

*International Seminar*

on

# Universalisation of Secondary Education



## REPORT



**Council for Social Development**

**(14-15 July, 2018)**

Venue: Conference Room – II, India International Centre (Main), New Delhi

## **Acknowledgements**

The Seminar is partly financed by the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration under the Scheme of Grants-in-Aid for Seminars on Educational Policy and other issues.

The contribution of the India International Centre for the conduct of the Seminar is also gratefully acknowledged.

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## Introduction

During the post-Independence period, while primary education and, to some extent, higher education have received some priority in India, relatively secondary education has been subject to severe neglect. It was assumed that secondary education has no particular role in the development in developing the poor agrarian country.

Only recently, it was realised that secondary education plays a crucial role in development of the society – in raising economic growth, improving income distribution, reducing poverty, and improving human development. While primary education imparts the three basic Rs, rarely does it provide skills necessary for employment – self-employment or otherwise, ensure some wages and economic livelihood. Moreover, most of the literacy and primary education programmes are also found to be not imparting literacy that is sustainable, to ensure that children do not relapse into illiteracy. Secondly, primary and even elementary education rarely serves as a terminal level of education. Thirdly, even if primary education imparts some valuable attributes in terms of attitudes and skills, and is able to raise people from below the poverty line to above the poverty line, it is possible that this could be *just above* the poverty line, but not much above; and, as such, the danger of their relapsing below the poverty line at any time could be high; which the skills and attributes acquired at primary level may not be able to prevent. On the other hand, it is secondary education that consolidates the gains received from primary education as it provides skills that could be useful in the labour market; it is secondary and higher education that can keep people above the poverty line without the danger of falling back into poverty trap -- educational poverty or income poverty; it is secondary (and higher education) that helps in innovating technology and in sustaining growth;; and, in fact, it is secondary and education that can ensure a higher quality of life, by increasing the social, occupational and economic levels of the households.

Today, there are 62 million students in secondary (including senior secondary) education in the country. The gross enrolment ratio at lower secondary level was 78.5 per cent and at the senior secondary level it was 54.2 per cent in 2016-17. These gross figures underline how far we are from universal secondary education. A more worrisome aspect is the high rate of dropout in secondary education, with 35 per cent of the students enrolled in grade IX dropping out before completing grade X and another 38 per cent before completing grade XII. The quality of secondary education, reflected in poor employability of secondary school graduates and/ or their unsuitability for admission in higher education, is a matter of serious concern. Secondary education is also associated with a high degree of inequalities – regional, and inter-state, between different social groups and economic classes. In short, secondary education is associated with the elusive triangle of low levels of quantitative expansion, poor quality and a high degree of inequalities.

An important feature of secondary education in India is the existence of a high proportion of private schools – government supported private institutions and, more importantly, private unaided institutions as a proportion of all schools. The latter have increased in large numbers in the recent past. It is increasingly being noted that the latter are associated with several maladies and unfair practices.

Many of these aspects have not received much attention of educational planners and policy makers for a long time. Now, with the rapid progress in universal elementary education, partly attributed to the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, mid-day meals and other interventions made at national and state levels, naturally the attention of the state as well as the society at large shifts to secondary education. On the lines of SSA, the Government of India has also launched *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan* (RMSA), with the objective of universalising secondary education. The Government of India has also initiated, among others, special programmes such as *Shala Siddhi* and School Leadership to improve quality of education and leadership at the school level. Recognising the linkages between elementary and secondary education, the Central Advisory Board of Education has also recommended integration of SSA and RMSA. Accordingly, very recently the government has launched the *Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan*. These initiatives are also reflective of the realisation of the state that for the development of the modern nation, universal, strong, equitable and quality secondary education is essential.

In this overall background, the Council for Social Development had proposed to organise a seminar on the theme of “Universal Secondary Education” to discuss some of the critical policy issues and practical problems in the development of secondary education. Some of the issues meant for discussion in the seminar included:

- Importance of Universal Secondary Education in Development
- Growth and Inequalities in Secondary Education
- Quality of Secondary Education
- Private Schools
- Funding Secondary Education
- Transition to Higher Education and/or to work
- Extension of RTE to Secondary Education, Integration of SSA and RMSA and the implications
- Importance of Vocational and Technical Skills in Secondary Education

Nearly 50 scholars from various parts of India and Bangladesh met for two days at the India International Centre for the Seminar. In addition to scholars from Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka, Bangladesh, and Council for Social Development, scholars from several institutions in Delhi and other States, including National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, University of Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jamia Millia Islamia, Ambedkar University, National Council of Educational Research and Training, Indira Gandhi

National Open University, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, Institute of Applied Manpower Research, Gautam Buddha University (Greater Noida), M S University (Vadodara), Centre for Social Sciences (Kolkata), Centre for Economic and Social Studies (Hyderabad), Manoramimum Sundarnar University (Tiruvanveli), Indian School of Business (Hyderabad), NGOs working in education such as Pratham Education Foundation, CODR, Young Lives, and Pratichi Trust (Kolkata), some secondary schools and many more, participated in the seminar and discussed and deliberated extensively on several important research and policy issues on secondary education. The list of participants is given in Annexure X.(correct it)

A total of 22 papers were presented at the Seminar, covering extensively and intensively some of the important issues relating to secondary education, elementary and total school education, expansion of school education in terms of infrastructure, teachers, increase in gross enrolment ratio, regional inequalities in the education system, inequalities in participation by social and economic classes and gender, issues of quality of education, particularly related to learning levels, standards of education, quality of management at school level, governance and the need for good leadership programmes etc. Some papers analysed, in detail, the issues relating to public and private schools at the secondary level. Discussions also covered papers presented on skill development, vocational and technical education and training programmes and the need for the training to develop the right manpower or to make human capital more useful for the overall development of the country. During the Seminar, some good empirical evidence and even strong research evidence on some known and some less known facts in education development were presented and discussed in detail. In all, they provided good insight on some of the unknown aspects or even the hitherto ignored facts. Even some conflicting evidence on some of the issues was also discussed during the Seminar.

Details on session-wise presentation of papers are given in the following pages.

### **Inaugural Session**

The inaugural session was chaired by Professor Muchkund Dubey, President, Council for Social Development. Professor Jandhyala B.G. Tilak, Distinguished Professor, Council for Social Development and Convenor of the Seminar welcomed all the distinguished guests and delegates to the two-day National Seminar on “Universalisation of Secondary Education” being organised as a part of Durgabai Deshmukh Birthday celebrations. Prof. Tilak observed that education is a vast area. Moreover, as many policy makers, researchers and others realised, we have some good research, policy analysis, and policy initiatives in case of elementary education; for obvious reasons, there is also a good amount of interest and action in higher education. In a sense, we concentrated on elementary education, on one side, and higher education, on the other; but we neglected the middle component, the secondary education for a long period. It is only recently during the last couple of years,

secondary education is getting some attention. The growth in elementary education, partly attributable to the Right to Education (RTE), *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, and also to earlier programmes, like District Primary Education Project, has necessitated this shift in attention. While RTE was being formulated, and during later years, there was a huge demand from academia and civil society for RTE to cover the entire school education, including secondary education. There is also a big demographic pressure building up, which will turn into a big problem, unless it is turned into a dividend by providing quality secondary education and training to our youth. Thirdly, it is also being realised that the goals relating to good quality elementary education and strong higher education for economic growth cannot be met without strong and well spread quality secondary education. Slowly realising all this, the Government of India had, a few years ago, launched a mission for universalisation of secondary education, the *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan* (RMSA) with the objective of universalisation of secondary education. It appears that the government is also planning to extend RTE to secondary education, on the basis of the recommendation of a sub-committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education. Very recently, the government has resolved to launch another SSA (*Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan*), probably in place of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* and RMSA.

What are the implications of these new initiatives?

If RTE is to be extended to cover secondary education, will secondary education necessarily have the key features of RTE, which are free, compulsory, universalism, quality and, most importantly, education as a right. If not, what is the meaning of extension of RTE to secondary education? If yes, whether it would be possible in the near future. This is a question many are obviously interested to know.

The new SSA – the *Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan* is proposed to cover elementary education, secondary education, vocational education and teacher education, which have been presently working in isolation from each other, and to bring them into an integrated framework, partly recognising the close links between them. While a holistic and integrated approach to school education is desirable, there are several issues that need to be carefully analysed, understood and planned for. Does *Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan* mean only funding – funding school education as a whole, rather than by level/type of school education, or does it mean real integrated approach of the school education system, making every school a composite/comprehensive school from Grade I (if not Pre-primary) to Grade XII, with common teachers, common infrastructure, and common policies and approaches. Does it involve breaking of hierarchy in school system and moving towards a common school system? One would expect such features to figure in the new model. We all know that the programme requires a huge amount of financial resources, millions of additional trained teachers of high quality and commitment, vast infrastructure in terms of buildings, laboratories, libraries, ICT facilities etc., and strong political will and social commitment. On all these aspects, we face large deficits at present.

It is also important to note that unlike elementary education, the nature and purpose of secondary education are different. Quality of secondary education has to be broad: it has to focus not only on learning levels, but also on preparation of youth for employment and citizenship. At the same time, it should also provide good students an access to higher education. Secondary education requires teachers; but typical pupil-teacher ratio may not serve as a good measure for planning, as we need subject teachers in large numbers. Secondary education is also diverse, as it includes academic, as well as vocational and technical education/training streams, giving knowledge and skills at the same time. Thus, as Prof. Tilak stated, it requires additional focus.

Presently, secondary education also faces serious glitches on several fronts. As per the gross enrolment ratios, half the children of the eligible age group are enrolled in secondary education and one third at the higher secondary level . Thus, there continues to be a large number of children who need to be brought into secondary schools. Secondly, with near universal enrolment in elementary education, inequalities in education may not be high; but they begin to take strong roots in secondary education; thirdly, more than half the secondary schools are in the private sector, with a major proportion of them being unaided or self-financing schools, depending exclusively on student fees, which may also be the cause of inequalities in education and, in turn, in society at large. Fourth, the school system as a whole, including secondary education, faces serious shortage of teachers. Partly to answer the problems of resource scarcity, the government is serious about public- private partnerships, privatisation and other similar measures, evidence on the effects of which is not encouraging. Lastly, education, including secondary education, is facing a serious shortage of funds. Given all this, what are the prospects for universalisation of secondary education?

Prof. Tilak mentioned that with this objective, the present Seminar was to focus on the theme of universalisation of secondary education. He also hoped that the deliberations would be useful for informed policy discourses and even for policy actions by the Government. [Professor Tilak's welcome and introductory remarks are given in Annexure X correct it.]

Chairing the session, Prof. Muchkund Dubey, thanked Prof. Tilak for the Welcome Address and for presenting a clear and detailed perspective on the seminar. Subsequently, he invited Prof. Rounaq Jahan, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Studies, Dhaka, Bangladesh to deliver the inaugural speech of the two-day national seminar.

Professor Rounaq Jahan is a senior research scholar at the Southern Asian Institute, Columbia University and an adjunct professor of international affairs at School of International and Public Affairs of the University. She is also a Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka. Dr Jahan had brilliant academic experience in several European and US institutions of higher education and research including Boston University, Chicago

and Harvard. Professor Jahan served several policymaking bodies set by the Government of Bangladesh and also served as a consultant to UNDP, (United Nations Population Fund), UNICEF, UN Development Fund for Women, UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), ILO, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), USAID, OECD, the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, as well as NGOs like International Women's Health Coalition.

In her Inaugural Address, Prof. Jahan highlighted the challenges faced by both India and Bangladesh in terms of school enrolment and quality education, disparities in education, poor governance – lack of monitoring and accountability, absenteeism of teachers, divide between the vernacular medium schools and the English medium schools and so on. These were identified as common problems faced by both the countries. However, while being disappointed with the inadequacies of public policy responses in Bangladesh, Prof. Jahan welcomed some of the recent initiatives of the Government of India such as the Right to Education Act, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), integration of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) with RMSA and Teacher Training, and Integrated Scheme for School Education.

In her address, Prof. Jahan raised a few questions for discussion in the Seminar. They related to the importance of political will and social commitment to improve education status, policy design and implementation, improvement in quality, reduction in inequality and improvement in governance.

These questions were: How adequate is the level of political will and social commitment to universalise secondary education? How realistic and implementable are the designs of these recent initiatives announced by the Government of India? Are the planned measures to improve the quality of education adequate to produce the desired outcomes? Are the recommended interventions to reduce inequality likely to produce equitable outcomes by 2020? Are the measures planned by the initiatives to improve governance sufficient and appropriate?

Prof. Jahan strongly argued that political will and social commitment were the critical ingredients for the success of any public policy. She observed that political will often becomes a “catch all” phrase to shift responsibility or explain away all deficits. She expressed the hope that education would finally become a “national obsession” in India.

Highlighting the gap between policy and program adoption and their implementation, Prof. Jahan favoured discussing the problems associated with setting up quantitative targets. For instance, the MDGs, with their quantitative targets, pushed countries to focus on increasing the number of student enrolment rather than on improving the quality of their education. She referred to the famous book by A.K. Sen and Jean Dreze, *An Uncertain Glory India: its Contradiction*, which highlighted the huge burdens created by poor standards, particularly in



government schools. It was pointed out that even in Bangladesh, students demonstrated poor capabilities in reading, writing and mathematics. Identifying the barriers coming in the path of providing quality education in the form of shortage of teachers, weakness in curriculum, lack of infrastructure and many more, Prof. Jahan cited the case of low scores of India in the PISA ranking compared to the consistent top ranking of East and South-east Asian countries. She referred to prevailing inequalities in education system such as exclusion of marginalised groups, the growing divide between public and private sector and between vernacular and English medium schools. She observed that South Asian countries have produced and nurtured a dual system of education in terms of haves and have-nots. Last but not the least, she highlighted several governance challenges such as management, accountability etc. According to her governance reforms had a critical role to play in improving quality and reducing inequality. But these reforms were not feasible without a strong political will and social commitment. [The Inaugural Address by Professor Jahan is given in Annexure X correct it).

Thanking Prof. Jahan for her inaugural speech, the chairperson, Prof. Muchkund Dubey, in his remarks, highlighted the lack of political commitment for the development of school education or education of any level, or education as a whole in India. On the subject of resources spent on education in the country, Prof. Dubey referred to the Kothari Commission suggestion of allocating six per cent of national income of the country towards education, while indicating that unfortunately, till now, we were able to spend only four per cent or less than four per cent of our GDP on education. It was further observed that resources earmarked for education have been very meagre as compared to those made for other sectors. For instance, India had spent enormous amounts on organising Commonwealth Games. He argued that in order to destroy the evil of dual education system, we must opt for Common School System. He highlighted the salient features of common school system envisaged by the Bihar government. Expressing optimism about the common school system, he stressed the need for such a system to become a national obsession. He deliberated on the hierarchy in school system which even exists within the government school system and questioned the role of school management communities and the community in delivering quality education. He suggested that the entire system of inspection should be entrusted to teachers while lamenting that the entire administration was transferred to bureaucrats. In this overall background, he highlighted the importance of the theme chosen for the seminar.

The inaugural session ended with Dr. Ashok Pankaj, Director, Council for Social Development proposing a Vote of Thanks.

The inaugural session was followed by technical sessions on selected themes:

## **Extension of RTE to Secondary Education and Universalisation of Secondary Education: Towards Integrated Model of School Education**

Prof. R. Govinda, Distinguished Professor, Council for Social Development, was the Chair, and Prof. Sridhar Srivastava, Professor, National Council of Educational Research and Training, was the Discussant at the session. Three papers were presented in the session.

The first speaker of the session, Dr. Aparajita Sharma, described the historical developments in both elementary and secondary education in India from the perspective of education as a public good, with particular focus on the role of the State. She explained how India attained new heights in elementary education with the passage of the Right to Education Act in 2009, which resulted in achieving national commitments and raising resources for elementary education. However, in spite of a huge existing demand for education, including pre-school and secondary education as a fundamental right, at present the fundamental right has remained restricted to elementary education due to various reasons.

In the context of integration of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), she first explained the difference between the two. SSA was not only a centrally-sponsored scheme but became a vehicle through which RTE was implemented, providing elementary education as a legal entitlement, with time-bound commitments attached to it. However, this was not the case with RMSA, which was introduced for universalisation of secondary education using different parameters. According to her, the integration completely ignores this aspect.

The second speaker of the session, Dr. Sunita Chugh first explained the need for secondary education as the basic minimum level of education in the present context. The impact of globalisation and rapid growth of new technologies have led to reassessment of India's preparedness to generate the required technical person power, develop new knowledge and skills and remain competitive at the global level. Moreover, Indian economy and its labour markets need people with sophisticated knowledge, skills and competences that cannot be developed only at the elementary level or in low-quality secondary schools. The secondary and senior secondary education system has a key role to play in enabling India to move towards these objectives.

Dr. Chugh listed a number of issues which need to be focused on in integrating primary and secondary levels of education. These are first and foremost, ensure that all children complete elementary education; second, create physical infrastructure to provide universal access and ensure universal participation and preparedness for the rigour of secondary education, and third, reorient secondary education to meet the needs of children of diverse backgrounds with different preparatory levels.

The last speaker of the session, Dr. Madhumita Bandyopadhyay began by building the case on the relevance and urgency of universalisation of secondary education. Secondary

education has an important role to play in societal development. It is considered as a link between basic and higher education as well as world of work. Secondary education deals with learning needs and skill development of adolescent children and young adults. It is necessary to pay serious attention to quantitative and qualitative expansion of secondary education as around 54 per cent of India's population is below 25 years of age and, without addressing their educational needs, India will not be able to reap this demographic dividend.

While secondary education is compulsory and free in some countries, a large proportion of children of eligible age group in India still remain deprived of quality secondary education with its far-reaching impact on society. Following the model of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the country has witnessed the introduction of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) for achieving Universalisation of Secondary Education (USE) but presently it has been realised that like basic education, provisioning of secondary education also needs a rights-based approach.

With the help of data, she explained where India stands in terms of provisioning of quality secondary education based on secondary data, and the challenges to be met in the coming years if RTE Act is to be extended to secondary education of reasonable quality in a diverse country like India.

Prof Srivastava, initiating discussion on the three papers, highlighted the need for intensive use of data available on all aspects, including, specifically, budgetary provisions, which is relatively under-researched. An important issue raised by several participants related to the widespread general preference for private schools, and the role of the State in such a situation. There are several unauthorised schools. How can they be considered as part of the universal education system?

A major reason behind the preference for private school is the English language factor. Realising this, all government schools presently have introduced English from Class I. Moreover, some government schools are going in for at least one section as English medium section. These initiatives have the potential for changing the preference in favour of government schools over private schools.

