

THE STATE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN JHARKHAND

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Summary Findings

- According to the 2001 Census the literacy rate in Jharkhand was 54.13per cent (second from the bottom among the 35 states and union territories of the country). Decadal increase in literacy rate was 13per cent. The literacy rate of Dumka is lower than the State average - 48.31per cent and there is a large gap between the literacy rate of the male and female populations. Male and female literacy rates for Dumka district are 63.28per cent and 32.68per cent respectively. The state literacy rates for males and females are 64.07per cent and 39.38per cent respectively.
- Tribals form 47per cent of the total population in the district. (For all Jharkhand 27per cent). Numerically Santal is the single largest community in the district and the largest of all the tribal groups.
- Acute hunger, abject poverty, malnutrition, ill health and indebtedness are the main features of the district. Seasonal migration (four seasons in a year) of men women and children for agricultural wage work is a regular phenomenon in the district. Hunger, poverty and migration play major roles in the educational backwardness of the district.
- Unlike in West Bengal, the number of never enrolled children was found to be very high (23per cent).
- Attendance of children was very poor on the days of our visits (53per cent).
- 33per cent of the parents were clearly dissatisfied concerning the performance of teachers.
- Quality of teaching was found to be poor. 21per cent of the children interviewed said that on the day of our visit (or the previous day) no teaching took place in the school. 48per cent of the children interviewed cannot even write their names and the problem is more acute among the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe children.
- Incentive schemes were reported to have been implemented very poorly.
- Children are taught in Hindi, which for the majority is not their mother tongue and is, in fact, a completely foreign language. This is a major hindrance to acquiring education.

¹ Munni Hembrom, Agatha Baskey, Pushpa Murmu and Agnes Murmu provided field assistance both in terms of data collection and language interpretation. The study team is indebted to the Ayo Aidari Trust, Dumka, for their unstinted co-operation during the fieldwork.

- Compared to West Bengal, the extent of private tuition in Dumka is low - 24per cent of the children were found to have been taking private tuition and most of them belonged to non SC/ST households. However, private schools are emerging as substitutes for government schools, obviously only for those who can afford the cost - 14per cent of the children interviewed were enrolled in private schools.
- While poverty prevents parents from affording the cost of private tuition or private schooling, inherited illiteracy prevents them from assisting their children at home. Only 39per cent of the children interviewed were found to have received assistance at home and they mostly belonged to other (non-SC/ST) castes.
- In the district, 12per cent of schools have no classrooms, and 4per cent have no buildings at all. 73per cent need major repairs. An area of 3.5 km on average is covered by each of the primary schools in the district. The state level figure is even worse – 4.6 km.
- Average number of teachers per school is two, which is far too inadequate and the distribution of teachers makes the situation worse. Urban and semi-urban primary schools are benefited with more teachers while those situated in remote areas are mostly run by a single teacher.
- Teachers' absenteeism was considered a more important factor than poor infrastructure (by parents) for the poor quality of education. 20per cent of the teachers were absent on the day of our visit. The absence of teachers was found to be higher in remote tribal areas.
- 100per cent of the respondents wanted their children to acquire education.
- The school inspection system was found to be functioning very poorly. Some of the schools (18per cent) had not been inspected at all in the year prior to our visit.
- Public participation, or the scope for public participation, was found to be negligible. Only 33per cent of parents interviewed said that teachers held regular meetings.
- Parents' inclination towards participating in the governance of primary schools was found to be very high. 75per cent of the respondents said that they wanted to join the system of governance through parent-teacher committees. They also want parent-teacher committees to be legally empowered to make school grants subject to their approval.

Section 1. Introduction

The educated mind of Jaipal Singh, the Oxford graduate turned tribal leader, dreamt of a separate Jharkhand state that took more than sixty years to realise. After protracted political movements (and alleged betrayal by leaders of Jharkhand movement from time to time that started with none other than the father of the movement, Jaipal Singh himself) the people of Jharkhand finally achieved a separate state that has become operational since 15 November 2000. The birth date of the new state was perhaps deliberately chosen to coincide with the birthday of the great tribal leader Birsa Munda who led an armed insurrection “Ulgulan”, against the British rulers and local exploiters in 1899-1900 and died in jail in 1900. Birsa’s mind had become restless, as the stories tell us, after he received elementary education.

While education has played a major role in building up the tribal leadership, the spread of education among the common people, particularly among the tribals, continues to lag far behind the rest of the country. According to the 2001 Census, the literacy rate in Jharkhand was 54.13per cent (all India: 65.38per cent) and the state ranked second from the bottom (Bihar brings up the rear with 47.53per cent literacy). Again the literacy rates for different districts have wide variations - 32per cent being the lowest and 69per cent the highest.² The government of Jharkhand, while acknowledging the educational backwardness of the state, is ambitiously planning to make Jharkhand a “model state for human resource development”³.

It is to be seen whether the government is successful in achieving this. At this point, however, an enquiry into the state of primary education - one of the most important issues in developmental discourse - may prove relevant to understand the ground realities that may help guide the future in a positive direction.

The Pratichi (India) Trust, with one of its major objectives of making positive interventions in the primary education sector has already conducted two studies in West Bengal⁴, and we thought it appropriate to make an enquiry into the status of delivery of primary education in the newly formed state of Jharkhand.

Although the geographical area of our study was confined to Dumka district and our findings are suggestive rather than definitive, the intensive nature of our

² Number of districts with literacy rates between 30per cent - 40per cent is 5, between 40per cent-50per cent is 4, between 50per cent-60per cent is 9 and between 60per cent-70per cent is 4.

³ Vision 2010, Government of Jharkhand (Ranchi, undated).

⁴ The first study report has already been published under the title The Pratichi Education Report (2002), TLM Books in association with Pratichi (India) Trust, Delhi. The second study report for West Bengal is given in the second part of this compilation.

investigations, our efforts to relate the delivery of primary education to class, caste, gender and other social factors, and corroboration with wider public discourse (media reports⁵, government and other reports, interviews with people other than selected respondents, etc.), forms perhaps, a basis for some general conclusions that may be applicable to the present state of primary education in the state of Jharkhand as a whole.

Field area and research methodology:

Dumka district of Jharkhand was purposively selected for the study. The main reason behind this is that the district is contiguous to Birbhum district of West Bengal - a district that was studied by the Pratiche research team in 2001. Aside from geographical proximity, both the districts have many social features in common (demography, culture, etc.) and the two districts have historical attachments - a part of Dumka, before 1855, was part of Birbhum district.

Another reason for selecting the district is its backwardness in terms of industrialisation and urbanisation compared to the state as a whole, on the one hand, and the large concentration of tribals in the district (47per cent) on the other.

The District

Dumka formed a subdivision of Santal Pargana district⁶ until it was given the status of a district in the early seventies of the last century. The district was divided into two in April 2001 (the new district created, Jamtara, comprises 4 of the 14 blocks of the old Dumka district).

