalisation and Education: Defining the Indian Crisis"
    iv. Analysis of the premises underlying the Free & Compulsory Education Bill, 2004
5. Summary of Discussions of the "Public Study Group on CABE Committees" on "Policy towards Free and Compulsory Education Adopted by the Indian Government since Independence" (Received through Prof. Anil Sadgopal, Member)
6. Paper by Dr. J.B.G. Tilak titled "A Study on the Financing of Education In India with a Focus on Elementary Education." South East EFA Forum. (Draft) NIEPA, mimeo, May, 2003
7. Nagaland Communitisation of Public Institutions and Services Act, 2002

Papers written by

and received from

Prof. Anil Sadgopal, Member: -

i. Deconstructing Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2003 (pp. 17)

ii. Legitimising Exclusion and Inequality in Education (pp. 5)

iii. Extract from "Globalisation and Education: Defining the Indian Crisis" (pp. 3)

iv. Analysis of the premises underlying the Free & Compulsory Education Bill, 2004 (pp. 5)

Total No. of Pages: 30

(2)

Extracts of Provisions of the Constitution of India that have a bearing on Elementary Education

	Pages
General	6
5th Schedule	4
6th Schedule	16
11th Schedule	8
12th Schedule	1
	35

(4)

Nov 1989
↓
GoI
Dec, 1992

Convention on the Rights of the Child

(adopted by the UN General Assembly
in November, 1989,
and acceded to by the
Government of India
in December, 1992)

No. of Pages - (21)

(3)

Summary of Discussions of the "Public Study Group on CABE Committees" on "Policy towards Free and Compulsory Education Adopted by the Indian Government since Independence"

(Received through Prof. Anil Sadgopal, Member)

(pp. 18)

(5)

Report of the Group of Experts on the Financial Resource Requirements for Operationalising the proposed 83rd Constitutional Amendment Bill Making the Right to Free and Compulsory Education upto the age of 14 years of Age a Fundamental Right

Tapas Majumdar Committee (1999)
No. of Pages (59)

Draft/ 20 May 2003

South Asia EFA Forum

A Study on

FINANCING OF EDUCATION IN INDIA WITH A FOCUS ON ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

(pp. 96)

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INDIA

May 2003

Nagaland Communitisation

of

Public Institutions and Services Act, 2002

(pp. 19)

REPORT TO THE NATION

ON

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES OF THE NORTH-EASTERN REGION

A LOKSHALA PERSPECTIVE

Presented by

Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha

Friday, May 8, 1998

India International Centre
New Delhi

REPORT TO THE NATION ON

ISSUES IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN THE NORTH-EASTERN REGION

- A LOKSHALA PERSPECTIVE

Presented by

Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha

May 8, 1998, New Delhi

Introduction

The concept of North-east is itself a misconception. As the people belonging to different States of this region often ask, ` North-east of what ? North-east of Delhi ?' Obviously, these people refuse to be defined with reference to Delhi. Why should Delhi be the reference point for defining this part of India ? The tendency to perceive the north-eastern region as a monolithic geo-cultural entity belies its historical as well as contemporary reality. The seven States of this region are as different from each other as would be any State of India from another. Indeed, each State of this region is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-lingual society. In Nagaland alone, for example, sixteen historically different languages (often reduced to being called dialects) are spoken, with each having its own oral tradition of literature and culture. Being unable to reach an agreement about a commonly understood language, Nagaland was persuaded to accept English as the medium of learning from Grade I upwards. However, it invariably appeared to the child as an imposition over her mother tongue, particularly because government schools hardly taught anythinhg worthwhile, least of all English. In Meghalaya, the people speaking Garo and Khasi are still struggling to find a common denominator of communication. Any attempt to deny this rich diversity of the north-eastern region can be sustained only at grave political risk and confusion.

The continued underdevelopment of the north-eastern region over the past 50 years has by now crystallised into a deeply alienated mindset. For too long, this region has been percieved during the British rule as the region beyond and imagined administrative line which has to be only 'managed'. During the post-independent period, our basic perceptions have hardly changed. In these circumstances, it makes hardly any sense to ask a citizen of this region to merge into the mainstream. When confronted with such questions, the people of this region are likely to retort by asking, 'Which mainstream ? Whose mainstream ?'. The frequent poser to join the mainstream can be particularly disturbing in view of the fact that many of the communities in this region have hardly shared a common history of cultural development or freedom struggle. Indeed, you would often hear in this region how several of these communities are deeply concious of their own unique freedom struggles against the British colonial rule which they do not see as being part of the wider Indian freedom struggle. Unless one is willing to reconstruct the framework of discourse, there would be little hope for a meaningful political dialogue.

Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha (BJVJ), an all-India network of people's science groups, has been working in the north-eastern region through state-level and district-level units since 1992. For the past 3 years, this interaction has deepened through the Lokshala Programme for Universalisation of Elementary Education which is being viewed as a nation-wide process. In this programme, BJVJ with academic support from the Maulana Azad Centre for Elementary and Social Education (MACESE), Department of Education, University of Delhi, has been able to catalyse social intervention for improvement of the government school system in 9 blocks of as many states. Of these blocks, 4 blocks are in the north-

eastern region viz. Debitola block, District Dhubri (Assam), Peren sub-division, District Kohima (Nagaland), Kakching block, District Thoubal (Manipur) and Umsning block, District Ri-Bhoi (Meghalaya). A series of recent workshops and orientation programmes in these four blocks have made us acutely aware of the severe issues concerning Elementary Education which require priority attention. Unless these issues are adequately responded to, the ongoing process of alienation may not be reversed. We feel that it is our duty to share this concern and perception with the nation.

In the four annextures, you would be able to have a glimpse of the issues which we have been able to identify for national attention. We are deeply concious that our understanding is at best embryonic and requires a further process of maturation. However, there are enough signs in the annexed four reports to raise the level of our sensitivity and socio-political response through changes in our priorities, policies and perceptions with respect to the north-eastern region.

Recommendations

- The school infrastructure must receive adequate financial allocation such that the government schools begin to be viewed by the local communities as 'neighbourhood schools' which are capable of providing education of equitable quality.

- The growing tendency to limit the government's commitment to only primary education (classes I – V) must be reversed to the pre-Jomtien goal of Indian education wherein the government's commitment was unabiguously to fulfill the constitutional obligation towards elementary education (classes I – VIII). This must be achieved despite the policy preassures of the World Bank and associated international agencies operating in the north-eastern region.

- Ways must be found to build up a supportive ambience for school education inspite of the continuing insurgency or army operations. Access to quality education is too critical an issue to be allowed to be adversely affected by reprisals, rapes, kidnappings etc. This is a matter which determines the security of the forthcoming generations too!

- The multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual character of the north-eastern region must begin to define all processess of educational planning, curricular re-construction and pedagogic reforms.

- The mother-tongue of the child as a medium of learning, atleast in early primary years, is a constitutional right which can be ignored only at grave political risk. In order to make this a reality and a matter acceptable to the people, the establishment of the common school system through neighbourhood school concept is almost a pre-condition.

Space must be created in both the policy and the planning process for meaningful and effective social intervention in the school system. Without this, the rhetoric about community participation would have no meaning. Decentralisation can become a reality only when it is combined with increasing space for community controll over schools. It is only through this process that we can hope to inform curriculum and pedagogy with geo-cultural issues and concerns.

ANNEXTURE 1

WORKSHOP ON LOKSHALA PROGRAMME AT MEDXIPHEMA, NAGALAND
(4TH TO 8TH APRIL, 1998)

BACKGROUND

Nagaland is the sixteenth state of the Indian Union. It has a population of 12,09,546. There are 8 districts with 1225 villages in the state. There are 16 major tribes and many more sub-tribes amongst the Nagas with their own distinctive language and cultural features.

There are 1843 primary and middle schools with 208344 pupils (Boys 1,07,526 + Girls 1,00,818) and 4351 teachers in Nagaland. Literacy rate is 61.65.

Awareness of Lokshala programme has been created among people working in different walks of life. Negotiation and interaction with the educational administrators at the Directorate level and Nagaland University, academics, NGO, Church leaders, Teachers, women organisations, student leaders and community leaders have taken place in the state.

As part fulfilment of the programme BJVJ offers us UGC Teacher Fellowship to start a field laboratory in our respective areas. Accordingly in Nagaland, Peren sub-division in Kohima district has been selected. Peren is the headquarter of the sub-division. It is situated on the south west of Kohima at the altitude of 1,445 meters (above sea level). The distance from Kohima to Peren is 139 kms. Peren is bordering Manipur and Assam.

Reasons for selecting Peren :

- People living in the sub-division have a common civil administration unit headed by ADC with two S.D.Os and two E.A.Cs as his subordinates.
- All schools in Peren sub-division are being supervised by one D.I.S with 9 S.I.S to assist her.
- Majority of the people living in this area share a common history, culture and socio-economic life.
- There are two powerful women organisations known as Zealiangrong, Mipui and Zealiang women organisation, Peren.
- There is a students body known as all Zelianrong students Union, besides, each village has a students body.

Although Seliang is the dominant tribe in the sub-division, yet there are four different sub-dialect speaking groups namely : Zema, Liangmai, Rongmai and Kuki. Negotitations and interactions with the different groups of peoples namely civil administrators, heads of

arms welding culture
78% drop-out

the educational institutions, women leaders, student leaders, Church leaders and community elders have been done in Peren sub-division. People living in this area are convinced that the kind of education imparted today lacks suitability and relevance to their social needs and that they have expressed their desire to bring about change in their schools.

There are 10 villages with a population of 56,379 (male:29,604 and female : 26,775), 106 primary and middle schools with 7,734 pupils (Boys: 3,997, girls 3,737) and 541 teachers, out of which only 128 teachers are trained Teacher - pupil ratio being 1 : 14.

An orientation cum workshop on 'Quality and relevance of learning in schools in Nagaland' was organised by BJVJ in collaboration with the Nagaland Peace Centre, Kohima at the School of Agricultural Sciences and Rural Development, N.U.Medziphma, April 4 –8 , 1998. 8 members representing BJVJ and National Academic Resource Group from outside the state, participated in the workshop. People from different parts of Nagaland and social activists from Peren sub-division atttended the workshop. SCERT, DIET and NCTE extended academic support to the workshop.

In this workshop, the participants from Nagaland were deeply concerned with the state of their society in which violence, drugs, rampant corruption and arms weilding culture had come to dominate. They were uncertain of our intentions and their views bordering almost on mistrust, but through a close dialogue rapport was established and frank discussions were possible.

Some of the main points that emerged out of this workshop are as follows :

a. Although each village has a school, at some villages even two, the govt. school has not really taken off the ground. Government primary schools comprises 70% of the total schools and remaining 30% are private schools. Even though schools are there in practice, very few students come to the school. We got the graphic descriptions of cows and other animals sleeping in the school premises. This was not considered an unusual phenomenon by those who were present in the workshop.

b. Through a research paper based on a survey of 120 government primary school conducted in 1991-92 and the discussion that followed the presentation of the paper, it emerged that there is 78% dropout rate in these schools. It was underlined that the problems had not received the attention it urgently deserved because studies have not been carried out so far to highlight the problems. Queries were made on the data from SCERT on this issue. We were stunned to get the reply that no state data exists since the department has so far undertaken no survey on the issue. In 1973 Dr. L.R.Srivastava in his article 'Universalisation of Primary Education in Nagaland' had put the drop out rate at 77.77%. All present in the workshop seemed to have a consensus that it could be anywhere near 80%.

Teacher Absenteeism
Lack of Science infrastructure

c. The above mentioned paper and the discussion that followed brought out the fact that 4 years of primary schooling there are exams from class I itself ; upto 30% detention takes place in almost every class. The dropout rate is higher in urban schools in comparison to rural schools in all grades except in grade I. In grade I there seems to be a higher dropout rate in the rural areas although the exact data could not be ascertained. The HDP of North Eastern Region puts the rural dropout rate at 72.55% and the urban rate at 44.25%. Both are presumably much higher. In rural areas there is a greater wastage due to repetition.

d. A distinctive feature of Nagaland school system is that with every primary school pre-primary students are attached. However in the pre-primary stage itself teaching of numbers and reading activity is introduced. Even the pre-primary stage is not substantially functional. In practice even in the pre-primary stage, the work of primary school is being done and despite that 6-7 years are being taken by the students for completing primary education which is upto standard four.

e. In many cases the schools were found empty. The reasons are :

i) Poverty – Access to textbooks, uniforms and other materials needed for studying are not available. Approximately 5% children fall in this category.

ii) Teachers are not in place – Although it was being continuously reiterated that the teacher student ratio in general is 1: 22 and 1:24, emptiness of the school was largely ascribed to the absence of teachers in the school. Invariably they are not in the place where they are posted and sometimes they succeed in carrying their posts with them.

iii) Calendar is not in consonance with the cycle of agricultural production for this reason children stay away from their school for several months.

f. During the course of one presentation and the ensuring discussion, it emerged that generally students after joining sciences in college, continuously shift to the humanities. Th reason given was their inability to cope with the science subjects. We are informed that some investigations had been done on this problem and it was found that the college blamed the high school which in turn put the blame on the middle school and the middle school blamed the primary school and the primary school to the pre-primary stage! Finally through a lot of probing, we discovered that although sciences are being taught in school, there are no science rooms and laboratories. There are no practical classes and no practical examination. The basic infrastructure for teaching of Science is totally absent.

Teachers are not accountable to the
villagers
English medium
OBB

We began to understand the reality when we visited the primary school at Peren village. In each of the classrooms there were 3-4 students sitting with 1 or 2 siblings. 2 to 3 more students arrived during our stay in the school. In class 4 they were doing environmental studies and all 4 students had their books open in front of them at a particular chapter. We tried to engage in a dialogue with these students – greeted them, asked them their names, talked about the chapter they were supposed to be studying. There was absolute silence – there was no reply. In surprise we turned to the young teacher from the school. Embarrased, he replied that they did not follow us. Surprised at it, we asked how come? Slowly came the answer. They do not know English. It was mind boggling. The book they had before them was 'Environmental Studies' for Class 4, Part – II, published by a publisher of New Delhi. This is the prescribed text book for this class by the Nagaland government and the book is in English.

Suddenly everything fell in place and we understood the emptiness of the government rural schools. Our interaction with the village committee members could reveal that they had no role to play in the government schools because the teachers are not accountable to the villagers.

It is significant that all along there was a consensus among the local participants that the way out of the existing educational morass is complete privatisation of elementary education. The State of Nagaland has not satisfactorily discharged its basic responsibility and the minimal functions towards elementary education. There are no basic statistics of any kind – be it enrolment or drop-out rate – since no survey has ever been done, something that is a matter of routine in other parts of the country has yet to begin in Nagaland. The operation black-board which is a Central Government scheme could not be implemented in Nagaland. The state in Nagaland has been absolutely oblivious of the language questions. The complete failure of the state is writ large on the text book, 'Environmental Studies'. The text books are in English, a language which students do not know and even primary school teachers may not be knowing sufficiently. Where do you begin ?

Funds thrown- not irresponsible, but a scheme.

ANNEXTURE II

WORKSHOP ON LOKSHALA PROGRAMME IN UMSNING BLOCK , MEGHALAYA

(4th to 8th APRIL, 1998)

A five-day workshop under the Lokshala programme was organised from April 4 to 8, 1998 in the Bhoi-Limbong area (Umsning Block) of district Ri-bhoi. The participants comprising of both women and men in almost equal numbers gave us a signal at the outset about the status of women in the Khasi community. It was a mixed group: headmen of the villages, school teachers, farmers, members of youth and women organisations. Two kinds of problems with regard to communication with the participants had to be dealt with on a priority basis before the Lokshala programme could be discussed.

(i) There was a complete sense of alienation with respect to all of us who did not belong to Meghalaya. For the Khasi, people all of us from outside Meghalaya were 'Indians' while they preferred to call themselves as Khasi. Clearly, they did not share our sense of the history of freedom struggle, nor did they appreciate our pride in being Indians. We had to convince them first that we neither represented the Central Government nor the Indian State, before the dialogue could proceed further. On several occasions, a local Khasi leader advocating the need to return to old Khasi traditions, exhorted the participants not to share socio-cultural information with us - the Indians - for we may misuse the information against Khasi interests.

(ii) The primary expectation of the participants from us was for obtaining funds as a precondition for initiating the Lokshala process. We gradually found out that the rural people had known only two sources of developmental funding during the past fifty years. First, the Government funds which were perceived as coming from an alien source, namely the Central Government. Since they had no affinity for the Central Government, they had little affinity for these funds either. Therefore, every person, especially the male folks, almost thrived on Government funds and refused to acknowledge that they, too, had contributed to these funds through taxes. The other kind of funding which came easily and in large quantity was from international agencies. For this, too, the participants had no sense of affinity. Such funds were consumed rapidly without much developmental benefits. In this context, they could not understand how Lokshala work could begin without funds. This matter was eventually settled when we posed a question, 'Who will pay whom? And for what purpose?'. Since the question was of education of their own children, why should they expect the Lokshala programme to provide funds for the process to be undertaken by them in their respective villages. It took time and sensitive handling but eventually it made sense to all the participants. But this experience revealed to us how irresponsibly both the Government and the international agencies have thrown their funds down the drain for five decades.

The fact which struck us was the total lack of sense for simple data with regard to the school system. Even the members of the intelligentia and academia from Shillong all seemed oblivious of a question such as 'What percentage of schools in Meghalaya belong to the Government ?'. The answers varied from none to 60-70! During our village visits, the headmistress or the teacher would claim that all children of the village were attending school. But only after much probing that the teachers would show some consciousness about the large number of out-of-school children.

Matri-linear Society

The youngest daughter of the family is the custodian of the family property and therefore on getting married, the husband would come to her home. Despite the powerful status of women in the Khasi society, the division of roles between women and men was still along conventional lines.

The Durbar

Each village had the traditional institution of Durbar where all decision-making with regard to the village took place. Much more faith is reposed in the Durbar than in the Government institutions. There was an incongruity in this system . Inspite of their high status in society, the women had no place in the Durbars, though we were told by men that they had to act in the Durbar explicitly at the instructions of their mothers or seniormost woman in the family.

The School Infrastructure

The school clearly suffered from neglect and apathy. In addition, the education process was misconceived. Each primary school had two pre-primary sections wherein it was expected that 3 year old toddlers would learn alphabets and numbers. When they could not learn, they had to be retained in the pre-primary classes indefinitely. Apparently, this problem was not a direct result of governmental action. The SCERT textbooks in grade I did not assume that the children would have knowledge of alphabets and numbers. Yet the textbooks in grade-I in actual use assumed this knowledge. We discovered that most primary schools ignore SCERT norms and use privately published textbooks. This was done so that the Government schools will look like the private English medium schools. This practice has caused tremendous damage because the majority of children we met had not learnt much and suffered from the tyrrany of this imposition. The role of imposing alphabets and numbers on young children can be overlooked only at grave risk to the future of the next generation. The government seems to have conspired in this malpractice by looking the other way.

The Four-Year Primary School

The primary schools end at class 4. This implies that that Government does not have to invest in terms of additional classrooms and teachers' posts for class 5 in the primary school. Since the primary school has to be provided within 1 kilometer of each habitation,

the Government has managed to save investment worth hundreds of crores of rupees. This also means that a child who would normally drop out after class V will now drop out after class IV because the class V of the middle school will be too far away for the child to walk to. This problem affects the education of the girl child even more as she is even less likely to be allowed to walk this 'unsafe' distance. This decision of the Government is in clear violation of the Constitutional obligation under Article 45.

Government Response to Community Initiative.

There were general complaints of the lack of government response to community initiative in starting new schools. Repeated attempts by the communities to seek recognition and aid were ignored. As a head man from one of the villages named Mawlasnai told us during our field trip "I have been to Shillong with the application and have made a number of personal visits but without any success." In the 11 villages surrounding this area, there was not a single primary school. Yet, the Government had shown total callousness in responding to initiatives in villages. This has led to tremendous resentment and attrition of faith in the Constitution as someone in the village asked "Tell me how will you look at this Government when in 50 years what you have received is only negative communication."