Summing up the session, the Chair concluded that the arrangement for Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is very feeble. Only financing arrangements have been mentioned; however, there is no perspective on what kind of education would be provided. For example, even though the Kothari Commission report provided a proper vision of school education, we continue to follow the path laid out by the colonial rulers. The Chair was in favour of having all schools from Class I to XII. Further, the Chair observed that there are major issues regarding uniformity and homogeneity of integrated education in a big country like India. Government schools are mostly State government schools. As such, a pluralistic

view has to be adopted regarding medium of instruction and curriculum context. Therefore, this integration requires proper dialogues with the respective State governments.

## **Growth of Secondary Education in India and States**

Prof. Atul Sarma, Distinguished Professor, Council for Social Development, chaired the session while Prof. Kumar Suresh, Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration was the Discussant. Four papers were presented in the session.

Prof. Praveen Jha and Dr. Satadru Sikdar (CESP, JNU, New Delhi), while presenting the paper titled *“Public Provisioning for Secondary Education in India: A Situation Assessment”*, described the trends in public provisioning for secondary education in India by focusing on schools managed by the State government, local bodies besides government-aided schools. While highlighting that secondary school enrolment had increased from 52.2 per cent in 2005-06 to 78.5 per cent in 2014-15, it was pointed out there were large disparities in secondary education enrolment. Enrolment was highest in the States of Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra and lowest in Odisha, Assam and Bihar. However, none of the States had reached universal enrolment.

Drop-out rates were high. It increased from 18.2 per cent in 2007-08 to 21.5 per cent in 2014-15. High drop-outs were reported from States such as Odisha, Assam, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, with low drop-outs reported from Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The reasons for drop-outs were household condition, financial constraints, poor education quality and lack of infrastructure.

In the Indian school system, a large number of schools are integrated schools with primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary levels of education. Access to secondary schools within five kms increased from 1978 to 2002, while that for higher secondary schools had reduced. As regards access to infrastructure, the Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) as well as the number of teachers had improved, but Student-Classroom Ratio (SCR) remained high. Moreover, only 41.4 per cent schools offered computer and internet facility in 2016. School- level information often differed from other survey databases and so it was important to track the situation through different sources.

Jha and Sikdar favoured use of per student allocation in Kendriya Vidyalayas as a thumb rule marker of ‘unit cost’. In 2015-16, per student government expenditure was approximately Rs.32000. Goa, Kerala and Himachal Pradesh were consistently performing better than all other States with regard to per child expenditure on secondary education, while Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh were relatively poor performers. Further, per student expenditure through the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) had reduced considerably over the last few years. Most grants were distributed among the eight States of Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. The grant shares depended upon factors like population size, expenditure capacity, submission of bills etc..

Jha and Sikdar also showed that public expenditure impacted quality of education and there was a significant positive correlation between public expenditure and learning outcomes

The second paper of the session on *Universalisation of Secondary Education – The case of Telugu Speaking States* was presented by Dr. P. Prudhvikar Reddy (Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad). It was based on secondary data from four NSS Rounds (50<sup>th</sup> Round – 1993-94 to 68<sup>th</sup> Round - 2011-12) at the national level and ‘Young Lives’ panel data at the State level for the Telugu speaking States of Telangana and New Andhra Pradesh.

Prof. Reddy described that at the national level, India had made remarkable improvements in enrolments but there were still major hurdles in achieving the goal of universalisation of secondary education, as there was large disparity in achievement of basic skills, such as reading and mathematics, along with a general decline in learning outcomes. Furthermore, there were disparities across regions, gender as well as social groups which was a matter of serious concern. Based on results of an econometric modelling exercise used to find out the factors impacting secondary completion rates, Prof. Reddy forecasted that at the national level only 62 per cent children in the age-group of 14-15 years would be enrolled by 2020 and, given the trend, 100 per cent net enrolment ratio (NER) would be achieved only by 2038; similarly it would take 80 years beyond 2020 to achieve 100 per cent net enrolment of children in the age group of 16-17 years.

Among the two Telugu speaking States, Telangana would achieve 100 per cent enrolment of children, aged 6-14 years, only by 2022 and New Andhra Pradesh by 2023; enrolment of 15-year-olds increased by 11 per cent between 2009 and 2016 and around 91 per cent of 15-year-olds were in schools in 2016 in both the States; and, in the case of 6-16 year olds, the out-of-school children were around 17 per cent in Telangana, with children mostly dropping out at Grade 6.

It was inferred that universalisation of secondary education even in the Telugu-speaking states was a distant dream. Apart from the enrolment, the learning levels in both the states were declining which was a major concern as well.

The third paper of the session *“Push-out not Drop-out: Youth and Secondary Schooling in India”* by Professor Manabi Majumdar (Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata) and Dr. Sangram Mukherjee (Pratichi Institute, Kolkata) who described ‘Drop-out’ as ‘Push-out’ and identified factors responsible for the same in secondary school education.

Based on NSSO data from 2007 to 2014, it was found that the participation rate across genders in educational institutions in India was high till 14 years after which it nose-dived, and more so for females than males.

The mean age at first enrolment was similar across different MPCE quantile groups but exits happened much earlier in the lower level classes compared to the higher level classes,

because of 'Push-out' factors. Most reports usually cited 'lack of interest' as a major factor for youths not attending any educational institution. According to the 71<sup>st</sup> NSSO round (2014), around 20.9 per cent rural youth and 17.7 per cent urban youth (age group 5-29) did not attend any educational institution. Why there was a 'lack of interest' is a matter that needs to be probed. Secondly, there was the systemic Imbalance factor. Schools had a tendency to fail students simply because the infrastructure was not adequate to cope with a large number of students. The present average enrolment per higher secondary school in the country is 195, which would increase to 334 if all lower secondary students made a successful transition to the higher secondary level. Further, secondary schools in under-developed blocks were bursting at their seams. For example, Sitai block in West Bengal had a Pupil Teacher Ratio of 99 and SCR of 157. Third factor cited was that of test/examinations which were increasingly becoming a source of 'elimination' rather than a source of 'evaluation'. Lastly, financial stress was cited as an important reason with expenditure on private coaching over and above that on school education causing excessive financial strain on parents. Expenditure on private coaching was found to be very high across all Monthly Per capita Consumption Expenditure Quintile Classes and exorbitantly high for higher classes.

Presenting the last paper of the session "*Secondary Education in Maharashtra: Issues of Concern*", Ms. Anuradha De and Ms. Meera Samson (CORD, Delhi) highlighted the trends in secondary education sector in the state of Maharashtra, estimated based on both secondary and primary data. The primary data included a survey of schools as well as parent groups and youth.

Based on secondary data, it was shown that gross enrolment ratio (GER) and net enrolment ratios (NER) were relatively better for Grades 9 & 10 compared to Grades 11 & 12. Drop-out rates were high after Grade 9. They peaked after Grade 10 and reduced after Grade 11. The share of 'aided schools' in total enrolments was high and increasing gradually. This was followed by the share of 'private unaided schools' that was picking up fast. The share of 'government schools' in contrast, was very low and showed a declining trend.

Referring to the primary data collected through a survey of schools, it was shown that there were major infrastructural gaps in the provisioning of drinking water, functional toilets, proper boundary walls and gates, and facilities of library, computer labs, science practical laboratories etc.. Besides, maintenance and cleaning staff were underpaid which further aggravated maintenance problems. There is a shortage of teachers, especially for Mathematics and Science. Teachers were mostly recruited on contractual basis with low remuneration. There were recruitment delays as well and many teaching posts lay vacant. There was high demand for English medium schools and some schools also had 'Semi-English sections' wherein Science and Mathematics were taught in English and other subjects in Marathi. The objective was to reduce enrolments in Marathi schools and increase it for English medium unaided schools. Schools also would tend to close down for

several days during local elections or even days before local festivals. Most secondary schools (80%) were single shift schools that generally functioned for longer hours. Double shift schools had shorter shifts in the morning. There were serious governance issues as well because District and Block Education Officers shared several responsibilities other than monitoring schools. These posts were also lying vacant in several areas.

The survey of parents and youth revealed that access to secondary schools was problematic, especially in rural areas. Students had to travel large distances and the means of travel were inadequate. Further, new schools were not set up in the last five years; and most schools offered Arts stream while very few offered Science and Commerce streams. Science and Commerce students required higher marks and these streams were more desired. It was also found that high expenditure on schooling along with pressure of private tuitions was putting huge financial strain on parents. Most students found it difficult to cope with Mathematics and Science and depended heavily on guide books and supplementary material. Functional computer education and practical science education was given very less attention. Lastly, the reasons for dropping out were failure in examinations, prohibitive cost of education, pressure to earn early, pressure to do housework, especially for girls, and limited aspirations for education of girls.

Ms Anuradha De suggested the need for increased government spending on school education, and reducing the multiplicity of institutions involved in school education such as Department of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, SCERT, Social Welfare Department, Tribal Development Department. Such multiplicity of institutions causes various types of problems. She also argued in favour of establishing more schools for children belonging to disadvantaged groups such as tribal children, poor Muslim families and scheduled caste children, and for a big improvement in issues related to access and quality that strengthen the existing school education system in Maharashtra.



## **Inequalities in Secondary Education**

Prof. Praveen Jha, Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru chaired the session while Dr. Hem S. Borker, Assistant Professor, Centre for Study Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Jamia Millia Islamia was the Discussant. Four papers were presented in the session.

The first speaker of the session, Prof. Sheela Reddy threw light on how education is one of the necessary conditions for advancing of life and freedom. She regarded secondary education as a decisive stage in the educational hierarchy and an effective link between primary and secondary education. Moreover, it was noted how secondary education can act as a major instrument of social change and development and the rigor of secondary education can enable students to compete successfully in education and jobs, globally and nationally.

Prof. Reddy proceeded to draw a link between secondary education and globalisation as rapid growth of new technology led to the development of skills and competitiveness at the global level. In that context, she mentioned how the XIth Five Year Plan observes that universalisation of elementary education alone will not suffice in the knowledge economy and a person with mere eight years of schooling is as disadvantaged as an illiterate person.

She briefly highlighted some of the major challenges to Secondary Education in India. The challenges include how to discover new ways of 'knowing' so as to effectively participate in the domestic and global processes, and thereby ensure equitable economic and socio – cultural diversity; how to change the role of the school from an institution of knowledge generation and transmission to respond effectively to the skill requirements; how to integrate the marginalised and vulnerable sections of society to promote access and equity and thereby ensure the larger goal of social justice; and how to challenge and cope with two types of pressures - Bottom up pressure (arising from the growth of primary schooling) and Top – down pressure (as the source of potential intakes for higher education).

Despite increase in the gross enrolment ratio, the issues of social access and equity remain persistent. Social, gender and income disparities continue to be reflected in gaps in learning levels and drop out of school. Wide regional variations are reflected in the structure of school education, management, infrastructure facilities, teacher deployment, quality of learning achievements etc.. Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), 2017 reflects a learning deficit amongst children, how children of a particular age do not have the learning competencies that are required of them for that age. There exist distortions in the policy planning with regard to expansion of school networks, often due to political and local factors.

Prof. Reddy also referred to some of the recommendations made by the CUBE committee and argued how these suggestions could bring about a paradigm shift in the secondary education. The CUBE committee introduced the notion of Universal Access which is access in

a comprehensible manner that is physical, social, cultural and economic. It then drew attention to the idea of Equality and Social Justice and how this spirit should be inculcated in the secondary education system. The committee also drew attention to Education for Adolescents (that is how responsive it needs to be to the needs and foster skills of transition- it is a very sensitive age during which the transition happens and so how it has to be handled); Education for Multiple Intelligence (that is how we need to nurture multiple talents- a child good in sports should not be discouraged in front of children performing well in studies) and Universal, Free and Compulsory Education (2020 as target for universal enrolment). Prof. Reddy noted in this context on how it is necessary to introspect if the goals and objectives set forward by the CABE committee are ambitious targets that fail to take into account the ground realities.

It is important to realise that proper Investment in education will yield considerable social and economic returns. There is an urgent need for policy-makers and administrators at the top of the educational hierarchy to place emphasis on demonstrating 'efficiency' rather than 'effectiveness' in reform interventions. Secondary education reform programmes, such as the RMSA, need to make provisions in their programme designs (in terms of policy and institutional arrangements) to facilitate school-wide reform. Issues of quality and equity need to be addressed from a micro-level intervention perspective. School effectiveness interventions (based on whole school reform experiences) may certainly prove critical in supplementing macro strategies and interventions in dealing with issues of equity and quality. There is need to generate right kind of political and key stakeholder support for translating reform into action. The quality and relevance of secondary education curriculum needs to address both those who want to go in for higher education and those wanting to enter the labour market. The curriculum must equip the students with adequate cognitive skills to deal with complex situations both in their daily routine as well as in the world of work. Teaching methods and curriculum transaction in the classroom ought to focus on learning to learn than on familiarising with and memorising facts. Prof. Reddy further argued that the basic skill gaps in the young population need to be addressed appropriately to make secondary education universal in terms of access and equity.

Presenting a paper titled 'Socio economic determinants of secondary education in India: Insights from NSSO unit level data of 71st round', Dr. Susmita Mitra drew attention to the educational status of children between the ages of 15 and 18. Of all children in this age group, four per cent never attended school; 29 per cent are attending primary level schooling while they should be in secondary or higher secondary school and about 20 per cent are enrolled in secondary and higher secondary but remain irregular. Only 47 per cent of children between the ages of 15 and 18 are attending secondary and higher secondary schooling as expected. While in the rural areas, the percentage of out-of-school girls is significantly higher than that of out-of-school boys, in the urban areas the disparity seems to be much lower.

In terms of religious composition of the out-of-school children between the ages of 15 and 18; in the rural areas, while the percentage of out-of-school Muslim students is significantly higher than that of students belonging to Hindu and Christian communities, the percentage of out-of-school Hindu students is higher than that of out-of-school Christian students. In urban areas, the trajectory is somewhat similar as majority of out-of-school children are Muslims, followed by Hindus and Christians.

Majority of out- of- school children, in both the rural and urban areas, belong to minority caste groups such as the SCs, the STs and OBCs. While 30 per cent of out-of-school children in the rural areas belong to the Scheduled Castes, in the urban areas 15 percent of out-of-school children belong to the same minority social group. An almost equal share of out- of-school children in both rural (33%) and urban areas (30%) belong to the Scheduled Tribes. As far as representation of Other Backward Classes is concerned, about 22 per cent of out-of-school children in the urban areas and 34 per cent in rural areas belong to this caste category.

In both the rural and urban areas, 40 per cent of the out-of-school children belongs to the poorest households. This correlation suggests that as the ability of the household to increase its expenditure on education increases, the share of out-of-school children commensurately decreases. Taking forward the question- are children really disinterested in education, leading to low enrolment and a high drop-out rate or is it the prohibitive cost of education- Dr Mitra presented a brief analysis of the total annual expenditure on education by different types of educational institutes (private aided, private un-aided and government). There is a direct link between the ability of a household or a family and family's spending on children's education as a proportion of their income. Given the high cost associated with secondary and higher secondary education in India and the high level of income disparity and poverty, it is logical to find a large share of out-of-school children belonging to poor or economically weak sections of society. It is also noteworthy to understand how the share of out-of-school children substantially increases after primary education, with cost of secondary and higher secondary education being higher than that of primary education.

Dr. Mitra also describes a few common reasons for not enrolling or dropping out as put forward by the NSSO. On the one hand, family-related reasons, including but not limited to disinterest in education, and financial restrictions or economic constraints prevent children from completing education, on the other hand, factors such as inability to cope with studies or distance from schools have also played a critical role in low enrolment and a high drop-out rate. Finally, she concluded that while it may be easier for economically weaker sections of society or minority groups to send their children to primary school, it becomes significantly harder to send them for secondary education.

The next speaker, Mr. Deepak Kumar, while presenting his paper *“Tracking the Progress of a Child from Enrolment to Completion of Secondary Education in India”* pointed out as to how low level of public expenditure and higher educational costs at secondary education increases the financial burden on weak households as the child progresses from elementary to secondary education. Several costs associated with secondary education, such as school fees, books, uniforms, transportation costs, make it difficult for children from poor and uneducated families to obtain a secondary/higher secondary education. Inability to become educated, in turn, affects their ability to improve their socio-economic status.

Examining whether socio-economic status of an individual continues to be an impediment to secondary education even after accessing it or whether there are other individual or school-related factors that affect completion of secondary education in India, Mr. Kumar indicated how factors like family background, parental education, socio-economic background and household resources act as major determinants of secondary and higher secondary school completion while playing a crucial role in a child’s educational attainment. Similarly it was observed as to how caste affiliation and religion of an individual played an important role in determining the educational inequality in India.

It was further observed that the chances of high educational attainment are more for children from well-off and educated families as compared to those from poor and less educated families. This study found that the major barrier for the disadvantaged sections of society, such as ‘SC/ST’ and ‘Muslims’, lies at the secondary level of schooling, particularly in government schools.

Dr. Mitra cited evidence to also show that between girls and boys who enrol in secondary and higher secondary schools, girls have a higher chance of completing secondary education.

As such, she favoured a greater focus in government policies on increasing enrolment and continuation of the education of girls from elementary to secondary education in order to minimise gender inequality in education at the secondary level and beyond. Further, it was observed that scholarship received by a student studying in government schools improved his/her chances of completing higher secondary school. These results suggest that if government can reduce the financial constraints of children from poor and uneducated families (particularly for the girl child), it will lead to their higher chances of completing secondary education.

A paper titled *“Reproducing Gendered Knowledge and Class through Education: A Case of a Muslim Habitation in North East Delhi”* by Dr. Vaishali looks at how school as a State institution can facilitate the reproduction of gendered knowledge and class through over-stratification and offering selective knowledge to girls. Based on Qualitative study, the paper documents the school experiences of 12 Grade XII Muslim girl students, living in a Muslim-

dominated habitation in North East Delhi. Drawing from Willis' work (1977) that working class children engage in working class jobs as schooling reproduces class-based inequalities, this paper focuses on how school, as State institution, induces compartmentalisation of knowledge and segregation of learners at secondary level of schooling on the basis of meritocratic principal.

Dr. Vaishali highlighted how girls with low scores are allotted the Arts (with score up to 60%) and Vocational stream (with score below 60%). Even within the Vocational stream, girl students having less than 50% marks are not allotted Stenography and Computer Applications. Moreover, even those girls with good scores can exercise choice only if merit is supplemented with affordability. For instance, weak students are given subjects such as Beauty and Hair or Holistic Health or Fashion Design and Garment Technology to choose from and this plays a critical role in reproducing gendered knowledge that produces gendered roles in the future. Schools also failed to cater to the needs of Muslim girls in the locality as staff suffered from the shortage of teachers. The practice of pulling back weak students or improvising their employability through vocational education at secondary level further led to accentuation of the phenomenon of reproduction of class and gender further.