Dumka has an area of 4369.2 sq. km. The major part of the district is located in the hilly or undulating areas. It is bordered with Godda and Pakur (Jharkhand) in the north, Deoghar (Jharkhand) in the west, Dhanbad (Jharkhand) and Birbhum (West Bengal) in the east.

According to the 2001 Census, Dumka has a total population of 1,102,217 with a sex ratio of 961. Tribals form 47per cent of the total population. Santal is the major tribe that forms about 90per cent of the total tribal population of the district. The other tribes found are Mal Pahariya, Mahli and Kol.

⁵ A newspaper survey of three Hindi dailies (Hindustan, Dainik Jagran and Prabhat Khabar - all published from the state capital of Ranchi) for the months of September- November 2002, shows that each of the dailies carried one news article on the poor delivery of primary education every seven days on average. The news items were mainly about poor functioning of primary schools, absence of teachers in schools for long stretches of time, unnoticed and unofficial long vacations, corruption in implementing midday meal and other incentive schemes, lack of infrastructure and teachers, corruption concerning recruitment of teachers and government funds allotted for primary education, etc.

⁶ Santal Pargana district was created in 1855 from parts of Bhagalpur and Birbhum districts. The formation of the district followed the Santal insurrection of 1855 and was designed to pacify the Santal unrest.

The literacy rate in the district, according to the 2001 Census, is 48.31 per cent, much below the national average and lower than the state average. There is also a large gap between the literacy rates of males and females. Literacy rate among males is 63.28 per cent and literacy rate among females is 32.68 per cent.

The official language is Hindi, but in almost all villages the main language for communication is Santali. The medium of instruction at the primary level, as we will see, for a majority of the school children in the rural areas has created a very significant problem - the distance between the mother tongue and the language used (Hindi) not only makes studying uninteresting but also inaccessible.

In contrast with the other parts of the state – Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Dhanbad, Bokaro, etc. - the district is far less urbanised. Except for some mining works in a small part of the district almost no industrialisation has taken place in the district. Despite being a commissioner's headquarter (presently six districts form this commissioner's) it is yet to be connected by rail.

Availability of land for cultivation is low and massive land alienation, mainly during the period of British rule, has left the tribals and other poor communities with the limited options of seasonal and long term migration for manual work, local wage work and gathering forest produce. The majority of the rural folk (and also many urban people) suffer from acute hunger, ill health and indebtedness.

The Pratichi (India) Trust also carried out a study (in the same households that were studied for primary education) to enquire about the state of the delivery of basic health services. The preliminary observations of the health study (a separate report on the health study will be published soon) suggest strong interconnections between hunger, health, ailments and indebtedness, as also education and illiteracy.

Community and Respondents

From a total of 10 community development (CD) blocks we selected three blocks (Jarmundi, Shikaripara and Gopikandar) on a random sampling basis. Four villages were randomly selected from each of the blocks (total 12). From a total listing of 944 households from the 12 villages we randomly selected 216 sample households (18 households from each of the villages) for an in depth study to enquire about the state of the delivery of primary education and basic health.

The study blocks and districts give us a diverse geographic, demographic and social picture. Hence, while some of the villages are located by the main road or in the plain areas some are located on the distant hills covered with forests. Some of the villages are entirely inhabited by tribals while others have a mixed population. In our sample villages we found Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe as well as people belonging to other

castes. As regards religion, we found people following Hinduism, Christianity and *Sarna* (traditional religious practice of the Santals⁷).

We began the fieldwork in October 2002 with listing and sampling of the households. In November-December 2002 the research team canvassed the questionnaires in the selected households. Of the respondents, 118 were male and 98 female. 170 belonged to ST communities, 22 to SC communities and 24 to other communities.

132 of the respondents were illiterate and the number of literate respondents was 84. Literacy among the female respondents was found to be much lower (15per cent) than among the male respondents (39per cent).

One reason for the high number of ST respondents is that the entire study was conducted in the rural areas (both our studies – in West Bengal and Jharkhand – have focussed on rural areas) where the ST population is very high. Almost the entire ST population of the district lives in the villages. Again, about 50per cent of the other caste population live in urban or semi-urban areas.

Although we canvassed questionnaires in 216 households (for studying the delivery of primary education and basic health), we found 126 households with children of primary school going age. Twenty-six households were found with exclusively never enrolled or drop out children and 100 households were found with children enrolled in primary schools - the latter group was interviewed about the delivery of the primary schooling system. Of these 100 households 80 have government primary school going children, 14 have private school going children and six have NGO school going children. (See appended tables for details.)

We completed questionnaires in 11 primary schools. Despite making five visits on as many working days we could not complete the questionnaire in one primary school, as the teacher was untraceable on our first four visits and in the last visit he was found in a completely inebriated condition. Nevertheless, household questionnaires were canvassed in this village too.

Besides canvassing the questionnaires, a large number of interviews with government officials, NGO functionaries and persons other than the sampled respondents were also conducted.

⁷ There are many different nomenclatures besides *sarna*. They are *bidin*, *mari dharam*, *sari dharam*, etc.

Section 2. The Delivery of Primary education

Education and other related issues.

The main cause behind the half-century long movement for a separate Jharkhand state was large imbalances in terms of distribution of resources. Jharkhand became the front-runner among Indian states in terms of availability of natural resources, yet the people of Jharkhand - both tribal and the non-tribal poor - lived in abject poverty. The situation has not yet changed and the conspicuous presence of imbalances affects all aspects of economic and social life. Even now, per capita availability of food in Jharkhand (230 grams) is much lower than the national figure (523 grams) - less than half. The gap between production of food grain and requirement of food grain is negatively 55per cent⁸. Given the huge inequality in terms of appropriation of wealth the condition of the poor of the state can well be imagined.

Households below the poverty line form 56.8per cent of the total. And among the tribals this figure is much higher.⁹

Again the local land and economic relationships, such as land alienation, indebtedness, impoverishment and pauperisation, etc.¹⁰ have played a major role in restricting the scope for spreading education, particularly among the tribals and other poor communities.

Historically, the state has been considered a very useful source of cheap labour for the tea gardens, construction sites and agricultural fields of different parts of the country,¹¹ and the same stream of labour migration still continues.¹²

At the same time, the state has seen a continual increase of immigration mainly from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, which has brought a major change in the demographic picture of the state. The proportion of the tribals to the total population has been in steady decline.¹³

The complex nature of inequality based on ethnicity, regional identity, class, caste and gender (all of these are interrelated) has left the state in a situation where tribal egalitarianism has lost out to an imposed anarchical inequality.

Landlessness, indebtedness, customary hunger, ill health and illiteracy have become part of the life of the tribals and other poor communities.