Lack of ICDS Facility

In Kweng village, we visited the home of a poor family where a girl of 7 years was not only taking care of a baby but also cooking food. Both the parents were away at work. The older brothers were engaged in various kinds of wage labour. When we inquired about whether the girl would like to go to school, the girl nodded with enthusiasm but then moved away from us and sat with the baby on the side of a hill sadly looking away. We talked to the teachers inquiring why can the baby not be left in the ICDS centre of the village so that the 7 year old girl could attend school. The teachers told us that the ICDS centre of the village hardly functions, mostly because the food supply lines remain 'choked' for most of the year. Nobody cared. Even if someone did, what could someone do!

Inaccessibility of Middle Schools and High Schools

We noticed during field visits that a large number of children walked long distances with heavy school bags to attend a middle school or a high school. The children of the poorer families, especially the girl child, could hardly do this and tended to drop out. It seems as if it is part of the government design to keep children away from education in higher classes.

Irrelevance of School Curriculum

Meghalaya has not seen much industrial development. Most of the people continued to be dependent on farm-based or forest-based economy. Given this background, it is easy to understand why a majority of youth remain unemployed while their education alienates them from manual work on their own fields. It was, therefore, a major concern of the participants and they focussed attention on the following question : What will this education give us – jobs ? land ? remove poverty ? If the answer to all these questions is negative, what is the point of sending our children to schools ?

History and Environmental Studies Textbooks

The textbooks on History and Environmental Studies have been written without the context of the local people. They continue to reflect the character of NCERT textbooks and the Khasi child has no way of relating her consciousness with what the textbook talks about. The participants asked us : "Why does the government not teach our children the contribution made by the Khasi people to our own freedom struggle ?" The significance of this question has to be appreciated in the context of the Khasi consciousness that their freedom struggle from the British colonial rule was not part of the Indian freedom struggle. However, the homogenised prescriptions of text materials prepared centrally would have hardly any scope for local perceptions. We may somehow 'manage' to ignore the critical significance of the local context in the rest of the country but in the north-eastern region it enhances the sense of alienation and anguish to almost an 'unmanageble' breaking point. The textbooks on Environmental Studies similarly have little to do with the environment of the child as they were never prepared in the local context.

Lack of Linkage with the Durbar

The powerful institution of Durbar seems to have been ignored in educational planning. Many of the village Durbars raise resources to provide for 1 or 2 additional teachers for the village school. Yet, there is no provision in the Government system to gradually train and absorb these young teachers into the schools. We met several of these teachers who seemed to have tremendous potential but felt both frustrated and directionless. Durbars also are not involved in any decision-making process relating to education.

Merging with the Mainstream

The participants were unanimous in their collective response to any suggestion from any quarter to merge with the mainstream. "Which mainstream? Whose mainstream?" , they would ask. Indeed we could cross the barrier to our communication with them only when we shared our belief that India represents not one, but multiple streams. Therefore, the question of merging with any one 'mainstream' does not even arise. In our visit to a school, the teacher dutifully asked the children to sing *Jan Gan Man*... for our benefit. The children complied with sullen faces. We requested the teacher to ask the children to sing a Khasi song. The children with great enthusiasm and movement of their arms sang the Khasi 'national' song. It was only then that it dawned upon us that in *Jan Gan Man,* there is not even a reference of any of the north-eastern states. The question of merging into any one 'mainstream' made even less sense in this interior Khasi village.

ANNEXTURE III

WORKSHOP ON LOKSHALA PROGRAMME AT LEIMEDONG MANIPUR
(5th-8th APRIL, 1998)

Background

Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha (BJVJ) has been active in Manipur since 1992. The Lokshala Programme at Manipur began in 1997 with the State Organising Committee, BJVJ, Manipur, identifying a local academic-activist Dr. M. Shamungoe Singh to lead the process at Kakching CD Block and who is at present, UGC Teacher Fellow for Lokshala Programme. This workshop has been preceded by about 6 months of intensive work by a local team comprising of the Teacher Fellow, local voluntary youth network and women's groups at Kakching who conducted exploratory and mobilisational meetings in 15 panchayat gram sabhas with the community, panchayat members, head masters, teachers, social workers and student organisations. The resources for these activities were generated locally. Two 10-day workshops have also been held to catalyse teachers with support from SCERT. The resources for these activities were generated locally.

Participants and Purpose

At the present workshop, around 70 participants from various groups identified through the earlier process interacted with 4 resource persons of the Lokshala national academic group: The Minister for Education, Manipur, Superintendent of Police, Kakching, Faculty from Manipur University Department of Education, Director, Wireless, Zonal Education Officer, elected Panchayat leaders from Wabagai and Leimeidong, Zilla Parishad member, Kakching, representatives of the Nupi Maro women's organisation, a woman activist from Imphal, were present. The workshop was organised by Citizen's Association for Rural Development (CARD) Zilla Parishad members and Manipur unit of BJVJ.

The Manipur group attempted to sharpen their understanding the alternative vision of the Lokshala Programme and issues relating to its concretisation in Manipur, while the resource team attempted to understand the local perceptions regarding transformation of the government school system at Kakching.

Issues arising and plans evolved during the workshop

1. The presence of the armed forces in Manipur under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act to some extent dominated and determined the climate and content of the workshop including the timing of the deliberations, the presence of participants. The deliberations on the first day had to be curtailed because of reported tension in some areas from which some of the participants came. Interactions with women's groups, Meirapaibi could only be conducted late in the night between 10 P.M. to 1 A.M. as the women, numbering around a 100 were guarding Leimedong village, armed with torches, and could come for interactions in batches. The villages had to be guarded because the army could enter the village at any hour of the night and pick up a teenager youth on charge of supporting

presence of Military.

militancy. The women reported that since they have taken up this organised vigil, they have been able to negotiate with the army for release of youth arrested under suspicion. One woman reported that recently one youth has been arrested because he had a rash on his skin and the army suspected that this rash was due to mosquito bites got by living in the jungle and involvement in insurgent activities. These women are on vigil throughout the night at a structure by the road open to the sky and they said that they barely sleep about an hour every night; after a full day's work at their homes, looms, market and fields. When asked about the ill-effects of sleeplessness, they said that for the first year they used to feel dizzy but are now used to it. The long term psychological and physical damage, its impact on child rearing of this can easily be imagined. The fatigue and tension felt by them at these late night sessions was very visible; yet these sessions were held at their request. Every householder is a member of the Meirapaibi. They expressed deep concern over the fact that large numbers of children do not go to school and that schools do not function properly. They expressed their desire to do something to change the school situation; but were not clear how to go about it. Discussions on the impact of educational policy in the state of the schools interested them deeply.

Despite the crippling tension, the Meirapaibis decided to form small groups to periodically visit the government schools in the villages to see whether the teachers and children come to school regularly. They also offered support to water testing for portability and school survey that the youth propose to undertake.

2. Interactions with the youths were dominated by the special situation at Manipur. Their lives are severely restricted by the necessity to be back in their homes by the early evening for fear of arrest. One boy reported that when army personnel question them, they are required to respond in Hindi. Although they know a little Hindi, they are unable to speak out due to fear. This silence is often taken for guilt, leading to interrogation. Another youth stated that he could have opted to join the underground movement, but he feels that it is better to study and to work . He experienced anguish that the authorities did not appreciate this and tarred everyone with the same brush. During the workshops there was tension in the Thoubal district over the disappearance of a 14 year old boy appearing for his board examinations. There was a general state of tension and anxiety among them.

Youth Club members have already initiated intervention in some of the schools, by repairing buildings, conducting some activities at around 12 schools in Wabagai. Community members and teachers were appreciative of this effort. The schools where they have intervened function more effectively than the other government schools in Leimedong. Most of the youth do not have employment but are engaged wetland and farm activities.

The youth club members proposed to conduct status survey in the government schools in the 15 Panchayat Gram Sabhas. A plan for cleaning of the ponds in the villages was also made during the workshop. Possibilities for extending their work in schools to a larger number of schools was also being worked out.

3. Text books for children were in short supply. One activist from Imphal stated that government has recently declared that text books for girl children for all classes will be provided free of cost. However, Meirapaibi members stated that the girls did not receive text books and wanted to know whom to contact.

The Zilla Parishad member offered to facilitate the procurement of textbooks after making esquires regarding the procedure.

4. The elected members of the panchayat participating in the deliberations were eager to take part in school enrichment. However, they stated that though they have been elected, they have not been vested with formal powers, despite several representations.

The panchayat members offered to procure school based data for the survey on education.

5. Many parents prefer to send their children to private English medium schools as by paying fees because the government schools do not function well.

6. Three Field visits were conducted as part of the workshop to demonstrate on the ground the Lokshala perspective on the following:

a) How to link developmental issues with the school system ?

The team observed that the surrounding ponds were the water source for both drinking and washing purposes. This can lead to health problems; as 70% of diseases were water related. A plan of action was evolved whereby school children from class VIII along with their teachers, will test the portability of the water sources. During discussions with women, it became clear that traditionally, the youth would periodically engage in cleaning of the ponds. This practice has now been discontinued.

It was decided that this activity will be re-initiated and students involved in this be awarded marks for these activities.

b) How to study the status of the school ?

A local team visited the Leimedong schools. The village had two government Lower Primary schools. Both had buildings. the team reported that in one of them, there were two appointed teachers, but the classes were being taken by the son of one of the teachers. The school was closed early. The total enrolment was 23 for classes IA, IB and II taken together. Only 13 were present. Out of 13, 9 were girls and 4 were boys.

A local team, visited the Leimedong Government High School for girls. The school had 17 teachers including the head master. The team reported that school has classes from III to VIII. Out of 498 children enrolled in the school, only 208 were present. The involvement of the parents and local community in school is very poor. Science teaching equipment was insufficient. There are only 2 toilets for the staff and 498 students.

c) How to interact with community on the existing school system?

The team interacted with the community and reported that around 80% of the people were engaged in farming, 18% in carpentry, tailoring, small business, pisciculture. Only 2% hold government jobs. Parents do not approve of the government schools. Only those parents who cannot pay fees in private schools send their children to government schools. The parents stated that the teachers of the schools neglected their duty and come to schools only for salary. Schools are not properly supervised. Teachers directly assist students to use unfair means in examinations. The parents want their children to learn well but they are unable to intervene as they were not literate. They sought the help of voluntary organisations to improve the schools.

7. An organisation structure at village, panchayat , block, district and state level was drawn up by selected participants to systematise work for school development.

The workshop experience reveals that many myths surrounding Manipur are not true. For instance, at Imphal, many people experienced surprise that the team proposed to stay in Leimedong. At Leimedong, the group had no difficulty staying there; On the contrary the local people were very warm and friendly and the group participated in the cultural activities with them late into the night.

The enthusiasm and willingness expressed by people for developmental action despite the crippling burden of the prevailing situation will remain an enduring memory for the visiting group.

work should be
intensified due to DPEP!

RTE 1:30

ANNEXTURE IV

LOKSHALA PROCESS AT DEBITOLA BLOCK, DHUBRI DISTRICT ASSAM (1996-98)

The Lokshala Process at Dhubri began with the participation of an activist from Dhubri Science Club at the 10-day workshop on Lokshala held at Nauni, Himachal Pradesh, in 1995. Enthused by the experience and subsequent discussion with other club members, they approached government officials seeking support to initiate activities for school transformation. However, they were told that the District Primary Education Project (DPEP) funded by the World Bank has been started and was expected to address all the issues related to school education.

However, when the Club members interacted with the community, they expressed several problems since DPEP began. Teachers were taken away from schools for training, hence no teaching was taking place. Both teachers and community expressed displeasure over the new methods particularly the "Joyful Learning" method, as they were never consulted during its formulation. Further this replaced the earlier method which were closer to children's reality. The Dhubri Science Club members were convinced that work still needed to be done despite DPEP.

A workshop was organised in February, 1997, that brought together teachers, members from Teacher Associations, youth and women activists to deliberate on concretising elementary education as a Fundamental Right. After intensive discussions, it was decided that work be started at Debitola Development Block with the ethnic composition comprising of Bodo, Raba, Santhal Garo, Hajhan, Rajvanshi, Goalparia, Assamese and Bengalis. A Co-ordination Committee was formed with representation from each of the groups participating at the workshop.

The first work attempted was a sample survey on education. However, the community members, already faced with several surveys conducted by DPEP, Total Literacy Campaigns and Census, were not willing to participate in yet another survey. Instead, they welcomed the idea of study groups at the panchayat level. 11 Panchayat study groups came into being and thus began intensive interaction with the community on issues related to education. Issues that emerged were :

1) Government data shows that the teacher:pupil ratio was 1:60 but many gram panchayat schools had teacher : student ratio of 1:125.
2) Government encourages community to start venture schools with the promise that if they function effectively for 2 years as per norms they will be recognised and supported by the government. However, even after 15 years of functioning, the government has not recognised the schools, thus divesting itself of the responsibility of providing education to these children.

3) Teachers are not paid their salaries on time; one teacher who was not paid salary for 55 months, committed suicide.

4) The children of fishermen, minorities and OBCs were not in schools; drop-out rates are very high among them.

5) Migration of people due to land erosion results in children not being able to go to school.

6) DPEP allocates 24% of its budget for school construction but between 1994-98, after 4 years of DPEP, their own data shows there are no school buildings in 300 schools; 200 schools are in state of disrepair and 1200 schools do not have minimum facilities in Dhubri district.

7) Textbooks are not available in Bangla and Hindi. There is a general shortage of textbooks.

8) Some parents do not send their children to school because they feel that the curriculum is not relevant. Once the children go to school, they refuse to cut wood, or do any other work. They also do not get employment.

9) In the Bodo and Raba villages, no school authorities have visited the school in the last 3 years. In one of the discussions, a Raba member said that the authorities do not visit because they feel it is not safe to visit their villages. He said that for the past one year, he has been trying to arrange a meeting of teachers, parents and educational officers without success. He said that training is being given to teachers without the trainers ever having visited the area and understanding the local problems.

10) There is no written script for Bodo, Raba and other tribal languages. The textbooks have so far written in Assamese script which is not acceptable to them. The Bodos want textbooks in Roman script.

The Panchayat study groups decided that :

1) they will form Lokshala Committees at village, panchayat and block level to form pressure groups to effect changes in the school system.

2) youth will become voluntary teachers in those schools where there is shortage of teachers.

3) community will collect material and offer free labour for repairing schools.For those villages without schools, processes will be initiated to construct the school, identify and train teachers and prepare teaching-learning materials through community support. Simultaneously, pressure will be exerted on the government to provide the finances for the school. *The Mahila Samithi* at Borjhora Village in the Kazegaon panchayat will lead this initiative. The remarkable feature of this effort in Borjhora is that Raba and Garo tribes, who have traditionally led separate lives though they lived in the same village; have now decided collectively to work for a common community school.

4) the community will document the local history of the areas.

5) the community will conduct a survey to identify disabled children.

The working and decision making processes of each panchayat study group has been unique. For instance, members of the study groups of Bodo, Raba and other tribes consult members of their village before arriving at any decision. The youth in these villages are also part of the active decision making process.

These panchayat level interactions were interspersed with a workshop on local history, micro-planning, and community mobilisation and a national workshop on the Lokshala process.

In order to link schools with the bio-diversity of the local region, a programme of action has been envisaged where school children, along with youth, will collect plants of the local region, identify their local names, document their use in food, fuel, medicine and their traditional uses. A small information centre will be created in each school.

In addition teachers, students and members of the community will collectively set up a seed bank and community register in which the local people will document the wide-ranging uses of biodiversity. A record of the species collected will be maintained. This collective local variety of traditional seeds will be registered to protect overall community intellectual and property rights as it is the entire base upon which farmer's lives depend. Nurseries are also planned to be managed by women. These will serve as the base for income generation for the women.

Community sustained forests are also planned where the community will plant those specimens which are required for their sustenance to provide for sustainable utilisation of biological resources and equitable sharing of benefits.

In the last two years, the Lokshala process has provided valuable insights into community perceptions and decision making processes. We have been better able to appreciate the feeling of frustration of the people of Dhubri. Commonly held perceptions regarding insurgency and unrest have had to be repeatedly set aside as people of diverse ethnic origins grappled with the common problems of providing meaningful education to their children. The Lokshala process in Dhubri is the precursor to similar initiatives at Nagaland, Manipur and Meghalaya.

Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha's

Lokshala Programme

Demonstrating an alternative vision for Universalisation of Elementary Education

Report of National Workshop

held at Karad, District Sattara, Maharashtra.

22-26 October, 1997

Organised by

M.N. Roy Institute for Non-Formal Education and Research, Karad

In Collaboration with:

* Bharatiya Vidyapeet, Yashwant Rao Mohite Institute of Management, Karad.
* Chauper, Karad.
* Tata Trust, Mumbai.
* United Nations Development Fund, Delhi.

With academic support from:

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE WORKSHOP SESSIONS

22-10-1997

SESSION ONE

14:00-20:00 Hrs.

OBJECTIVE: Understanding Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha (BJVJ)

PRESIDIUM:
1. Dr. Tripta Wahi
2. Mr. Sudhir Kumar
3. Ms. Chayya

23.10.1997

SESSION TWO

10:00-14:00 Hrs.

OBJECTIVE: Understanding Lokshala.

PRESIDIUM:
1. Dr. Tripta Wahi,
2. Prof. Shyam Bohre
3. Ms. Zhatsu Humtsoe.

23.10.97

SESSION THREE

3:00-9:30 Hrs.

OBJECTIVE: Presentation of Work Plans by UGC-Teacher Fellows.

PRESIDIUM:
1. Prof. Shyam Bohare. Bhopal
2. Ms. Zhatsu Humstoe, Nagaland
3. Dr. Janaki Rajan, Delhi.

24.10.1997

FIELD TRIP

25.10.1997

SESSION FOUR

10:00-14:00 Hrs.

OBJECTIVE: Women's Empowerment in the Lokshala Process.

PRESIDIUM :
1. Ms. Chhaya
2. Dr. Janaki Rajan
3. Dr. Tripta Wahi

25.10.1997.

SESSION FIVE

15:00-21:00 Hrs.

OBJECTIVE : To understand the need and process of advocacy.
Advocacy in Lokshala Programme.

PRESIDIUM :
1. Prof. K. K. Sharma
2. Dr. Ramesh Dave
3. Ms. Chhaya

25.10.1997

SESSION SIX

21:00-24:00 Hrs.

OBJECTIVE: Organisation Structure: BJVJ and Lokshala

PRESIDIUM:
1. Prof. Anil Sadgopal
2. Prof. S.P.Verma
3. Prof. Rajendra Kumbhar

26.10.1997

SESSION SEVEN

10:00-14:00 Hrs.

OBJECTIVE: Work Plans of UGC Teacher Fellows for Lokshala Programme and of various Field efforts.

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE LOKSHALA PROGRAMME
Karad, Dist. Satara, Maharashtra,
October 22-26, 1997.

BACKGROUND

The Lokshala Programme for demonstrating an alternative vision for universalisation of elementary education (UEE) was initiated by Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha (BJVJ) with academic support from Maulana Azad Centre for Elementary and Social Education(MACESE), Department of Education, University of Delhi, in 1995.

Lokshala Programme attempts to demonstrate an alternative vision for universalisation of elementary education.

The *Manthan Sammelan* at Delhi held in 1994, a national workshop at Nauni, Himachal Pradesh followed by a series of workshops held in many parts of the country thereafter, have helped initiate several field-level action at around 12-15 sites in the North-east, North, Central and Western India.

Three advanced field laboratories have come into being at Timarni Block, Hoshangabad district, Madhya Pradesh, Karpi-Kurtha Block, Jahanabad, Bihar and Jahangirpuri, a re-settlement-cum-slum colony at Delhi. The initiative at Dhubri, Assam, is fast developing leading role in the Lokshala process in decentralised functioning and community mobilisation.

Three advanced field laboratories have been functioning since 1995, to test ideas and vision.