Dr. Vaishali further observed that not only is class reproduction done by compartmentalising knowledge in hierarchical manner as in Willis' study but also gender is reproduced by associating soft skills like Beauty and Health and Textile with poor performer girls. This interplay of class and gender pulls back Muslim girls from education and work. The study concludes with the way in which gender and class interplay with each other to influence withdrawal of the girls from education. Even good performing students often drop out of school due to decline in mobility. The State, despite its education development agenda for Muslims, fails to deliver under the influence of neo-liberalism. School reproduces class and gender for girls by ignoring their aspirations for further education and work.

## Quality and Inequalities in Secondary Education

Dr. Rukmini Banerji, Chief Executive Officer, Pratham Education Foundation Chaired this session while Prof. Avinash K. Singh, Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration was the Discussant. Five papers were presented in the session.

Prof. K. Pushpanadham presented a paper titled *“Quality Assurance in Secondary School Education: Ground Realities of School Inspections”*. The study was conducted in four talukas in Nashik district of Maharashtra. He reiterated the UNICEF definition of quality of education which includes quality of learners and learning environment, quality of content, the process that takes place within the institution and the outcomes. His paper examined as to what is happening in inspection system in Maharashtra. The talukas having maximum number of schools and high pass percentage were selected for the study. The powers and functions of the Maharashtra State Board of Education are decentralised wherein inspection and supervision is mandatory. According to the guidelines, three school inspections have to be done, namely pre-inspection, inspection and follow-up. The state government officials are required to cover at least 20-30 schools every year. Classroom session by subject experts and feedback session with teachers also needs to be undertaken.

From the survey analysis, it was found that school inspections were carried out in only 40 per cent of the schools at least once a year in the rural areas. Eight per cent and 12 per cent of the schools were never inspected in the last 10 years in rural areas and urban areas respectively. The study also featured the perceptions of teachers. According to the teachers, there was inadequacy of inspection which was attributed to under-staffing of inspectors, heavy workload and time constraints; the attitude and commitment of the inspectors were also questioned as was the training of the inspectors (no pre-service and in-service training was undertaken); lack of collaboration between inspectors and teachers and inspectorate and university was also one of the observations; the feedback, if given by the inspectors, was not taken seriously; and the inspectorate lacked autonomy

Dr. N. Mythili presented a paper titled *“Regional Diversity, School Leadership Practices and School Quality: A Comparative Study of Two Indian States in North Eastern Region”*, which focussed on weak implementation of education reforms, ineffective teacher training programmes and the importance of school leadership. According to her, there were five major leadership factors in the Indian context, namely vision building, goal setting, organisational or school improvement, commitment and goal achieving. The study was conducted in Manipur and Sikkim, covering 78 and 80 school heads respectively. In Manipur, there were six major nodes that emerged as highly correlated and significant. They were practicing leadership, teacher professional development, mutual interaction to understand each other, trust building with teachers, providing intellectual stimulation. In Sikkim, four nodes that emerged as highly correlated and significant were providing intellectual stimulation, teacher professional development, setting up of structure and

system for decision-making and mutual interaction to understand each other. The findings suggest that the school heads adopt a layered approach in achieving the set goals. School leadership directly influences creation of a favourable climate for improving overall school quality even as it indirectly influences student learning. The policy implication of the study was that schools must be considered as a unit of teacher professional development to be led by the school leadership for improving student learning and school quality.

The third speaker of the session, Prof. Pramila Menon, spoke on *“Revitalizing Academic Support for Secondary Education”*. The sources for her research were the Joint Review Mission Reports of RMSA. She spoke about the unfortunate affair of teacher training, mostly happening at the elementary and primary levels. The trainings were planned only after funds were received, implying that training was being done mid-session. She suggested that the teacher capacity building should be standardised, training needs of the teachers be properly identified, there be greater linkages between SSA teachers and that the in-service assessment should be more realistic. She concluded by observing that the transition to secondary education was not happening the way one would like it to happen.

Dr. Nivedita Sarkar used the 71<sup>st</sup> round unit level data of the NSSO ‘Social consumption, education’, 2014 and analysed the question *“Who Completes Secondary Education: Examining Role of Individual and Household Characteristics”*. The sample consisted of those students who had at least done elementary education and not more than secondary education. Through the results of the Probit regression model, she showed that the monthly per capita expenditure, which was taken as the proxy for household income, and the social affiliation (SC/ST/ OBC) were major factors for a student to complete secondary education. The scheduled tribes were less likely to complete secondary education as compared to scheduled castes and other backward classes. The other major factor was distance of the school from the household. If the distance exceeded five km, the student was less likely to continue with secondary education. There was no significant difference seen between the males and females which might be due to the sample selection wherein the students not completing elementary education were already counted out.

The last speaker of the session, Dr. Manasi Thapliyal Navani presented a paper titled, *“Transition to Higher Education and Equitable Learning Outcomes”* wherein she examined the importance of transition to higher education and shared the equity concerns in this transition process. Based on the qualitative data, she showed how students transitioning to undergraduate levels must be evaluated differently due to the student diversity and the contingent pedagogic and curricular diversity. According to her, there is a need for renewed commitment in achieving equity in learning outcomes taking into account the space, cost and quality on account of demography.

Quoting Sharda Jain, Dr. Rukmini Banerji, the chairperson of the session, said that the whole age group of adolescents is really under-imagined in India from the point of view of both the

school as well how families treat them. This factor must be taken into account whenever we talk about this age group, it was added. Citing the DISE data 10-12 years ago, she said there were roughly 25 million children in each age group but the number of children in the age group of Class 8 and above was approximately 10-11 million, which has now increased to 22 million as per the recent DISE data, implying thereby that an entire set has moved to elementary education. She said that SSA laid a lot of emphasis on secondary education but the three years in the middle that is from Standard 6 to Standard 8 is very critical and, in essence, defines how the future is going to be.



## Public versus Private Schools

Prof. Tapas K. Sen, Retired Professor, NIPFP was the Chair, and Dr. Renu Singh, Country Director, Young Lives was the Discussant of the session in which three papers were presented.

Prof. Sen started the session by indicating that there has been a constant increase in the share of private schools and further that there is a plethora of evidence that shows parental preferences, not only in urban, but also in rural areas. Share of private schools in total enrolment is gradually increasing. In this context, it is important to reflect on the policy action and other factors associated with it.

The first paper of the session was on *“Changing Public Private Mix in School Education and its Implications for Policy”* by Prof. Achin Chakraborty. He observed that there has been increasing privatisation in the past 15 years and there is a corresponding willingness on the part of the people to send their children to private schools. At the same time, the contrasting reality, as per NSS 1<sup>st</sup> Round, is that 10 per cent of children are out of school. It is important to reflect on the system of service delivery and both the supply and demand side needs. He argued that though parents do make their choices as active agents, the choice is not available to all parents. It is important to reflect on the stories on the demand side. Also equally important is the need to look at elementary education too, as secondary education cannot take place in isolation. The need of the hour is to reflect on what should be the ideal response of the public sector, in a context where there is public-private mix? If not attended to, we might end up having unexpected consequences. Dr. Chakraborty has also shown that in Bihar and other States, there has been positive relationship between change in infrastructure and female literacy. Female literacy is low where the infrastructure in terms of girls’ toilet is not available. Those with low literacy should be given more focus and more resources. But the current scenario is the other way round. It is important to reflect on the allocations made. While most of the studies, based on IHDS, state that the parental preference for private schools is to get quality education, Dr Chakraborty opined that parents choose private schools based on perceived quality differences and the choice is not based on the research findings on quality. Ironically, States/Districts/Blocks, with poor public school performance, are more likely to have more private schools. In many States, there is negative correlation between poverty rates and enrolment in unaided private schools. In terms of enrolment, boys have more access to private schools in comparison to girls. In West Bengal, more girls are attending schools, even till the age of 17, and it is important to note that the proportion of private schools is low in this State. Dr. Chakraborty argued that supply side thinking may not help to address many issues. There has been a variety of private schools in different States. Hence, the strategy needs to be different for different States, having different levels of privatisation.

The next speaker of the session, Dr. Pradeep Kumar Choudhury, in his paper titled *“Expanding Private Education Market and Parental Choice for Schools in India: Evidence from IHDS Data”* indicated that there is a complexity underlying parental choice and there are fewer studies that examine the demand side issues. There is massive expansion of private schools and there is heterogeneity and hierarchy as well in its expansion. With the increasing number of low-fee private schools, there is change in the school choice too, based on the supply side. Further, there is change in the behaviour of the disadvantaged group and the middle class too. The shift of middle class parents from government to private schools has shrunk the space for school-community interactions, due to which there is no voice in government schools these days. Based on an analysis of the two phases of IHDS survey conducted in 2004-05 and 2011-12, Dr. Choudhury indicated that private provisioning of schools is uneven in rural areas. Parental choice of schools is also based on gender. There is a pro-male bias evident in choice of private schools. About 50 per cent parents prefer private schools for its environment and 20 per cent for the quality aspect. But the private school choice is determined by the paying ability of parents. Students belonging to richer families, urban areas and to the general caste and boys have greater access to private schools, but the access to private schools is limited for poor children, those from rural areas, SCs/STs and girls. Choice of schools also depends upon the educational attainment of parents. Educated parents send their wards to private schools while parents with limited or no education opt for only government schools. There is unregulated expansion of private schools and low-fee private schools, in particular. If this trend continues, there will be monopoly in the education system. Dr. Choudhury felt that it is important to examine the growth of the local private school market to understand the micro phenomenon. He also opined that there is dearth of research on the schooling choices of disadvantaged groups and the people belonging to minority. It is important to examine who is going to which school, it was added.

The last paper of the session was *“The Power Game: A Case Study of a Private School in Odisha”* by Dr. Amrita Sastry. The presentation was based on a doctoral study of an elite private school in Odisha. The study adopts the methodology of institutional ethnography while attempting to offer some solution to deal with power dynamics that operated in schools. Ethnography was used to understand the everyday living experience of children at the micro level. The study is a qualitative research based on observation and interview with school, parents, children, teachers etc. Dr. Sastry has found that the aspiring middle class send their children to private schools because of the latter’s quality connotation and they are ready to compromise even their basic needs to meet the educational needs of their children. However, as Dr. Sastry observed, education is now commodified as a package and the power dynamics operates in private schools based on the school culture. There is power dynamics in the culture of learning, which enables, isolates or even disables children’s learning. Children are considered the lowest rung in terms of power/space and the teachers, principal, parents, etc. occupy high space in the power ladder. Indeed, the children are

regarded as blank slates were people wielding power write their thoughts. Power dynamics also exists between teacher-students and students-students. The mind of children is schooled in the classroom based on power dynamics. Different thinking on students, such as slow learner, weak student etc., is passed onto them, which becomes self-fulfilling prophecies. Economic Weak Section and slow Learners are the worst affected, when one starts dominating others. Thus, the idea of self is developed based on such thoughts that are created in schools. Knowingly or unknowingly, children are thus drawn back. If societal reflection of a child is positive, the self-reflection of a child is also positive and vice-versa. As a solution, Dr. Amrita Sastry espoused the importance of diffusing the notion of power in the classroom. In this regard, it was felt that the power that teachers have should be held with much sensitivity and responsibility and each child should be treated as a separate learner. As the assessment system created hierarchy and also created hidden meaning, the system of assessment should be diffused.

Commenting on the papers presented in the session, Dr. Renu Singh stated that more sensitive allocation of resources is needed. An interesting point raised was as to why the idea of voucher system had not resurfaced. We need to look at the policy interventions, of both the public and private schools, on the one hand, and the changing preferences of different classes of consumers, on the other. One of the papers presented was on the hierarchy that exists within private schools in terms of choices. The choices were framed based on the economic circumstances, for which the data served to highlight as to how the children belonging to SCs, STs, Muslim community, etc. had less chance to get enrolled in private schools. Such aspects need to be viewed within the socio-economic set-up. There is a need to look into the culture of the low-fee private school and the trends over time and the transition to higher education. The culture of learning in an elite private school, presented here is an interesting facet. The child's mind is schooled not only in private schools, but also in all kinds of other schools. It is important to deconstruct the power dynamics that operates in schools and understand that everybody in the school is a learner. Diffusing the notion of power is a much larger issue which operates everywhere, not just in schools.

The session ended with the remarks by the session Chairperson. There are private schools of all kinds, right from low fee to the multi-national type. Clubbing all together is a misnomer, when we talk about public vs. private schools. Secondly, there is a qualitative difference at the primary level and at the secondary level. Education and school are not synonymous at the primary level. Education can happen without a school at the primary level, but cannot happen at the secondary level. Formalisation of education is much stronger at the secondary level.

Some of the important issues and questions raised in the open Discussion were as follows:

- Solutions for power dynamics has been highlighted in NCF too. Can we rethink and consider teacher as a learner within the school space and children as a facilitator; and schools and classrooms not just as sites of learning for children, but for teachers as well?: Such alternative thinking is needed. Learning is a lifelong process and it is important for the teachers to understand this fact. The biggest problem is educating the educators when the view is contested by the teachers themselves.
- One of the presentations stated that poorer states have more private schools. How does such a correlation exist. States like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, etc. have high levels of privatisation?: In the poorer States, enrolment in private school is less. I agree. At the village level, we found some difference.
- How do the EWS students fit into the private schools when there is a huge gap and how are they dealing with the situation of peer groups, teachers and their culture?: The school surveyed has started a remedial programme for the EWS category to cope with the subjects. However, hierarchy has been so strongly created in the school between non-EWS and EWS categories since the beginning that it has been very difficult to break it. Within the classroom system, it has become very difficult for the EWS category to integrate with the other children. In one of the private schools in Delhi, though EWS category was able to access the elite private school, the system is completely is distorted, given the fact that the regular sections and EWS have different time slots.
- Comments from a participant: The low-fee private schools are expected to conform to certain norms like the government school system. The private schools in the village visited in UP were in a much better condition as the bar set by the government was much lower. Cost of running the private school at the secondary level was so high that they were forced to charge high rates. In another study conducted, the students were found to be leaving private schools, as they were not able to afford the cost and could not continue in these schools. Another study in Delhi highlights how EWS are made a part of elite private schools too and Dalit families are able to access private schools and have gone up to Class V.
- There is information asymmetry with a very wide gap that exists. Some studies have highlighted that a number of private schools strategically project their infrastructure edge, even as they compromise by appointing less qualified teachers. But parents from poor socio-economic backgrounds cannot discern these issues.

## Secondary Education, Skill Development and Transition to Labour Market

Prof. Arup Mitra, Director General, National Institute of Labour Economic, Research and Development (NILERD/IAMR) & Institute of Economic Growth was the Chair and Prof. Narendra Thakur, Ambedkar College, University of Delhi was the Discussant at the session in which three papers were presented.

At the outset, Prof. Arup Mitra observed that there have been significant changes in the labour market in the last two decades which created the demand for skill improvement in India. The role of rising capital market in the requirement for skill is quintessential. The question that arises in the present context is how our education system, especially Higher Secondary school system, will cope with this requirement. The relevance of linking the skill development with secondary schooling can be viewed in two ways: to reduce the labour search cost in the domestic and international labour market; and skill development for self-employment and self-sufficiency for rural and urban youth in India, which promotes upward mobility through education for socially backward classes.

From lower primary schools to better quality secondary schooling, skill development plays a crucial role to improve the system and vice versa.

The first speaker of the session, Dr. Mona Sedwal, in her paper on *“Elusive Vocational Education Programme: An Analysis on Trends in Indian Secondary Schools”*, wondered how would the nation be able to reach the target of imparting skills training to 500 million by 2022, given the limited infrastructure and small size off vocational education sysstsem. It also focused on outcome and linkage to jobs and employability of the trained people (GOI 2009). Skill development enrolment in vocational education in India is negligible in global comparison. Only five per cent of the Indian labour force in the age group of 20-24 has received vocational training.

Education committees highlighted the importance of technical and vocational education in order to meet the demand for skilled manpower. Woods Dispatch 1854 recommended establishment of vocational schools. Abott and Wood’s Report (1937) recommended starting first nationwide massive training programme in 1940 under “War Technicians Training Scheme,” to meet the World War II urgent defence requirements in the country. The 1937 Wardha Scheme also focused on teaching the basic craft through vocational training in the self-sufficient mode, with special focus on manual labour.

University Education Commission (1948-49) recommended that the students who have completed tenth grade in vocational education can take admission in the intermediate colleges. In 1952, Mudaliar Commission also recommended that the student may have an option for taking up the vocations with diversification of the courses at the secondary as well as post-secondary level. Education Commission 1964-66 recommendations led to policy formulation in 1968 and 1986 on vocationalisation of school education under the MHRD.

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Vocationalisation of Higher Secondary Education (1988) covered 10,000 schools with an intake capacity of about 10 lakh students. The vocationalisation of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education (2011) aimed to meet the demand of high skilled human resource at the national and international market. In 2013, the scheme was merged under the *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan* scheme. Some of the significant amendments were introducing the vocational education from Class IX onwards with increased financial provision for inviting resource persons and engaging with the Industry/Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) for assessment, certification and training.

Dr. Mona Sedwal made a quick analysis on how vocational education evolved through different five-year plans conceptually as well as in terms of allocation of funds and implementation. The first five-year plan provided a vocational bias, based on the Directive Principles of the State Policy, as per the Constitutional provisions and the approved schemes. During the second FYP, a comprehensive review of the issues related to secondary education in 1953 reported the need to overhaul the curriculum as it was not related to the child's experience. Thus, it was proposed to engage substantial number of specialists in specific vocations. The budget for the technical and vocational education doubled from 230 million from the previous plan period to 480 millions. (Gol, 1956 p. 500). The Third Plan focused on expanding the reach of quality vocational guidance programmes among the students, with an emphasis on consolidation and improvement of all aspects of secondary education reorganisation. But the major issue was related to lack of trained teachers and teaching material for these courses. Fourth Plan reinforced the need to provide skills to students, after elementary schooling, with reference to the new demands. Fifth plan also proposed initiating vocationalisation at the secondary stage in selected areas during the next two years to enable implementation of well-conceived and fully thought-out programmes. Similar trend was also followed in the sixth five-year plan which merely focused on designing the model for linking vocational education with employment opportunities. Seventh Plan provided for the initiation of vocational education courses in a flexible manner linked to the upcoming job opportunities. This was in collaboration with the States for which an expert committee was set up for expanding the programme in coordination with the education system. In the Eighth Plan, the National Open Schooling (NOS) was made responsible for introducing and developing courses for vocational education. Ninth Plan emphasised on pre-vocational training at the secondary level for industrial and agricultural development with practical training. In 1993-94, pre-vocational training of students, enrolled at the secondary stage, was initiated and the programme of vocationalisation was extended to 6476 schools during 1995-96, with 11.5 per cent of students were enrolled in the vocational streams. Tenth plan rolled out the vocational education programme in 6,700 schools offering more than 150 courses in six major disciplines: agriculture, business and commerce, engineering and technology, health and para-medical services, home sciences and humanities. Eleventh five-year Plan introduced the concept of National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) system that was to be developed in

collaboration with public and private sectors. Twelfth Plan vocational education scheme was reviewed and supported by National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework (NVEQF) for smooth transition from school to higher education. Emphasis was laid on developing skills in formal education from Grade IX onwards and a vocational education cell was established within the CBSE. Based on the CBSE-NIOS collaboration model, the States were also supported to set up similar cells in the State Boards. The model allowed the credit accumulation and transfer for accelerated participation of students to opt for vocational courses along with academic courses either as combination subjects or additional subjects.