⁸ Vision 2010, Government of Jharkhand

⁹ Meenakshi et al, (2000), Singh (2003)

¹⁰ Roy Chaudhury, (1965). Also see Rana (1997)

¹¹ Hignell (1903); O, Malley (1910); Bradley Birt (1909)

¹² Rogaly et al (2001), Rana (2001a)

¹³ Kesri, (1979), Also Roy Chaudhury (1965) and (1961)

However, it is also apparently one of the wealthiest states of India. Every 36th person owns a two-wheeler, and every 156th person owns a four-wheeler! There is one truck per 501 persons and a bus per 4,176 persons!¹⁴

Literacy, as we have seen above, is not only low but also marked by a wide gender gap in literacy rates - 28.57.¹⁵

Infrastructure and teachers

There are 17,304 existing primary schools (including the upper primary and secondary schools with primary sections) in the state. Although the population served under each of the primary schools averages 1,555, which almost matches the national average, given the low population density (338 per sq. km) and vast geographical area (79,714 square km) with plateaux, hills, forests and undulating landscape, the number of primary schools is far too inadequate. Each of the primary schools on average caters to an area of 4.6 square km!

Again, the propensity for establishing more primary schools in the urban or semi-urban areas makes the situation more difficult for the children of the hinterland.

Figures for Dumka district give a better picture, but only relatively. Although there is one primary school for every 3.5 square km an average, we have found children of a study village visiting a school more than four kilometres away.

More depressing to note is the fact that 243 (12per cent) schools have no classroom and 72 (4per cent) have no building at all.¹⁶

The inadequacy in the number of schools along with the poor number of teachers per school adds to the severity of the problem of the primary schooling system. In Dumka district the average number of teachers per school is 2.5 (3,154 teachers in 1,254 schools) but, as happens almost everywhere in the country, many of the schools in the rural areas are run by a single teacher while many of the schools in the urban and semi-urban areas enjoy the luxury of having an excess number of teachers.

Of the 11 primary schools we surveyed, three (27.3per cent) are single-teacher schools, six (54.6per cent) are run by two teachers and the rest are run by more than two teachers. Single-teacher schools not only create a difficult situation for the teacher herself but also engenders larger inequality in the delivery of primary education by adversely affecting the number of teaching days, teaching hours per day and the quality of teaching.

¹⁴ Calculated from Vision 2010, Government of Jharkhand, Ranchi, Undated.

¹⁵ Census of India 2001, Provisional Population Totals

¹⁶ DPEP, Dumka, Reports on EMIS, Year 2001-02. However, these figures are for the old Dumka district that comprised the blocks that presently form Jamtara district. Also the document has no mention about the difference between “no classroom” and “no building”.

In the district as a whole, the number of female teachers in primary schools comprises only 31 per cent of the total. In the study areas this figure is a little higher - 36 per cent. However, in the remote corners of the study areas we found very few female teachers – most of them are placed in schools with relatively better accessibility (concerning transport and other facilities).

These factors coupled to the problems of governance have resulted in the erratic functioning of schools. A DPEP report shows a great variation in the number of working days found among primary schools. While some had less than 125 working days in a year, some had more than 250 working days in the same period.¹⁷

Aspiration for acquiring education

The national phenomenon¹⁸ of increased awareness about acquiring education has perhaps been strengthened through the literacy drive in the 1990s in the district. This has apparently played a positive role in reducing illiteracy in the state and in the district and has made a positive impact in terms of building awareness among the people about the importance of acquiring education by their children.¹⁹

One hundred percent of the respondents in the study villages responded positively about the importance of acquiring education by their sons, and 95.5 per cent of the respondents said that they wanted their daughters to acquire education. The high level of aspiration among parents matches other study reports, such as the Public Report on Basic Education (1999) and the Pratichi Education Report I (2002).

Enrolment and drop out

The high level of aspiration, however, has not been reflected fully in the actual enrolment of children in the primary schools. For the state as a whole, a Sarva Siksha Abhiyan document shows that 25 per cent of the children of primary school going age still remain out of school.²⁰

Data collected by the Pratichi research team in two phases from the listing sheets and sample households show that a large number of children of primary school going age are still not being enrolled in school.

¹⁷ Reports on EMIS, Year 2001-02, DPEP, Dumka

¹⁸ See PROBE Report (1998)

¹⁹ PRIA(2001); Purna Saksharata Abhiyan aur Buniyadi Siksha ke Sath Uska Sambandh: Dumka, Jharkhand, Ek Addhyayan, New Delhi. The document mentions that in the mid-nineties 38,000 literacy centres were opened with 38,487 volunteer instructors and 2,056 master trainers. 95 chief resource persons were also trained and involved in the literacy drive. This, despite not being satisfactory, has had a positive impact on the literacy rates as Census records reveal. The decadal improvement in literacy rate (1991-2001) for the district (14.29 per cent) is better than the state average (12.14 per cent). Of the 18 districts of the state, Dumka ranks third in terms of decadal difference in literacy rate.

²⁰ Basic Statistics, SSA, Jharkhand

From a total of 944 households listed in the first phase, a total of 774 children were found in the primary school going age group (6-11). Of them 533 (69per cent) were found enrolled, and 181 (23per cent) were found to have never enrolled, although drop out rates at the primary stage were relatively low - only 8 per cent (60 children of 774). The following table provides the details, disaggregated by caste and gender.

Table 2.1. Distribution of children in 6-11 age group in the study area of Dumka (from a total listing of 944 households. Figures in parentheses indicate percentage.)

	Children in 6-11 years age group		Schooling status of the child					
			Male			Female		
	Male	Female	Currently enrolled	Never Enrolled	Drop Out	Currently enrolled	Never Enrolled	Drop Out
ST	334	281	218 (65)	92 (28)	24 (7)	182 (65)	73 (26)	26 (9)
SC	48	39	38 (79)	9 (19)	1 (2)	33 (84)	5 (13)	1 (3)
Others	40	32	36 (90)	0 (0)	4 (10)	26 (81)	2 (6)	4 (13)
Total	422	352	292 (66)	101 (24)	29 (7)	241 (68)	80 (23)	31 (9)

The extent of non-enrolment is further confirmed from the sampled households where among a total 160 children, 106 (66per cent) were found to be enrolled and 38 (24per cent) were found to have never enrolled. Number of drop out children was found to be 16 (10per cent).

Details with caste and gender disaggregation are presented below in a tabular form.

Table 2.1a. Distribution of children in 6-11 age group in the sampled households

	Children in 6-11 age group		Schooling status of the child					
			Male			Female		
	Male	Female	Currently enrolled	Never Enrolled	Drop Out	Currently enrolled	Never Enrolled	Drop Out
ST	62	62	39 (63)	16 (26)	7 (11)	41 (66)	14 (23)	7 (11)
SC	9	11	6 (67)	2 (22)	1 (11)	5 (45.5)	5 (45.5)	1 (9)
Others	11	5	11 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (80)	1 (20)	0 (0)
Total	82	78	56 (68)	18 (22)	8 (10)	50 (64)	20 (26)	8 (10)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

From both sets of data never enrolment and drop out was found to be higher among the Scheduled Tribes. Average enrolment per primary school surveyed was found to be 113.