In 1997, the University Grants Commission (UGC), awarded 12 Teacher-Fellowships for the Lokshala Programme and related development activities. With the induction of the UGC Fellows, the Lokshala process took a major leap forward. 6 new field laboratories are being initiated by the 6 Teacher-Fellows. 2 of the Fellows are providing academic support in the nation-wide process in the areas of local history and educating the disabled; 2 others propose to work on strengthening the organisational processes of Lokshala, and 2 Fellows propose to concentrate on developing national campaigns on the related developmental areas of Drug action and Alternative Technology.

UGC has awarded 12 Teacher Fellowships for Lokshala Programme and related developmental activities.

The present workshop evolved out of the need for the academic and field groups, now much enlarged, to get together and share their perspectives regarding their own and each other's work; to move towards a common understanding of the Lokshala process; to explore possibilities of interlinkages in their work; and, to come together as a national resource group for the Lokshala Programme.

The present workshop is an attempt to evolve a common understanding of the Lokshala process and strategies for implementation at several newly emerging Lokshala Field Laboratories.

The workshop marks a forging of links in the varied but related processes leading to and newly informing the Lokshala Programme; ranging from BJVJ's experiences in the people's science movement, MACESE's newly perceived role in providing academic support for UEE; to the work of UGC-Teacher Fellows, and the experiences of the Field Laboratories.

As the size and intensity of the Lokshala programme increases, the need for evolving systems and relationships between various groups increases correspondingly.

Efforts to evolve common understanding on crucial issues such as women's empowerment and role of women in Lokshala process; local history, decentralised, participatory functioning, funding policy, etc. become imperative, and the Lokshala workshops are the means through which these collective attempts are made.

Women's empowerment, local history, decentralised participatory functioning and funding policy are crucial issues for the Lokshala process.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON LOKSHALA PROGRAMME

22-26 October, 1997.

VENUE: Yashwant Rao Mohite Institute of Management, Karad.

INAUGURAL SESSION

Shri Appa Saheb Panwal, Co-ordinator, Bharatiya Vidyapeeth Educational Complex, Karad, welcomed the participants and **Dr. Sachin Wernekar, Director, Yashwant Rao Institute of Management** gave the welcome speech.

Emphasising the importance of this national workshop, he stated that a large number of children do not go to school and there are a variety of reasons for this. School being irrelevant, fear of examinations and the poor financial position of the parents are some of the reasons. For the girl-child, her role of looking after the siblings is a major factor for not going to school. He stated that it is the responsibility of every person in society to see that every child goes to school. He saw an important role for parents in this, as well as for employers and industry.

It is the responsibility of every person in society to ensure that every child goes to school.

Emphasising inter-linkages between higher education and school education, he said people often ask him what possible interest can an institute of management have in elementary education. Bharatiya Vidyapeeth runs several schools because of the belief that without a sound foundation in elementary education, it is not possible to ensure sound higher education. He was happy that a national level workshop on elementary education should be conducted at the institute of management and he was sure that a concrete plan of action will emerge from this.

Without a sound foundation in elementary education it is not possible to ensure sound higher education.

Dr. Rajendra Kumbhar, UGC Teacher Fellow for Lokshala and President, M.N.Roy Institute, stated that Lokshala is a process. It originated with the BJVJ's movement to establish linkages with people, through mass action for national regeneration (MANAR).

Nearly 9 crore children are out of school; even the government data shows that figure is 6 crore amounting to 50% of the children are out of school. The government has gone back on its own constitutional commitment of providing 8 years of free and compulsory education first by providing only for primary education and now by providing only literacy. Literacy alone is not education. Several reports have been brought out by the government on education with many recommendations. The only recommendations that are actually implemented are those concerning pay revisions. In many areas, female literacy is 6-14%. Education has been denied to a large number of females. Rs.1190 crores is being given for literacy. The funds for elementary education is very little compared to the need. There is indifference to elementary education on the part of the government. There is need to revitalise sensitivity about the school.

Literacy alone is not education.

This is not the first national workshop of Lokshala. The national workshop at Nauni, followed by the Nauni Declaration gave shape to the form and vision of education; what is to be the workplan of action. Lokshala is about people's participation in school education; and this workshop will focus on this. There has been support for this programme from some government departments. Through MACESE, which has come forward to extend a hand to elementary education, the Department of Education, University of Delhi, has become involved with Lokshala. When the Central Institute of Education (CIE, now Department of Education) was inaugurated by Maulana Azad, then Education Minister; he had said that he hoped that CIE will be the foremost centre of elementary education in the country. Today MACESE is attempting to fulfil this role. The UGC has also helped by providing 12 Teacher-Fellows for the Programme. UNDP and Tata Trust have extended support.

MACESE is attempting to fulfil its role in universalisation of elementary education.

The participants here have come from different parts of India. Some of them, particularly those from the north-east have travelled for several days to be present here. They have spent the greater part of their lives working for education. Still, they have gathered here, to understand elementary education. The situation is that as many children are out of school as there are in school. The government and teachers are aware of this situation. But the schools continue to teach the history and geography of the world, not the history and geography of our people, or about our environment. We have to change this. Schools do not teach how to earn our food, or how to get it; or why there is no food for so many people. At this workshop, we will deliberate on how to draw in children of such parents struggling for their living. This effort has to be a people's movement; the government will not and cannot do this. The processes of this movement has started in several places; the workplan for this will be prepared here at this workshop.

Schools do not teach how to earn our food or why there is no food for so many people.

Merely providing chalk, blackboard and building does not make a school. Unless the worker, the people who till the soil, do not feel the school is theirs, we have not made a school. Unless the school becomes that which common people find meaningful, the task is unfinished.

Until the worker; the people who till the soil do not feel the school is theirs, the task of UEE is unfinished.

Such attempts are not new for Maharashtra at least. 150 years ago, Jyotibhai Phule educated the Hunter Education Commission on primary education. He had suggested ways for education of common people; their involvement and control of primary education. Without him, Maharashtra would have had no education.

Maharashtra has a 150-year old of influencing educational policy.

We have gathered here now, to re-educate the authorities in Delhi; to remind them of long forgotten unfinished tasks. Lokshala is not about setting up private schools; Lokshala attempts to empower the government schools, where so many of our children study; and to draw in so many who have still have not even reached the government school. He invited all those who are gathered here to join this movement.

Lokshala attempts to empower the government school.

Prof. Anil Sadgopal, Convenor, BJVJ, Co-ordinator, Professor in Education, MACESE, and Chief guest, then addressed the gathering.

He began by responding to the question posed earlier, which was, why is this workshop on elementary education being held in an institute of management. In 1937, Gandhi posed a question in Harijan, a respected journal of those times. The question was: In a child's education, there are three essential aspects: the head, the heart and the skill of the hands. Unless we look at these three integrally, how can we have holistic education? The schools set up by the British dealt with only the head, there was no space for anything else. When India becomes independent, we can think of holistic education, a "*nai taleem*." He had asked if educationists can help to evolve an integrated approach to the child's education.

In 1937, Gandhi asked if educationists can help evolve an integrated approach to a child's education which includes the three essential aspects of the head, the heart and the skill of the hands.

Citing the cognitive, the affective and skill development as the three aspects of a child's education, Gandhi asked: I would like to know if any teacher-training institute prepares teachers with these aspects in mind. Gandhi's question has remained unanswered even today.

Gandhi's question still remains unanswered.

Referring to higher education, Prof. Sadgopal said, the faculty of NCERT are those who have received higher education. Yet they have not been able to provide the answer. Institutions do not incorporate the social character in their knowledge base. Since school policy and curriculum are all decided by those connected with higher education, school education cannot change until the social character and basis of higher education changes.

Institutions do not incorporate the social character in their knowledge base.

Maulana Azad, at the inauguration of the Central Institute of Education at Delhi University, had said that he hoped that the Institute will be foremost in working for elementary education. For fifty years, this institute has been involved largely in every thing except elementary education. It is only in 1990, that some of us have again begun some work on elementary education.

In 1972, University Grants Commission gave 14 Fellowships for teaching science through experiments in schools. This was not made available so easily; the teachers involved then had to struggle to make it happen, but the flame was lit. Then, Eklavya, a voluntary organisation in Madhya Pradesh working in rural schools, got Fellowships from UGC. This struggle going on in higher education; to establish that involvement in teaching rural school children is a legitimate academic activity of those involved in higher education, is a significant struggle. If this is kept up, then the very way of viewing knowledge will change. Today, we have Fellowships for Lokshala that has enabled us to involve people from various regions as diverse as north-east, east and central India; in disciplines ranging from Hindi Literature to Psychology. When, after they complete their two-year period and return to teach in their institutions; they will take with them an alternate view of their own disciplines and the way they reach their students will have undergone a change. This struggle will have to be extended to every institute of higher learning.

There is a struggle going on in higher education to establish its role and involvement in school education.

UGC-Fellows for Lokshala will help Fellows take with them an alternate view of their own disciplines.

Between a private school and a government school, there is only difference of facilities; the transaction of knowledge in both types of schools is one-way, from master to child. In both types of schools the child is considered a blank slate. But a six year old child knows a great deal. S/he knows about the family, the relationships within the family, about aunts, uncles and cousins. In the English language, such complex relationships are all included in single words such as aunt, uncle and cousin. But in the Indian languages, there are specific words for each relationship such as *chacha, chachi, nana, nani* etc. The child knows all these intricate relationships and words. S/he knows that in his village, where different classes and different castes of people live, and the many types of interactions between them. S/he knows the many kinds of games being played in the village and the rules of these games. S/he knows the songs, the *lok geet*, the *lori* sung in the village; about *Ramayan*, the *Quran* The rural child knows all this; perhaps an urban child may not know all this.

Both in private and government schools, transaction of knowledge is one-way.

A study conducted by the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad shows that a 7-year old child in Tamilnadu could identify 300 species of seeds and flora. This has been listed and recorded. The child knows about the various kinds of birds in his/er village; the kinds of nests they build; the kinds of eggs they lay. This is the child we call a 'blank slate'.

A 6-year old child is not a biank state. She/he knows a great deal.

hen a child who knows so much goes to school, this is what appens:

The teacher is teaching class I, under environmental studies, a lesson on birds' nests from the text-book. A child keeps looking out of the window. The teacher punishes the child for not paying attention to the lesson. It is not part of our educational pedagogy to ask the child what is it he was looking at out of the window. If s/ he had been asked by the teacher, the child would have answered, *Guruji*, from where I am sitting, I can see a nest that a bird has built on the tree outside. The nest does not look like the picture of the nest drawn in the text-book. Can I bring and show it to you?" The NCERT textbook can print a picture of a nest that is not reflective of the actual nest; if the child learns from the actual setting, it is called indiscipline.

Our educational pedagogy does not include the child's experience.

Whenever the children in the class get noisy, the Head Master feels that the teacher cannot control the class. But there are so many kinds of sounds in the classroom. There can be the sounds of acquiring knowledge. When a teacher teaches, there a myriad questions in the child's mind. If he seeks clarifications, there is bound to be noise. Educational institutions do not recognise the noise that is a natural process of children's understanding.

Educational institutions do not recognise the noise in the class-room that is a natural process of childrens' learning.

For the first time in India, under the Hoshangabad Science Teaching Programme, science was taught to rural children through experiments. Teachers were allowed by a government order to take the children out on field trips.

The Lokshala process is all about empowering government school system; and empowering the parents of the children in these schools along with parents who have not yet put their children in these schools, to ensure sound education. The process is based on what common people in the ground say about education. There is for example, a saying:

hen the child finishes primary school, he grows away from the family. When he finishes middle school, he grows away from the village. When he finishes high school, he grows away from his work. Another part can be added to this: when he finishes higher education such as engineering, medicine, he goes away from the country. Higher education divides the children from our environment, our community, our modes of production, and our country. This education has to be made "*layak*", relevant for the people.

Higher education divides the children from our environment,our community, our modes of production and our country.

The "brahm", belief, is that it is only through english medium it is possible to understand the fundamentals of modern knowledge. Prof. Sadgopal said that last year, when he had the occasion to visit Pakistan, he found that people there firmly believe that science cannot be taught through Urdu or Panjabi or their other languages. They firmly believe that science can only be taught through English.

This belief separates the child's mother tongue from the medium of learning. When in classes I and II, the child is separated from the mother tongue, the child is being limited in his capability to understand and acquire knowledge. Recent researches in brain biology show that the growth of one part of the brain's growth is dependent on the child's learning h/is/er mother tongue. This means that a child whose mother speaks Bhojpuri, Maghai, Bundelkhandi must likewise, in the early years, speak these languages for growth of a portion of the brain. It is not sufficient that he speaks Hindi; but that he speaks the language of the mother. By using English or Hindi alone as medium of instruction, the schools first contribute to impeding the child's growth, and then proceeds to impart knowledge. There is a difference between learning English as a language and using English as medium of instruction.

By not using mother-tongue as medium of instruction in the early years, schools first contribute to impeding the child's growth, and then proceeds to impart knowledge.

As part of teaching science through experiments at Hoshangabad, the following experiment was set up to understand hard and soft water. Water was collected from different sources; such as taps, bore wells, ponds etc. Soap solution was added to each of these samples. When a sample of water began to form froth, the children got very excited. They shouted to the master in Bundelkhandi, to come and see the froth. The master then asked them to write down what they had observed. The children asked, shall we write down just the way we have said? The master said, yes. And the children recorded their exciting observations of the effect of soap solution on different samples of water in their own language through using the Hindi Script. Prof. Sadgopal concluded his address by asking, Is this not modern science?

r. Janaki Rajan, Reader, MACESE, Department of Education, niversity of Delhi, presented some glimpses into Lokshala rogramme in action all over the country. She said that the okshala Programme began with people coming together from fferent regions and disciplines to interact and learn about each her's experiences, to sharpen the collective understanding nong activists and academicians.

Glimpses of Lokshala Programme in action.

good example of the Lokshala process is the experience of the eld laboratory at Jahanabad. After initial workshops and scussions, the local team at Jahanabad, undertook to mobilise ie people of the Karpi-kurtha block for the Lokshala Programme. hey visited around 150 villages and held discussions with people f these villages, the panchayat members. Out of this evolved a lan of action for the area, which the local team put together in a eport. They then invited the team from BJVJ Delhi, and MACESE, o comment on their plan. These teams suggested some changes, articularly with regard to the time-frame for some of the activities. he Jahanabad local team did not accept these suggestions vithout question. They took these suggestions once again to the 50 villages, and sought their opinion. Some of the suggestions vere accepted. The plan of work that has since emerged, is aturally, therefore, an enriched one, demonstrating interaction it multiple levels for preparing the ground for UEE. Interactions hat have been participative, and that have harnessed the energies of people at various levels of experience.

Lokshala interactions are participative, and have harnessed the energies of people at various levels and experiences.

The attempts for UEE have not always begun as Lokshala nitiatives; the Jahangirpuri School Project by MACESE-IASE, Delhi University, at a slum-cum-re-settlement colony, Jahangirpuri, s a case in point.

Universities which produce teacher educators have no direct experiences of teaching in schools. Further, the very nature of the teacher-education programme cuts the teacher educators off from the academic disciplines in which they have been trained. This results in teacher educators preparing teachers for a school situation about which they have little first hand knowledge, and for subjects over which they have lost touch with, and therefore have missed the contemporary developments of their disciplines.

Teacher educators have no direct experience of teaching in schools. Teacher education programmes out teacher educators off from the developments in their academic disciplines.

Within Departments of Education, however, there is much debate to reconstruct activities to address the various issues in education. There is dissatisfaction over the manner in which in-service teacher-training is conducted. Prof. Sadgopal, for instance, is critical of the lack of community interaction with teachers; and the lack of efforts towards UEE.

The Jahangirpuri School Project evolved as a re-defined in-service teacher-training programme, where teachers will be oriented in their work places, and the curriculum designed to help them fulfil their roles in their school settings. She said that since the people involved knew very little about the actual school setting, a workshop

Jahangirpuri School Project began as a re-defined in-service teacher-training programme.

was organised to understand the differential perceptions of elementary school education by parents, teachers, and school administrators. The discussions at the workshop led to Jahangirpuri becoming an advanced field laboratory for Lokshala. In actual fact, the Jahangirpuri School Project goes beyond Lokshala. With the involvement of Institute of Advanced Studies in Education (IASE) of the Department, which specialises in secondary school development, the Project now covers all stages of school education.

The way the Lokshala process began in Dhubri is another interesting example. When members from Dhubri Science Club participated in the national workshop at Nauni, they were eager to start the process at Dhubri. But a major government programme, the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) was already in operation at Dhubri with loan from the World Bank. The Lokshala team is highly critical of DPEP, but could not see how Lokshala and DPEP could function in the same district. But the Dhubri team was convinced that much needs to be still done for elementary education at Dhubri, despite DPEP. This conviction helped to the understanding that DPEP is just like any other government programme. Dhubri became a Lokshala field laboratory. In Phulbani, Orissa, teachers and activists of the area helped collect rice for the Lokshala workshop. They negotiated with the District Collector for the use of the Circuit House for out-station resource persons.

Much needs to be done in elementary education despite DPEP.

She emphasised that different solutions emerged in different regions as interactions with people began in the Lokshala Programme.

There is also a lot of learning from each field effort. In Lokshala, there is often reference to "Dhubri style" study groups, or Jahanabad style "Lok Sansad".

In the Lokshala process, new methods such as Panchayat Study groups of Dhubri, Lok Sansad of Jahanabad have evolved.

Underlining the complexity of the language issue she highlighted two efforts:

The attempts of the Raba/Bodo Sahitya Sabha in Assam to construct the written language of their mother tongue which has hitherto existed only in spoken form. 10,000 words have been compiled so far using Assamese script. The task ahead is their incorporation of such words into schools textbooks.

Raba Sahitya Sabha has constructed written script for Raba language.

The challenge of teaching children of Jahangirpuri through the mother tongue in classes I-III, in a setting where people who speak 14 languages live together. How do we tackle this in the context of providing education in the early years of education through mother tongue, to all the children?

People speaking 14 languages live together in Jahangirpuri.

Emphasising the need for empowering women as an integral part of the Lokshala process of school intervention, she said that women must be empowered not merely because they will intervene

Women must be empowered not only to intervene in schools but because it is their basic right to function as empowered beg.

effectively to transform schools, but because it is their basic right to function as empowered beings.

She looked for ideas from Institutes like of Y.M. Mohite Institute and said that the problems of organisation and management of UEE is a very challenging task, requiring the fullest managerial and organisational input. In many ways it is more challenging than the complexities of industry.

Prof. S. P. Verma who chaired the session, introduced BJVJ as a nation-wide process of post-independent India, for a national movement for self-reliant development. Social scientists and scientists were not reaching the people. This was an attempt to understand the perspectives of people, and what they thougnt of development. Activists, professionals and students travelled to villages with science software addressed to local needs such as drinking water, agricultural technology, health care, education etc. and to establish dialogue at grass-root level in an attempt to work out ways for moving towards national reconstruction. This was akin to Gandhi's attempt to understand India through his nation-wide tours.

BJVJ is a nation-wide process of people's science movement for national re-construction from the grass roots.

People, after touring the five corners of India, converged at Bhopal, in 1987, and a science movement was born. The All India People Science Network was formed. Though there was some idea, it was not clear how intervention should be carried out. In 1992, another attempt was made to meet people from 350 districts.

After a national review and manthan held in 1994, BJVJ took up the area of intervention by the community in the local school system for generating empowered schools, which can act as centres of developmental action and micro developmental planning. This activity is called Lokshala programme and is expected to lead to the control of the school by the community.

Lokshala attempts to empower schools to act as centres of developmental action and micro developmental planning.

He expressed happiness at being in Karad and drew attention to Maharashtra's long cultural history and interventions in the educational process including the efforts of Bharati Vidyapeeth, where the workshop was being held. He said that the five-day interaction is an opportunity for enrichment of understanding.

BJVJ attempted to link science and technology with local problems through the Jatha.