Financial provisions shared by the Centre and the States had been varied as the Central government gives 100 per cent assistance for 11 components of vocational education: apprenticeship training, district vocational surveys, textbook development workshops, instructional material subsidy, resource persons' training, workshop/laboratory building, equipment to schools, teacher training courses, curriculum development workshop, etc.. Ratio of 75:25 is followed for sharing the financial responsibility between the Centre and the State for vocational school staff. The States completely finance the expenditure on conducting examinations and providing vocational guidance. Vocational Education Scheme offered various career options in skills through Central Board of Secondary Education which offers 15 vocational courses in different sectors at Secondary level and 40 courses at Senior Secondary level. Many courses are offered in collaboration with the professional organisations at Secondary Level with the format in which the vocational subject may be offered as additional sixth subject along with the existing five academic subjects.

Many challenges remain, as pointed out by Dr. Sedwal. These are maintaining high standard of quality, stagnation in the job market, gap between the certification and the employment, variance between the skills attained and those actually in demand, limitations due to the management structure which is distributed between the Central and State authorities, lack of coordination between different departments resulting in avoidable duplication of same task. Besides, involving private sector in management is critical if institutions are to be responsive to labour market needs.

What is needed is innovative solutions for emerging demands, changing of funding mechanism from supply to demand-driven model, transfer of public resources on the basis of input or output criteria, flexible education system, making basic education provide the foundation for learning, development of core capabilities, and core technical skills in secondary and tertiary education. Vocational education in India at the university level, B.Voc. degree (Bachelor of Vocational Education) introduced by the UGC is a structured program.

The second speaker of the session, Dr. Bornali Bhandari, in her paper on "*Missing Middle of Educated Unemployable: A Critical Perspective on Secondary Education in India*", assessed the extent of inequality in secondary education and unemployment. Secondary education

aims at laying the foundations for lifelong learning and human development, by offering more subject- or skill-oriented instruction using more specialised teachers (World Development Indicators)

The issues discussed by Dr Bornali were: How to define youth given that students as young as 11 are attending secondary education?; Educational attainment whose profile has not changed much over the seven years; Attendance which has shown moderate improvement over the seven years; Average Secondary Education Expenditure which has shown moderate increase; Revisiting Educational Inequality and Spatial variations; Decrease, albeit marginally, in inequality of Educational attainment; Decrease in inequality of Current Attendance of Secondary Education; An Outcomes Approach Educational Quality, Policy Discussion: What outcomes do we want out of Secondary Education?

The last paper of the session - *“Reforms for ‘Skill India’ on The Report of the Sharda Prasad Committee on Skill India Reforms”* by Dr. Ashutosh Singh discussed the objectives of the Report which were i) Meeting the exact skill needs of the industry; ii) Providing relevant skills and decent means of livelihood to each youth entering the labour market; and iii) Designing a holistic and credible skill development system which could meet skills needs of the domestic industry and realise the vision of the Prime Minister to make India the Skills capital of the world.

The methodology followed in the report was - review of international literature on VET and SSCs, various policies and national reports and consultations with all relevant stakeholders- Central Ministries/Departments, State Governments, Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Employers, Trade Unions, VTPs, NSDC, NSDA, DGT, DGE, CSO, NSSO, Labour Bureau, all SSCs, CIVE, AICTE, eminent experts, etc.

Dr. Singh discussed the major issues facing Vocational Education Training as mentioned in the Report. The major issues were absence of a sound National Vocational Education and Training System, Training Standard, ownership of the National Standards and an integrated in-plant Apprenticeship Training; Vocationalisation of Education in Schools; Inadequate industry interface and lack of relevance of VET; Inadequate financing of VET system; Inadequate Training Capacity in the country; Poor Quality Outcomes; Short-term VET Courses; Large School Drop-outs; Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL); Promotion of Soft and Life Skills; VET for the Unorganised Sector; Shortage of qualified trainers; Provision for Counselling, Guidance and Employment Services; Skills for the Future; and Need for a comprehensive legislation.

Dr. Singh summed up the major recommendations of the Report which were - i) 10 years of schooling for each child, irrespective of his/her caste, creed, religion, region or economic status- 3Rs must for each child; ii) At Secondary School level, students should be sensitised about dignity of labour, world of work and career options; iii) After 10 years of schooling, create a new stream of VET with options for upward mobility- certificate, diploma, advanced diploma,



degree, post degree etc.; iv) Set up Vocational Education and Training Colleges on the pattern of Engineering and Medical Colleges. VETCs should run vocational courses in Engineering and Services Sector along with two academic subjects, as is mandated for ITI pass-outs to get equivalence with Class XII; v) Align Vocational education training system with International Standards.

He highlighted the conceptual framework, international experience, issues facing, suggested reforms and implementation of the proposed rationalisation of sector skill councils. Besides, he discussed the role of various agencies in implementing the proposed rationalisation of SSCs. He concluded the session by discussing the skill standards and financing of skills mentioned in the report.

Discussing the papers presented in the session, Dr. Narendra Thakur [Ambedkar College, University of Delhi] observed that universalisation of secondary schooling and provision of skills to youth need to be integrated into one major programme, as there is a big common ground between them. Both vocational education and secondary general education face serious challenges due to rising costs, and inequalities of caste, class and gender they create. Privatisation of both also create further inequalities. There is a need to introduce specific measures to promote inclusiveness in secondary education. If universalisation of secondary education is not inclusive of the provision of good skills, it does not help in reaching the sustainable development goals relating to education (SDG4).

As Prof. Arup Mitra noted, it is difficult to estimate skill shortage. But it is widely known that the skill gap – between demand and supply – is increasing over time. Researchers may like to use NSS unit level data to develop skill shortage index for various occupations, including in agriculture - the skill gap is increasing over time.

Prof. Mitra referred to the study on secondary education in Mumbai slums, which showed that there can be scope for much upward mobility both among boys/girls, though differently. Good secondary education should lead to upward mobility in education and also in employment, particularly among low-income families.

In the discussion that followed, several questions were raised: who goes to vocational education and why do they drop out? We need to look into this aspect in depth, based on sound database. Secondly, some corporates like Tata, Infosys (Narayana Murthy), WIPRO (Azim Premji) are loud enough to voice their requirements in terms of skilled manpower for their organisations. In contrast, majority of small sectors may not have any voice. Basically, Gandhiji's perspective on work and education is important and it should guide educational planners. Without any perspective, Government of India seems to be focusing on skill development, essentially to spend less on education. Dr. Ashutosh Singh opines that if education could provide skills, there would be no need to provide skills separately. He also

felt that in the present context, the corporate sector is not doing enough; their involvement is limited.

The chair felt that many of these issues need further probing and good research.

## **Panel Discussion: Prospects for Universalisation of Secondary Education**

Chairing the panel discussion session on “Prospects for Universalisation of Secondary Education”, Prof. Tilak sought the opinions of the experts on the subject of the discussion. He raised five pertinent questions – one for each panelist to ponder over. First, given the experienced growth in elementary education during the last few decades, and given the experience with the implementation of quite a few initiatives during the last couple of decades, including DPEP, EFA, SSA, RTE, midday meals and others, what are the prospects of achieving universal secondary education in the next few years? What are the pre-requisites and other essential points of policy action for achieving this laudable goal?

Second, it was indicated that the education system is expanding in terms of infrastructure, building, and other facilities; and enrolments are exploding. Thus, even as there has been remarkable quantitative progress, questions persist on the quality of education and learning levels of the school children. In this context, how does one ensure that in the effort to universalise secondary education, the quality of education is also adequately taken care of. What are the measures required to provide good quality education to secondary school graduates so that they gain skills, knowledge, values and attitudes, that go beyond the narrowly defined learning outcomes.

Third, quality of education critically depends upon the availability of teachers in adequate numbers and of appropriate quality. But teacher shortage has become the bane at every level of education in India – primary, upper primary, secondary, higher secondary and higher education. Teacher-student ratios are increasing and have reached alarming levels in some institutions, if not in any State as a whole, on average. The question is if we have to universalise secondary education with quality, what are the ways in which the teacher shortage and teacher quality problems can be addressed.

Fourth, generally it is held that secondary education can be regarded potentially as a first meaningful terminal level of education. But, for it to be a meaningful terminal level of education that ensures good job market and decent wages, secondary education needs to be providing good knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Even the Kothari Commission states that along with the academic stream, it is imperative to have skill orientation through vocational training and technical training programmes. Though the experience with vocational secondary education has not been satisfactory, the recently launched skill development programme promises good employment prospects for our youth. What then are the strategies required to produce secondary school graduates who can confidently enter labour market and, at the same time, be eligible for admission in higher education.

Finally, Prof. Tilak raised the issue of finances: where do we get the money for universalisation of secondary education and what are the options available. Though money does not necessarily solve all the problems in education, it is critically important; rather, it

forms an essential condition, but not a sufficient condition for development of education. While we have the target of spending six per cent of the national income, we are currently spending just about four per cent. Every level of education seems to be suffering from shortage of resources to fulfil the basic objective of expansion- quality. Given this background, how does one ensure resource adequacy for universalisation of secondary education and also ensure that the allocated resources are efficiently spent?

While responding to the first question, Prof. R. Govinda, who played an active role in drafting the Right to Education Act and the reports on extending RTE to secondary education, stated that the words universalisation and expansion are used often as if they are interchangeable. But, universalisation was observed to have a very specific connotation, involving two dimensions: universal provisions and universal participation of children, wherein universal provision meant free provision of education by the State while universal participation meant compulsory participation. Without the free and compulsory components, there will be no universalisation. Likewise if we say that one can join school only if one can afford it and one can attend school if one wants to. Such a scenario would not amount to universalisation since if one wants universal education, it has to contain free and compulsory provisions and only then would universalisation of secondary education be meaningful.

Prof. Govinda further stated universalisation of a given level of education all over the world is seen in relation to an age-group, not by level. For instance, in UK, the age group is 6-16 years, wherein all students in this age group should attend school and, in US, it's 7-18. In India, RTE also stipulates 6-14 years, which is what the Constitution states and that is where we need to check what really is the age group we should aim at and, based on that, we need to make an assessment of what we have achieved and what is yet to be covered. He further stressed that we need to fix the entry and the exit points which has a serious implication if we really want to pursue universalisation of secondary education. In India, we are not serious about pursuing universalisation of even elementary education as we have not really standardised the entry and the exit points and this is really a serious issue, Prof. Govinda observed.

On the prospects for universalisation, Prof. Govinda stated that data shows that 10 to 12 per cent people in the age group of 15-24 years are illiterate and this is a serious issue. This is the time when expansion of elementary, DPEP and other things were in high gear. The official data also shows that 20 per cent of the children dropped out without completing even five years of schooling and if three more years are added, it will shoot up further. He also mentioned that there is a huge gap between GRE and NRE at the secondary level. Further, he mentioned that in 50 per cent of India, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> are part of secondary school and there is always a chance of double counting – counting this as part of secondary education while it should be considered as a part of elementary education.

It was emphasised that the task before us in ensuring everybody should participate in secondary education is too huge because of the backlog that we created at the elementary level and, if we do not solve this, we will not be able to achieve universal education even after 70-80 years.

The whole idea of universal secondary education had begun to be considered since 2005. But the only thing that was done after 2005, was the launching of the scheme Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA). RMSA is a very small scheme touching only a small segment of secondary education. The space of secondary education is largely occupied by the private players and the role of government is relatively limited. He stated that there are States where there are no Government Schools; they are either private aided or private unaided schools like West Bengal and Gujarat. RMSA started only to support or provide assistance to Government Schools and it was marginally extended to include the government-aided schools. He stressed that we really need a transformation of the whole approach and the way of delivery to really achieve the task of universalisation of secondary education. Lastly, he stated that in terms of quality dimension we really need to rethink about what we have done so far. The core aspect of what we do depends upon two dimensions: curriculum and teachers. He highlighted that the secondary schools are full of problems in both the dimensions. There is huge shortage of teachers at the secondary level and even if there are teachers, they lack subject knowledge and this phenomenon is rampant both in private and government schools. Teachers, who are teaching Maths and Science, really have less or no knowledge about the subjects or have not even studied Science and Maths. He mentioned that one of the weakest links in secondary education is science education. Practically, there are no science labs in our country for any experiments or demonstrations as they just use the text books without much of practical knowledge.

He concluded by stating that there is no focus on teaching for the holistic development of children. We need to strengthen Science, Maths, and Communication for which we have not given adequate importance.

Responding to universalisation of quality secondary education, Prof. V. Vasanthi Devi, former Vice-Chancellor, Manorani Sundaranar University, Tamil Nadu, observed that political will and social commitment were the core ingredients or the components for taking India forward. This point has not figured in our discussion. She highlighted the need for a shift not only in the education policy but also in the characteristics of the State and the direction in which the country is moving. She further elaborated that today we are living in a welfare state; the ruling ideology of neo-liberalism cannot accommodate the welfare state and one of its ideas of universalisation of education of equal quality.

She stressed that today it is all about class education and the role of the schooling system, not just the secondary, act as a filtering process which just picks up people from socially,

economically and culturally capable segments while pushing out the disadvantaged. India has constructed an education system with built-in inequality and exclusion in the world. In India there are so many levels in schooling system. She stated that there is a very strong correlation between the caste system and education system. In India, there is a multi-track school system to ensure that each mini class has its own particular rung so as to make sure that children from the two levels do not meet. This is how the country is being fragmented by the education system.

Exclusion and inequality work in different ways, not only through streaming of children to different levels, but also through the designing of the curriculum, the evaluation system and different type of schools with different quality levels that demand the highest fees. In the prevailing scenario, a school that charges highest fees is one that has a connotation of good quality. Everything is defined in elite interest. This way, they exclude others and fail people. Thus, for inclusive growth, there is a need to involve all for a bigger picture. Prof. Vasanthi Devi further indicated that the elite interest and the corporate interest are now completely in sync. As it happens, elite interest is nothing but derived derivative of corporate interest, it was observed.

In such a system there is no political will whatsoever to provide equal quality education to all children. How one confronts or defeats this system is a real challenge?

Prof. Vasanthi Devi also highlighted that the curriculum is so designed that only children with social and economic capital can cope with it and disadvantaged children are literally pushed out from the system. The system does not address the needs of children coming from extremely difficult backgrounds – caste-wise, class-wise etc. and the very thought of children from different castes and classes sitting together is totally unthinkable. Children from EWS who have been brought to the elite school system, are often discriminated. There is a stigma attached to such children so much so that an elite school in Chennai even sent a circular to parents, forcing them to raise their voices against such inclusion by asking them as to whether they wanted their children to study along with dirty, uncultured children from EWS category and pick up bad habits from them.

There is need to fight against a system which has been structured in such a way as to exclude children from disadvantaged groups. The curriculum is so designed that a child hailing from a disadvantaged group cannot cope with it. This is one of the reasons why children of different classes drop out, she said while observing that, in effect, it was not a case of dropping out but being pushed out. Further, the curriculum does not match with the lived reality and lacks the content for the large mass of rural working class groups. Curriculum does not address the needs of the low-class, tribal children. Hence, there is a strong need to modify the curriculum so that inclusive development can take place in the

context of universalisation of education. The State, thus, needs to design its own curriculum system based on the need of all children, including those from disadvantaged groups.

The language of learning happens to be a deep-rooted form of exclusion as the universe of exclusion has grown around the English language. English became the soul language of the privileged, and provided the power or opportunity to exclude others. Presently, in India, those who converse in English with an American accent or with fluency and grace and those who can function only in their mother tongue or regional language belong to two different groups.

Skill development courses should not be for the elite classes who will be going from IITs directly to the corporates; it's for the other group of people who are concerned with getting decent jobs in the labour market. She referred to the concept of common schooling system, with neighbourhood school as the only solution to move forward, as mentioned by Prof. Dubey in his introductory remarks. Even when there are local government schools, parents prefer to send their children to private schools located far away from the house despite facing of financial crises or being saddled with debts.

There is a need to understand as to why government schools fail and are being rejected and why till the 70s they were not? The government school system collapsed only after the multi-track system started and provided the option, to those who could afford it, to go to private school and get fitted into the layered schooling system. The government actually let the government school system collapse as the teachers were not appointed, infrastructure was allowed to collapse, funds were not provided and schools were starved of resources, resulting in failure of the government schooling system. In a different way, it is possible to close down the private schools or reduce their numbers by strengthening government schools.

She highlighted the need for an alternative model of education system in which it would be possible with to take out the education from the central ambit and decentralise it and give it to the local levels. Each State would then be required to control and design its own education system and curriculum according to its own historical and social background.

Prof. Santosh Panda, Professor, Indira Gandhi National Open University and former Chairman, National Council for Teacher Education, concentrated on the issue of teachers. Teacher training in pre-primary, primary and elementary level mainly concentrated on the quantity of teachers rather than quality. After the extension in 2017, 675292 teachers were allowed to do distance learning and they were untrained in-service teachers. It was further mentioned that for secondary school, there is no data to show that the teachers are appointed without qualification.

He highlighted that when MHRD declared that it would be providing online training to untrained teachers – 15 lakhs teachers got enrolled, thus implying that 15 lakhs teachers were untrained across all levels of education. Further, 1.75 lakh teachers called Shiksha Karmis were also appointed long back without any teacher education qualification or without clearing the teacher eligibility test. For the last few years, there is hardly any increase in secondary or senior secondary schools. The regular number of teacher to be appointed have been reduced and there is substantial increase in the number of contractual teachers who do not pass the teacher eligibility test.