Attendance of children

The poor rate of enrolment is further aggravated by a poorer rate of attendance. Overall attendance of children on the days of our visits to the schools was 43per cent. The attendance records procured for the days visited from the school attendance registers support the responses of the parents. In response to the question of attendance in school, 53per cent of the respondents said that their wards attended school on all six working days in the week prior to our visits. 33per cent said that their children did not attend a single day during the period and 8per cent said that the children attended school between one and three days.

Table 2.1b. Attendance of children - parents' responses

No. of days attended in last school week	No. of responses
1 - 3 days	8
4 - 6 days	53
Did not attend at all	33
No response	6
Total number of parents interviewed	100

Reasons for never enrolling and drop-out

“My mother has gone out to dig earth
And left me in the pit.” (Santali folk song)

There were varied perceptions about never enrolment, drop out and poor attendance rates of children at primary level. Many of the government officials, NGO functionaries and teachers interviewed held the parents responsible for not enrolling their children or discontinuing their studies. While some of them sympathise with the parents' inability to afford children's education because of their poor financial condition that forces them to engage children in domestic and other work, many of them believe that the tribals and other poor communities do not value education. The latter view is commonly found in the other parts of the country as well and the causes for this undercurrent of prejudice are deep rooted. (See Pratchi Education Report I.)

It is true that children of many families simply cannot attend school because of family responsibilities, such as looking after younger siblings, tending cattle, etc. Many of the families migrate out in search of work from season to season,²¹ which makes their children's attendance at school impossible. Yet, from what we gathered from the views expressed by respondents, there are more reasons - often very strong ones - for the so-called "disinterest" of parents and children towards acquiring education.

Parents' responses (which were spontaneous, pre-determined options were not given) to the questions asked to find the reasons for never enrolment, dropout and poor rate of attendance, ranked in a tabular form gives us a chance to examine the reasons. The ranking has been done in a descending order in accordance with the respective number of responses.

Table 2.2. Major reasons for Never Enrolment, Drop Out and Poor Attendance in the schools

Categories →	Never Enrolment	Drop Out	Poor Attendance
Rank ↓			
1	Child was needed for other household activities	Child did not wish to continue studying	Child was needed for other household activities
2	Poor family condition	Child was needed for other household activities	Child less interested
3	School far away	Parents withdrew the child due to irregular schooling	Teacher did not come
4	Child less interested in studying	Parents withdrew children for domestic work	Ill health of child or other family members
5	Caring for siblings	Caring for siblings	Tending cattle
6		Tending cattle	Caring for siblings
7			Helping parents in farm work

Some of the reasons are mutually supportive, like "poor economic condition" and "child needed for other activities". Similarly, "school far away" and "child less interested in studying" obviously have something in common. Parents of a village where the nearest primary school is located about four kilometres away said that very often small children refuse to walk the distance.

²¹ Dumka district is one of the main sources of labour for rice cultivation. Labourers migrate out four times in a year and the duration of stay at Bardhaman (in West Bengal) varies between 15 days and one month in each season. For details see Nitya Rao and Kumar Rana (1997): "Women's Labour and Migration: Case of Santals", *Economic and Political Weekly* 32 (50, December 13-19); Ben Rogaly et al (2001): *Seasonal Migration for Rural Manual Work in Eastern India - Final Report*, University of East Anglia, UK. Also Kumar Rana (2001): *Parijati Majoor o Kicchu Prasangik Bhabna*, *Notun Ganatantrer Janyo*, May 2001, Kolkata; and Kumar Rana (2002): *Saontal Parganar Baromasya*, CAMP, Kolkata.

The ranking of the responses received as the reasons for drop out points towards the poor delivery of the primary education system - “child did not wish to continue studying” (the first reason for drop out) was most commonly caused by:

- a) Hunger - for many children hunting and gathering food is more important than sitting in class with an empty stomach fearing the teacher’s beating!
- b) Not understanding the texts, mainly because of the problem of language
- c) Teaching being uninteresting.

Problems of poor rate of attendance in schools share some common explanations with never enrolment and drop out. However, one important additional reason is the ill health of children or other family members. Poor health delivery system, lack of awareness about basic health care, etc. are common features in the rural areas of Dumka district.

Hunger and malnutrition are synonymous with the lives of most of the people in the area and these, in turn, compel families and their children to engage in other activities, like tending cattle, doing farm and domestic work, gathering food, etc. A properly implemented mid day meal scheme could have a positive effect on the attendance of school in such areas in particular.

The problem of universalisation of primary education cannot be explained by the inverse relationship of poverty and education; one has to look beyond this simplification. The other components (infrastructure, teachers, teaching time and quality, implementation of incentive schemes, etc) - which in many cases (like retention of children in school) are much more responsible for the poor condition of primary education - must be examined with due care. This will be done in the following section.

Section 3. Functioning of the primary schools.

Functioning of the schools

It is the proper functioning of the primary schools that can assure the delivery of primary education. Functioning of the schools depends upon the school environment, motivation and dedication of the teachers and supervision and monitoring by both school inspectors and local people. In this section we will examine the amenities available in the schools, teaching time, teachers' attendance and teaching qualities, etc. This will be followed by a discussion on the governance of the primary schools.

Basic amenities in the school

Although all the 11 schools we have surveyed have their own buildings.

- Eight of them (73per cent) needed major repair.
- None of them had toilet facilities.
- Three of them (27per cent) had no drinking water facility.
- Seven of them (64per cent) had no maps or charts and eight (73per cent) have no teaching kits.
- In one school (9per cent) even a blackboard was also not available.
- Six (55per cent) had no playgrounds

Programmes like “*School dela* - Come to school” launched with much fanfare, have painted the walls of the towns and villages, but so far, they have not succeeded in changing the dull school environments into an attractive one.

Teachers' attendance

The question of teachers' attendance is taken more seriously than the lack of basic amenities by the parents. Many of the parents complained that teachers frequently remain absent from the schools. In one of the schools, as we have mentioned above, we have not been able to carry out the survey because of the absence of the teacher. In another school it took four visits to find the teacher at school to interview. During the visits to the schools, we have found 20per cent of the teachers to be absent (the figure of absence does not include the teacher who we could interview on the fourth visit!).

Absenteeism among the teachers was found more in the tribal villages located in the hinterland. On the contrary, teachers in the schools located in the non-tribal villages were found to be more regular and punctual.

However, we have come across some very dedicated teachers who are respected in the localities for their regularity, punctuality and innovative methods of teaching.

School days and timings

We have already seen in the DPEP report that the working days of the primary schools are more diverse than uniform (varies between 125 and 250 days in a year). In the study villages too, we have noticed similar variations. At least two of the 12 primary schools visited²² were found to have been functioning most irregularly. Besides these, some other schools were also found to have erratic working days - a holiday did not need any government order or rule but only the teacher's wish, and that too, in some cases was reported to have been done without any previous announcement. Aside from occasional declared or undeclared holidays, as we have observed during the visits and many of the parents reported, many of the teachers (particularly the male ones) often used to come to the school much later than the scheduled time and leave much earlier than they are supposed to do.