The Inaugural session ended with a vote of thanks by Shri. Mohan Kulkarni, President, Chauper.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE WORKSHOP SESSIONS

22-10-1997

SESSION ONE

14:00-20:00 Hrs.

OBJECTIVE: Understanding Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha (BJVJ)

PRESIDIUM:
1. Dr. Tripta Wahi
2. Mr. Sudhir Kumar
3. Ms. Chayya

The attempt to understand BJVJ was made through a series of presentations followed by discussion.

1. What is Jatha? Perspective and Goals: A Conceptual exposition

Prof. S.P.Verma:

At the inaugural session, I tried to communicate the experience of what is Jatha. Both 1987 and 1992 were landmarks for BJVJ. It was an attempt on the part of the leadership to understand social reality at the grassroot level, through the people's science movement. We tried to link science and technology with local problems. In the first phase, the strategies of the old political institutions of Jatha were adopted for reaching out to the people to draw inferences of social reality. An attempt was made to establish dialogue with the rural people. The software for communication was folk lore, dramas, skits, on social problems of housing, water, health, etc. A cultural engagement was made through these forms. There was an attempt to solve local problems through traditional knowledge.

The goals of BJVJ was to have an organisation which is creative and rich in local experiences; where local groups also share a national perspective.

The BJVJ organisational structure was such that the local committees were largely autonomous; nonetheless there were centralising tendencies. There was debate on that. The understanding at BJVJ was that a tightly bound organisational structure may not be able to innovate. The structures were therefore loosely bonded; but not so loosely bound that it disintegrates. There was sharing of experiences. The goal was to have an organisation which is creative, rich in local experiences; but where different groups of the network share a national perspective. There was also an effort to identify local movements. BJVJ is not a project, but a process, a movement. A participatory movement of the people who are involved in social issues was attempted. BJVJ was not a project but a process. BJVJ is not an NGO and is therefore a little slow in its process. It is a catalytic agent to help make local resource an effective tool of intervention at the local level. It is not just for intervention in education, but for development in a context, defined less by ideals and more test-based. A process through which people themselves test their ideas and work. BJVJ does not hold to an ideal vision for changing society; it was an attempt to learn from the people.

BJVJ is a catalytic agent to help make local resource an effective tool for intervention for development

Development processes were not reaching the majority of the people.

. 1987 and 1992 Jatha Experiences:

Shri. Rohtash Raghuvanshi, National Organising Secretary, BJVJ:

By 1980s, there emerged a feeling that developmental processes were not reaching the majority of the people. There was rich experience of jathas, and the idea emerged that an understanding at the national level be attempted. This resulted in the Jatha from five corners of the country, all of them converging at Bhopal.

From the Jatha activities, a network was set up, with around 26 organisations. An understanding and recognition of the network was built up; but there was a feeling that governmental organisations should also be involved in the network as voluntary organisations alone cannot perform the many tasks ahead. There was nation-wide debate and discussion on a large number of issues: water, education, scientific temper building, health, etc. In 350 districts, around 60-100 village level dialogues were held at each district. In 1990, the National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC) was formed. The Manthan Sammelan was held at Delhi in 1994.

Manthan Sammelan was a result of nation-wide debate on water, education, health etc. in 350 districts.

An All India People Science movement was formed. Literacy was their main focus. After the Manthan Sammelan, elementary education became the focal theme, and Lokshala process was initiated. The main lesson learnt from these experiences was that centralisation leads to suppressing local initiatives. Critical self-appraisal was also emphasised. Some of the groups did not join the Jatha due to some differences.

3. Reflections of Jatha in the States:

a) Shri. Shamungou Singh, State BJVJ Unit, Manipur:

I was not personally involved with the Jatha at that time, but had heard from people involved that in 1993, an organising committee was formed at Manipur. Steps were taken by the BJVJ national unit to organise workshops for awareness, for example on pollution. Since 1995, the state organising committee has been taking up the issue of universalisation of elementary education. During this process there have been many problems.

BJVJ-Manipur State Organising Committee has decided to take up UEE.

b) Shri. Prabhkar Pursadkar, BJVJ District Unit, Wardha, Maharashtra:

During the Jatha activities, many voluntary organisations, government organisations were involved including Nehru Yuva Kendra. In 1992, 29 districts were visited covering around 3000 villages. Kala Jatha were organised. Work to eradicate superstition was undertaken. Workshops on education, watershed management, etc. were undertaken. But after this, the local team was at a loss to understand how to go forward. Then came Mass Action for National Regeneration (MANAR). Co-ordination after

The BJVJ-Wardha District Unit visited 29 districts covering 3000 villages during the Jatha.

MANAR activities were not very effective. Since then, there have not been collective efforts. At the individual organisational level, each organisation has continued to work in the area of their own priorities; the collectivity got lost. There has been a gap in collective understanding. Joint efforts stopped and the distance of local organisations from Jatha processes widened. Some people were involved with the central processes. There has also been problems of funding. There is still a possibility of regeneration. In the Lokshala Programme also, separate efforts are being made, and there is a general feeling that there is need for collective understanding. Some interaction is there; but there is no co-ordinated work.

There has been a gap in collective efforts and follow-up after the Jatha. But there is still a posibility of regeneration.

c) Shri. Hambi Rao Patel, Rayat Shikshan Samithi.

Speaking about the Maharashtra state-level experience of Jatha, he said that a lot of work is already going on. The Rayat Shikshan Sanstha founded by Bahu Rao Patel in 1930s, runs 600 schools in remote tribal villages with no government funding. The schools are run by the local people. There are science centres in these schools. The funding for our programmes are self-generated, from the people

The Jatha experience was very good for people of the remote villages. through Jatha activity, people started to come together. The awareness campaigns of the Jatha has very good learning potential. Students brought a fistful of rice each to support the programme. We did not feel the shortage of funds.

e) Dr. Rajender Khumbhar, Teacher Fellow, Karad

Jatha's relationship with the people will first have to be understood. In some instances during the Jatha, people were just spectators to the activities that were going on through the Jatha. There was neither any attempt on the part of activists, nor did any exchange of views take place between the people and the Jatha activists. We adopted the philosophy of reaching the people through secondary schools. Even after the demolition of the Babri Masjid, our programmes continued and there were no untoward instances. A cell was formed to discuss issues on science and technology such as water management. But there was a long silence after the Jatha. The Jatha movement could not become an organic whole. It could not establish a relationship with society. The Jatha base consisted of social workers, intellectuals, students, and they had no organic link with the masses. There was nothing much to be given to the masses except words. A parasitic relationship existed between the movement and the existing government funding agencies. No movement could be raised with landless labourers, women's groups etc.; so empowerment was not possible. We did not have the technology to transfer to people. There was no relationship with artisans either. In Manthan, the middle class was involved. They were not sufficiently declassed. There was not much scope for communication. Even Lokshala alone cannot sustain the movement. The network has got fossilised in some places, is dormant in other places and still alive in some places. There has been no documentation of the Jatha process.

The Jatha could not establish relationship with landless labourers, women's groups, artesans.

There was long silence after the Jatha.

e) Shri. Satyen Chaturvedi, Rajasthan:

Narrating the Jatha experiences of Rajasthan, he said that he and his friends had got involved with the Bhopal gas tragedy, and helped in building a movement against Union Carbide. Grass root workers were in favour of supporting this. Some scientists involved in Bhopal later were associated with the Jatha though it was for a limited purpose. Jatha gave a direction; but did not leave any imprint behind. Some people formed NSCSTC, some formed BJVJ. The condition imposed by BJVJ was that no organisation funded by a foreign agency could join BJVJ. BJVJ also suffered from other problems. BGVS was another network that was formed. Anil Bordia made literacy the central thrust of the Jatha in 1987. This could not take roots.

4. Understanding Jatha: Prof. Anil Sadgopal, Convenor, BJVJ.

Much has already been said about Jatha in the various statements made today. Science, society and development were linked together to create a people's movement in 1987. But lessons were not drawn from the various national movements. Instead, in a superficial manner, the Jatha was created.

The 1987 Jatha was built on the lines of one of the movements; *Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishat*. In 1970s they had evolved the concept of *Kala Jathas*. The hope of the 1987 Jatha was that it will generate an all India movement, a genuine people's movement on the lines of the Kerala experience. But the 1987 Jatha did not follow the basic principles of the Kerala movement. The 1987 Jatha became a superficial and mechanical attempt to create a process without a social base. None of the principles of the Kerala experience was present in the 1987 Jatha. The Kerala movement had its own understanding through its own grass-root movement. Work was systematically attempted district wise and village-wise. Issues such as that emerging from the Silent Valley were understood and internalised by the people. The Kala Jatha at Kerala was evolved out of the issues arising out of the struggles against the hydro-electric power plant at Silent Valley. All this did not happen in the 1987 Jatha. A participant of the Jatha at Madhya Pradesh, when asked if there were any local people's movements in Madhya Pradesh, said there were none; and this he said when the *Narmada Bachao Andolan* was at its height. The experiences translated from Kerala to the national level was only the communication technology and not the social substance. Many activities too place but much of this did not reach the people.

The 1987 Jatha was built on the lines of the efforts of Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishat.

The experiences translated from Kerala to the national level was only the communication technology and not the social substance.

If the Jatha had been more like a camel caravan, moving at a slow pace, talking to people, much could have been learnt. Instead, the Jatha moved at jet speed.

In the 1992-93 Jatha, there were variations from the 1987 Jatha. There was district-wise planning. Some lessons had been learnt from the earlier experience. But, the process was still one-way

traffic. There was software, to show and teach the people. But to learn from the people was not even part of the plan.

I was present at Wardha, after 5 days of discussion, where the district level teams presented their own experiences. The teams admitted that it was a one-way process. However there were district-wise variation; and sensitivity to the district wise problems. The reporting from Wardha on water, sanitation, was very insightful. The decentralised processes at Wardha enthused me very much.

The post-Jatha was to prepare people for action, now that the problems have been articulated and identified in some measure. A problem x has been identified, then, people with experience in x were put together to collectively discuss how to make an action programme. About 15 workshops were held. Jatha was to act like a decentralised organisation. Some of the workshops were held in the districts. The planning workshop on jhumka khethi was held in Manipur. The team at Chappra district decided to organise a workshop on fuel and fodder. In West Bengal, workshop on food and fodder preservation was held, and in Assam, planning for an agricultural model for the hilly tracts of assam was held. In 1994-95, a workshop on the issue of reproductive health of women was held in south India, though it was centrally planned.

The premise upon which these workshops were held, was that people would, through these interactions, learn to relate concepts with practical skills and these would translate into local action programmes. No action plan will be detailed out; people themselves will work it out for themselves. How can this happen?

The premise was that people would learn to relate concepts with practical skills and this would translate into local action. This premise fell apart.

In 1994-95, this premise fell apart. The sum and substance of was that such a massive effort could not be transformed into action. Jatha at its peak did not visualise working alongside and with the people. The participation of dalits, minorities, women were limited; and they were involved to a very little extent in planning and decision making. This problem exists even today. We were also not able to involve rural artesans who represented indigenous knowledge. In turn, the artesans did not see any need to link with BJVJ. The conceptual linkages and work linkages were very weak. We were also not clear as to how to link with other people's movements. The questions that arise are, why did the people' science movement not get agitated by the modern face of development? There was no awareness. In 1992-93, during Jatha activities, the Department of Science and Technology gave a grant of Rs. 2 crore. A question that comes to mind is, a lot of money was passed on to people. Is it because people got money that they got involved? Was their commitment genuine?

Concept and work linkages were weak.

I have tried to reflect, and engage in self-criticism for myself and the organisation. The distinguishing features between 1987 and the 1992 Jatha, the attractive features of the Wardha Jatha was its district level diversity. The mobilisation of people was much more during the 1992 Jatha than in 1987. But in a lot of places, people's initiatives were crushed. In both the Jatha, the software

were similar, and the scope for learning from the people was very weak. The valuable lesson that I learnt from the Jatha is that national networking is possible.

My concerns stem around certain post-Jatha developments. Vinu Kale, for the past one year, has been trying to get the question of artesans at a national level gathering. He wrote a concept paper *Hunar Khoj*, which he has circulated. When he organised the *Karigar Panchayat*, BJVJ was not involved. I asked him why he did not systematically involve the BJVJ network, since he is aware of that in states like Maharashtra and Assam, the BJVJ network has strong artesan presence. Some of us were involved at the individual level; the Assam and Maharashtra teams participated at my request. At the *Karigar Panchayat*, *Swadeshi Jagran Manch* took over and it was with difficulty that we were able to put our view point across. But it is a matter of concern that when a person closely associated with the network does not choose to involve it. We need to reflect why it happened.

We need to reflect on why BJVJ as an organisation did not become involved with *Karigar Panchayat.*

In the discussion that followed, participants made the following observations:

Dr. Rajender Khumbar:

Though BJVJ had the concept of *Hunar Khoj*, we have not done very much. We have not yet forged a dynamic relationship between artesans and landless labourers. The RSS is attempting to mummify the *karigar* concept. *Bhunkar*, masons, iron smiths did not go. The state level committees did not know how to link artesans. In a bourgeois-feudal society, art is viewed as residual. It is not fully understood that artesanal development has the sustainable potential to conquer market forces. We have not been able to communicate this to the network. *Swadeshi Jagran Manch* uses artesans for their exhibitional value. The artesans have to enter the market; for this intervention is needed. Can we provide systems and networks for this?

Can Jatha process provide systems and networks for artesans to enter the market ?

Prof. S.P.Verma:

The lessons learnt from the 1987 and 1992 Jathas: In 1987, the Jathas were planned to a time schedule. The Jatha were the same. Regional levels were just touched. In 1992, the Jatha were not centralised, but originated from the district level. Since 350 districts were involved, 350 teams were formed. This was a large exercise. Instead of a fixed time schedule, a period of time for the Jatha was fixed. Some Jatha in Bihar took a whole year, ending in 1993. Each team could plan according to their own pace. There was local area autonomy.

1992 Jatha was not centralised. Communication was in local language.

In 1987, the Jatha teams were trained in one place by resource persons from Kerala, with identical teaching of science world view. The Jathas did not have local flavour. This changed in 1992. Communication was in local language. The Jatha activities also involved survey of local area, creation of local action plan in any

sector. There is a documentation of the failures and innovations in the blue booklet. After the Jatha, large-scale planned follow-up was not taken up. The National Organising Committee did not function properly. Therefore, the spin-off did not take place. But a national programme for intervention in schools has begun through the Children's Science Congress. The local units still prepare projects for this. This is very much a spin-off. The idea that Rs. 2-5 crores is huge money that attracts people has to be viewed in the context of the scale of the programme. When 350 districts are involved, and 100 villages in each district; with 2000 basic level units, the funding really amounts to very little or so per local unit. The major funding came from the local people. Rs. 56 lakhs were returned unutilised, as they could not be spent. The analysis is presented in the Hyderabad statement.

Central funding per local unit was small. Major funding came from local people.

Shri Rohtash Raghuvanshi:

The *Karigar Panchayat* organised by Shri Vinu Kale has also to be seen in the context of the local organisations before and after Jatha. The Allahabad unit, at the time of the Jatha was hesitant even to envisage a district level programme. Now, after the Jatha, they have not only visualised, but organised a national level gathering. This is the extent of empowerment resulting out of the Jatha process.

The *Karigar Panchayat* shows the extent to which people from the districts felt empowered after the Jatha process to organise nation-wide activities.

Dr. Tripta Wahi:

BJVJ has to be clear about what it is setting out to do. If, through the Jatha, BJVJ is attempting to start a people's movement, then we have to ask ourselves, what do we mean by scientific temper? Are we trying to revolutionise society by breaking superstitions?

The Lokshala concept is a powerful concept. It is possible to engage people for transforming pedagogy and curriculum has been said that artesans did not join. We need to link the modes and relations of production of the area with what we observe.

Shri Satyen:

1987 Jatha was an outcome of central effort and funding. But I am clear that Jatha was useful.

Dr. Anita Ghai:

When you attempted to initiate a people's movement, did you think of linking up with other social movements? If we do not learn from our own experiences, then how will we learn from other movements?

Prof. Anil Sadgopal:

This has been true of the Literacy Mission also. The Kerala literacy effort has its own history. We are trying to replicate this in the whole country. When a movement emerges; for the persons closely linked with it; the issues surrounding it become a matter of personal ego.

23.10.1997

SESSION TWO

10:00-14:00 Hrs.

OBJECTIVE: Understanding Lokshala.

PRESIDIUM: Dr. Tripta Wahi,
Prof. Shyam Bohre
Ms. Zhatsu Humtsoe.

Emergence and Significance of Lokshala in BJVJ:

Prof. S.P. Verma, General Secretary, BJVJ:

Tracing events following the 1992 Jatha, he said that during and after Jatha, when attempts were being made to identify areas and problems where work needed to be done, the problems and in remote areas, the absence of the system of education at the grass-root level came up again and again particularly among the dalits and backward sections of society. In the post-Jatha phase, a 5-day workshop was held at Pune, in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Education, Pune, a voluntary organisation, now registered. Dr. Chitra Naik presided over the workshop. Members from the District Organising committees participated. To all present, it seemed that action on elementary education was feasible. But how was it to be organised? Through Jatha, or through other means? In April 3-4, 1994, at Hyderabad, there was assessment of BJVJ. Brainstorming of the process, work, direction, assessment and review resulted in the Hyderabad Statement.

The Hyderabad Statement emerged in 1994.

The development path we envisage to have will have the following major elements:

1. Local work through local people.
2. Resource mobilisation at the local level.
3. Local level planning from the village level.
4. Needs of the local area and planning to be done collectively.
5. Primary education, primary health initiatives and management systems to be locally generated.
6. The processes should begin at the lowest level, the villages.

It was in this backdrop that the major initiative of Lokshala took place. A national level consultation was held at Itarsi on 3-4 March, 1995 and at Delhi on 1-2 March,1995.

A National workshop was held at Nauni, Himachal Pradesh, between May 1-10,1995. Around 75-80 participants, including 40-45 members from District Organising Committees were present. At the end of the workshop a perspective on universalisation of elementary education emerged. A Nauni Declaration was brought out that clarified many ideas for plans of action.

The Nauni Declaration emerged in 1995.

Discussions were held at a spate of meetings after this including universities at Patna, Delhi. This is how Lokshala emerged from Jatha, community involvement and collective discussions; through the processes spelt out in the Hyderabad statement. For BJVJ, Lokshala is not viewed only in the area of school education. It will necessarily lead to other questions related to the community; agriculture, women's issues, housing, land and other questions of interest to the community. Whenever community sits down to discuss education, all these issues come up, leading us to an integrated, connected view of education. The understanding that emerged was, if the community learns to intervene in education, they are bound to have learnt to intervene in other sectors too. All this will lead to an alternate view of development and knowledge, not another parallel school system that provides relevant education.

Emergence of Lokshala from Jatha.

Lokshala activists at the grass-root level will be passing through a process which leads to a local integrated developmental view of the place; with the school as the centre of developmental activity taking it to new vistas. In all this, the decision making will always lie at the local level.

Aims and Objectives of Lokshala:

Dr. Janaki Rajan, MACESE, Department of Education, University of Delhi :

The Lokshala Programme aims at universalisation of elementary education, that is, from Class I-VIII. To concretise this aim, and bring it the ground level requires debate and discussion on education at various levels; not just among educationists and educational bureaucrats. These groups are not in tune with the social realities; have little hands on experience in schools, nor have interacted with children. They are in general not in touch with the developments in their own academic disciplines. Educational discourse of such nature have been often sterile.

In the Lokshala process, the level of educational discourse has reached new heights. This has become possible because the focus of discussion is UEE at the local level. The task of how to concretise UEE necessitates these discussions among groups such as illiterate women, youth, teachers, who have so far been kept out of decision making in education. In different places in the country, such discussions are taking place; perhaps more ground level debate has taken place in the last 2 years on education than in the last several decades. There has also been sharing of experiences of work and discussions between people of various regions, and common statements have emerged through these experiences. These statements combined with a national perspective together form the vision of Lokshala. The local and the national are similar, and also distinct.