It was further disclosed that undergraduates are also teaching in secondary and senior secondary schools where the minimum stipulated qualification is graduate.

Observing that the curriculum is in danger, Prof.Panda stressed the need to design it in such a way that it addresses the needs of both the teachers and the students and makes them both happy by involving practical teaching as well. It should have social impact and help children deal with problems, while providing live learning etc.. He stated that the demand and supply deficiency can be easily seen and that teacher education program is very weak.

Referring to employability of secondary school graduates, Professor Arup Mitra, Director-General, National Institute of Labour Economics, Research and Development and Professor, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi, pointed out that productivity is directly linked to quality of education. He further stated that health has a very strong bearing on education. Thus, if the level of education is high, then one tends to have good health, the rationale being that people know the importance of investment on health if they are educated.

Prof. Mitra also mentioned that people who have acquired secondary level of education will be able to get decent jobs in the labour market as compared to those who have just passed elementary level of education.

Reflecting on the grave issue of finances for universal secondary education, raised by the chair, Prof. Praveen Jha, Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, started with the remark that fundamentally education should be viewed as Social Common Good. In other words, it is life's basic necessity to meet basic human needs and education is central to the process. He highlighted that one core reason for degraded education system is inadequate resources at all levels of education. He further stated that there is a need for a political will, structural changes and change in education reforms. There is a case for changing the overall architect of the system. There is a need to think beyond the possibilities of resources mobilisation which give us political spaces that have not been explored barring the transition to GST. He highlighted that there is a need first to look for solutions to the challenges of resource mobilisation.



Prof. Tilak, who was chairing the panel discussion, summed up by stating that we need a strong political commitment which can only be possible with social pressures and only then can we achieve the universalisation of quality education. He added that there is a need to redesign the curriculum so as to impart good values, attitudes and knowledge, besides skills. While noting the enormous growth of private schools with serious adverse implications for equity, quality and access to education, Prof. Tilak emphasised the immense need to strengthen, rather rejuvenate government schools on a large scale. This would entail huge investment in terms of financial resources, quality teachers, infrastructure etc. He drew the attention of the audience to a report of the Sub-committee on improving government schools in India. He also underscored the need for regular appointment of qualified teachers in all levels of education. Options relating to vocational training and skill development programmes need to be carefully designed. Prof. Tilak also flagged the idea of a common school system as the panacea to many problems faced in education.

### **Concluding remarks by Prof. Muchkund Dubey**

During the two days of the Seminar, as many as 22 papers were presented in six technical sessions, apart from the inaugural session, which actually turned out to be the first technical session of the Seminar. These sessions were supplemented by an exciting panel discussion. Nearly 50 scholars – experts, young and serious researchers, experienced administrators took part in the Seminar. The two-day deliberations covered many important issues relating to secondary education, elementary and total school education, including expansion in terms of enrolments, infrastructure, teachers, and gross enrolment ratio, inequalities by gender, social and economic -- in education, quality of education, particularly relating to learning levels, standards of education, in governance and leadership programmes, etc. Besides discussions on vocational education and skill training, there were also meaningful discussions on public and private schools, and financing of education.

Concluding the wide ranging discussions in the Seminar, Prof. Dubey observed that the issue of universal secondary education was extremely complicated. Instead of talking about universalisation of any one level of school education, it would be better to consider the universalisation of school education as a whole. This has not been done in many of the countries. There were so many conceptual, logical, and practical links between the two levels of education – elementary and secondary- that it would be a mistake to take one level after the other for universalisation, viz. either universalisation of elementary education or universalisation of secondary education, or, for that matter, to consider one to be more important than the other. One of the biggest flaws of the Right to Education Act was to keep secondary education out, without recognising the difficulty it would create in future. He further stated that these days the concept of basic or elementary education is ill-designed and needs to be redesigned. As secondary education has become the basic need, it has to be considered as basic education. In this context, he also referred to the definition and scope given by the expert group of UNESCO of basic education, which comprises minimum 10 years of formal education after the pre-primary level. Highlighting the point that education is being provided in different types of schools, each devoted to a particular group of students, Prof. Dubey stated that in the process we are only universalising the discrimination in education. He concluded his remarks by emphasising the importance of common school system, as outlined in the Report of the Bihar commission.

The seminar ended with a Vote of Thanks proposed by Ms. Jaya Nair, Senior Research Associate, Council for Social Development.

## Recommendations

Finally, to sum up, the following can be noted as major recommendations that emerged from the discussions in the Seminar:

- *Universalising Secondary Education:* While universalising secondary education, focus should be laid on the serious glitches on several fronts, viz., bringing the large number of out of school children under secondary schools; dealing with issues of inequalities that have taken serious roots in secondary education; addressing issues of shortage of teachers, inadequacy of funds; and regulating the practice of Public private partnership, and other such measures. There is an immense need to strengthen rather to rejuvenate government schools on a large scale, which requires huge investment of financial resources, quality teachers, infrastructure etc. Strong political will and social commitment is needed to improve education status, policy design and implementation, quality improvement, reduction in inequality and improvement in governance. Governance reforms are critical for improving quality and reducing inequality.
- *Common School System:* In order to eliminate the dual system of education that exists for the haves and have-nots, Common School system of education with neighbourhood school should be promoted. The Right to Education Act in its comprehensive spirit should be extended to secondary education, so that secondary education is also provided free, compulsory and of equitable good quality. Instead of talking about universalisation of any one level of school education, it is better considering the universalisation of school education as a whole.
- *Quality Secondary Education:* There is a need to lay special emphasis on quality of education and learning levels of children in schools. In addition to providing good quality trained teachers, the curriculum should be redesigned in such a way so that all children, irrespective of their social and economic background are able to cope up with the system, which will help in preventing dropping out or pushing out from school. A redesigned curriculum would also help to imparting good values, attitudes and knowledge, besides skills.
- *Private Schools:* There is an enormous growth of private schools in the country and a large number of them are run on commercial principles. Many such profit-oriented, non-philanthropic private schools cause more inequalities in education and in society at large. There should be a tough regulation on the growth of private schools in the country, and their functioning.
- *Skill Development:* At the secondary level of education, it is important that students are sensitised about dignity of labour, world of work and career options. There is a need for a proper mix of skill-oriented training, and academic subjects in secondary education; and this mix should be compulsory for all. Options regarding vocational training programmes, skill development programme, should be carefully designed.

## **Annexures**

1. Concept Note
2. Programme
3. List of Participants:
  - Special Invitees
  - Chairpersons
  - Discussants
  - Authors of papers
  - Rapporteurs
  - Other Participants
4. Brief Profile of Resource Persons, Speakers, Chairs and Discussants
5. List of seminar papers
6. Welcome and Introductory Remarks (Prof Jandhyala B. G. Tilak)
7. Inaugural Address (by Prof Rounaq Jahan)
8. Papers

## 1 Concept Note

During the post-independence period, while primary education and to some extent higher education have received some priority in India, relatively secondary education has been subject to severe neglect. It was assumed that secondary education has no particular role in the development of a poor agrarian country.

It is only recently it is realised that secondary education plays a crucial role in development of the society – in raising economic growth, improving income distribution, reducing poverty, and improving human development. While primary education gives the basic three r's, rarely does it provide skills necessary for employment – self employment or otherwise that can ensure some wages and economic living. Moreover, most of the literacy and primary education programmes are also found to be not imparting literacy that is sustainable, so that children do not relapse into illiteracy. Secondly, primary and even elementary education rarely serves as a terminal level of education. Thirdly, even if primary education imparts some valuable attributes, in terms of attitudes and skills and if primary education is able to take the people from below the poverty line to above the poverty line, it is possible that this could be *just above* the poverty line, but not much above; and more importantly the danger of their falling below poverty line at any time could be high; the skills and attributes may not sustain. On the other hand, it is secondary education that consolidates the gains received from primary education; as secondary education helps in innovating technology and in sustaining growth; it is secondary (and higher education) that provides skills that could be useful in the labour market; it is secondary and higher education that can keep the people above poverty line without such a danger of falling back into poverty trap -- educational poverty or income poverty; and in fact, it is secondary education that can ensure a higher quality of life, by increasing the social, occupational and economic levels of the households.

Today, there are 62 million students in secondary (including senior secondary) education in the country. The gross enrolment ratio at lower secondary level was 78.5 per cent and in senior secondary level it was 54.2 per cent in 2016-17. These gross figures underline how far away we are from universal secondary education. More worrisome aspect is high rate of dropout in secondary education: 35 per cent of the students enrolled in grade IX dropout before completing grade X and 38 per cent before completing grade XII. The quality of secondary education, reflected in poor employability of secondary school graduates and their unsuitability for admission in higher education, is a matter of serious concern. Secondary education is also associated with a high degree of inequalities – regional and inter-state, between different social groups and economic classes. In short, secondary education is associated with the elusive triangle of low of levels of quantitative expansion, poor quality and a high degree of inequalities.

An important and disturbing feature of secondary education in India is a high proportion of private schools – government supported private institutions and more importantly private unaided institutions as a proportion of all schools. The latter have increased in large numbers in the recent past. It is increasingly being noted that the latter are associated with several maladies and unfair practices.

Many of these aspects have not received much attention of the educational planners and policy makers for a long time. Now with the rapid progress in universal elementary education -- though the deficits particularly in terms of quality, infrastructure and teachers are still very large, partly attributed to the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, midday meals and other interventions made at national and state levels, naturally attention of the state as well as the society at large shifts to secondary education. At the same time, the unfinished agenda on universal elementary education cannot be lost sight of. On the lines of SSA, the Government of India has also launched Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), with an objective of universalizing secondary education. Government has also initiated, among others, special programmes such as Shala Siddhi and School Leadership to improve quality of education and quality of leadership at school level. Recognising the linkages between elementary and secondary education, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CBSE) has also recommended integration of SSA and RMSA. It is also being discussed the need to extend the Right to Education Act to secondary education. These initiatives and discussions are also reflective of the realization of the state that for the development of the modern nation, universal, strong, equitable and quality secondary education is essential.

Thus, the launching of the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) a few years ago with an objective to provide universal secondary education, the current discourses on the need to extend the Right to Education Act to secondary education, and the more recent initiative of the Government of India to integrate Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan with RMSA and Teacher Training, and thus launch a new “Integrated Scheme for School Education” that aims at administrative, financial and programmatic integration, with a view to improve “school effectiveness measured in terms of equal opportunities for schooling and equitable learning outcomes” and raise “allocative efficiency and optimal utilisation of budgetary and human resources” -- necessitate a serious discussion on theoretical, empirical and practical aspects on universal secondary education, as all these have serious implications not only for secondary education, but also for universal elementary education, rather for the whole education sector.

In this overall background, it is proposed to organize a seminar on “Universal Secondary Education” to discuss some of the critical policy issues and practical problems in the development of secondary education.

Some of the issues meant for discussion in the seminar include

- Importance of universal secondary education in development

- Growth and inequalities in secondary education
- Quality of secondary education
- Central, state government and private schools
- 
- Funding secondary education and Grants in Aid in secondary education
- Fees in secondary education
- Foreign aid for secondary education
- Performance of students in board examinations
- Shala Sidhi
- Development of school leadership
- Extension of RTE to secondary Education and its implications
- Integration of SSA and RMSA
- Curriculum and Development in Secondary Education
- Importance of vocational and technical skills in secondary education
- Quality of teachers, teacher methods, teacher training
- Supervision, Inspection and School administration
- Transition to higher Education
- Transition to work

This is not an exhaustive list. Papers are invited on any of these or other themes related to secondary education in India.

The Seminar will be organized by the Council for Social Development on 14-15 July 2018, in the India International Centre, New Delhi. Invited participants in the seminar include researchers, policy planners, administrators and those who are deeply interested in the development of school education in the country.

### **Important Dates**

Acceptance of the invitation: 22 April 2018

Title and Abstract: 1 May 2018

Full paper: 1 July 2018

Seminar Dates 14-15 July 2018

## 2 Programme

Hrs	Sessions	Chairs, Discussants, Speakers and Rapporteurs
<b>DAY ONE – SATURDAY, THE 14<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2018</b>		
9.30	<b>Registration</b>	
10.00 – 11.15	<b>INAUGURAL SESSION</b>	
	Chair: Prof. Muchkund Dubey, President, Council for Social Development	
	Welcome & Introduction to the Seminar	Prof. Jandhyala. B.G. Tilak, Distinguished Professor, CSD
	Inaugural Address	Prof Rounaq Jahan, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka & Adjunct Professor, International Affairs, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University
	Chairman’s Remarks	Prof Muchkund Dubey, President, CSD
	Vote of Thanks	Prof. Ashok Pankaj, Director, CSD
	Rapporteur	Ms. Antora Borah, Research Associate, CSD
<b>11.15 – 11.30 Tea / Coffee</b>		
11.30 – 13.00	<b>Technical Session I: Universalisation of Secondary Education towards Integrated Model of School Education (Extension of RTE to Secondary Edn)</b>	
	Chair	Prof. R. Govinda, Distinguished Professor, CSD
	Discussant	Prof Sridhar Srivastava, Professor, National Council of Educational Research and Training
	Paper Presenters	<i>Integration of SSA and RMSA : A Major Policy Shift in School Education of India</i> Dr. Aparajita Sharma, Save the Children
		<i>Issues in Extension of RTE 2009 to Secondary Level Education</i> Dr. Sunita Chugh, Associate Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
		<i>Extension of RTE to secondary Education and its implications</i> Dr.Madhumita Bandyopadhyay, Associate Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
	<i>Policies and Progress towards Universalisation of Secondary Education: Issues and Challenges</i> Dr. Pankaj Deep, Assistant Professor, Gautam Buddha University, Greater Noida	
Rapporteur	Dr. Susmita Mitra, Assistant Professor, CSD	
<b>13.00 – 14.00 Lunch</b>		
14.00 – 15.30	<b>Technical Session II: Growth of Secondary Education in India and States</b>	
	Chair	Prof. Atul Sharma, Distinguished Professor,CSD
	Discussant	Prof. Kumar Suresh, Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
Paper Presenters	<i>Public Provisioning for Secondary Education in India: A Situation Assessment</i> Prof. Praveen Jha and Mr. SatadruSikdar, CESP, Jawaharlal Nehru	



		University
		<i>Universalisation of Secondary Education – The Case of Telugu Speaking States</i> Dr.P. Prudhvikar Reddy, Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad
		<i>Push-out, not Drop-out: Youth and Secondary Schooling in India</i> Prof. Manabi Majumdar, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata and Dr Sangram Mukherjee, Pratichi Institute, Kolkata
		<i>Secondary Education in Maharashtra: Issues of concern</i> Ms. Anuradha De and Ms. Meera Samson, CORD
	Rapporteur	Dr. Mondira Bhattacharya, Assistant Professor, CSD
<b>15.30 – 15.45 Tea / Coffee</b>		
	<b>Technical Session III: Inequalities in Secondary Education</b>	
	Chair	Prof. Praveen Jha, Professor, JNU
	Discussant	Dr Hem S. Borker, Assistant Professor, Centre for Study Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Jamia Millia Islamina
15.45 – 17.30	Paper Presenters	<i>Universal Secondary Education in India- Access, Equity and Social Justice</i> Prof. Chavva Sheela Reddy, Chair Professor and Ms. Vandana Shukla, Research Officer, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Chair in Social Justice, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi
		<i>Socioeconomic Determinants of Secondary Education in India: Insights from NSS Unit Level Data of 71<sup>st</sup> Round</i> Dr. Susmita Mitra, Assistant Professor, CSD
		<i>Tracking the Progress of a Child from Enrolment to Completion of Secondary Education in India</i> Mr. Deepak Kumar, Ph.D. Scholar, CESP, Jawaharlal Nehru University
		<i>Reproducing Gendered Knowledge and Class through Education: A Case of a Muslim Habitation in North East Delhi</i> Dr. Vaishali, Project Junior Consultant, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
		Rapporteur
<b>DAY TWO – SUNDAY, THE 15<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2018</b>		
	<b>Technical Session IV: Quality and Inequalities in Secondary Education</b>	
	Chair	Dr. Rukmini Banerji, Chief Executive Officer, Pratham Education Foundation
	Discussant	Prof. Avinash K. Singh, Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
9.30 – 11.30	Paper Presenters	<i>Transition to Higher Education and Equitable Learning Outcomes</i> Dr.Manasi Thapliyal Navani, Assistant Professor, Ambedkar University
		<i>Quality Assurance In Secondary School Education: Ground Realities of School Inspections</i> Prof K Pushpanadham, MS University, Vadodara and Dr.Pallavi Khedkar, Academic Director, Parul University, Vadodara
		<i>Regional Diversity, School Leadership Practices and School Quality: A</i>

		<i>Comparative Study of Two Indian States in North Eastern Region</i> Dr. N.Mythili, Assistant Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
		<i>Revitalizing Academic Support for Secondary Education</i> Prof Pramila Menon, Retired Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
		<i>Who Completes Secondary Education: Examining Role of Individual and Household Characteristics</i> Dr.Nivedita Sarkar, Assistant Professor, Ambedkar University
	Rapporteur	Dr.Ankita Goyal, Assistant Professor, CSD
<b>11.30 – 11.45 Tea/Coffee</b>		
	<b>Technical Session V: Public versus Private Schools</b>	
	Chair	Dr Tapas K Sen, Retired Professor, NIPFP
	Discussant	Dr Renu Singh, Young Lives
11.45 – 13.15	Paper Presenters	<i>Changing Public-Private Mix In School Education and Its Implications for Policy</i> Prof. Achin Chakraborty, Professor of Economics and Director, Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata
		<i>Expanding Private Education Market and Parental Choice for Schools in India: Evidence from IHDS Data</i> Dr. Pradeep Kumar Choudhury, Assistant Professor, ZHCES, Jawaharlal Nehru University
		<i>The Power Game: A Case Study of A Private School in Odisha</i> Dr. Amrita Sastry, Dept of Sociology, Jesus and Mary College, University of Delhi
		<i>Financing and Management of Secondary Education in Uttar Pradesh</i> Prof Mohd Muzammil, Ex-Vice Chancellor, Dr BR Ambedkar University, Agra
	Rapporteur	Dr.M. Poornima, Assistant Professor, CSD
<b>13.15 – 14.00 Lunch</b>		
	<b>Technical Session VI: Secondary Education, Skill Development and Transition to Labour Market</b>	
	Chair	Prof. Arup Mitra, Director General, National Institute of Labour Economic, Research and Development (NILERD/IAMR) & Institute of Economic Growth
	Discussant	Prof. Narendra Thakur, Ambedkar College, University of Delhi
14.00 – 15.30	Paper Presenters	<i>Elusive Vocational Education Programme: An Analysis on Trends in Indian Secondary Schools</i> Dr. Mona Sedwal, Assistant Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
		<i>Missing Middle of Educated Unemployable: A Critical Perspective on Secondary Education in India</i> Dr.Bornali Bhandari, Dr Charu Jain and Mr Ajaya Sahu, National Council of Applied Economic Research
		<i>Reforms for 'Skill India'</i> Sri Ashutosh Singh, Specialist in Skill Development Programmes, Indian School of Business, Hyderabad