Female teachers, in general, were found to be more regular and punctual. Also they were found to be much friendlier with the children. As mentioned above very few female teachers are found in the remote areas. However, it was reiterated by the parents of some remote localities where female teachers are placed (we have found three such primary schools out of nine) that female teachers are not only regular but also they spend enough time for actual teaching, which is not always the same with the male teachers.

Subjects taught

Where functioning of the schools is poorly assured, it is not surprising that actual teaching in the classrooms remains far from satisfactory. From a total 43 children responding to the questions of subjects taught in the school, 21 per cent said that no teaching was done the days or previous days of our visits, although the school was open! Hindi and mathematics are the only subjects which were reportedly taught. Although subjects such as Science, History and Geography, Sanskrit and English are supposed to be taught in classes three, four and five, none of the children mentioned those subjects. To our utter surprise, one teacher of a primary school interviewed was not aware of the syllabus!

Parents' perception about teachers' performance

“Sleeps the teacher in the class
And snores
And the children make a noise
And he springs up

²² Number of primary schools visited is 12. However, questionnaires could be completed in 11 of them since we could not find the teacher in one of the schools after paying several visits.

And beats (the children) black and blue.” (Santali folk song)

Sixty one percent (61per cent) of the parents interviewed were found to be illiterate. And as we have mentioned earlier, illiteracy among the female respondents was found to be alarmingly high (85per cent). Illiteracy coupled with the exclusion of the parents from the school arena has kept parents ignorant about the policies and their implementations.

Yet parents’ responses to the questions related to school functioning were extraordinarily clear, (although some of the respondents – mainly non-parent old men and women - could not respond). On the question of teachers’ performances seventy nine percent of the total respondents gave their clear opinions on the performances of teachers. The following table shows that there is a higher degree of dissatisfaction among the parents concerning the performance of teachers— 33per cent of them were found to be clearly dissatisfied. The number of satisfied parents was lower than 50per cent and 21per cent of them were either unable to answer or unwilling to comment.

The table also reveals that parents’ knowledge about the government primary schools was much higher than that of the private schools (50per cent of the parents of the private schools could not respond). This is since the government primary schools are located in or around the villages and people – whom many of the teachers and policy makers consider to be “fools” – are able to observe the teachers’ attendance, school-timing, etc everyday²³.

A middle aged villager, Pradhan Marandi, remembers his school days. “*Mahasay tikin laha hec’koa , ar tipin jokhe tadi n’u calak’ koa. Hec’ ruarkate mit bar chhapti dal, ar chuutti* — the teacher used to come before noon and [immediately] would go out for drinking toddy. After returning back he used to give us few sticks of beating and then suspended the classes.”

The situation has changed little. For many of the teachers, as Pradhan and other villagers think, teaching at school is more akin to taking a break from their other work.

Table 3.1 Performance of teachers (Parents’ responses)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Don’t know	Total
Govt.	38 (48)	29(36)	13(16)	80(100)
Private	5(36)	2(14)	7(50)	14(100)
NGO	3(50)	2(33)	1(17)	6(100)
Total No. of Respondents	46(46)	33(33)	21(21)	100(100)

²³ Rao (2000) has also the similar observations

Children of the primary schools have, it seems, very little respect for their teachers. Many of the children said that few of the teachers taught in the classes, even when they came to the schools. Sleeping in the classroom, getting their bodies massaged by the children, talking with colleagues, are the jobs, most of the teachers were “complimented” for.

Section 4. Teaching quality, private tuition and private schools

Quality of teaching

Functioning of the schools tells a lot about the quality of teaching delivered in the primary schools. An assessment made by the researchers with 63 children of different primary classes (classes 2- 5) shows that 48per cent of them cannot write their names. 36per cent of them can write but cannot read fluently and only 16per cent could do all the tasks of reading, writing and solving simple sums. The number of poorly performing children was found much higher among the scheduled tribe children. The figure was much lower among the children belonging to other castes. The following table gives a detail account of the assessment on the level of learning achievement by the children.

Table 4.1 Assessment of level of achievement of the children of classes 2-5
(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

Categories	SC	ST	Others	Total
Cannot write their names	6(46per cent)	22(54per cent)	2(22per cent)	30(48per cent)
Can write but cannot read fluently	4(31per cent)	14(34per cent)	5(56per cent)	23(36per cent)
Can read, write and solve simple sums	3(23per cent)	5(12per cent)	2(22per cent)	10(16per cent)
Total	13(100per cent)	41(100per cent)	9(100per cent)	63(100per cent)

While the main reason behind the poor level of achievement of children was found to be the poor quality of teaching, there are other reasons identified by the parents, teachers and some of the government and non-government functionaries. They are poor implementation of incentive schemes, poor governance and supervision, the problem of medium of instruction, lack of teachers, poor school infrastructure and amenities, etc. which are very important and often intertwined. Performance of the children of private schools and NGO run schools were not found to be much different.

The class division.

The quality of teaching delivered in the primary schools offer two main options for the majority of the parents.

- Either to help them at home in studying or to arrange private tuition for them, and
- Leaving the children at the mercy of the teachers.
- A third option is gradually increasing, not only in Dumka district, but also all over the state. More parents have been seen to incline towards enrolling their children in the private schools.

Assistance given at home

Given the poor educational background of the households, many of the parents (mainly among the SC and ST communities) cannot help their children in studying. Thirty nine percent (39per cent) of the parents responded that their children were given assistance, either by the parents or by the relatives at home.

Educated mothers, as we have seen in West Bengal studies are often more likely to assist their children in studying at home. Among our respondents in Dumka district only 15per cent of the mothers were found to be literate. This is a major reason for most of the children do not get home assistance in studying.

Private tuition

Unlike in West Bengal, resorting to private tuition has not yet become a phenomenon in the primary level of education in the rural areas of Dumka district. One main reason was found to be abject poverty among the parents (for 49per cent of the parents the cost of schooling per children was reported to be less than RS 25 per month- cost includes clothes, books, stationeries and private tuition—where applicable).

The other reason is the non-availability of persons competent to impart private tuition in the localities. Even the abilities of some of the private tutors found in the localities are questionable. For many children, as our quality assessment suggests, taking private tuition has not had much impact in their learning. Thirty five percent of the children taking private tuition could not read and write, performance of another 47per cent was only moderate. The rest 18per cent could read, write, answer questions and solve simple sums. In terms of quality little difference was found between the children taking private tuition and those who are not. The following table gives us a comparative picture.

Table 4.2 Private Tuition and Performance

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

Categories and performances	Private tuition taken	Private tuition not taken
Cannot write their names	6(35)	24(52)
Can read and write	8(47)	16(35)
Can read, write and solve simple sums	3(18)	6(13)
Total	17(100)	46(100)

It is probable that financial inability of the parents to afford the cost of private tuition and the non availability of qualified private tutors are mainly responsible for comparatively less number of children taking private tuition. Among the sampled households 24per cent of the children were found to have taken private tuition.