Article 45 of the Constitution of India commits free and compulsory education upto the age of 14 years. Yet the term elementary education does not mean the same thing in different parts of the

Article 45: The State shall provide, within a period of 10 years for free and compulosry education upto the age of 14 years.

country. In Assam and Maharashtra, which is the foremost in industrial development and which has such a rich tradition of educational discourse and innovation, elementary education has meant class VII instead VIII. Of late, the government has begun to substitute the term elementary with primary. This means only upto class V. Worse still, education is now being substituted by the term literacy. This means, UEE is being reduced to providing literacy.

The term *elementary* is being substituted by *primary* and the term *education* by *literacy* in government documents.

The objectives of Lokshala, arise out of the emerging common understanding on how to concretise UEE. At a recent Lokshala meeting at Bhopal, an effort was made to articulate these objectives. They were:

Objectives of Lokshala

1. To universalise elementary education.
2. To transform the government school system to the common school system, through people's participation for empowerment of schools.
3. Systemic intervention in the government school system through people's participation.
4. Making curriculum and pedagogy relevant and meaningful to the child.
5. Linking curriculum with the world of work and the world of knowledge.

The concept of Lokshala, is a process of empowerment of the existing school system through community intervention leading to Universalisation of Elementary Education. Three field laboratories were set up for formulation, testing and review of the different elements of the Lokshala process. The content of education must have the perspective of contemporary history as well as forces operating in society. The government does not implement its own commitment to education. The government initiates parallel processes like NLM, NFE, and different streams of school system have been introduced undermining elementary, education. Lokshala includes children of the 0-6 age group also and attempts an integrated view of education of children till the age of 14 years. Though the Kothari Commission report recommended the Common School System in 1966, there has been no initiative from the State. Systemic intervention in the Government school system, with community participation in curriculum and methods of teaching, will make education relevant and meaningful. The Common School System has so far emerged as the only means for ensuring quality education to all children. If UEE can be achieved through other means, then these can also be explored.

Lokshala attempts to take an intergrated view of education of children upto 14 years including the 0-6 age group.

The Common School System appears to be the only means for ensuring quality UEE.

To sum up, the objective of Lokshala is to transform the government school system to provide education for all children through a common system that is funded by the state and managed controlled by the people.

The objective of Lokshala is transformation of government school system to a common school system funded by the State, but managed and controlled by the people.

Evolution of Lokshala concept in the context of educational interventions in the country; some perceptions:

Dr. Ramesh Dave, Retd. Prof. of SCERT, Madhya Pradesh:

Lokshala should not be seen in a very narrow context. It is an effort towards building a movement. The present status of the school is such that it is merely a token of something which has to be learnt formally within the given situation and constraints. Government programmes have been failures, it seems that government intervention is nothing but a systematic fraud. Government programmes talk about people's participation. But everything is done by government order, even people's organised participation. This is true of the District Primary Education Programme also. All the societal forces that used to be active are now dormant. All activity is being done by the government. There is imposition of our views upon the people. People's views about us are not known. Intellectual tyranny on the people is being practised. People are not even allowed to think. Lokshala is a community mobilisation programme. School is within the community, therefore, the community needs to own the school.

Lokshala should not be seen in a narrow context. It is an effort towards building a movement.

Lokshala liberates education from its narrow confines to make it a system owned and developed by people. There are other streams of education e.g. NFE, Literacy and Alternatives schools; but all these efforts are fizzling out as they are basically not committed to people's development through their own participation and involvement. In all these fifty years, we have been rearing a system of failures and resources have been wasted.

Lokshala liberates education from narrow confines to make it a system owned and developed by people.

There is a very strong network of formal school system in the government sector. This sector needs to be transformed through positive people's intervention and if the community has a sense of ownership of the schools, schools will be empowered on the one hand; and the community will also get stronger and stronger. Thus in a way Lokshala is a community empowerment programme. Other programmes in the field are also going. The strengths of such programmes should be dovetailed with Lokshala programmes. In Timarni Block of Madhya Pradesh, the basic work is done. The baseline survey reveals that school has still not reached the hilly terrains. A large number of children are still unreached.

Lokshala is a community empowerment programme.

Shri Shyam Bohare, Academy of Administration, Bhopal:

Since schools are for the people's children, school text books should be written in the everyday language of the people.

Ms. Chhaya, Jahangirpuri School Project, Delhi:

Ms. Chhaya said that she had been working on women's issues from a women's organisation, Action India. Importance was given to people's participation, but the approach was different. A committee used to be formed; an education committee for instance. The view of people's participation was limited. Working in these lines was a frustrating experience. There was need for direction. Women's groups work largely with women. After participating in the Nauni workshop, I was convinced that Lokshala has a large

Through the Lokshala process at Jahangirpuri, women's groups have come together to discuss their own status and status of schools.

The effort is to empower women through the process of intervention in the school system.

vision for change. It also brought the realisation that the work being done so far on women's issues is narrow in its conception. It is more important to work with men on women's issues. Women at any event,are involved in these struggles.

Work at the Lokshala advanced field laboratory at Jahangirpuri re-settlement colony at Delhi especially among women of deprived sections of the society has shown that women are eager and willing to bring about change in school education. Women's groups have come together, to discuss their own status, and the status of schools. A *Sanjha Manch*, consisting of 14 local voluntary organisations have come together at Jahangirpuri for Lokshala work. At a *Mahila Shivir* held in Jahangirpuri, women discussed what it is that they feared most. Through the process of sharing their fears, they felt a certain confidence. The effort is to empower women through the process of intervention in the school system.

Participants wanted to understand what is meant by the Common School System.

Dr. Janaki Rajan on the Common School System:

The concept of common school emerged at two different times in India. In the 1920s and 30s, Gandhi developed the idea of aNai Taleem, also known as Basic Education. This system of education was not accepted by the government after independence as a common system; although Basic education was set up as a parallel stream.

Then again in 1964-66, Kothari Commission the Common School System to help promote social equity. By a common school system we mean that all children in the neighbourhood; irrespective of the parents' socio-economic status, caste, religion or caste will receive education in the same neighbourhood school. There will be common curriculum, teachers.

Common School System : All children in the neighbourhood receive education in the same neighbourhood school.

The current practice of providing different layers of schools for children of different sections of society, merely serves to divide society further.

If a child's right to education is to be realised, then there is no other alternative to the common school system concept that came out of the independence movement. The government's policy statement advocates common school system for national unity, equality and social justice. The creation of Central schools, Sainik schools, Public Schools are created to fulfil the aspirations of the elites. For the poorer sections of community, non-formal education, of late, Adult National Literacy Missions are being promoted in which children of the 9-14 age group are included.

The current practice of providing different layers of schools for children of different sections of society, divides society further.

Shri. Satyen Chaturvedi :

The term *lok* has been used in Lokshala because we visualise a school which will make people's living situation qualitatively better. What should be taught, who should be the teacher, these decisions must also be collectively made by the people. These will help narrow down the caste and socio-economic differences. The curriculum will comprise of what people perceive as relevant, only then will it be able to make the living conditions of people better. But there is also need to be aware of the fact that there are contradictions within the local community, in terms of caste, class, religion etc. There is inherent danger in this. We need to understand how to deal with this.

In Lokshala, we visualise a school that will make people's living situation qualitatively better.

The Curriculum will comprise of what people perceive as relevant.

In our organisation, we try to involve those who are interested in girl's education. A survey is then conducted and the essence of the survey is studied. We insist on transparency in all spheres. The steps for implementation are: survey, study, discussion, from which plan of action emerges. We do take foreign funding, but we are very clear about our perspective. If the funding agency has different perspectives, then, we do not accept their funds.

23.10.97

SESSION THREE

3:00-9:30 Hrs.

OBJECTIVE: Presentation of Work Plans by UGC-Teacher Fellows.

Presidium:

1. **Prof. Shyam Bohare, Bhopal**
2. **Ms. Zhatsu Humstoe, Nagaland**
3. **Dr. Janaki Rajan, Delhi.**

5 UGC-Teacher Fellows for Lokshala and related developmental tasks presented their work plans.

a) Dr.Sri Ram Parihar, Lecturer in Hindi, Government College, Khandwa and District Co-ordinator, NSS, Madhya Pradesh, presented a one year plan of activities for the Lokshala advanced Field Laboratory at Timarni Block, District Hoshangabad, Madhya Pradesh.

Workplan for Lokshala Field Laboratory at Timarni, Block, Hoshangabad District, Madhya Pradesh.

The work plan envisages community mobilisation for Lokshala in 15 panchayats and 53 villages. 20 villages will be reached in the first phase and 33 villages in the second stage. These phases are necessitated by the topography; the villages in the plains are relatively easy to access; whereas, those in the hilly terrain where people are primarily dependent on forest produce are more difficult to reach.

Work will be initiated tnrough the process of *Lok Sampark*, with community, local voluntary organizations, high school students and

women of the village getting together in the beginning, to collectively analyse the status report *Shala Se Lokshala Ki Or* prepared by the Lokshala team in Timarni. Through this process, identification of Lokshala workers at village, panchayat, block and district levels will be initiated. Discussions will centre around people's participation, linking Lokshala with other development programmes, retention, quality of education, teacher provision in these schools.

People's analysis of the status report *Shala se Lokshala ki Or.*

The Lokshala team thus identified, will initiate an awareness campaign on issues such as child labour, agriculture, health, working conditions,problems of children unable to attend school as they have to look after younger siblings, children of migrant labour, particularly the large numbers engaged in soya bean cultivation at Timarni.

Awareness campaigns on issues of child labour, agriculture, health etc.

Key concepts of the Lokshala process relating to non-formal education, literacy programmes, early child hood education will also be discussed as ground work before evolving plans of action for changing the educational situation.

All these efforts will go towards the formation of a people's committee, *Lok Parishad*, to plan for change and manage the change in the functioning of schools. To involve children, a children's parliament is also envisaged to better understand children's psychology, their perceptions of the problems of the schools and their ideas on solving these problems. By the end of the year, it is expected that school-reconstruction will commence, with a detailed plan of action for the next year.

Lok Parishad to plan and manage the change in the functioning of schools.

The discussion that followed touched upon the following issues:

- A year long process of deliberation to formulate the concept paper on women's empowerment, with members of the Timarni team has been going on; resulting in a plan of work for which funding also has been procured. The work plan presented by Shri. Parihar does not refer to this all important component of Lokshala process; and further; does not integrate this vision in the over all year plan. This points to an understanding of Lokshala with women's empowerment as a parallel process; which is not the way LOKSHALA is envisaged. Therefore all efforts must be made to understand the holistic vision of LOKSHALA and this must reflect in the work plan and its implementation.

Despite the year-long process to formulate the women's empowerment components, the work plan makes on reference to this.

- While the process of organising people is ongoing, there may emerge other ideas for organisation and mobilisation. Care must be taken to see that these are incorporated, and the process is two-way.

- The activities detailed seem to be too packed for one year. There must be flexibility in approach.

- The Rayat Shikshan Samithi has adopted certain slogans for community organisation, for example, wasteland is the best land; self-help education. Similar strategies can be thought of.

- A suggestion was made that all participants present can form the resource person pool for facilitating the concretisation of the individual UGC Fellow work plans. Addresses will be circulated to each Fellow.

b) Ms. Zhatsu Humstoe, Department of Education, Patkai Christian College, Chumukedima, Nagaland, presented a written action plan of action for Lokshala in Zalukie Circle, Nagaland, comprising of 36 villages. She had participated at the Nauni workshop; she narrated how she then and there became inspired to look upon work of the Lokshala process as a life time's work.

Workplan for Lokshala Field Laboratory at Zalukie Circle, Nagaland.

Giving a brief overview of the status of education in Nagaland, she said that there are 1123 schools in Nagaland, the average teacher: student ratio is 1:22. But quality education is not being made available to the children.

There are 7 major tribes in Nagaland, and she proposes to involve members from each of the tribes in Lokshala work.

For the last one year, she had been preparing to initiate a Lokshala Field Laboratory at Tuensang district near the Indo-Burma border, where five major tribes of Nagaland live; but the situation in Nagaland has necessitated reconsideration of the area of work to Zalukie circle.

Putting together a resource group for Lokshala process.

Work has been ongoing by visiting the various district capitals conducting meetings to put together a support group for Lokshala comprising of persons from DIETs, SCERT, North Eastern Colleges of Education, school teachers, pre and in-service teacher trainees, church leaders, members of the community, particularly village elders and women leaders.

A State Level Orientation-cum-Training Workshop of 5 days duration is proposed for the local activists, community members and resource groups for exploration, planning and mobilisation at the district circle town and the creation of support systems for each village to help village members to become involved in their own villages.

Establishing linkages with different village organisations & mobilising resources in cash and kind in 36 villages.

In particular, the workshop will help establish linkages with different village organisations, village councils, and seek active participation and intervention in schools. Processes to mobilise resources in cash and kind will also be initiated in 36 villages of Zalukie circle with population of 14,883.

Workplan for Lokshala Field Laboratory at Kakching Community Development Block, Langmeidong, Manipur.

In Zalukie Circle, the problem is not so much enrolment and retention. There is however need to work for relevance and quality of education. There is need to bring about qualitative change in

curriculum and community intervention for empowerment of the existing school system. Attempts will be made to involve the Block level BJVJ unit in the area in the Lokshala activities.

The tribes speak their own language, and in general, members of one tribe do not understand the language of members of other tribes. A hybrid language called Nagamese has developed.

The language of communication will be English, and there will attempts to translate proceedings simultaneously in the local tribal languages.

Suggestions included drawing up of a more detailed plan of action, and drawing upon of the academic support of the 4 UGC Teacher-Fellows in the North-East for assistance. Prof. K.K.Sharma offered his guidance and support.

c) **Shri. M. Shamungou Singh, Teacher-Fellow from Kha-Manipur College, Kakching Block, Manipur** presented a work-plan for Lokshala programme in 15 Gram Sabhas at Kakching community development Block, Langmeidong, Manipur. The process of the ongoing exploratory, mobilisational and planning meetings will be intensified.

These meetings will be held with the panchayat members, head masters, teachers, local educationists, youth teams, women's groups, students' union members, parents, social workers, members of local voluntary organisations. These will be followed by parent-teacher interaction meetings.

Interaction meetings with panchayat members, head masters, teachers, youth terms and parents.

A set of meetings will also be held with school-going and non-school going children in different age groups between 6-14 years, to search for problems faced by them inside and outside schools.

Meetings will also be held to introduce Lokshala and seek permission and collaboration of Education Departments, Inspectors, SCERT and DIETs; and to provide academic support to headmasters for improving schools.

A 5-day workshop will be held for all those who will be associated with the Lokshala process, to evolve conceptual and operational guidelines for work, and an annual plan of action for universalisation of elementary education in 159 schools of the 15 gram panchayats will be finalised.

The process will then be initiated for a period of one year, after which, all persons concerned will re-gather together to discuss their work, problems and drawbacks. Based upon this, fresh plans will be drawn for the succeeding year.

Drawing up a collective plan of action.

Suggestions included a cautionary statement that Lokshala process is not a set of ready made statements to be imparted to people, but and evolutionary process; therefore care must be taken to listen to the views of all the concerned groups regarding education, and

their ideas for its improvement. The north-east regional resource team's assistance must also be sought for developing ideas.

Shri. Shamungo Singh also expressed the need for resources to initiate work, and sought guidance on how to mobilise funds. A written work plan with a Budget estimate was also presented.

Workplan for introducing the issue of education for children with disabilities in the Lokshala process.

d) **Dr. Anita Ghai, Teacher-Fellow, Psychology Department, Jesus and Mary College, Delhi,** presented a concept paper titled "Reaching the Unreached" related to the universalisation of education of marginalised children with particular reference to the disabled.
The questions being addressed are:

What knowledge is most worth?

Whose knowledge is considered most worth?

These are questions riddled with difficulties. They are questions not just for education, but also of politics, class, gender, displacement.

Who is marginalised? There are many kinds of marginalisations. Broadly, they can be:

- those who do not know the language.
- those with disability.
- those excluded from any set of activity or sphere.

A series of theme papers on marginalisation will be developed under various categories : the disabled, gender, class, minorities, and a combination of these.

A survey of existing programmes at the level of the family, school, community, at the Block level will be initiated. Perceptions on disability at the Block level will have to be understood for creating an awareness of what it is to be marginalised, to sensitise in order to bring about attitudinal change in the way the marginalised are viewed will have to be attempted at each of the Lokshala field laboratories. There is also need to understand the differences in the adultomorphic and childmorphic view. Issues related to the disabled; such as the Bill on disabilities, passed in 1996, is yet to become functional as the government has still not appointed a Commissioner; will also be raised through a series of workshops.

In sum, the effort will be to concretise the Nauni Declaration to for the empowerment of the unreached.

The activities proposed for this year are:

- Exploration at various Field Laboratories for working out ways of creating awareness and sensitivity.
- Paper on issues for education of girl children.

- Preparation of questionnaire for survey at various blocks.
- National level workshop to orient the Block-level activists on the issues of marginalised children's education.
- Feedback from the various field laboratories.
- Regional workshops on the issue.
- Paper on Strategies and Methodology to deal with disabled children.
- Training for Field activists
- Paper on Education of poor children.
- Problems of disabled women.
- Collection of data from the Field.
- Writing a report of work.
- Communicating the observations and catering to Block-level needs.
- Review.
- Towards a direction for curricular development.

The discussion began with an invitation by the Gujarat team to visit their field area and participate at a workshop being organised there. Observations included the need to have a multi-faceted approach to the education of the disabled. There is more need to educate the non-disabled about the disabled than the disabled themselves. There is also a cost paid by visible handicaps.

(e) Dr. Tripta Wahi, Teacher Fellow, Department of History, Hindu College, Delhi presented a concept paper on "Local History, an engagement of the people with themselves".

Work Plan for introducing the concept Local History in the Lokshala process.

Introducing the concepts presented in the paper, Dr. Tripta Wahi said that the syllabus of history in schools is ruled by the fear that India will break up. There is a continuous attempt to present history that is selected to reinforce the idea of unity. In recent years, this tendency is being combated by some of us at the higher education level. An effort is being made to depict the pluralism in society through the understanding of the history of different classes and the dialectic power relations. Local history is people's history.

Local history is people's history.

It leads to an understanding and progressive management of the contradictions and dynamics in society. Local History is an initial step in Lokshala. It has emerged out of the field-level identification of the 6 point agenda: to document folk songs, puzzles, games; history of the school; study of local skills; etc. All these are nothing but local history. Integration of these different points point towards an understanding of how society operates. At the level of the child, if a child does not get enough food, it is important to understand why the child does not get sufficient food. These links are much more easily understood by workers, better than the middle class as it is closer to their experiential reality.

Existential reality can both broaden and limit. Local history must

be thought of from the point of view not only of Indian history; it must be viewed in the context of international human history and the views through which histories of other countries are being taught. While documenting local history, simultaneously, or a little later, major landmarks in human history also need to be introduced.

Local history must be viewed in the content of international human history.

Local history was introduced at the Lokshala workshop at Phulbani and Patna and the process will have to be taken forward.

There is need to develop ideas through cross-fertilisation of ideas. Eklavya for instance has done remarkable work in the area of introducing local history in both content and pedagogy and in resolving some basic questions of pedagogy and the role of education. These are important not only in the teaching of history, but mathematics and sciences as well.

The workplan envisages interaction at the national level as well as catalysing field action for local history at the block level. Documenting local history will be taken up at different levels. The plan includes a series workshops at the national level with activists from each Lokshala Block apart from academicians. The knowledge so gained will open up new vistas for radical transformation of the school curriculum and pedagogy. To sharpen ideas for methodology of local history in field laboratories, ideas will be tested through field work at Jahangirpuri, Delhi.

Work plan envisages interactions at the national level as well as catalysing field action for local history.