	Rapporteur	Dr. P.M. Arathi, Assistant Professor, CSD
<b>15:30-15:45 Tea / Coffee</b>		
15.45 – 17:00	<b>Panel Discussion: Prospects for Universalisation of Secondary Education</b>	
	Chair	Prof. Jandhyala B G Tilak, CSD
	Panellists	Prof. R Govinda, Council for Social Development
		Prof V Vasanthi Devi, Manormaniam Sundaranar University
		Prof. Santosh Panda, Indira Gandhi National Open University
		Prof. Arup Mitra, National Institute of Labour Economics, Research and Development & Institute of Economic Growth
		Prof. Praveen Jha, Jawaharlal Nehru University
Rapporteur	Ms. Ramandeep, Research Associate, CSD	
17:00- 17:30	Concluding Observations	Prof Muchkund Dubey, President, Council for Social Development
	Vote of Thanks	Ms. Jayalekshmi Nair, Senior Research Associate, CSD

### **3 List of Participants:**

#### **Special Invitees**

1. Prof. Rounaq Jahan, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka, Bangladesh
2. Prof. Rehman Sobhan, Chairman, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka, Bangladesh

#### **Chairpersons**

1. Prof. Muchkund Dubey, President, Council for Social Development, New Delhi
2. Prof. R. Govinda, Distinguished Professor, Council for Social Development, New Delhi
3. Prof. Atul Sharma, Distinguished Professor, Council for Social Development, New Delhi
4. Prof. Praveen Jha, Professor, Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
5. Dr. Rukmini Banerji, Chief Executive Officer, Pratham Education Foundation, New Delhi
6. Dr Tapas K Sen, Retired Professor, NIPFP, New Delhi
7. Prof. Arup Mitra, Director General, National Institute of Labour Economic, Research and Development (NILERD/IAMR) & Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi
8. Prof. Jandhyala B G Tilak, Distinguished Professor, Council for Social Development, New Delhi

#### **Discussants**

1. Prof Sridhar Srivastava, Professor, National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi
2. Prof. Kumar Suresh, Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi
3. Dr Hem S. Borker, Assistant Professor, Centre for Study Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi
4. Prof. Avinash K. Singh, Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, v
5. Dr Renu Singh, Country Director, Young Lives, New Delhi
6. Prof. Narendra Thakur, Ambedkar College, University of Delhi, New Delhi

#### **Panellists**

1. Prof. R Govinda, Distinguished Professor, Council for Social Development, New Delhi
2. Prof V Vasanthi Devi, Former Vice Chancellor, Manormaniam Sundaranar University, Chennai
3. Prof. Santosh Panda, Professor, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi

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5. Dr. P. Prudhvikar Reddy, Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad
6. Prof. Manabi Majumdar, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata and Dr Sangram Mukherjee, Pratichi Institute, Kolkata
7. Ms. Anuradha De and Ms. Meera Samson, CORD, New Delhi
8. Prof. Chavva Sheela Reddy, Chair Professor and Ms. Vandana Shukla, Research Officer, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Chair in Social Justice, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi
9. Dr. Susmita Mitra, Assistant Professor, Council for Social Development, New Delhi
10. Mr. Deepak Kumar, Ph.D. Scholar, CESP, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
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12. Dr. Manasi Thapliyal Navani, Assistant Professor, Ambedkar University, Delhi
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22. Sri Ashutosh Singh, Specialist in Skill Development Programmes, Indian School of Business, Hyderabad

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- 40 Prof. Zoya Hassan, Distinguished Professor, Council for Social  
Development, New Delhi



#### **4 Brief Profile of Resource Persons, Speakers, Chairs and Discussants**

**Prof. Achin Chakraborty**, Professor of Economics and Director, Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata

**Dr. Amrita Sastry**, Dept of Sociology, Jesus and Mary College, University of Delhi - Teaching for last 8 years. Core area of interest in sociology of education. Currently Working on a project - NDMC school at Bapu Dham to develop it to be a model school ( approval from the president's office On Jesus and Mary College's golden jubilee celebration).

Ms. Anuradha De M.A. from University of Calcutta and M.Phil from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Ms de worked as Lecturer, Netaji Nagar College, Kolkata, senior research fellow PROBE team, is currently Director, Collaborative Research and Dissemination (CORD), New Delhi.

**Dr. Aprajita Sharma** - A development professional who have been working for a decade now with various marginalized communities, state and NGOs on education focusing on gender and conflict and education. Her interests are popular culture, pedagogy in school education for peace and sustainable development. Aparajita has been nominated for the International Visitor Leadership Program 2014 by the US Dept of States for her work in education and entrepreneurial skills development for the youth and women primarily engaged in the unorganised sector. Recently she has authored a book on Education For Peace and her articles published on national and international journals have been received well.

**Prof. Arup Mitra**, Professor of Economics at the Institute of Economic Growth (IEG), Delhi is currently the DG, NILERD. His research interest includes development studies, urban economics, labour and welfare, industrial growth and productivity and gender inequality – areas in which he has several publications. Many of his research papers are published in international refereed journals. He has been a member of several expert committees and his contribution to policy making has been significant. At the IEG other than research he has been engaged in teaching the trainee officers of the Indian Economic Service.

**Prof. Ashok Pankaj**, Ph. D., LL. B., having twenty years of teaching and research experiences, is a Professor and currently Director of CSD. His area of specialisation includes law and political economy with a focus on public policies, institutions of governance and development, interface between development and democracy and society and polity. Prof. Pankaj has directed/co-directed about a dozen research and evaluation projects on socio-economic development sponsored by the agencies like UNDP, ILO, UNIFEM, UN Women, ICSSR, Planning Commission of India, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Panchayat Raj, Ministry of Minority Affairs and Food and Civil Supply Department (Government of Bihar in association with the World Bank). He has contributed numerous articles and reviews to reputed professional journals, namely *South Asia Research*, *Contributions to*

*Indian Sociology, Journal of Asian and African Studies, International Studies, Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics, Contemporary South Asia, Social Scientist, Economic and Political Weekly, Poverty in Focus, Social Change.* He has edited two books, viz. *Right to Work and Rural India: Working of the MGNREGS*, Sage Publications, 2012, and *Subalternity, Exclusion and Social Change in India*, Cambridge University Press, 2014.

**Sri Ashutosh Singh** - works on policy issues on Skills and Jobs. He has worked with Central and State Ministries, corporate, non-profits, parliamentarian, National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC) investee Training Company, Sector Skills Council (under MSDE) and Govt of India Committee-Sharda Prasad Committee on Skill Reforms. He is an MBA from Indian School of Business (ISB) Hyderabad.

**Prof. Atul Sarma** is currently Distinguished Professor in Council for Social Development, New Delhi. After completing tenure of Vice-Chancellor, Rajiv Gandhi University, Itanagar, became a Member, Thirteenth Finance Commission till February 2010. Thereafter he was ICSSR Mahatma Gandhi National Fellow for two years (2011-12). He is also Chairman, OKD Institute for Social Change and Development, Guwahati.

**Prof. Avinash K Singh** is the professor in the Foundation of Education Department of NUEPA. His areas of specialisation are Policy Analysis and Programme Evaluation, Decentralized Educational Management, Tribal Education. He has published research papers and articles in national and international journals and books; conducted several research studies.

**Dr. Bornali Bhandari**, Bornali Bhandari is a Fellow at NCAER with a background in international economics and macroeconomics, specifically focussing on the impact of globalisation on development. Currently she is working on Direct Benefit Transfers and on the challenge of skilling India. Her wider research interests include analysis of infrastructure, particularly the roads and ICT sectors, G-20 issues like climate change, finance and reserve currency and trade-related issues. She is also co-ordinating NCAER's macro publications – the Quarterly Review of the Economy and Business Sentiments Survey. Bornali has completed her doctorate from the University of Oregon, USA

**Prof. Chavva Sheela Reddy**, Chair Professor of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Chair in Social Justice, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi

**Mr. Deepak Kumar** is a Ph.D. Research Scholar at Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. His research interests include Economics of Education and Development Economics. He completed his M.Phil. from Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University. He was a part of the team that conducted Qualitative Field survey organised by CMS-Targeted research to Empower change (A Collaboration Project with J-PAL conducted in four districts of Haryana). He was also

associated with the team conducting quantitative field Survey organised by Indian School of Business (ISB), Hyderabad.

**Prof. R. Govinda** is currently Distinguished Professor in Council for Social Development, New Delhi. He has been a former Vice Chancellor, National University of Educational Planning, New Delhi which has recently become National Institute of Educational Planning (Deemed to be University), New Delhi. His publications include, *India Education Report — Profile of Basic Education*, Oxford University Press; *Community Participation and Empowerment in Primary Education in India*, SAGE Publications New Delhi and *Who Goes to School: Study of Exclusion in Education*, Oxford University Press

**Dr. Hem Borker** is assistant professor at the centre for the study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. She has earned her DPhil in Education from the University of Oxford on the Clarendon Scholarship. Her research interests centre around education, social exclusion, gender and youth. She also holds an MA in social work from the University of Delhi and BA in history from St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi.

**Prof Jandhyala B G Tilak** is a Distinguished Professor at the Council for Social Development, New Delhi. Former Vice-Chancellor, National University of Educational Planning and Administration, Prof Tilak, an economist of education, holds a Ph.D. Degree in Economics of Education from the Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi. Dr Tilak was on the research and teaching faculty of the National University of Educational Planning and Administration, University of Delhi, Indian Institute of Education, University of Virginia and the Hiroshima University (Japan), and a Visiting Professor in Economics, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. He was also on the research staff of the World Bank. Prof Tilak has authored/edited dozen books and about 300 research papers in the area of economics of education and development studies, published in reputed journals. His current and past publishers (of his books) include Sage, Orient BlackSwan, Routledge/Taylor & Francis, Academic Foundation, and UNESCO-IIEP. Recipient of Swami Pranavananda Saraswati National Award of the UGC for his outstanding scholarly research in Education (1999), Dr. Malcolm Adiseshiah Award for distinguished research contributions to development studies (2003), Inspirational Teacher of the Year Global Education Award 2012, and Devang Mehta national education award for outstanding contribution to education (2015). Dr Tilak had a privilege of delivering a keynote address to a meeting of the Noble laureates in Barcelona in 2005. Prof Tilak was the Editor of Journal of Educational Planning and Administration and is on the editorial board of several professional journals. Professor Tilak also served as Vice-President, and as President of the Comparative Education Society of India (2010-12), and is on the Board of Directors of the Comparative Education Society of Asia.

**Prof. Kumar Suresh** is the professor in the Educational Administration Department of NUEPA. His areas of specialisation are Public Policy and Diversity Management, Federalism, Educational Policy and Governance. Published research papers, monographs and books on

the theme of policy response to diversity, multiculturalism and inclusion, federalism and multilevel governance, human rights education etc.

**Dr. Madhumita Bandyopadhyay**, is an Associate Professor at the Department of School and Non-formal education in National Institute of Educational Planning (Deemed to be University), New Delhi. Dr. Bandyopadhyay is currently engaged in research, teaching and training programmes of the University. She is a Ph.D. (Geography) from Centre for Studies of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Her research interests include education of disadvantaged groups, decentralization of educational governance and the education of women. She has also published many articles and chapters in books and journals of international repute.

**Prof. Manabi Majumdar**, Professor in Political Science, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata. She had obtained Ph.D from University of Maryland. Her research interests include Political Economy of education, democratic decentralisation and human development.

**Dr. Manasi Thapliyal Navani**, is Assistant Professor with the School of Education Studies, Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD). Her doctoral work in the domain of sociology of higher education engages with academic reforms and dynamics of change in universities through a case study of University of Delhi. Her research interests include education reforms, educational policy and practice, change and leadership, Peoples' Science Movement and education for social transformation.

**Ms. Meera Samson**, is a senior researcher based at Collaborative Research and Dissemination (CORD), New Delhi, India. [CORD is a not-for-profit research organisation which focuses on articulating the problems of the disadvantaged primarily through field-based research.] Samson has been doing research on education for over twenty-five years, focusing primarily on the quality of education accessed by disadvantaged groups. She was part of the team who worked on the PROBE report in the nineties. Secondary education has been a focus of research for many years, earlier in Delhi, Rajasthan and West Bengal, and more recently in Maharashtra

**Dr. Mona Sedwal**, Assistant Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration has worked in the area of Education for All (EFA) and has contributed in the publication of two books published by Oxford University Press entitled India Education Report, A Profile of Basic Education in India, edited by R. Govinda, 2002 and India Education Report, Progress of Basic Education, edited by R. Govinda and Mona Sedwal, 2017. She was associated in the preparation of Country Report entitled 'India' published in 2000 and 2007. She was also associated in the preparation of a synthesis document entitled Different Approaches for Achieving EFA: Indian Experience published jointly by UNESCO, New Delhi and National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi, 2003. She played a significant role in the publication of state reports and thematic papers for

the National Evaluation of Operation Blackboard in 2007. She has authored two books in history of education entitled Genesis and Growth of University Education in India and Development of University Education. She has authored and co-authored several articles related to history of education, teacher education and disadvantaged groups. She has prepared Practical Tips for Teaching Multigrade Classes for the series on Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for Creating Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environments Specialized Booklet 4 published by UNESCO Bangkok, 2013. The booklet was jointly prepared with Rashmi Diwan, Associate Professor, National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA).

**Prof. Muchkund Dubey**, President of CSD, has Master's degree in economics from Patna University and later studied economics in Oxford and New York universities. He has a D. Litt degree (Honoris Causa) from the University of Calcutta. He had an illustrious career in the Indian Foreign Service, serving, among others, as India's High Commissioner to Bangladesh and the Permanent Representative to U.N. Organizations in Geneva. He retired from the Indian Foreign Service after occupying the post of Foreign Secretary to the Government of India. He then joined the Jawaharlal Nehru University as Professor where he taught for close to eight years. As an international civil servant, he served at the headquarters of both the United Nations and the UNDP. He was the Indian Member on the Executive Board of UNESCO, Chairman of the Common School System Commission, Bihar, and Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of Sikkim. His areas of specialization have been international economic relations, India's social and economic development, international security and disarmament, international development cooperation and world order issues. He has authored two books, Unequal Treaty: World Trading Order after GATT and India's Foreign Policy: Coping with the Changing World; edited three books including, Indian Society Today: Challenges of Equality, Integration and Empowerment; and co-edited six books.

**Dr. N. Mythili**, Assistant Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration has completed her Ph.D. in the area of Education from Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bangalore. Her areas of work include educational data bank, school leadership, school quality, improving student learning and teacher education. Organisations where she was involved prior to joining NCSL, NIEPA include centre for Multidisciplinary development research (CMDR), Dharwad; Azim Premji Foundation, Bangalore; and TISS, Mumbai.

**Dr. Narendra Thakur** teaches Economics in Bhimarao Ambedkar College, University of Delhi. Presently, he is doing his postdoctoral research on "Shadow Education in Global City: Coaching Industry in Delhi" in JNU, it is funded by ICSSR, MHRD. His areas of specialization are applied econometrics, economics of education and migration. He published his research articles in journals like EPW and chapters in edited books. **Dr.**

**Dr. Nivedita Sarkar**, teaches at Ambedkar University Delhi. She holds a Ph.D. in Economics of education and her research interest lies in Economics of Education, Applied

Econometrics, Higher education, Development economics and Educational Financing. Earlier she worked at National University of Educational Planning and Administration, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy and P.G.D.A.V Evening College, Delhi University. Her current research focuses on skills and labour market outcomes, privatisation in higher education and inequality in access to higher education.

**Dr. Pradeep Kumar Choudhury**, is an Assistant Professor of Economics at the Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India. His research has dealt with various aspects of Indian development, especially issues related to education, health and the labour. His specific research interests include: economics of education, financing of education, education and labor market and educational inequality

**Prof Pramila Menon**, retired from the National University of Educational Planning and Administration in 2013, after completing thirty years. Worked mainly in the area of elementary education. Areas of specialisation include, community participation, minorities' education, studies undertaken for village education committee and state institute of educational management and training (SIEMAT).

**Prof. Praveen Jha** is Professor at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning (CESP) in the School of Social Sciences at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. He has also been a Visiting Fellow at University of Bremen, Germany; Tianjin University of Finance and Economics Tianjin, China and Visiting Senior Research Economist at International Labour Organisation, Geneva. His areas of interest/specialization are Labour Economics, Agricultural economics, Development economics, Economics of Education, Resource Economics and History of Economic Thought.

**Dr. P. Prudhvikar Reddy** - Doctorate in Economics and has gained rich experience in field survey methods especially in rural areas both in quantitative and qualitative sphere of research including longitudinal studies. In the capacity of Senior Researcher and Survey Coordinator in Young Lives since inception of the project (2002 extensively travelled within and abroad. He gained rich experience in the areas of multi dimensions of poverty and in rural development besides publishing agriculture, education and poverty related articles.

**Prof K Pushpanadham** - is a Professor of Educational Management at the Department of Educational Administration, Faculty of Education and Psychology, the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Gujarat, India. He is the DEAN of Sports and is nominated as a Member of SENATE for the National Institute of Fashion Technology, Ministry of Textile, Government of India. He was awarded Doctor of Philosophy for his research in the area of Decentralization of Educational Management by the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. Recipient of Swedish Institute's Guest Professorship at the Institute of International Education, Stockholm University, Sweden. Completed several research projects funded by various national and international agencies in the field of education and educational management.

**Dr. Renu Singh** has been Country Director of Young Lives India since 2010. A trained Montessorian and special educator, her interests include early childhood development, gender, equity and inclusion. She has over twenty six years of teaching experience in general and special education, teacher education, early childhood development, policy analysis and research both in India and abroad.