Private tuition among the communities other than SC and ST was found to be much higher. While 44per cent of the total general caste children were found to be taking private tuition, in case of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes the figures were 29per cent and 18per cent respectively. Interestingly, number of children of private schools and NGO run schools taking private tuition was found to be higher than the children of primary schools taking private tuition. In case of some private school going children the teachers of the respective schools reportedly insisted that the children took private tuition. Also it is a fact that parents of private school going children are capable of bearing the cost.

The same explanation, however, does not apply to the NGO run schools. Also it is very difficult to a draw a conclusion from a trivial sample of only six households (sending their children to NGO schools).

Table 4.3 Extent of private tuition.

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

	PS	PVT	NGO	Total
Private tuition taken	17(21)	5(36)	2(33)	24(24)
Private tuition not taken	63(79)	9(64)	4(67)	76(76)
Total	80(100)	14(100)	6(100)	100(100)

Whatever impact private tuition has on the quality of learning, it certainly creates or re-establishes class boundaries among the people. The relatively affluent sections of the society (irrespective of caste and ethnic identity) shrug off their responsibilities towards the monitoring or supervision of the schools, which they are (and only they are, given the social set up) otherwise capable of doing. The notion of taking expensive private measures creates another false sense of security which makes them indifferent about greater social security. The sense of privately arranged security not only keeps itself confined among the affluent, but also percolates down to others. As mentioned above, the quality of the private tutors in many cases is not beyond doubt, yet some of the respondents with fair degree of financial handicap were found to have borrowed money to pay the fees of the private tutors.

Private schools

Complete lose of faith on the government primary school and absence of subsequent alternative in the form of private tuition have inspired the private players to fill the gap in the primary education sector. According to some government officials and NGO functionaries the growth of the private schools in the area has mushroomed. The private players are gaining more strength day by day from a friendly government in the state that has warmly invited them into the field of education- both at primary and higher level.

The increasing attraction of the private schools can be seen from the fact that private school going children were found in seven of the 12 surveyed villages. Not only in the towns or block headquarters, private schools have also been established in the large villages (inhabited mainly by non tribals) as well. Most of these schools are owned and governed by the non-tribals. However, some of the educated tribal youths are also coming forward as educational entrepreneurs.

The number of private school going children—14per cent of the enrolled children (about whom we asked the questions) is considerably high given the poor economic condition of the area. Inclination to sending children to the private schools was found to be equally high among all the castes, and this is particularly evident among the relatively affluent scheduled tribe families. Of the total 14 children found to be enrolled in the private school 12 were from scheduled tribe communities. The relatively better-off households were found to have enrolled their children in the private schools. Although the

quality of teaching in the private schools is not assured (and in some cases they are worst than the government schools), the illusionary positive perception about these schools has found strong ground among the people.

All the parents sending their children to private schools have a strong belief that the learning achievements of the children, especially learning of English language, would help children building their future. “*Naoa jugre alo parhao hon naoa-* in modern age, studying has also to be modern”, said a respondent. Otherwise, “*nokri chakri chet hon ban namoak’* - they will not be able to compete in the job market”, said another.

In addition there is a belief among many respondents that since the private schools are collecting fees from the children they must be giving good teaching, or, “ why are they charging money - *Bangkhan do paisa chedak’ hataoakan?*” On the other hand, the poor people, dismayingly express the power of money in the society. “Those who have money can buy everything, those who have not are deprived of everything”, said many of the parents who cannot send children to private school. “*Jom reak’ thikan banuak’ alo ar parhao?-* we don’t even have the certainty of filling our stomachs, how can we think of education?”

Another reason for the growing inclination towards the private schools is perhaps the relatively better management and apparently disciplined atmosphere of the private schools.

These discourses perhaps point towards the expression and intensification of class division among the tribal societies. Property and other economic relations have already brought a change among them.

Ethnicity and class

As well as the emergence of a class divided society ethnic challenges must also be addressed. This is particularly relevant in a place like Dumka where more than 40per cent of the population belong to Santal tribe (and for many of the non Santals in the rural areas not only the lingua franca is Santali, but also they are incorporated in the Santal culture to a great extent).

L.S.S. O’Malley, the methodical administrator who contributed significantly in compiling the historical and administrative records, wrote about the district of Santal Pargana in 1910, “... the district is a backward one, chiefly because the population is mainly composed of aboriginals, who have little thirst for knowledge”.²⁴ The O’Malleys left, but their Indian successors continue to hold such perspectives.

Such thoughts are often expressed in policies and programmes. The tribals, on the one hand are accused of being indifferent towards acquiring education, yet on the other are

²⁴ L.S.S O’Malley, Bengal District Gazeteers, Santal Pargana, 1910, Calcutta, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot

not allowed to acquire education. There is a great problem for the children both in terms of geographical accessibility and poor functioning of the existing primary schools. Poverty is a key issue. Those who somehow manage to cross the barriers of accessibility and affordability find themselves facing an even greater challenge.

The problem that the tribal children face everyday is the barrier of language. Hindi, the official language of Jharkhand and the medium of instruction in the government primary schools, is as foreign to them as any other foreign language. All the general caste teachers we have interviewed said that for them the biggest problem of teaching is that of communication. Children, who are otherwise found to be very intelligent, cannot just pick up in their studying because they cannot understand the textbooks²⁵. This further aggravates the situation, which has already marked by the poor functioning of the schools.

Most of the children of the lower classes responded only to a few questions asked by the researchers. One reason for this is that the identity of the researchers, in their eyes, was not very different from the identities of their teachers to whom they seldom speak (either because of shyness or fear). However, 27 children (of a total 63 interviewed) responded to the question asked about whether or not they understood teachers' language and cannot understand the text at all. All the tribal children taught by non-tribal teachers said that they understood little of what the teacher taught.

There are other ethnic issues as well. The division between the policy makers-implementers and the common people the former are supposed to serve is almost drawn along ethnic lines. The non-tribal officials and teachers do not much care to hide their distaste for the tribals. The cemented belief that tribals are not fit for acquiring education not even to be called human beings was expressed by many of the officials and teachers during the interviews with the researchers.

The tribals of Dumka district, particularly the Santals, have no historical inheritance of formal schooling. Their history of continuous migration from one place to another²⁶ and the political economic relations of the country²⁷ never allowed them to get acquainted with formal schooling. Yet, they have a rich cultural heritage. They have a language of great regularity and complexity, which has been compiled by P.O. Bodding into a five volumes dictionary²⁸. Perhaps, the policy makers have never taken this into account.

²⁵ This has been observed by others also. See Kumar Rana(2001), *Medium of Instruction : Case of the Santals*, in Samantak Das, *Chithi*, www.santiniketan .net. K.Srijana (2000) *Total Literacy campaign in Dumka, Bihar*; PRIA, New Delhi. Also see Kumar Rana(2002) *Saontal Parganar Baromasya*, CAMP, Kolkata.