The discussions that followed pointed to the need to be aware of the impact created through the teaching of history. In Maharashtra, should Maratha history be taught? There is the issue of communalism between Hindus and Muslims. One participant observed that we need to examine why Purdah system came into existence in regions where it was not in practice. History of nomads has to be recorded, as also the history of shifting cultivation of land. The Maharashtra government gives different types of dresses as uniform for different sections of society. This amounts to colour coding in order to differentiate. All this leads us to questions like, whose history are we writing/ for whom? There is a search for convergence. One participant asked, What teaching method must be used to teach history to a child of 6 years? In the context of Lokshala, who will collect and document local history? Is it the history of a colony? Another participant referred to Bertrand Russell and said, people who do not learn from History are condemned to repeat it. History divides people culturally and geography (as they are taught) divides people territorially. Teaching about human civilisation is fine, but perhaps, as a practical measure, those parts of history that generate hatred must be dropped. Perhaps we should only teach those aspects that will not divide people, that cause world wars.

One participant pointed out that the curriculum is being dictated by policy makers and their decisions. In history text books, Gandhi is given little space, and described in terms that do not reflect his enormous contribution. RSS is being depicted as a social

Curriculum is being dictated by policy makers .

organisation. Only a Hindu is accepted as a patriot, or *desh bhakt* Social thought is represented by a few thoughts of a few selected persons in a manner that robs their vitality of thought.

One participant requested, that to progress the idea further, there is a need for a working paper on how local history can start in concrete terms at the Block level. There is also need to understand the relationship between local history and the Lokshala processes. Eklavya, for instance, has no reservations on policy matters.

Given the government policy on UEE, the question is, will the government hijack any intervention? There are instances in the experience of history writing when this has happened.

(f) Dr. S. P. Verma, Teacher Fellow, Department of Physics, Science College, Patna University, proposed developing support systems for the Lokshala Programme and related developmental areas of BJVJ and related networks at state and national levels.

Work Plan for organisational strengthening for Lokshala and science teaching processes.

The work plan presented had 3 components. The first component pertains to strengthening science education in the existing school system through science education programmes, with special focus on secondary schools. Activities include initiating formation of science clubs, wall papers, science journalism, children's science Congress. The second component relates to strengthening Lokshala Programme at Karpi-Kurtha Block, Jahanabad, the advanced field laboratory, developing a State Resource Centre for Lokshala activities, and strengthening state level organisation of BJVJ. The third component relates to strengthening Bihar Science Society, and NSCSTC network. The three components were presented in a flow chart as follows:

A. Towards building people's science movement:

A. Towards building a people's science movement.

Strengthening science education in existing school system.
Networking of Voluntary organisations.
Developing science teacher organisations.
Establishing Bihar Academy of Sciences.

B. Co-ordination and support activities.

B. Co-ordination.

Strengthening Lokshala Programme at Jahanabad.
Development of State Resource Centres.
Strengthening BJVJ.

C. Other responsibilities:

C. Science education and popularisation.

Bihar Science Society.
NSCSTC.

The discussions centred around the following:

- Whether Science popularisation activities strengthen the other movements of BJVJ.
- Whether it leads to curriculum changes in the School System.
- Do we really generate scientific temper among the masses.
- Whether pedagogy of communication in being developed on correct lines.

The methods adopted to remove superstitions will have to be re-examined. New approaches have not been adequately examined. By and large, science experiments have been blindly imitated in the last 12-13 years. It is open to question whether, conducting science experiments, however impressive, will lead to lasting influence in the curriculum. Science activities generally remain as activities in schools. They do not become part of the curriculum. It

is even more dangerous to incorporate it under SUPW because it ensures further marginalisation of experimentation, and it implies that it is definitely not part of the curriculum. Have superstitions been removed by the activities we have undertaken? Do science club activities actually touch upon these issues? Those who participate in science movements also believe in the *sant* and his displays.

Dr. Tripta Wahi said that local history offers plenty of scope for science experiments. Wherever Lokshala is on, a tour can be undertaken and the local issues can be integrated with science and science education. Issues and problems such as those of health can be analysed and integrated with science.

Dr. Janaki Rajan said that people's everyday life can be observed and the scientific principles in action therein can be identified and this can form the basis of the people's science. A woman who draws water form a well uses scientific principles that is discernible by the angle at which she pulls the rope, by the way she ties the rope to the pot. A child uses a different way, and when she does not apprehend the significance of each step. The gradual process by which a child learns to draw water from a well with increasing ease, the careful observation of these processes can yield valuable insights into the pedagogy of learning.

Dr. Anita Ghai pointed out that this must be viewed not as a short term intervention, but a long-term holistic one.

Dr. Shyam Bohare said that we get impatient and want to do things quickly. There is need to observe how people live their lives and what they believe in. By analysing this, we get insight into solutions. Dr. Rajender Khumbar said that he has been closely linked with the people's science movement for the last 12-13 years. Science experiments are being mechanically replicated. There was an instance when an error was being replicated year after year without question.

Prof. Anil Sadgopal said that during the Kishore Bharati days, he had interacted with a tribal woman who was ill and a medicine man was called to treat her. When asked why she was not taken to a doctor, the reply was, where do we go? If we take her to the Primary Heaith Centre, where is the guarantee that she will be treated? Who knows, she may get well through this treatment itself. These are certainly logical conclusions under the circumstances.

24.10.1997

FIELD TRIP

The following Field Trip Programme was scheduled for the participants:

1. Visit to Rayat Shikshan Samiti.
2. Visit to the site where women masons were at work at Satara.
3. Presentation of work and discussion at site office.
4. Visit to Earthquake Resistant House at Banwadi.
5. Visit to Valmiki Phatar, Patan Taluka.
6. Programme at school site and laying of Foundation Stone.
7. Discussion with Mahila groups at Udhawane.

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The Field trip began with a visit to the Rayat Shikshan Samithi premises at SATARA, a voluntary organisation that was initiated by Shri. Bhaurao Patil in 1919 inspired by Jyotibhai Phule. The organisation has since been engaged in rural education, among classes considered as untouchables. The first students' Hostel at Satara meant for students of all communities was started by this organisation in 1924. Mahatma Gandhi, who used to donate Rs.500/ annually to the organisation. During his visit here, Gandhi was stated to have said that the Rayat Shikshan Samithi is doing the kind of work that was envisaged at Sabarmathi Ashram.

The organisation also established the first training College for Primary teachers in 1935, and established the first primary school in 1936. The organisation now runs 578 voluntary primary schools in the hilly mountaineous areas of Satara. A free residential secondary school, a composite hostel for boys and girls, the first College at Satara and another at Taluka Place, Karad have been established by this organisation. By 1955, a college of Education was also started at Satara.

Allied development efforts includes a Co-operative Farming Scheme, started in 1911, a co-operative Bank in 1940, co-operative stores and many co-operative societies.

The participants visited the school premises at Satara, where a museum recording the work of the organisation has been set up. A brief meeting was held with members of the governing body of the organisation, who, in his address, welcomed the Lokshala initiative and said that efforts such as the Rayat Shikshan Sanstha has much to offer and learn from the Lokshala initiative. A book on the Founder, Karamveer Bhaurao Patil by Dr.Anjivel V. Mathew was given to the participants.

The participants then visited the District Office, Satara, where work on low cost sanitation was being undertaken in collaboration with UNICEF. The local team showed specimens of the specially fabricated toilets, using special corrosion resistant raw material and designed to consume less water. The unit comes with a specially designed soak pit suited for rural conditions.

This was followed by a visit to a village site where such a community toilet was already built. The most striking feature of the toilet structure was its clean and sparkling appearance. The external design was decorative, in keeping with the strategy that community toilets must be visible as an important structure of the village; no less important than say, a temple.

The visit to the site where women masons were at work showed a dozen women engaged in the masonry work, cement lining a deep trough at a village. Some youth were also engaged in assisting the women.

Alternative techniques in rural housing.

The earthquake resistant house,constructed collectively for and by members of the M. N. Roy Institute for Non-Formal Education and Research showed a wealth of alternative features in rural housing. Ingenious use of construction technology has resulted in the rooms being airy, with built-in storage designed to conserve space, kitchen counters that have carefully taken into account the fatigue factor involved in cooking. The design has taken into account details such as the posture women have to adopt while cooking, and the accompanying health hazard of prolonged stooping.

The ceiling, which contributes to a substantial portion of the total cost, is designed to use less raw material. Walls have been constructed using a mesh of steel and concrete, greatly reducing its width and material used.

The emergence of a school in a difficult-to-access area : Valmiki Pathar.

The participants arrived at Valmiki Pathar at 19:00 hours after a 2 hour drive through a "jeepable" track that has been constructed by the people of the villages. Valmiki Pathar is otherwise accessible only be walking. The new school site selected is on a raised meadow, within half to one hour walking distance from the nearby villages. There is no other structure within at least 2 kilometre radius. The people of the villages had pitched bamboo poles marking the school structure that is to come up. Around 100 children, youth, men from the villages, and a few village leaders were present. The people reported that around 100 women, who had assembled here since 12:00 noon, had to return to the villages as it was growing dark, and they had to cook at their homes.

The scene around the school site in the night was memorable. At a distance the dim glow of lights from the villages could be seen. The star light was bright, unhindered by city smoke and pollution. The function took place under the generator driven lights.

The programme began by the village elders, and youth, welcoming the participants with the traditional coconut and flowers. Dr. Rajender Khumbhar then introduced the participants in a novel way, by asking some of them to sing a song in their own language. The future school ground at remote Valmiki Pathar, reverberated with the sound and song of distant Nagaland, Manipur, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh. The youth of the village, in turn, sang songs in Marathi.

The local team also displayed a model of their future school. Apart fro class rooms, the model also had provision for an animal clinic, a health clinic for women, storage space for local produce. (It is doubtful if NCERT/NIEPA could ever have visualised such a building while planning a school).

Dr. Rajender Khumbar then narrated the efforts that have gone into this school coming into being. The villages of Valmiki Pathar are isolated and inaccessible. The rocky terrain makes agriculture insufficient to provide for the people's needs. The men in great majority go to Bombay to seek work as labour, particularly in Mazagaon Docks, the sea port of Bombay. When a team visited mazagaon docks to talk to the men of Valmiki Pathar about the construction of the school, it was perhaps the first time that a meeting for a school took place on the docks. The warehouse became the meeting place. At present, the children of this region are deprived of elementary education. There are some primary schools in nearby villages, with the attendant problems of poor quality education. But even this is only upto class IV. If a child wants to study from class V onwards, s/he may have to travel 10-11 kilometres everyday.

People's vision of school includes, apart from classrooms, an animal clinic, clinic for women, storage space for local produce.S

The school building will be constructed by the village people themselves. In order to make bricks for the building, people who are experts at making bricks will come and live in the village and teach the people how to make bricks. The right type of soil for brick making has already been identified nearby. Women in the village will prepare pickles, and medicinal products out of herbs growing in the region, and the sale of these will also help support the school.

School huilding will be constructed by people themselves with bricks made in the villaga-a skill people will first learn in order to build a school.

Keeping in tune with the introduction, Prof. Anil Sadgopal, addressed the gathering by asking the children and youth to maintain the method by which participants were introduced as the method of teaching in the schools. He said that what is being visualised here is not just a school, but marks the beginning of what Gandhi visualised as a rural university.

A symbolic ceremony of digging the ground was followed by the inauguration of the pickle making and other income generation activities of the women.

After dinner hosted by the local people, the participants returned to Karad 1:00 A.M.

25.10.1997

SESSION FOUR

10:00-14:00 Hrs.

OBJECTIVE: Women's Empowerment in the Lokshala Process.

Presidium Ms. Chhaya
Dr. Janaki Rajan
Dr. Tripta Wahi

The session on women's empowerment began with Prof. Anil Sadgopal who specially requested space to initiate discussion on women's empowerment on the plea that he wishes to break the stereotype that only women speak on and raise women's issues. He stated that patriarchy is a strong force that determines women's status and until power relations remain as they are, women's oppression will continue. There are many forms of this systematic bias against women as evidenced by repeated instances of the legal and police machinery to resist action on legally punishable crimes against women.

Patriarchy is a strong force that determines women's status and powers relations and many forms of systematic bias against women.

The vision of Lokshala envisages community mobilisation and the cutting edge of this mobilisation is women. Therefore Lokshala's strategy is to begin empowering women. DPEP is also talking of women's empowerment but the women's question has been reduced to enrolment of girl children. They have no concern for women's historical situation. He also decried NCERT's token attempts to change names of boys in textbooks to girl's names.

Vision of Lokshala envisages community empowerment of for school transformation and the cutting edge of this is women.

Ms. Chhaya began her presentation in a participatory manner by asking the participants to give their understanding of women's empowerment through a key word. The words that emerged were equality, co-existence, independence, inner strength, identity, employment, power, real sharing, equal sharing, destruction of the power system.

Ms.Chhaya then talked about how inequality in the structures of the family emerges in the lives of the women through housework. Even if the woman is working several hours outside the household, certain household chores are considered the woman's. A man keen to empower his sister is not keen to empower his wife. At all levels decision making processes exclude women, even when it comes to selecting the husband for the sister. There are many different manifestations of this inequality shows through in the every day lives of people.

There exists inequality in the structures of the family. Women are excluded from decision making processes.

Some of the observations that surfaced from the male members are:

- women have to assert themselves.
- upper class and lower class women take their own decisions and therefore have no problems.
- men decide who women should marry.

Dr. Tripta Wahi stated that in an unequal situation, talking of equality or actions implying equality is meaningless.

Dr. Rajender Khumbhar said that there are no ready answers, but the basic issue is that of identity of the person, regardless of whether the person is a man or a woman. He stated,who is asking for equality, whether it is men, women or academicians? Women's groups which claim equality have misconceived notions. Tribals and middle class have a different mental make-up. He said women's empowerment as it is thought of today is like wrapping a wet cat in cotton wool. Tribal women have decision making powers to the extent of giving their men money for liquor. He emphasised that freedom of women will come through creating an identity of equal human beings, the status of equality.

There are differences in perception of equality among middle class women, academics and tribal women.

Dr. Janaki Rajan traced the history of emergence of patriarchy in the roots of the emergence of the concept of private property. Historically, there is evidence to show that matriarchy was the way of life of early civilisation. Over a period, patriarchy began to emerge. Some social scientists trace this transition to the emergence of the notion of private property. Once private property gained credence, the man, as the owner of the property, began to look for whom the property should be passed on to, given the mortality, and the violent ends of life in these times. The children, as having been begotten by the man, became the next in line for the ownership of the property. To ensure that the property went to "his" children, it was important to control the sexuality of the woman and thus began the shackling of women. Over time thus, women became a commodity, the reproductive bag that produced the progeny to whom the private property could be passed on. In this scheme of property and property relations the woman herself came to be construed as man's property. Man's superiority was therefore not because man is superior to woman, but because he is a man. Patriarchy thus distorts social reality by systematically viewing woman only in relation to the man as superior. It magnifies the image of man and diminishes that of the woman. In reality, this distortion affects both men and women. Few if any men fulfil the exalted view of men, and it is a continuous fruitless struggle to achieve this distorted magnified image. Patriarchy is so all pervasive that it continually and cumulatively deteriorates the status of women. The combination of modernity and patriarchy is a lethal combination arrayed against the woman, as can be seen in the portrayal of woman in the media that is accessible even in the remote villages, and the exploitation of women in the new culture of consumerism. It must also be remembered that in any conflict and struggle, be it class struggle or communal, the reaction invariably targets women as the victims. In our own struggles, we must ensure that the woman once again does not become the victim.

Historically, patriarchy has been traced to the origin of private property.

Patriarchy magnifies the image of man and dimmishes the image of women.

In any conflict or struggle, reactions invariably targets women.

In Lokshala it is important to remove the glasses of patriarchy that distorts and perpetuates this unequal status. An attempt to create a culture leading to equality has to made. This calls for a review of what defines man-woman relations and the power system related to this.

Regarding women's role in Lokshala, women's empowerment is not just an instrumental strategy to make Lokshala work, but an inherent principle. The primary objective of Lokshala is school transformation through people's participation. As women constitute half the "people", people's participation cannot happen without women's participation. This, in the fullest sense of the term, necessitates women's empowerment.

Women's empowerment is not merely an instrumental strategy but an inherent principle.

There is no doubt that class differences exist and operate within society, but there does exist a special category by gender in society to which special attention must be paid.

Ms. Khurshid Atar began by stating that she comes from a voluntary organisation *Muslim Satya Shodhak Mandal* inspired by Jyotibhai Phule. The organisation was started by her sister who died recently in an accident and who was forefront in this region in participation in the movement related to the Shah Bano case.

Muslim Satya Shodhak Mandal.

Her mother tongue is Marathi. She said that she was pained that Muslims in this country have been portrayed as traitors. She said history writing has been a very effective medium in portraying this. She traced a long line of reformers in Maharashtra who give lie to this, and who have held very progressive views on education. There is a general tendency to state that Islam is against women's education and emancipation. This is far from true. She said that their organisation have been using the Quran as the source to raise several issues pertaining to women. She spoke about he equality of women in the Quran and maintained that the prophet was in favour of women's education. She expressed her anguish at Rajiv Gandhi having yielded to the pressure of the retrogressive forces of the muslim community in the Shah Bano case.

In this country, particularly in history writing, muslims are portrayed as traitors.

***Muslim Satya Shodhak Mandal* uses the Quran as the source to raise secular issues pertaining to women.**

She gave an account of the attempts of progressive women in resisting these forces. They had taken a procession to Delhi. On the way they were stoned. They met the President, but nothing came of it. Rajiv Gandhi's retrogressive decision has forced 1000s of Muslim girls into prostitution.

She narrated the incident related to the burial of her sister when she died in an accident. The family was not allowed to bury her in the burial ground as it was alleged that she opposed Islam. She was called a "*dharm virodhi*". It was at the intervention of her students who threatened to bury her within the college premises, that she was finally allowed to be buried.

Women activists are termed *dharm virodhi.*

There was heated debate over certain perceptions that emerged from the presentations.

Dr. Anita Ghai said that the problems of the disabled women, and displaced women require special attention.

Dr. S. S.Ray said that this effort is important because it is an effort at conceptualisation and the transfer of the concept into action. The women's question is not being raised for the first time. Since

Womens question has been raised since the 19 century.

the 19th century, people have raised this question. An image of the woman has been created, and that is expected to be followed. This amounts to male rationalisation of the image of the woman. As large numbers of women are being drawn into the production process, this image is changing and is leading to the creation of a new power structure. The Quran was interpreted in different ways. It was used for a social process.

Legally China and Cuba gave equal power to women and provided an economic basis. The cultural aspects must be emphasised; since it is through cultural transmissions that images are propagated. The cultural framework of western educational elites must take into account the Indian specificities. At the community level, traditional legacies can be renewed. Popular and democratic elements must be retained. Communalism is not only a colonial legacy; but something to do with ourselves also.

Popular and democratic elements of culture need to be retained.

Dr. Shri Ram Parihar said that we need to evolve strategies to deal with women's question. What is to be done about invoiving muslim women if the muslim community objects.

Shri Debashish Dutta said that Khasi women do all the work. The man is free. This is a form of exploitation.

Dr. Janaki Rajan said that the time has come for us to take stock of the participation of women in the Lokshala process. How many women are involved at each level? Let this become part of the evaluation of the field laboratories. We also need to think of linking organisationally with women's group networks.

There is need to take stock of women's representation in Lokshala process.

Prof. S.P.Verma said that there is need to share grassroot level experiences.

Prof. Anil Sadgopal said that when the *Manthan* document was being written, many weaknesses of BJVJ network on the issue of women, such as the poor representation of *dalit* women, lack of awareness of issues related to women were raised. Women within BJVJ set a clarion call. They fought with the Charter Committee for representation. This process led to some of the provisions in he BJVJ Constitution. From the Block level network, there will be representation at the Central Committee. These processes will throw up better women representation. The struggle has just begun. We need to network with women's groups, dalits, displaced groups. There should also be representation from fraternal organisations. There are only 3 women among the 12 Teacher-Fellows although efforts were made to get more. There has been very little awareness of issues of muslim women. This question must be raised in a big way. This is just an account of rising awareness, not a rise in awareness.