**Prof. Rounaq Jahan** joined the University of Dhaka in 1970, where she taught undergraduate and graduate courses on comparative politics, political development, and research methodology. She also supervised MPhil and PhD theses till she left the University in 1993. From 1973 to 1975 she was the chairperson of the Department of Political Science of the University.[1] She had been a research fellow at the Chr. Michelsen Institute, Bergen, Norway in 1979; a research fellow at the Department of Political Science and Committee on South Asia, University of Chicago in 1975–76; a visiting fellow at the Committee on South Asia, University of Chicago in 1980; a senior research associate at the Center for Asian Development Studies, Boston University in 1978; and a research associate at the Center for International Affairs and the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University from 1971 to 1972.[1]

During her tenure at Dhaka University Jahan served several policymaking bodies established by the Government of Bangladesh in an advisory capacity in the fields of education, culture, rural development, women, and population.[1] She had also served as a consultant to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, as well as NGOs like International Women's Health Coalition.[1]

Jahan was the head of the Programme on Rural Women, Employment and Development Department at the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva, Switzerland from 1985 to 1989.[1] She was the coordinator of the Programme on Integration of Women in Development, United Nations Asia Pacific Development Centre (APDC) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for two years.[1] She was a member of the advisory board of Human Rights Watch in New York, the board of trustees of the Population Council, the international council of the Asia Society, and the advisory committee on rural development at the ILO.[1]

Since 1990, Jahan is working as a senior research scholar at the Southern Asian Institute, Columbia University and an adjunct professor of international affairs at School of International and Public Affairs of the University. There she has taught for the graduate courses on Women and Development: Key Policy Issues (1991–95), Gender, Politics and Development (1998), and Arsenic Crisis in Bangladesh (2000).[1]

**Dr. Rukmini Banerji** trained as an economist in India, completed her BA at St. Stephen's College and attended the Delhi School of Economics. She was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University and earned her PhD at the University of Chicago. Dr. Banerji worked as a program officer at the Spencer Foundation in Chicago for several years before returning to India in 1996 to join Pratham as part of the leadership team. Over the years, she has represented Pratham and the ASER Centre in various national and international forums and is a member of committees both in India and abroad. She writes frequently on education in India and enjoys creating books and stories for children.

**Dr Sangram Mukherjee**, Senior Research Associate, Pratichi Institute, Calcutta. His research interests includes educational inequalities and private expenditure in education.

**Prof Santosh Panda**, M.Phil. and Ph.D. (Education), Certificate in ETV (BBC, UK), is a professor of Distance Education, Staff Training & Research Institute of Distance Education (STRIDE) at the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). He is also the coordinator of IGNOU's International MA in Distance Education Programme, sponsored by COL and Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, SADC, and UNESCO-IICBA and offered in 20 countries; and coordinator of the first National M.Ed. Programme sponsored by the statutory Distance Education Council and the statutory National Council for Teacher Education, Government of India. His current research areas include: learner persistence and dropout, student learning styles, curriculum design and development, institutional and private cost for technology-based learning, teacher education and continuing professional development, quality assurance and bench-marking of online services and new educational technologies.

**Dr. Satadru Sikdar** is with National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP), New Delhi, since 2006. He has been associated with several research studies in NIPFP, including preparation of Medium-Term Fiscal Policy for different states; effectiveness and utilisation of funds for selected schemes, property taxation and urban poverty alleviation among others. He did his Ph.D. from Centre for Economic Studies and Planning (CESP/SSS), Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Title of his Ph.D. thesis was "School Education in India: An Assessment of Public Provisioning since the Early 1990s"

**Prof. Sridhar Srivastava** is the professor and Dean (Coordination), NCERT, has experience of more than 25 years of planning, conduction, management, output and dissemination of country-wide largescale studies/surveys for school education. He has contributed in the study of state level policies and national level planning and review exercises. Dr. Srivastava has experience of active policy level engagements with state governments and agencies in the area of school education and large-scale assessment surveys under SSA and RMSA. As part of countrywide training he provides academic support in conducting National and State level training programme for state and district level educational administrators. He was Head of the Educational Survey Division (ESD) of NCERT and was also involved through projects of the department in exploring the options for addressing issues of delay,



uniformity and quality in education statistics produced. He is conducting as well as delivering resource lectures in training programmes for capacity building in Statistical Methods, Sampling Techniques, Research Methods and Data Quality Management; and planning the course outline and developing the training manual. He was Faculty-in-charge of Computer Centre in NCERT and has held the post of Secretary, NCERT.

**Dr. Susmita Mitra** - an Assistant Professor in Council for Social Development (CSD) with PhD in Economics from Jawaharlal Nehru University. She has received Best paper award in the 2nd International Conference of REDSET (2015), Junior Visiting Fellowship (2011) under the UNCTAD vi DAAD programme at the HTW, Berlin, Germany,, Junior and Senior Research Fellowship (2006 - 2011) in National Entrance Test (NET), and Ford Foundation Scholarship, awarded for topping two consecutive semesters during M.A. (2003 - 2005). She has been the Co-Principal Investigator for the submitted CSD project (2018) "Status of and Barriers to School Education in Chhattisgarh". With strong econometric background, she has 13 publications in international and national peer reviewed journals and edited volumes.

**Dr. Sunita Chugh** - Associate Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration

**Dr. Vaishali**, Project Junior Consultant, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration - works as Project Junior Consultant in NIEPA. She recently completed PhD(Education) from Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Her doctoral work has been on education of Muslim women, which is a qualitative study focusing on construction and reconstruction of aspirations among Muslim adolescent girls in a senior secondary school in North East Delhi. Her interest areas include- Gender and Class under the Sociology of education and Critical Pedagogy.

**Prof. Vasanthi Devi** is an educationist, Activist and Politician from Tamil Nadu. A well known educationalist, she is the former vice-chancellor of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University (M.S. University) of Tamil Nadu. Apart from education, she has given some significant contributions to the fields of human rights, gender and environment.

## List of papers presented

1. *Integration of SSA and RMSA: A Major Policy Shift in School Education of India* - Dr. Aparajita Sharma, Save the Children
2. *Issues in Extension of RTE 2009 to Secondary Level Education* - Dr. Sunita Chugh, Associate Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
3. *Extension of RTE to secondary Education and its implications* - Dr. Madhumita Bandyopadhyay, Associate Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
4. *Public Provisioning for Secondary Education in India: A Situation Assessment* - Prof. Praveen Jha and Mr. Satadru Sikdar, CESP, Jawaharlal Nehru University
5. *Universalisation of Secondary Education – The Case of Telugu Speaking States* - Dr. P. Prudhvikar Reddy, Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad
6. *Push-out, not Drop-out: Youth and Secondary Schooling in India* - Prof. Manabi Majumdar, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata and Dr. Sangram Mukherjee, Pratichi Institute, Kolkata
7. *Secondary Education in Maharashtra: Issues of concern* - Ms. Anuradha De and Ms. Meera Samson, CORD
8. *Universal Secondary Education in India- Access, Equity and Social Justice* - Prof. Chavva Sheela Reddy, Chair Professor and Ms. Vandana Shukla, Research Officer, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Chair in Social Justice, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi
9. *Socioeconomic Determinants of Secondary Education in India: Insights from NSS Unit Level Data of 71<sup>st</sup> Round* - Dr. Susmita Mitra, Assistant Professor, CSD
10. *Tracking the Progress of a Child from Enrolment to Completion of Secondary Education in India* - Mr. Deepak Kumar, Ph.D. Scholar, CESP, Jawaharlal Nehru University
11. *Reproducing Gendered Knowledge and Class through Education: A Case of a Muslim Habitation in North East Delhi* - Dr. Vaishali, Project Junior Consultant, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
12. *Transition to Higher Education and Equitable Learning Outcomes* - Dr. Manasi Thapliyal Navani, Assistant Professor, Ambedkar University
13. *Quality Assurance In Secondary School Education: Ground Realities of School Inspections* – Prof. K. Pushpanadham, MS University, Vadodara and Dr. Pallavi Khedkar, Academic Director, Parul University, Vadodara
14. *Regional Diversity, School Leadership Practices and School Quality: A Comparative Study of Two Indian States in North Eastern Region* - Dr. N. Mythili, Assistant Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
15. *Revitalizing Academic Support for Secondary Education* - Prof. Pramila Menon, Retired Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
16. *Who Completes Secondary Education: Examining Role of Individual and Household Characteristics*- Dr. Nivedita Sarkar, Assistant Professor, Ambedkar University
17. *Changing Public-Private Mix In School Education and Its Implications for Policy* - Prof. Achin Chakraborty, Professor of Economics and Director, Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata

18. *Expanding Private Education Market and Parental Choice for Schools in India: Evidence from IHDS Data* - Dr. Pradeep Kumar Choudhury, Assistant Professor, ZHCES, Jawaharlal Nehru University
19. *The Power Game: A Case Study of A Private School in Odisha* - Dr. Amrita Sastry, Dept of Sociology, Jesus and Mary College, University of Delhi
20. *Elusive Vocational Education Programme: An Analysis on Trends in Indian Secondary Schools* - Dr. Mona Sedwal, Assistant Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
21. *Missing Middle of Educated Unemployable: A Critical Perspective on Secondary Education in India* - Dr. Bornali Bhandari, Dr Charu Jain and Mr Ajaya Sahu, National Council of Applied Economic Research
22. *Reforms for 'Skill India'* - Sri Ashutosh Singh, Specialist in Skill Development Programmes, Indian School of Business, Hyderabad

## **5 Welcome & Introductory Remarks by the Seminar Coordinator (Prof Jandhyala BG Tilak)**

Namaskar, Good morning, Suprabahat!

Prof Muchkund Dubey, President Council for Social Development, Prof Rounaq Jahan, Distinguished fellow, Centre for Policy Studies, Dhaka, Bangladesh, Dr Ashok Pankaj, Director, CSD, Eminent experts and distinguished scholars from Delhi and other states – far and near, esteemed colleagues from CSD and other friends

On behalf the Council for Social Development, it is my pleasure and privilege to extend a hearty welcome to all of you to this two-day National Seminar on Universalisation of Secondary Education. All of you have been so nice to accept our invitation to participate in this Seminar, being organised on Saturday and Sunday. This reflects your deep interest in educational issues, and also of course your fond attachment to the Council for Social Development.

As many of you know, CSD organises an annual seminar during this part of the year, on the eve of Dr Durgabai Deshmukh's birth anniversary, which falls on tomorrow 15 July, which is celebrated by CSD with a Memorial lecture by eminent development specialist. Prof Rehman Sobhan, Chairman, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka, has agreed to give the lecture tomorrow at 6pm on "Human Security in South Asia."

The annual seminar is organised every year on a particular theme. This year we chose 'Education.' We have also organised a seminar on education a couple of years ago. Education is a vast area. Moreover, as many policy makers, researchers and others realised, we have some good research, policy analysis, and policy initiatives in case of elementary education; for obvious reasons, there is also a good amount of interest and action in higher education. In a sense, we concentrated on elementary education on one side, and higher education on the other; but we neglected the middle component, the secondary education for a long period. It is only recently during the last couple of years, secondary education is getting some attention. The growth in elementary education, partly attributable to the Right to Education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, and also to earlier programmes like DPEP, has necessitated this shift in attention. While RTE was being formulated and during later years, there was a huge demand from academia and civil society, that RTE should cover the whole school education, including secondary education. There is also a big demographic pressure building up, which will turn into a big problem, unless it is turned into a dividend by providing quality secondary education and training to our youth. Thirdly, it is also being realised that the goals relating to good quality elementary education and strong higher education for economic growth cannot be met without strong well spread quality secondary education. Slowly realising all this, Government of India has launched a few years ago a mission for universalization of secondary education, the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) with an objective of universalisation of secondary education. It appears that the government is also planning to extend RTE to secondary education, on the basis of

recommendation of a sub-committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education. Very recently, the government has resolved to launch another SSA (Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan), probably in place of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and RMSA.

What are the implications of these new initiatives?

If RTE is to be extended to cover secondary education, will secondary education necessarily have the key features of RTE, which are free, compulsory, universalism, quality and most importantly education as a right. If not, what is the meaning of extension of RTE to secondary education? If yes, whether is possible in the near future. This is a question many are obviously interested to know.

The new SSA – the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan is proposed to cover elementary education, secondary education, vocational education and teacher education, which have been presently working in isolation from each other, and to bring them into an integrated framework, partly recognising the close links between them. While a holistic integrated approach to school education is desirable, there are several issues that need to be carefully analysed, understood and planned for. Does *Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan* mean only funding – funding school education as a whole, rather than by level/type of school education, or does it mean real integrated approach of the school education system, making every school a composite/comprehensive school from Grade I (if not Pre-primary) to Grade XII, with common teachers, common infrastructure, and common policies and approaches. Does it involve breaking of hierarchy in school system, and move towards a common school system? One would expect such features to figure in the new model. We all know that the programme requires huge amount of financial resources, millions of additional trained teachers of high quality and commitment, vast infrastructure in terms of buildings, laboratories, libraries, ICT facilities, etc., and strong political will and social commitment. On all these aspects we presently face huge deficits.

It is also important to note that unlike elementary education, the nature and purpose of secondary education are different. Quality of secondary education has to be broad: it has to focus not only on learning levels, but also on preparation of youth for employment and citizenship. Also at the same time it should provide good students to higher education. Secondary education requires teachers; but typical pupil-teacher ratio may not serve as a good measure for planning, as we need subject teachers in large numbers. Secondary education is also diverse, as it includes academic, as well as vocational and technical education/training streams, giving knowledge and skills at the same time. Thus it requires additional focus.

Presently secondary education also faces serious glitches on several fronts. As per the gross enrolment ratios, half the children in secondary education and one third in higher secondary level are enrolled in schools. So there are still large number of children to be brought into secondary schools. Secondly, with near universal enrolments in elementary education, inequalities in education may not high; but they begin to take strong roots in secondary education; thirdly, more than half the secondary schools are in private sector, a major

proportion of them being unaided or self-financing schools, depending exclusively on student fees, which may also be the cause of inequalities in education and in turn in society at large. Fourth, the school system as a whole including secondary education faces serious shortage of teachers. Partly to answer the problems of resource scarcity, the government is serious with public private partnerships, privatisation and similar other measures, evidence on the effects of which is not encouraging. Lastly, education including secondary education is seriously short of adequate funds. Given all this, what are the prospects for universalisation of secondary education?

With this objective, we have chosen, this year, to focus on universalisation of secondary education as the theme of the Seminar and the deliberations in and outcomes of the Seminar are hoped to be useful for informed policy discourses and even for policy actions by the Government.

When we sent the first letter inviting papers for the Seminar, we are encouraged by very enthusiastic response. Almost everyone we invited accepted our invitation to contribute a paper and participate in the Seminar. There are very few regrets and fewer dropouts. The scholars we got, many of them are here, are eminent experts who spent their long years on policy research, policy discourses and contributed directly and indirectly immensely to policy formulation in education and even implementation of the policies in India and abroad. So I am hopeful of very intense discussions on the theme during the two days, and every one would feel really benefited by the amount of value added of the Seminar.

In all, we received more than 25 papers, and 25 of which are going to be discussed in six technical sessions during the two days. Each session will be chaired by an eminent expert, and served by an equally eminent scholar as a discussant. I am also thankful to everyone who agreed to chair, who agreed to be a discussant, and who agreed to be a rapporteur for each session. The names are many, but let me quickly thank, by name, first the chairs: Prof R Govinda who was active in formulating the RTE and also in discussions on how to extend RTE to secondary education, Prof Praveen Jha, who is leading a major advocacy research project in education, Dr Rukmini Banerji, a name identified with Pratham and its ASER, Prof Atul Sharma, former Director of Indian Statistical Institute, Prof Tapas Sen of National Institute of Public Finance and Policy and Prof Arup Mitra, Director-General of IAMR, all eminent economists, educationists and development specialists who made invaluable contributions to policy discourses on several social, economic and educational issues. Discussants are Prof Sridhar Srivastava from NCERT, Prof Kumar Suresh, Prof A K Singh, both from NIEPA, Dr Hem Borker from Jamia, Dr Narendra Thakur from Delhi University, and Dr Renu Singh from Young Lives – a longitudinal study Project. All my young and serious colleagues at CSD have actually volunteered to be rapporteurs. Among the paper presenters also we have well known names like Prof Praveen Jha, Prof Sheela Reddy Dr Ambedkar Chair Professor on Social Justice in the Indian Institute of Public Administration, Prof Achin Chakraborty from Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata, Prof Manabi Majumdar

from Centre for Social Sciences and Prtichi, Anuradha De and Meera Samson from CORD, and many more. Thank you all.

In all, we have scholars here from several institutions in Delhi and other states, including National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, Jawaharlal Nehru University, , Delhi University, Jamia, Ambedkar University, National Council of Educational Research and Training, Indira Gandhi National Open University, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, Institute of Applied Manpower Research, Gautam Buddha University, MS University, Vadodara, Pratham Foundation, Pratichi Trust, CORD, Centre for Social Sciences, Kolkata, Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad, Manoramimum Sundarnar University, Tiruvanveli, Agra University, Indian School of Business, Hyderabad, some schools and many more, to discuss and deliberate on several important research and policy issues on secondary education.

We have originally wished to have not more than 3 papers for a session; but we got so many, that at one point, we were to say “No more”. Finally we have to arrange four papers for each session. Even then when we have more papers, we planned to have a parallel sessions, but finally we could avoid parallel sessions. So the time is rather tight for each session and I request the chairs, the discussants and paper presenters to note it and make the best use of the time.

We have also arranged a panel discussion with eminent experts of the prospects of universalisation of secondary education tomorrow afternoon. Prof Vasanthi Devi, former Vice Chancellor Manormanimum Sundarnar University who has very keen interest in educational policy issues, and Prof Santosh Panda of IGNOU, who served as Chairman of the National Council for Teacher Education, will join Prof Govinda, Prof Praveen Jha and Prof Arup Mitra in the Panel. Thank you, every one of you, for generously accepting our invitation.

An important highlight of the Seminar is an eminent expert from Bangladesh who has immediately agreed to our request to deliver the inaugural address. Prof Rounaq Jahan. It is my privilege to briefly introduce her and welcome her.

Prof Rounaq Jahan is a senior research scholar at the Southern Asian Institute, Columbia University and an adjunct professor of international affairs at School of International and Public Affairs of the University. She is also a Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka.

Dr Jahan had brilliant academic experience in several European and US institutions of higher education and research including Boston University, Chicago and Harvard.

Prof Jahan served several policymaking bodies set by the Government of Bangladesh and also served as a consultant to UNDP, (United Nations Population Fund, UNICEF, UN Development Fund for Women, UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), ILO, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), USAID, OECD, the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, as well as NGOs like International Women's Health Coalition. There is indeed as long bio about her with me and though I am tempted to read in full, I take the liberty of shortening it.

We are indeed fortunate to have Prof Jahan to deliver inaugural address in this Seminar. Thank you Madam Prof Jahan.