²⁶ Rev. R.C.Coomer, *Santal ar Pahariyareko Itihaas*, Benagaria Mission Press (1987)

²⁷ Rapaj, T.K.*Hajariyareko Itihaas*, Kolkata (1993),Jharkhand reek' Itihaas,(Series of essays) in *Natun Ganatantree Janya (1998-2002) Kolkata*.

²⁸ A Dictionary of Santals (in five volumes), P.O. Bodding, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi (1993)

At the same time the emergence of class among the ethnic groups has to be kept in mind. The emergence of class has been established through land relationships but in addition to many other class components of tribal societies. One is the great divide between salaried employees and others. Some of the tribal teachers, particularly the male ones were found in many cases to have been suffering from gross absenteeism. The high salary they get (Rs. 5-11, 000 per month) has put them above the ethnic boundaries to join the class of employees who have little feeling for their fellow tribe-children.

Again we have come across some tribal teachers whose dedication towards their work has earned them high esteem in the localities. As a Santal teacher of a school said that he did not mind working extra time to teach more than a hundred children since it was his sacred duty and one should not neglect the job he was paid for. In addition, he believed that through teaching he was contributing to his own community that was illiterate, poor and neglected by the government. Only dedicated and innovative teaching to make the schooling attractive for the children can improve the enrolment and attendance rate.

The relationship of ethnicity and class is not only intricate but also a delicate issue and needs careful examination. Inside the village and community class division, deprivation based on class and class exploitation are emerging factors. When tribals face the 'others' in a world outside the community ethnicity becomes much larger an issue. Without understanding this, policy formulation can never be complete.

Section 5. Implementation of the incentive schemes

Hunger, poverty and primary education

“Of all the sufferings of life, the most painful is hunger and poverty.”(Santali folk song)

To translate the above line we have to use two words ‘hunger’ and ‘poverty’ to bring out the closest meaning of the Santali word *rengec*. A poor man is called a *rengec*’ hor, and someone uses the same term *rengec*’ to express feeling hungry. For many of the families in the rural areas of the district (among whom, besides the Santals, there are many other poorer communities like Pahariya, Blacksmith, Ghatwar, Rajwar, etc.) who suffer from abject poverty, particularly during September-October, a full meal of rice is considered a luxury.²⁹ Among these people poverty is defined by a single parameter – the filling of the stomachs.

In such a situation, developing the knowledge for coping with hunger, ill health, indebtedness and so on largely preoccupies the peoples’ mind and despite having their strong inclination to acquire education - the ‘thirst for knowledge’ that O’Malley understood- they often stand helpless.

- Who would care for siblings when the parents go out to work?
- Who would tend the cattle?
- How would the children fill their empty stomachs if they sit in the classrooms and do not go to hunt and gather?
- Who would look after the children at home (if they are left to attend school) when the parents migrate out seasonally for wage earning?
- Where do they get money to buy books, stationeries and clothes?
- Who would give them private tuition free of cost?

These are questions one has to address before planning the universalization of primary education.

Not that the policy makers are wholly unaware of the situation. Rather, some policies have also been formulated (though there is enough room for improvement in the formulation) to address these issues, viz. the mid day meal scheme, cash incentive for attendance, free uniform scheme for girls, free text books to all children, scholarship schemes, etc.

However, plans and their implementation, as it seems from the responses of the parents and teachers, are two parallel lines which meet each other at infinity.

Mid day meal scheme

Although out of a total 80 households with primary school going children (children going to the private and NGO schools were not supposed to be covered under the incentive schemes provided by the government)) 63 (80per cent) said that their children have

²⁹ See Kumar Rana (2002), Saontal Parganar Baromasya, CAMP, Kolkata.

received rice (under the mid day meal scheme, ideally, which is to provide 3 kg. of hulled rice per child per month subject to 80per cent attendance in the school), both the quantity of rice and the frequency of distribution was reported to be ridiculously erratic. While some parents said that their children have received rice once or twice a year (although this scheme is a national one and is supposed to be implemented every month), responses on the quantity of rice received was much varied (from village to village). Particularly, in the villages in the remote areas, the irregularity is sky high.

All the teachers admitted that the distribution of rice under the mid day meal scheme has been implemented irregularly. They complained that the irregular and inadequate supply of rice added to the problems of getting the quota of rice (as mid day meal) have made the situation extremely bad, as it affects both the teaching in the schools and also harms the relationship of the teachers with the parents, since the latter hold the teachers (wrongly) responsible for the irregularity.

Free text books

The scheme is supposed to bring all the children into its fold to provide all the books required in the classes. None of the children got the complete set of textbooks taught in the classes—in many cases, they had to buy most of the books from the market, as reported by the parents. Only 55(69per cent) of children have got only some of the textbooks under the free textbook scheme.

Teachers also uniformly agreed to the views expressed by the parents, and also complained that they often have to face the parents' wrath that they cannot provide the prescribed textbooks to all the children. The teachers also said that not only was there inadequacy in supply of the books, but sometime books are supplied much after the academic sessions have started.

Free Uniform schemes.

None of the children interviewed have reportedly been benefited under the scheme. Teachers also agreed to the parents' responses.

Cash Incentive for Attendance

This scheme is meant for the children coming from the below poverty line families. Such children are supposed receive the rate of Re 1 per day of attendance. We have found only 10 (13per cent) children to receive the benefit of this scheme, though more than 80per cent of our respondents were found to be under the poor income category (Rs12000 a year or less).

Teachers complained that besides irregularity in releasing the funds under this scheme, they commonly face another major problem, which lies in the process of selection of below poverty line (BPL) families. Many of the parents who have been excluded from the list of

BPL (though they are no less poor than those who have been enlisted) come to the teachers to ask why their children have not been covered under the Cash Incentive for Attendance Scheme. Thus teachers are in the front line, having to cope with the failings of a policy (the selection of BPL households), and are even being held responsible for this by some parents.

Scholarship scheme

This scheme is meant for all SC and ST children only. Only 12 (18per cent) of the total 65 SC and ST children visiting the primary school have reportedly received this benefit (Rs 180 per student per year).⁸ (10per cent) of a total 80 children have never received any incentive from the schools.³⁰

Table 5.1 Incentives received

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

Type of incentive	No of children benefited
Dry food ration	63(79)
Uniforms	0(0)
Text book	55(69)
Scholarship	12(18)**
Cash incentive	10(13)
No incentive	8(10)
Total no. of respondents	80

** Total SC and ST children enrolled in the government primary schools/Responses not mutually exclusive.

Suggestions on Incentive Schemes

When requested for their views, all of the 11 teachers said that the distribution of rice in the name of Mid Day Meal scheme should immediately be replaced with a proper Mid Day Meal to provide cooked food to the children. This, they believe, will improve enrolment and attendance and will reduce the rate of drop out. Parents also expressed similar views.

All the teachers and parents demanded that all the prescribed textbooks should be provided to all children in time.