BJVJ is one of the few organisations that has been open about questioning their own position on the Women's question, leading to provision of 1/3 women at all levels in the BJVJ Constitution.

A decision was taken to rectify the imbalances in representation by women at all levels including decision making, and taking up women's empowerment as a priority programme and seeking to network with women's groups.

A committee was formed to look into possibilities of immediate tasks that participants could take up in their own work areas with regard to women's empowerment. Some of the suggestions that emerged were:

1. Each participant to write a note on their perception on women's empowerment.
2. Each UGC work-plan to be reviewed with regard to women's empowerment.
3. Attempts to ensure substantial gender participation in all activities.
4. Attempt gender and class analysis in Lokshala work.

25.10.1997.

SESSION FIVE

15:00-21:00 Hrs.

OBJECTIVE : To understand the need and process of advocacy. Advocacy in Lokshala Programme.

PRESIDIUM : Prof. K. K. Sharma
Dr. Ramesh Dave
Ms. Chhaya

There were six presentations.

a) Dr. Sukhdev Patel, Gujarat, presented his experience of advocacy by a network of voluntary organisations engaged in working for the education of children engaged in child labour and children of migrant workers.

For the last 5 years, his organisation has been engaged in working with the children of salt pan workers in Gujarat. As Gujarat produces 70% of the salt produced in the country, there are large number of such workers. Salt panning is a 700-year old tradition in Gujarat. The work involves moving from one area to another digging trenches for storing salt water, and harvesting salt on evaporation. The organisation first began education for these children through running balwadis for the 1-6 age group, 5 years ago. But as the people moved, so did the children, and work with them could not be continued. Another group for whom education was being provided were children of migrant labourers. They used to accompany their parents to the cities.

The group has been interacting with the Lokshala programme since 1994 in Delhi. There have been 3 workshops on education with the LOKSHALA group in Gujarat. this has helped to form a broader vision for work. After a sustained campaign for "gaon ke bacche gaon mein", it has now become possible to retain the children in the village under the care of the elders and the youth groups to continue their education uninterrupted. this alternative has so far not attracted girls.

Gaon ke bache gaon mein : an alternative for education of children of migrant labourers.

At the salt pans, the alternative that has emerged is to have the "school' and the teacher move with the people from place to place. The teachers live in the make-shift huts along with the people. There is now a demand from the adults also for education.

A 'moving school' for children of salt-pan workers.

Our interactions with the government began with the campaign for education children engaged in child labour, which was a nation-wide process. A public hearing was held in Delhi in 1997. The Supreme Court had ordered every state government to identify child labour and organise their enrollment in schools. It was through the Labour Ministry that our intervention for education began. A Commission was set up to enumerate child labour. The members of the Education Department including DPEP are also part of the Commission. So far, the government has only managed to identify 1477 children in Gujarat

Our intervention at government-level for education began with the issue of child labour.

state. The policy on child labour is defective in many ways. A narrow list of hazardous occupations are the only areas legally not allowed to engage children. This left out large number of areas where children were still exploited. As representatives of the voluntary sector at the Commission, we were able to raise a large number of issues on education. Several decisions, such as waiving of birth certificates have now been put into effect. The survey of child labour conducted by the government is done mechanically. There is no follow-up with the education ministry to ensure admission. We thought of conducting surveys ourselves, but now we have decided to act as watch bodies for the survey.

The current political scene in Gujarat is conducive for state level advocacy for education. the breakaway group from BJP is in power. The Chief Minister, in his oath taking ceremony, called for a commitment for elementary education. The presence of a senior activist in his Ministry gives voluntary organisations a very big advantage. The party is newly formed, and they are also looking for a base. The voluntary movement seems to be a good base for them. We in turn, are in a position to influence policy. As members of the government body on child labour and education, we are careful to see that we do not bring about a dead lock with the government functionaries. We keep the spirit of dialogue open. It is slow work. We are also planning a series of public hearing campaigns in Gujarat which will be combined with a campaign for education.

Space for intervention in education is often available when a new political party comes to power.

b) **Prof. Anil Sadgopal,** said that Lokshala in itself can be visualised as a large scale advocacy effort for universalisation of elementary education which would lead to changes in government policies by demonstrating an alternative through the people's effort. There must be change in government policy. If this does not happen, then, it would be the failure of an effort like this. The impact of good work will become nullified. That is why work was envisaged in 100 development blocks. Vision alone does not constitute advocacy even though it is an important part. It also includes creating constructive pressure through good work. In Jahngirpuri, a dhakila utsav was conducted recognising this as a means of advocacy. People there have formed a common front. They have begun demanding that there must be provision for the education of the 50% children who are out of school; and only then will the work in education have the right direction. There have been discussions, opinion forming, and formation of pressure groups in several places. An effort to influence educational policy was made in the context of the 83rd Amendment. Many groups helped in the formulation of an alternate policy draft and a working linkage thus got established in very short period of time. The Parliamentary Standing Committee stood chastised. Lokshala also made efforts to help the advocacy process that has been initiated in Gujarat. In Gujarat also, many groups initially balked at the idea of intervening in the government school system. But between January and April, three 3-day workshops were held and an understanding emerged that there is necessity to influence the government.

Lokshala can be seen as a large-scale advocacy effort for UEE.

Advocacy in education takes on a new dimension with the entry of World Bank in primary education in the country.

Since 1985, there has been an understanding that government can be influenced through participation in the government programmes.

Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samithi (BGVS) concretised this understanding in the area of literacy. BGVS received several crores of rupees for this. BJVJ also considered this method as important advocacy. But there is an important difference between the two organisations in their view of advocacy. BGVS took forward the government's policy. They did not formulate their own agenda; but were informed by Kerala Sahitya Shastriya Parishad's vision. In the Lokshala programme, intervention is being attempted on the understanding that Lokshala is different from the government's programme, the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and that the government policy is erronous. Therefore we have to change the policy and we have to offer alternatives.

There are limits to the responsiveness of even UN agencies in changing their perceptions on elementary education.

There are also several questions that crop up regarding people's participation. Whose participation are we talking about? What is the basis of this need for people's participation?
We have to strengthen the principles of our advocacy. It is not sufficient to try to influence Parliamentary Standing Committees alone. This has to become the agenda of lakhs of people.

In the last few years, there has been a sizable increase in international agencies operating through the government in the area of education. In the context of globalisation, this takes on a new dimension.

More than ever before, there is need to train ourselves for advocacy in order to be able to intervene effectively in education. Pressure has to be created to by large numbers of people for the system to respond. With World Bank entering the educational arena, the stakes and players have changed. High money power has marginalised even the UN Agencies in India, thereby creating a condition that UN bodies like UNDP/UNICEF etc. have formed a conglomerate called UNSCOPE for educational and other programmes, as opposed to DPEP programme funded by World Bank. In an attempt to shore up opinion against the World Bank, we attempted to work in partnership with UNSCOPE. But such attempts are riddled with difficulties. We have experienced during this process, that, even UN agencies are not above distorting. For example, the UNSCOPE document acknowledges that their effort has been inspired by the Lokshala process. But the UNSCOPE document refers to opening of several thousand Lokshalas, which is a direct contradiction of the concept; since Lokshala refers to empowering the government school system. Despite being a member of their steering committee, and despite the support of other members, we have not been able to bring about a change in their way of thinking in some aspects. We need to discuss strategies for advocacy. It is a difficult task, with many implications.

This is need for a common understanding for successful advocacy.

Pressure generated at local, block, district and state levels play an important role in making advocacy effort effective.

Another level of advocacy is through media and through intervention at the Centre and State level Institutions leading to changes in perceptions in the government. All this requires systematic effort, and study of developments and thinking at government level.

(c) **Prof. K. K. Sharma , Nagaland,** shared his experiences in the north-east of advocating the Lokshala concept with the media, through seminars, print media, radio and television. A good base has been

created in these sectors. we have also arrived at the understanding that this process should be further forwarded throu gh working with local traditional voluntary groups.

(d) **Dr. Rajendra Kumbhar, Karad,** said that the vision of Lokshala is to empower and improve the school system through people's participation. We have to form a holistic vision of elementary education. The situation is such that for large numbers of people, even after 50 years of independence, we will only be able to provide education upto elementary level. We must therefore provide all those knowledge and skills that people require for a holistic life in the elementary stage itself. The methods and means of organisation, co-operation, struggle, must be taught. Children will learn to repose trust in these methods. Reflection, analysis, nad raising of questions must form part of the Lokshala process. The government relies only on the knowledge of the teacher in education. We have to change the assumption that people do not have any knowledge. We have to establish the value for the common people's work and labour; that the worker, the artisan, the cobbler, the carpenter have skills and they is also a teacher. Their role as teachers must be recognised and established in the system. The various skills in society must become part of elementary education. The work undertaken for living must be taught formally through education. How society functions and its linkages must also be taught. The relationships of the market from the village level to the community block, to the district must be traced in schools as part of education. We are advocating for all this.

(e) **Dr. S. S. Ray, West Bengal,** narrated the efforts of the West Bengal group in bringing about change in government policy with regard to public health. The sustained advocacy effort, coupled with people's action successfully prevented the use of incinerators for medical waste disposal. but there is a critical need for adopting a common strategy at different levels. For instance, while the BJVJ West Bengal group opposed the setting up of the incinerators, the BJVJ Panjab group supported this, and went so far as to assist their installations. Instead of spreading a successful intervention in favour of public health, we took contradictory positions. We therefore need to take common stands on various This is women's empowerment , health care and preventives.

During the discussion, Prof. S.P. Verma pointed out that though Advocacy has a major role, the pressure generated at local, block, district and state levels play a very important role in making the advocacy effort effective. For instance, during the Lokshala workshop in Patna, Prof. Sadgopal was invited to address the legislatures in Bihar on Lokshala vision. They felt the need to understand Lokshala because of the prominent grass root initiatives that they were visible to them in the region.

Dr. Janaki Rajan, in her intervention, gave an example of advocacy when the BJVJ could respond to 83rd Amendment of the Constitution which will make elementary education a Fundamental Right. Three streams of the Lokshala group were involved in this. The academic group in Delhi held discussions, and a Memorandum of Concern was

Multi-level attempts to address the issue of 83rd Amendment of the Constitution is a good beginning for collective action

drafted and sent to the Ministry. Simultaneously, the Sanjha Manch for Lokshala, a common platform of local voluntary groups, government and academic agencies working in the Jahangirpuri mat and prepared a common statement on the Bill which was also sent to the Ministry. Members of the academic team, also went to Jaipur, Rajasthan, and facilitated the preparation of an alternative draft of the Bill by a group of 40 voluntary organisations. There are distinctive features in all these documents. The areas of concern expressed by Jahangirpuri, centred round mother tongue, quality of education, which is a perspective that can only emerge from an area where people speaking 14 different languages live together, and where the government school is in very bad shape. Similar distinctive features can be found in the other two groups. The pressure was thus exerted from groups at different levels of a common statement. We also came to know that independently, the Gujarat group has also responded in a similar manner. We now have to evolve a collective plan of action to continue and broad base this effort.

We also have to learn how to engage in successful advocacy. This group can consider taking up 83rd Amendment as an issue for nation-wide advocacy, and through this process learn the strategies and methods of advocacy.

Advocacy needs to be attempted as a team.

Referring to the international agencies working on school education, she said that the lessons to be learnt from this are that advocacy should be attempted as a team and not individually. Mistakes are costly; and it is not possible for one person to be alert on all issues, or to be well-informed on all issues. The team should be representative of women, dalit, minority interests; and these persons must continuously update themselves on developments. If advocacy efforts succeed, they can result in lasting impact on a wide scale; conversely we lose a lot when these efforts fail. It is not merely the failure of the effort of one person.

We should ask the government to support these activities. We should also attempt to increase the allocation for elementary education in the IX Plan.

Shri. Shyam Bhore said that there is always the danger of co-option by funding agencies. Despite that, what strategies can we evolve? We must involve gram panchayats in this effort. We must demand money from the government. This is also a measure of the pressure we are able to create on the government for education and will force the involvement of the government. This is also a matter of advocacy.

Prof. Sadgopal outlined possible collective efforts under the Lokshala Programme:

- 83 Amendment as a major issue.
- Increase allocation foe elementary education in IX Plan.
- examine the role of artesans and the Karigar Panchayat in Lokshala process.
- Occasional paper series on Lokshala.

Possible collective efforts on :

- 83rd Amendment.
- IX Plan Allocation.
- Role of artesans.
- Occassional paper series.

- Status report on education on the 50th year of independence.
- Gender and women empowerment in LOKSHALA.
- Inter-sectoral linkages of LOKSHALA process and human rights campaign, drug action campaign, technology campaign.
- Advocacy for alternative concepts of Non formal Education such as for salt pan workers' children migrant labour.
- Narmada Bachao Andolan's Jeevan Shala. A three member team of Kishore Bharati associates, Shri. Ramesh Dave, Shri. Shyam bhore, Shri. Devender to visit and explore possibilities of support from Lokshala.

- Status Report on education.
- Gender and Women Empowerment.
- Inter-sectoral linkages for Lokshala.
- Alternative concepts of NFE.
- Linkage with Narmada Bachao Andolan's Jeevan Shala.

The challenges before us are:

a) To dispel the notion that Lokshala is a process merely to take forward the government agenda.

b) What will be the funding sources for National, state and Block level work?

c) Should all energies be focussed on Lokshala or should we also engage in related developmental activities?

25.10.1997

SESSION SIX

21:00-24:00 Hrs.

OBJECTIVE: Organisation Structure: BJVJ and Lokshala

PRESIDIUM: Prof. Anil Sadgopal
Prof. S.P.Verma
Prof. Rajendra Kumbhar

The meeting began with the circulation of the BJVJ Constitution, that has emerged out of year long consultations with the national, state and district groups. BJVJ has since been registered under the Society's Act.

BJVJ Constitiution and the core of the Organisation Structure is the Basic Unit of 20 persons, of which 1/3rd are women.

Prof. Sadgopal drew attention to some of the salient features of the Constitution, such as the Basic Unit, which can be formed by 20 persons of which a third of them must be women. All other bodies, the district, state and national bodies will be built up by representatives from the Basic units, thus making BJVJ organisation truely reflect its grass root character.

This was followed by three presentations of the BJVJ Organisational Structure.

Prof. K.K. Sharma, Nagaland, presented the organisation structure that he has visualised for the North-East Region which will draw upon members from teacher education institutes, its students, teachers, and the state and district units of BJVJ.

Common understanding of Inter-organisational linkages leading to Lokshala process needs to be arrived at .

Prof. S.P.Verma presented a flow chart of the BJVJ organisation. There was heated exchange following these presentations. Some participants wanted to know what was the place of Lokshala in the BJVJ organisation set up. It was being visually presented as a separate structure. Questions were raised regarding the place of organisations such as Maulana Azad Centre for Elementary and Social Education in the Lokshala Programme. To this came the response that the BJVJ network has provision for fraternal organisations collaborating in its programmes. These organisations are free to collaborate. They can also decide not to do so. There were strong objections to these remarks. It wa pointed out that some organisations have been involved in a systematic way since inception with the Lokshala Programme, and to now portray this involvement as an involvement with BJVJ on a take it or leave it basis was objectionable.

The BJVJ organisation members were asked to make the position of Lokshala in BJVJ and MACESE's role in Lokshala clear. Prof. Anil Sadgopal responded by chalking out a scheme of development of Lokshala on the black board. This did not satisfy some members who said that the scheme merely shows the possible development of BJVJ units through Lokshala and does not make other

elationships clear. The discussion was acrimonious. One member ppealed that the idea was more important than organisations and his must be kept in mind during the discussions. The session ended vithout definite agreement on the issues raised.

26.10.1997

SESSION SEVEN

10:00-14:00 Hrs.

OBJECTIVE: Work Plans of UGC Teacher Fellows for Lokshala Programme and of various Field efforts.

a) Shri. Sukhdev Patel, continued the thread of his earlier presentation and detailed out the work being undertaken by his organisation Ganatar. The attempt to retain children of migrant labourers in the village to continue their education has had positive response. One of the houses of the migrant labourer will serve as the hostel for the children. Teachers have helped to collect grain to provide for their food. Women's and youth groups of the village have extended support. 21 children stayed back, they were enrolled in school attended school and gave examinations. They have since been promoted to the next class. We have not been successful in getting the girls to stay back. This year the programme is being extended to 8 villages. Once this programme proves successful, then we will show the government an alternate way of reaching out to children of migrant labourers.

Education of children of migrant-labourers : an alternative.

For the children in the Kutch area where people are engaged in migrant labour, a mobile school has been organised with people's help. This year, the programme is being extended to 10 areas. The teachers stay in the school.

Creative alternatives : Mobile Schools.

During the discussion, the novel approach to educating children of migrant labourers was seen as a viable alternative. But today this is not sufficient to influence policy. People in the village will continue the running of the schools. There is great difficulty in acquiring transfer certificates for children wanting to go with their parents. In the salt pan area, the effort is to get teachers from among those who work in the salt pan. There has not been any attempt so far to change the curriculum of the government. Children, however, "make" their own curriculum from the given framework.

b) Shri. Ahan, expressed his desire to initiate the Lokshala process among the traditional organisations working for the education of the youth in Nagaland, known as Morung. He expects to involve these organisations and also collaborate with the Morung Social Institute. He said that there is great scope for re-vitalising the traditional social organisations such as Morung and this could be done in around 250 villages in Nagaland. There are also many missionary schools run by churches; and these could also be involved in these processes.
As a beginning, he proposes to conduct orientation workshops for these groups under the guidance of Prof. K. K. Sharma and Ms. Zhatsu Humstoe of Nagaland. He stated that he would also like to initiate work at Akhrul district of Manipur.

Traditional groups engaged in education such as *monung* need to be involved in the Lokshala process.

c) Prof. K. K. Sharma, UGC Teacher Fellow, North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong presented his work plan. He stated that he proposes to facilitate the Lokshala process being initiated in the

North-Eastern Regional initiative for Lokshala and related developemntal action.

north-eastern region with special emphasis on introducing the cultural character of the north-east to Lokshala work.

His work plan for this year includes:

- Facilitating conduct of orientation programmes for Lokshala in the various field laboratories of the north-east region.
- Organise awareness and orientation seminars on Human Rights, Social Justice and Social Values in collaboration with the Universities in the region, for teacher-educators, teachers, students and activists.
- A 10-day jatha on health and nature cure which will begin in Nagaland and move on to Manipur.
- An orientation workshop on mathematics and science for those involved in the Lokshala processes in the region.
- Orientation workshops on Lokshala for those to be associated with the process.
- Workshop on Morung, and documentation of the traditional social group's role in education.
- Workshop for documenting traditional history of the region.
- Workshop on Local History and how to concretise it.
- Initiate appropriate technology campaign.

d) **Shri. Debashish Dutta, member, Dhubri Science Club, Lokshala Field Laboratory, Dhubri, Assam,** detailed the work plan for Dhubri as follows:

- Work in Debitola block will consist of the first three months being devoted to holding dialogues with people and trying to understand what people wish to do. A work plan will then be prepared on the basis of this interactions. Study groups will be formed at the panchayat levels and at the block level. These activities will also lead to a local base for Lokshala Programme.
- This will be followed by a workshop on Lokshala process at Dhubri for activists of Dhubri Science Club, and members from the panchayat study groups, teachers, and other interested groups.
- Workshops will also be held at panchayat level.
- Village level dialogue with artesans and discussion with people at village level on schools and education.
- The history of schools in the block will be studied and documented.

It is expected that these processes will lead to the formation of a common platform for Lokshala.

e) **Dr. S. S. Ray: UGC Teacher Fellow, West Bengal,** will engage in initiating the Drug Action Campaign as a related developmental activity to the Lokshala process. A relatively new area of social intervention, awareness on this issue began in the 1980s but was not sustained. The issue has re-emerged with the new economic policy. In India, 71,000 drugs are available. WHO has made 200-250 drugs available. There are plenty of spurious drugs available in the market, and awareness of these needs to be raised.