Before I conclude, I may inform all of you that in the now becoming cashless economy and paperless society, we have made all the material relating to the Seminar available on our website [www.csdndia.org](http://www.csdndia.org). If still someone requires hard copies, we have a few sets available, or we can make them available during the seminar, or if not now, certainly later. Apart from abstracts of the papers there are also full papers we received from most of the scholars, which we have not uploaded on the website, as many scholars do not want the draft versions to be uploaded now; but we do intend to get them into public domain, when we get final revised papers. We wish to publish them in a book as soon as possible.

Last but not least, on a personal note, let me thank Prof Dubey, Dr Ashok Pankaj, and other friends and colleagues at CSD for the trust they have in me and giving me this honour and responsibility of organising this important academic event. I just came to CSD a year ago after retiring from NUEPA, and there are many senior scholars here. This is also an experience, as after nearly four decades of service in public institutions, which have been relatively well-endowed, I have to do now what is known in the literature on planning as 'planning under austerity.' This is indeed a new experience, even though I know it well in theory all these years. Thank you all for your understanding.

Everyone at CSD has been so cooperative and helpful, some of whom I know only by face, some by name, and of course quite a few by face and name, that I enjoyed organising this Seminar very much.

I would also like to particularly mention the commendable support I got from Ms Jayalekshmi Nair, who has corresponded with everyone of you, and has seen that no major or minor aspect is missed and the Seminar goes perfectly well. If the Seminar goes well, I hope it will with all your cooperation and active participation, the credit goes to Jaya, and I am squarely responsible for the shortcomings if any.

With these few words about the Seminar, now let me welcome you all once again to the Seminar, and request Professor Muchkund Dubey to take over the session and conduct it.

Thank you.



## 6 Inaugural Address (by Prof Rounaq Jahan)

### Universalization of Secondary Education: Questions for Discussion and Debate

Rounaq Jahan

I am deeply honored by the invitation of the Council for Social Development (CSD) to deliver the inaugural address of the national seminar on Universalization of Secondary Education. I must confess that I was surprised by the invitation because I do not consider myself to be an expert on the topic of secondary education. Nor am I that knowledgeable about what is happening in India, especially the recent initiatives in the education sector. But I have in the past faced similar situations when people, more knowledgeable in a field, have requested me to speak on a topic where I have no technical expertise. I guess experts sometimes want to hear what questions and concerns a non-expert may have based on common sense and perspectives of a concerned citizen. So I seek your indulgence as I raise some questions with you for consideration and deliberation in the seminar.

My perspective is shaped by my own experiences in Bangladesh where we face many challenges similar to those of India. In some areas we have undertaken innovative initiatives which have addressed specific obstacles and yielded positive results, such as the introduction of stipends for girls which resulted in rapid expansion of girls' enrolment in secondary schools. The enrolment of girls increased from 442,000 in 1994 to over one million by 2001.<sup>1</sup> As a result Bangladesh achieved gender parity in enrolment in secondary schools. In fact there are now more girls than boys enrolled in secondary schools. The ratio of girls to boys changed from approximately 45:55 in 1994 to 55:45 in 2001.<sup>2</sup>

But expanding school enrolment with quality education remains a big challenge for us as is the case in India. We too have seen the gradual development of disparity between public schools delivering poor quality education to children from low income households and private schools providing better quality education to children from upper income households. We also have the divide between the vernacular medium schools and the English medium schools which are now attracting students not simply from upper middle income households but from middle and lower income households. We have the added challenge of rapid expansion of madrasa education where children from extremely poor households go because they can get free room and board. We face similar challenges of governance— lack of monitoring and accountability. Absenteeism of teachers, despite increase in salary, is a persistent problem. Professional bodies such as teachers' associations are preoccupied with demands for increasing teachers' salaries and do not pay much attention to issues concerning improvement of quality of education.

However, despite our past experiences of being disappointed with the inadequacies of public policy responses, we still look forward to policies and actions from the state to

address the myriad problems we face in the education sector. After all in a democracy such as India and Bangladesh citizens should be able to reasonably expect that public policies and actions will be geared towards improving the quality of education of the majority of the electorate. So some of the recent initiatives of the government of India such as the Right to Education Act, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhijan (RMSA), integration of Sarva Shiksha Abhijan (SSA) with RMSA and Teacher Training, and Integrated Scheme for School Education are very welcome news indeed. I look forward to learning more about the efficacy of these initiatives from your deliberations.

After India passed the Right to Education Act in 2009, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organized a seminar in Bangladesh and invited some of the Indian experts including Professor Govinda, in order to create an opportunity for them to share Indian experiences with Bangladeshi experts and our own minister of education in the hope that we can learn some lessons from India. In that spirit I am participating in this seminar in Delhi today and hope to carry back some lessons about what to do and what not to do in Bangladesh.

When I read the concept note of the seminar and looked at the program of various sessions, several very broad questions came to my mind. I would like to share them with you and I hope very much that you will find some time to address these questions in the seminar.

#### **Political will and social commitment**

My first question is: ***How adequate is the level of political will and social commitment to universalize secondary education?*** In Bangladesh I often feel frustrated when we end a seminar with a statement that policy X or action Y could not be implemented because of lack of political will and social commitment. Political will often becomes a “catch all” phrase to shift responsibility or explain away all deficits. If political will and social commitment are the critical ingredients for the success of any public policy or public action, then, should we not first assess what is the level of our political will and social commitment before we embark on any public policy or program initiative? If we think the level of political will and social commitment is inadequate, then, can we not devise some strategies to create that additional level of political will and social commitment?

I raise this question of political will and social commitment because in an excellent paper Professor Tilak has written on the experiences of East Asia titled *Building Human Capital in East Asia: What Others Can Learn* (World Bank 2003), a key lesson he highlights is the importance of political will and social commitment. He states the following:

“political will and social commitment to education is one particular feature that explains the growth of the education system in East Asian economies .... In every country ... education was an item of national obsession; it is regarded as the most important means of achieving social status, occupational mobility and economic advancement – individually and as a society .... Investment in human capital has

been regarded as the corner stone of nation building and the key factor of economic development in East Asia. This realization is critically important".<sup>3</sup>

I hope in this seminar you will be able to ponder on this lesson drawn by Professor Tilak and ask: has education now finally become a "national obsession" in India more than 70 years after independence? Do the national and state governments regard investment in human capital as the "cornerstone" of nation building and economic development? If the answers to both questions are "yes" then of course this seminar does not need to spend much time deliberating on them. But if the answers are "no" or "not yet" then we need to think how can we make education a "national obsession" and a "cornerstone" of our development policies.

### **Policy design and implementation**

My second question for the deliberation of this seminar is: ***How realistic and implementable are the designs of these recent initiatives announced by the government of India?***

I often read policy and program documents which are full of good intentions but their targets and time frame are unrealistic; they lack specific instruments to address specific constraints; and insufficient resources are allocated to achieve the policy and program objectives. Our persistent record of gaps between policy design and policy implementation create serious credibility and trust gaps between government and citizens. But these credibility and trust deficits appear not to be taken seriously by our policy makers. Our policies and programs are rarely scrutinized from the perspective of feasibility of their implementation. Often policy implementers, mostly bureaucrats, go along with unrealistic and ambitious policies and programs because they know that policy makers are more concerned with policy pronouncements rather than policy implementation.

In Bangladesh we have often **noticed** wide gaps between policy and program adoption and their implementation. Sometimes a much heralded policy or initiative of one government gets neglected when there is a change in government. Sometimes ministries fail to spend allocated resources because of slow rate of implementation. For example, a recent budget analysis found that 13% of the allocated budget of the education sector and 40% of budget of the health sector were not spent though these sectors were allocated only a small portion of the annual budget. (approximately 5%).<sup>4</sup>

I note from the concept note of the seminar that the objectives of India's new *Integrated Scheme for School Education* are "to improve school effectiveness measured in terms of equal opportunities for schooling and equitable learning outcomes" and raise "allocative efficiency and optimal utilization of budgetary and human resources". Providing equal opportunities and attaining equitable outcomes are challenging enough objectives! Combining them with 'allocative efficiency' and "optimal utilization of resources" make the achievement of all these goals even more challenging. The goals of achieving equality and efficiency may not always go together as efficiency is often interpreted as cost cutting.

When policy implementers are given the tasks of ensuring both equality and efficiency, they may not be able to deliver on either of them.

A report highlighting some of the challenges of universalization of secondary education in India notes that most states will not succeed to achieve the targeted Secondary Level Gross Enrolment ratios by 2017 and they will find it difficult to do so even by 2020.<sup>5</sup> The report further notes that with the current level of financing and availability of trained teachers and facilities, expanding opportunities for groups and areas that are so far left behind to meet the stated targets will be a near impossible task for many states.<sup>6</sup> I hope the seminar will find time to deliberate on the prospects of realizing some of the goals and targets of these initiatives.

We need to also discuss the problems associated with setting up quantitative targets. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with their quantitative targets pushed countries to focus on increasing the number of student enrolment rather than the quality of their education. Increasing number of students is important but we should not lose sight of what they are learning. The MDGs and the current Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 which is quality education, have not succeeded in developing satisfactory indicators to measure improvements in quality and this remains a singular challenge for tracking the progress of SDG-4.

## Quality

My third question is: ***Are the planned measures to improve the quality of education adequate to produce the desired outcomes?*** The planned measures include, many interventions such as provisioning of infrastructure, appointment of additional teachers, in-service training of teachers, review of curriculum, residential accommodation for teachers etc. But are there sufficient resources – financial and human – to implement these measures? For example, if we are to take the feasibility of one intervention, such as the appointment of teachers and training of teachers, will it be feasible to appoint adequately trained teachers to impart quality education within the time frame of 2020, particularly in underperforming states?

In their recent study, *An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradictions*, Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen highlighted the huge burdens created by poor standards particularly in government schools. They note that of the children aged 8 to 11 years enrolled in government schools only 50% can read, 43% can subtract and 64% can write.<sup>7</sup> The adverse teacher-student ratio, particularly in government schools, again, is a huge problem.

In Bangladesh too the students demonstrate poor capability in reading, writing and mathematics. We are faced with not only shortage of teachers but a shortage of teachers who will be able to improve the quality of education. A recent survey found that 78% of heads of institutions were not aware of either the strength or the weakness of their curriculum; 35% of teachers reported receiving no training to improve the quality of their teaching; and 30% of students felt that their teachers were not knowledgeable.<sup>8</sup> About a

half of the schools had no science laboratory; only 15% had a library with a modest collection and 37% of schools claimed to have computer education facilities but a fifth of these schools had only one computer.<sup>9</sup>In public sector schools teacher student ratio in computer education is 4207 compared to 755 in private sector schools.<sup>10</sup>

I hope, the seminar will come up with a few innovative ideas to add value to the measures already being planned to improve the quality of education. Moving forward we need to change teaching methods and teaching materials to make our education competitive in the global market. The low scores of India in the PISA ranking, compared to the consistent top ranking of East and Southeast Asian countries, should be a matter of great concern for policy makers. We need to also pay attention to the contents of curriculum. Sometimes efforts are made to change school curriculum, as has happened recently in Bangladesh, to downgrade the importance of diversity in our cultural tradition. We need to be vigilant against such efforts, particularly at a time when globally and in our region conscious political campaign is being mounted to portray the “other” as the enemy.

### **Inequality**

My fourth question is: ***Are the recommended interventions to reduce inequality likely to produce equitable outcomes by 2020?*** Do these measures adequately address some of the sources of inequality such as the exclusion of marginalized groups and the growing divide between public and private sector and vernacular medium and English medium schools? In South Asia we have produced and nurtured a dual system of education – one for the rich and another for the poor. Will inclusion of excluded groups be accommodated within the existing dual system with ever increasing disparity between English medium private sector schools on the one hand and public sector vernacular medium schools on the other?

The recommended measures for inclusion appear to be geared towards increasing coverage of excluded groups such as students coming from rural areas and urban slums, scheduled tribes and scheduled castes and girls. Will the expansion of existing facilities, building of new schools, free boarding facilities, cash incentives and so on be adequate to address the myriad of economic and social obstacles that hold back the children from these groups from attending schools?

In Bangladesh as I noted earlier, we introduced a special cash incentive of providing scholarships for girl students for secondary education. This not only contributed towards fast increase in girls’ school enrolment, there were other collateral benefits such as reduction in the number of young women marrying before the age of 18. For example, the overall proportion of 13 to 15 year old married girls declined from 20% in 1992 to 14% by 1995.<sup>11</sup> But we have also noticed that cash incentives often were not enough to counter the parents’ concerns of safety and security for girls in an environment of fear of sexual harassment and violence against girls.

If we are to ensure equitable outcomes for girls' secondary education then we need to think of multi-pronged measures to improve girls' and women's condition and status and community and society's support for enhancing women's empowerment. I have annexed a table comparing gender-related indicators in India and Bangladesh which is taken from Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen's book *Uncertain Glory*. The table shows Bangladesh doing better than India in all indicators including literacy, school enrolment and labor force participation. Female literacy rate is 78% in Bangladesh compared to 74% in India, secondary school enrolment ratio for girls is 113 in Bangladesh compared to 92 in India. And labor force participation rate is 57% in Bangladesh compared to 29% in India. These improvements in Bangladesh have been made possible by consistent and conscious policies and actions pursued by government as well as the non-government sector for the last four decades.

I believe if we are serious about addressing the issue of inequality and inequity then we have no alternative but to improve the standards of government and vernacular medium schools so that children from upper income households do not flee from these schools and flock to private English medium schools. The growth of the dual system of education has consolidated a widening social gap between a narrow privileged elite and the large excluded masses. This inequality has expanded over the last half a century. In Bangladesh, we have now reached a situation where many people have given up efforts to improve the quality of public sector and believe that the public sector is beyond repair!

But this divide between vernacular and English medium and public and private sector schools was not there when I went to school and university in the 1950s and early 1960s. Most of us studied in Bangla medium government or private schools in *muffasil* towns. I did not have that many post-graduate teachers in my schools but I received sound basic training in reading, writing and mathematics from highly motivated teachers which enabled me to make the transition to an English medium college and university after matriculation, and ultimately earn a Ph.D from Harvard University. I think it will be much more difficult and unusual for a student trained in Bangla medium *muffasil* schools these days to make this kind of transition to an elite university in the USA. I believe many of my age group in India also were able to go through similar transition from vernacular medium schools in small towns to top universities in India and even the USA or UK.

Even if we think that given ground realities inequality has to be bridged by provisioning of a public-private sector mix, we still have to improve the standards of the public sector where the majority of our students are enrolled. I hope the seminar will come up with many different options involving both public and private sector. One recommendation of the Right to Education Act which drew our attention in Bangladesh was the reserved quota for underprivileged children in elite private schools. It will be interesting to know how far this measure has been implemented.

Another issue I would like to draw your attention to, which is not generally discussed in seminars, is the availability and quality of translation. When I was in school I could read excellent Bangla translation of world literature including those of Shakespeare, Tolostoy,

Dostoyvosky, Chekov, Maxim Gorky, Eric Maria Remarque and so on. In fact, I enjoyed more reading the Bangla translation of Arthur Conan Doyle's *Lost World* when I was in school than the original English edition which I read later when I was in college. I was exposed to books published in the West mainly through Bangla translations. These days I do not find good quality Bangla translation of books published in other countries. This has narrowed the horizon of Bangla medium students. Internet, with all its limitations, is their only window on the world.

Here I would like to particularly acknowledge my deep appreciation for Professor Muchkund Dubey's recent translation of *Fakir Lalon Shah's* poems and songs from Bangla to Hindi. He has added a new dimension to translation. I feel translation from Bangla into Hindi, rather than just English, has widened the readership of *Lalon* and created an opportunity for a much larger Hindi reading public to understand and appreciate the rich syncretic cultural legacy of Bangladesh which had traditionally focused on mystical and devotional aspects of religion. I believe many more such translations from one vernacular language to another will help foster greater appreciation and understanding between different regions of South Asia.

### **Governance**

My fifth question, again, is: ***Are the measures planned by the initiatives to improve governance sufficient and appropriate?*** In their book *An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradictions*, Dreze and Sen highlight several governance challenges including those of management, accountability and the role of professional organizations. They highlight the problem of absenteeism of teachers as an example of governance failure. They have calculated that with 20% absenteeism of teachers and 33 percent absenteeism of students, in effect the probability of any effective teaching in a school in any day is 50 percent.<sup>12</sup> They further note that despite improvement in salary, absenteeism of teachers has continued which underscore lack of monitoring and accountability. They point out the narrow focus of teachers' associations who mainly demand improving the conditions of teachers rather than the condition of the education sector as a whole.

In Bangladesh too we face similar problems of student and teacher absenteeism. Absenteeism of head teacher is 20% in primary schools and 18% in secondary schools. Over the years, teachers' salaries, though still inadequate, have improved, but this has not contributed towards reduction in absenteeism. Again, I do not remember teachers being absent when I was in school though those teachers were also poorly paid. Moreover, nearly 40% of teachers are involved in private tutoring.<sup>13</sup> Teachers' associations are politicized and political parties use them to expand their vote base. Before every national election teachers' associations start agitations to increase their salaries. Members of parliament have expanded their holds on school boards and use them as patronage resource.

Governance reforms are critical to improving quality and reducing inequality. But these reforms are not feasible without a strong political will and social commitment, the

very first question I started with in my address. I hope the deliberations of this seminar will be widely disseminated to academics, policy makers, political leaders, civil society activists and the media and you will continue your engagement in pushing for governance reforms, improvement of standards, and reduction of inequalities in the education sector. I look forward to future opportunities for sharing our experiences and learning from each other.

## Annex

### Gender-related Indicators in India and Bangladesh

	India	Bangladesh
Female labour force participation rate, age 15+, 2010 (%)	29	57
Female-male ratio in the population, 2011 (females per 1,000 males)		
All ages	940	997
Age 0-6 years	914	972 <sup>a</sup>
Ratio of female to male death rates, 2009 <sup>b</sup>		
Age 0-1	1.01	0.89
Age 1-4	1.55	1.25
Ratio of female to male school enrolment, 2010 (%)		
Primary	100 <sup>c</sup>	104 <sup>d</sup>
Secondary	92	113
Literacy rate, age 15-24 years, 2010 (%)		
Female	74 <sup>e</sup>	78
Male	88 <sup>e</sup>	75
Proportion of adults (age 25+) with secondary education, 2010 (%)		
Women	27	31
Men	50	39
Women's share of seats in national Parliament, 2011 (%)	11	20
Total fertility rate, 2011 (children per woman)	2.6	2.2

<sup>a</sup> Age 0-4 years. <sup>b</sup> 2007 for Bangladesh. <sup>c</sup> 2008. <sup>d</sup> 2009. <sup>e</sup> 2006.

Source: *Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradictions*, London: Penguin, 2013.

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