The work plan envisaged is follows:

- Establish dialogue with the drug manufactureres.
- Preparation of software for communication and awareness raising.
- A workshop organised on the issue.
- Preparation of health manual for schools.
- Intervention for change in drug policy.
- Creating pressure for the formulation of an alternate drug policy.
- Efforts towards making this alternative policy the national policy.

f) **Dr. Rajender Khumbar, Director, M. N. Roy Institute for Adult Education and Research, UGC Teacher Fellow, Lokshala process, Sattara District, Maharashtra,** presented the work of the M. N. Roy Institute for Non-Formal Education and Research, Karad.

The perspectives informing the work of the institute include education of the educators to bring about, through an integrated approach to social development, sustainable development for the weaker sections. This will be carried out by evolving a cyclic process for production, distribution and consumption and formation of networked multi-sectoral group enterprises.

The overall thrust is organisation of local groups and developing in them the sense of collective "we" feeling leading to accessing, controlling resources and educating them about the market.

The work areas include:

- Low-Cost housing and sanitation.
- Training and production centres.
- Research, development, demonstration and training.
- Non-Formal education fir artesans, women, teachers and children.
- Environmental Conservation and development.
- Agricultual research and organisation of farmer-scientists.
- Health and Hygiene education for rural society.
- Formation of think tanks in economics, sociology and politics.

The interventions in education carried out so far have been:

- Environmental education for 1000 teachers from 200 primary schoools in Pune District.
- Vigyan month for promotion of scientific temper at Maval involving 150 Resource Persons and 500 students.
- Prepared 1000 posters about science, environment, cultural and historical heritage of India.
- Sanskar Varg for personality development for children of the age group 8-15 years.
- A school at Valmiki Pathar.

In all, more than 1000 programmes have been organised in 600 villages for removal of blind belief, catalysing gram and mahila sabhas in 75 villages for low constructions of latrines; swaraj niyojan andolan for improvement of weaker sections in 30 villages in 30 villages of Patan Tehsil. The Holi Bachao Andolan in 205 villages have saved 10,000 tonnes of fuel wood. A Campaign to decrease the use of thermocol and plastic and chaeck misuse of paper.

Training has been imparted for masonry work to 72 unemployed youth and 30 women; Ferrocrit technology to 30 women and 25 men for building water tank, sanitary complexes, houses etc., nursery training for 45 women and 15 men; for food-processing to 20 women and management training for new small scale industries.

Research activities have centred around earth quake resistant housing, design analysis for ferrorete construction, processing and mechanism of white clay, an ancient building material, multi-purpose carpenter's machine, improved solar heater and boiler, non-ferrous reinforcemtns in RCC Structures, bamboocrete technology for rural housing, vermicomposting, improved rampi-type cement and block machine, low-cost sanitation, low-cost water harvating and dam structures, improved food processing techniques and 50 new products.

For initiating the Lokshala Programme, a concept known as NBMS has been developed. Around a nodal town, 4-5 small villages, 6-8 villages of medium size, the villages that have a local market and big villages close to the town will form the geographic unit for intervention.

First a resource group will be identified and oriented to develop a resource centre that includes a lab., reserch, development and training and space for strage of local produce. Around this, wasteland dvelopment, milk, animal husbandry and nurseries will be developed in 6-8 areas. Artesan groups, 6-8 in number, will also be formed who will conduct technical schools, processing units. These groups will form the core of the community intervention for school transformation.

Workshops and public seminars will also be conducted to reach out to 458 primary schools, and 8 municipal schools with the help of 9 artesan groups, 40 women groups, 2 academic groups, 1 resource group, 4 Basin parishads and 4 Lokshala Jatha Groups formed.

Dr. Anita Ghai, Department of Psychology, Jesus and Mary College, Delhi and UGC Teacher Fellow, presented a proposal for the National Academic Resource Group for Lokshala and related developmental activities. This group will comprise of persons from various regions of the country, with the goal of supporting the field-level activities, raising issues at the national level, and reaching out to people who believe in social transformation.

26.10.1997

15:00-17:00 Hrs.

VALEDICTORY SESSION:

As the working session drew to a close, a brief interaction was held between the participants of the worksho and several dignitaries including the Vice-Chancellor, Bhratiya Vidyapeeth, and several others. The speakers expressed their happiness on seeing the united effort to deliberate seriously upon the complex issues involved in elementary education, and the attempts being mede to forge a common understanding. The gropu was urged to sustain the work that has been initiated. The session ended with a vote of thanks to the participants who had come from 12 diferent states for this workshop at Karad.

List of Annexures:

List if Participants, Schedule and list of material circulated at the workshop.

1. List of Participants.
2. Schedule of Workshop.
3. Excerpt from National Policy on Education, 1986, and its modification.
4. The Constitution (Eighty Third Amendment Bill, 1997, tabled at Rajya Sabha.
5. Memorandum of Concern to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development, presented on October 4, 1997.
6. An Alternate Bill on the Eighty-Third Amendment, presented to MHRD by Lok Vyapikaran Sanjha Manch, Rajasthan.
7. Proposal for constituting a National Academic Resource Group for Lokshala: Draft Paper presented by Dr. Anita Ghai, UGC-Teacher Fellow, Lokshala Programme.
8. Quest for Local History: People's engagement with themselves, theme paper presented by Dr. Tripta Wahi, UGC-Teacher Fellow, Lokshala Programme.
9. Marginalisation and Disability: A Perspective, presented by Dr. Anita Ghai, UGC Teacher-Fellow, Lokshala.
10. *Jhadtha ki ore le jaathi hai Shiksha,* Raghvendra Prapan, Jan Satta, Oct.14,1997.
11. Extracts from the proceedings of the Silver Jubilee Seminar held by Lady Irwin College, Delhi, 1996.
12. Inaugural Address, NCTE Seminar on 'Futuristic Teacher education in Early Childhood Education, Lady Irwin College, Delhi, 1996.
13. *Hoshanagbad Vigyan,* Science Today, December, 1997.
14. M.N. Roy Institute of Non-Formal Education and Research, a Perspective, 1997.

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON LOKSHALA PROGRAMME
October 22-26, 1997, KARAD, Maharashtra

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

S.No.	Name	University/College/ Organisation	State	Role in Lokshala Process
1.	Dr. Anita Ghai	Department of Psychology, Jesus and Mary College	Delhi	UGC-Teacher Fellow, Member, NARG
2.	Prof. K. K. Sharma	Department of Education North-Eastern Hill University	Shillong, Meghalaya	UGC-Teacher Fellow, Member, NARG
3.	Prof. R. R. Kumbhar	Department of Chemistry Sadguru Gadage Maharaj College	Karad, Maharashtra	UGC-Teacher Fellow, Member, NARG
4.	Prof. S. P. Verma	Science College, Patna University	Patna, Bihar	UGC-Teacher Fellow, Member, NARG
5.	Dr. Sriram Parihar	Sri Neelkantheshwar Govt. Autonomous PG College	Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh	UGC-Teacher Fellow, Member, NARG
6.	Dr. S. S. Ray	Sri Jayadev College of Education and Technology	Bhubaneswar, Orissa	UGC-Teacher Fellow, Member, NARG
7.	Dr. Tripta Wahi	Department of History, Hindu College	Delhi	UGC-Teacher Fellow, Member, NARG
8.	Dr. Maibam Shamungou Singh	Kha-Manipur College	Kakching, Manipur	UGC-Teacher Fellow, Member, NARG
9.	Ms. Zhatsu Humstoe	Patkai Christian College	Chumukedima, Nagaland	UGC-Teacher Fellow, Member, NARG
10.	Shri Ramesh Dave	Retd. Professor, SCERT	Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh	UGC-Teacher Fellow, Member, NARG
11.	Shri Rohtash Raghuvanshi	VICAS	Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh	Organising Secretary, Member, NARG
12.	Shri Babu Bhai	K. P. College of Commerce	Surat, Gujarat	State Organising Secretary, BJVJ
13.	Shri Sukhdev Patel	GANATAR	Ahmedabad, Gujarat	Member, NARG
14.	Shri Satyen Chaturvedi	ECAT	Nagaur, Rajasthan	Member, NARG
15.	Shri Debashish Dutta	Dhubri Science Club	Dhubri, Assam	Member, Lokshala Advanced Field Laboratory, Debitola Block Dhubri District, Assam, Member, NARG

16.	Shri Shyam Bohare	Academy of Administration	Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh	Member, NARG
17.	Dr. P. Mohan Raju	Department of Education University of Delhi	Delhi	Member, Academic support team, MACESE, University of Delhi
18.	Dr. Janaki Rajan	MACESE, Department of Education University of Delhi	Delhi	Member, Academic support team, MACESE, Member, NARG, Member of Jahangirpuri School Project, Lokshala Advanced Field Laboratory, Delhi
19.	Ms. Chhaya	Lokshala Womens Empowerment Component, Jahangirpuri School Project	Delhi	Member, Jahangirpuri School Project, Lokshala Advanced Field Laboratory, Delhi, Member, NARG
20.	Prof. Anil Sadgopal	BJVJ, MACESE, Department of Education, University of Delhi	Delhi	National Convenor, BJVJ, Co-ordinator, MACESE, Member, NARG
21.	Shri Prabhakar Pursadkar	Centre for Science for Villages	Wardha, Maharashtra	District Organising Committee, BJVJ
22.	Ms. Alka Narang	UNDP	Delhi	Observer
23.	Shri Sudhir Kumbhar	M. N. Roy Institute for Non-Formal Education & Research	Karad, Maharashtra	Activist, Satara
24.	Shri T. S. Patil	Savitribai Phule Mahila Vidyalaya	Satara, Maharashtra	Activist, Satara
25.	Ms. Khurshid Attar	Savitribai Phule Mahila Vidyalaya	Satara, Maharashtra	Activist, Satara
26.	Shri Sourabh N. Deshmukh	M. N. Roy Institute for Non-Formal Education and Research & Development of Nomadic & Denotified Tribes	Satara, Maharashtra	Activist, Satara
27	Shri Vijay Jaysing Mane	M. N. Roy Institute for Non-Formal Education and Research	Karad, Maharashtra	Activist, Satara
28.	Shri Fhaiyyaj Mubarak Mulla	M. N. Roy Institute for Non-Formal Education and Research	Karad, Maharashtra	Activist, Banwadi, Satara
29.	Shri Yangahan	Mt. Hermon School	Kohima, Nagaland	Student
30.	Mohammad Shahid Ali	MACESE, Department of Education, University of Delhi	Delhi	Computer-Operator

Ann

BHARATI VIDYAPEETH,S
YASHWANTRAO MOHITE
INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, KARAD
Malkapur-Karad 415110

National Workshop On
Universalisation Of Elementary Education

Programme/schedule of the Inaugural Function

22nd. Oct. 1997

WelCome to Guest ——> Shri. Appasaheb Panwal
Co-Ordinator
Bharati vidyapeeth
Educational complex,
Karad.

WelCome Speech ——> Mr. Sachin vernekar
Director
of the institute, Karad

About The Workshop —> Prof. Rajendra Kumbhar
M.N. Roy Institute, Karad

Introduction to the
Chief Guest —> Mr. Jignesh Waghela.
Hon,ble Dr. Anil Sadgopal. M.B.A.II

Inauguration By Lighting The Lamp And
Inaugral Address Of the Chief Guest

Introduction to the
Chairperson —> Miss. Shilpa Abraham
Mr. ~~B.K. Pasi~~ S.P. Sharma Ve M.B.A.II

Dr. Jankirajan
—— Chairperson,s address ——

Vote Of Thanks ——> By Shri. Mohan Kulkari
President, Chaupher

Compuring ——> Prof. Adv. S.H. Mohite

Prof. K.M. Alaskar
Prof. Adv. S.H. Mohite
Prof. V.V. Sane
Shri. Anand Paranjape
Organising Committee.

LOKSHALA PROGRAM

FOR

UNIVERSALISATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

(Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha)

23 - 10 - 97

SESSION : 4.

OBJECTIVE: Understanding LOKSHALA

Presidium : Dr. Tripta Wahi
Prof. Shyam Bohre
Ms Zhatsu Hhumtso

	Topic	Speakers	Time in min.
1.	Emergence and significance of LOKSHALA in BJVJ	Prof. Anil Sadgopal	15
2.	What is LOKSHALA	Dr. Janaki Rajan	20
3.	Evolution of LOKSHALA concept in the context of educational interventions in the country. Varying perceptions.	a. Dr. Satyen Chaturvedi	5
		b. Mr. Ramesh Dave	5
		c. Ms. Chayya	5
	Discussion		25

o---Tea Break---o

SESSION : 5.

OBJECTIVE : Exposition to work reports & plans

	Topic	Speakers	Time in min.
1.	Presentation of common report on LOKSHALA	Prof. Anil Sadgopal	30
	Additional inputs, if any, by specific LOKSHALA centers		05
	Discussion		10
2.	Presentation of work plan by Teacher-Fellows (BJVJ)	a. Dr. Shri Ram Parihar	20+10*
		b. Mrs. Zhatsu Humtso	20+10*

* Discussion

(Rapporteurs : a. Dr. Shri Ram Parihar
b. Shri. Sudhir Kumbhar
c.)

o-----LUNCH BREAK------o

SESSION : 6

OBJECTIVE : Exposition to work plans

Presidium : Dr. Janaki Rajan
Prof. Shyam Bohre
Mrs. Zhatsu Hhumtso

	Topic	Speakers	Time in min.
1.	Presentation of work plan by Teacher-Fellows (BJVJ)	a. Dr. Shammongou Singh	20+10*
		b. Dr. Anita Ghai	20+10*
		c. Dr. Tripta Wahi	20+10*
		d. Prof. S. P. Verma	20+10*
		e. Debashish Dutta	20+10*

* Discussion

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'LOKSHALA'

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON ELEMENTRY EDUCATION

PROGRAMME DETIALS

DS ON 24th OCT 1997

TIME	PROGRAMMES
07.30 AM.	Depature from Hotel to Satara.
09.00 AM. To 10.00 AM.	Visti to 'Women Masonon Work'
10.00 AM. To 11.00 AM.	Presentation of 'Work & Discussion'.
11.00 AM. To 12.30 PM.	Satara to Karad (Banawadi).
12.30 PM. To 01.30 PM.	Visit to "Earthquake Resistant House" at Banwadi.
01.30 PM. To 2.30 PM.	Lunch.
02.30 PM. To 04.30 PM.	Visit to Walmiki Phatar.(Tal. Patan)
04.30 PM. To 05.30 PM.	Programme at School site (Laying of stone.).
05.30 PM. To 06.30 PM.	Discussion with Mahila Groups at Udhawane.
06.30 PM. To 07.30 PM.	Dinner.
07.30 PM. To 09.00 PM.	Back to Karad.

M. N. ROY INSTITUTE FOR NONFORMAL EDUCATION &RESEARCH,KARAD

LOKSHALA PROGRAM

FOR

UNIVERSALISATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

(Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha)

25 - 10 - 97

SESSION : 9.

OBJECTIVE: To understand the need, process & implimenting women empowerment

Presidium : Prof. K. K. Sharma
Dr.. Ramesh Dave
Ms. Chhaya

Topic	Speakers	Time in min.
1. Women empowerment in LOKSHALA programs	a. Dr. Anil Sadgopal	5
	b. Dr. Janaki Rajan	10
	c. Prof. Rajendra Kumbhar	10
	d. Ms. Chhaya	15
	d. Dr. Razia Patel	10
	e. Ms. Khurshid Attar	10
Discussion		30

o---Tea Break---o

SESSION : 10.

Presidium : Prof. K. K. Sharma
Dr. Ramesh Dave
Ms. Chhaya

OBJECTIVE: To understand need & procces of advocacy

Topic	Speakers	Time in min
1. Advocacy in LOKSHALA programs	a. Dr. Sukhadev Patel	20
	b. Prof. Anil Sadgopal	10
	c. Prof. K. K. Sharma	20
	d. Prof. Rajendra Kumbhar	10
	e. Dr. S. S. Ray.	5
Discussion		30

Rapporteurs: Dr. Ramesh Dave.
Dr. R. Raghuvanshi.
Shri. Sudhir Kumbhar

o-----LUNCH BREAK------o

SESSION : 11

OBJECTIVE: Understanding Organisational Structure and Process in LOKSHALA for Participation and Action

Presidium : Prof Anil Sadgopal
Prof Rajendra kumbhar
Mrs. Zhatsu

Topic	Speakers	Time in min.
1. Organisational structure and process in LOKSHALA	a] Prof. S.P. Verma	20
	b] Prof.K.K.Sharma	15
	c] Dr. R. Raghuvanshi	15
		30

DISSCUTION

Rapporteurs : 1) Shri Satyen Chaturvedi
2) Dr. S. S. Ray
3) Shri Sudhir Kumbhar

0 ---------- TEA BREAK ---------- 0

SESSION 12
OBJECTIVE :

Presidium : a] Prof. Rajandr kumbhar.
b] Dr. Janki Rajan.
c] Snri Satyen Chaturvedi.

	Topic	Speakers	Time in min.
1.	Draft Proposal On National Academic Resourse Ggoup For Consideration.	Dr. Anita Ghai	10
	Discussion		20
2.	Presentation of Work Plan by Teacher-Fellows	a. Prof. K. K. Sharma	10 + 10*
		b. Mr. Ahan	10 + 10*
		c. Prof. Dhruv Chakravarti To be presented by Dabasish Datta.	10 + 10*
		d. Prof. S. S. Ray.	10 + 10*
		E. Dr. Sukhudave Patel.@	
3.	Construction of Calender of LOKSHALA events	*discussion	10
4.	Presentation of common report		20
	inputs, if any, from specific LOKSHALA centers	Prof. Anil Sadgopal	5
	Discussion		10

@ Non techer - fellow

Rapporters : 1. Prof. S. P. Verma.
2. Prof. Shriram Parihar.
3. Shri. Sudhir Kumbhar.

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LOKSHALA PROGRAM

FOR

UNIVERSALISATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

(Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha)

26 - 10 - 97

SESSION : 13.

OBJECTIVE: i. To become aware of possible funding sources vis-à-vis policy.
ii. To understand & develop the skills of designing & writing a project proposal.
iii. To understand Alternate vision as a catalyst for change.

Presidium : Dr. S. S. Ray
Dr. Anita Ghai
Prof. Rajendra Kumbhar

	Topic	Speakers	Time in min.
1.	Funding policy and funding sources.	Prof. Anil Sadgopal	10
		Dr. Janaki Rajan	10
	Discussion		10
2.	Project proposal writing and its design, norms for budget and project budgeting.	Prof. Rajendra Kumbhar	30
		Prof. Anil Sadgopal	10
	Discussion		15
3.	An Alternate vision - In approach to change	Prof. Rajendra Kumbhar	10
	Discussion		10

Rapporteurs : 1. Dr. Tripta Wahi
2. Shri Satyen Chaturvedi
3. Shri Sudhir Kumbhar

LUNCH BREAK

Valedictory Function

Annexure 3

National Policy on Education - 1986

A RESOLVE

5.12 The New Education Policy will give the highest priority to solving the problem of children dropping out of school and will adopt an array of meticulously formulated strategies based on micro-planning, and applied at the grass-roots level all over the country, to ensure children's retention at school. This effort will be fully coordinated with the network of non-formal education. It shall be ensured that all children who attain the age of about 11 years by 1990 will have had five years of schooling, or its equivalent through the non-formal stream. Likewise, by 1995 all children will be provided free and compulsory education upto 14 years of age.

National Policy on Education - 1986

(WITH MODIFICATIONS UNDERTAKEN IN 1992)

A RESOLVE

5.12 The New Education Policy will give the highest priority to solving the problem of children dropping out of school and will adopt an array of meticulously formulated strategies based on micro-planning, and applied at the grass-roots level all over the country, to ensure children's retention at school. This effort will be fully coordinated with the network of non-formal education. It shall be ensured that free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality is provided to all children upto 14 years of age before we enter the twenty-firest century. A national mission will be launched for the achievement of this goal.