Eight (72per cent) of the teachers and many of the parents felt that Free Uniform Scheme should immediately be implemented and all children irrespective of caste and gender should receive this benefit, as many of the children (irrespective of gender and caste) have no clothes at all to wear. Many of the children in the schools were found with a piece of torn loin to cover the lower part of the body.

Seven (64per cent) of the teachers and many of the parents said that Cash Incentive for Attendance should cover all the children of the primary schools since many of the children are simply excluded from this because of wrong or partiality- driven selections of the BPL families.

³⁰ According to a DPEP, Dumka report (Report of EMIS, District Dumka, 2001-2002) , 61per cent children received rice, a little more than 50per cent boys and girls received free text books and only 0.12per cent boys and 0.25per cent girls have got free uniforms.

Section 6. Governance

Inspection

One major reason of the poor functioning of the schools was attributed by many of the respondents to the poor inspection system. Of the 11 primary schools we could survey, two (18.2per cent) had not been visited by any inspector in the past one year prior to our visits. Four of them (36.4per cent) had been visited by inspectors only once in the year. Another 36.4per cent were visited twice in the year. Only one (9per cent) was inspected thrice in a year. Primary schools located near the block headquarters or with easy accessibility were visited more, and the schools in remote villages were largely neglected.

In many cases, inspections have also, as the teachers reported, become a *khanapurti*- mere formality. Likewise in West Bengal, school inspectors in Jharkhand are not respected by the teachers much. Even some parents complained about the teachers and inspectors being involved in corrupt practices.

Parent teacher committees

Although 100per cent of the primary school teachers interviewed said that there were parent-teacher committees in their respective schools, only 21per cent of the parents of the children visiting government primary schools agreed with the teachers.

6.1 Awareness about Existence of PTAs?

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

	PS	PVT	NGO	Total
Yes	17(21)	3(21)	0(0)	20
No	53(66)	6(43)	5(83)	64
Don't know	10(13)	5(36)	1(17)	15
No.of respondents	80(100)	14(100)	6(100)	100

Meetings with parents

When asked whether the teachers hold meetings with them, only 33per cent of the parents of primary school going children replied in the affirmative. Figures for the private schools were found to be much worse. In the case of the NGO schools no parent said that teachers held meeting with them.

Table 6.2 Parents Teachers meetings

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

	PS	PVT	NGO	Total
Yes	26 (33)	2(14)	0(0)	28
No	44(55)	8(57)	4(67)	56
Don't know	10(12)	4(29)	2(33)	16
No. of respondents	80(100)	14(100)	6(100)	100

Parents' inclination towards participation

Nevertheless, the majority of the parents said that they responded positively to the teachers when they were invited to the meetings. In fact, some of our researchers have witnessed such meetings where the attendance of the parents – both fathers and mothers were very encouraging.

Table6.3. Parents' attendance in the meetings.
(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

	PS	PVT	NGO	Total
Yes	17 (65)	2 (100)	0(0)	19 (68)
No	9 (35)	0(100)	0(0)	9(32)
No. of respondents respondent affirmatively about teachers' holding of meetings with them.	26(100)	2(100)	0(0)	28(100)

Parents' inclination towards participating in the governance of the primary education system is clear from their positive responses to offer assistance to improve schooling. Seventy five percent of the parents of the primary school children were found to be willing to offer assistance. However, the willingness is much lower in case of the private and NGO schools.

Table6.4. Parents willingness to offer assistance
(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

	PS	Pvt.	NGO
Willing	60 (75)	3(21)	3(50)
Indifferent	20(25)	11(79)	3(50)
Total	80	14	6

Section 7. The newly launched Gram Siksha Abhiyan – problems and prospects

The government of Jharkhand has recently launched a programme- Jharkhand Gram Siksha Abhiyan- with the aim of making primary education universalised by the year 2010.

Under this programme, according to a booklet published by the Directorate of Primary Education, Government of Jharkhand (the only available material on this so far), alternative schools will be opened to facilitate all children between the 6-11 age group to get primary education. Every village will have a school within one kilometre of its radius. “Schools will reach the door step”, the booklet enthusiastically claims.

The schools will be governed by the Gram Siksha Samitis , but as soon as the election to the Panchayats are held they will be devolved to the hands of Panchayats³¹.

One teacher for each of the schools will be recruited by a block level committee, headed by the BDOs of the respective blocks. The teachers will be recruited on contract basis and each of the teachers will get an honorarium of Rs 1000 per month in case of the schools with an enrolment of 20 children or less. In case of an enrolment of more than 20 children teachers will get at the rate of Rs 50 per child per month. However, the honorarium would not exceed Rs 2000 per month.

Recruitment of teachers will be done from the villages or nearby localities of the schools. Any youth (of either sex) with a minimum qualification of matriculation is eligible for applying for the post.

A district level committee headed by the Deputy Commissioners of the respective districts will monitor the programme.

Honorarium of the teachers will be paid through the Samitis after getting sanctions from the block level committees.

The programme has just been announced and hence our study could not include any such school into its enquiry. The programme, however, as the guidelines in the booklet indicate, is not free from bureaucratic governance. Gram Siksha Samitis will be constituted with the villagers, and “at least one of the members has to be a parent”. There is high probability of the committees being grabbed by the local powerful section of the society. Moreover, the functioning of the schools, in every step, will have to face the high

³¹ Jharkhand Gram Siksha Abhiyan Directorate of Education, Department of Human Resource Development, Govt. of Jharkhand, Ranchi (2002)

handedness of the block and district level committees constituted with the Officials, MLAs and MPs.

Our West Bengal experience says that the success of such schools (such as the SSKs in West Bengal) can only be assured by the democratic governance of such schools, and most preferably with the female teachers. The Jharkhand Gram Siksha Abhiyan, as the indications are available, has little intention for democratic governance and employing female teachers.

Section 8. The way forward

The basic problems that hinder the delivery of primary education, particularly in impoverished rural areas, are essentially the same all over the country.³² As our studies in West Bengal have shown, the complex nature of the problems – which are intertwined – has to be kept in mind while formulating policies for universalising primary education.

These problems are further exacerbated in the case of Jharkhand by three factors.

First, the extent and degree of rural impoverishment, particularly among the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe communities, which is far more acute in Jharkhand than in most other states.

Second, the very low levels of literacy, especially among women, and most particularly among scheduled tribe women that has a direct impact on children's learning achievements, or the lack thereof.

Third, the use of Hindi, which is essentially a foreign language, and never used at home by scheduled tribe children, as the medium of instruction.

Rural impoverishment

The degree and extent of impoverishment has a direct impact on all aspects of the delivery of primary education. In addition, there is a direct correlation between poverty and levels of literacy – the poorest are usually those who are illiterate, those who are somewhat better off have marginally higher levels of literacy and so on. In such a situation, where primary education is concerned, not only are children from the poorest families deprived of any help at home, they are also unable to make use of alternative systems to acquire education – such as private tuition, or private schools. Further, poor parents' voices are effectively silenced by the wealthier, more powerful, parents. Those who need education the most are unable to acquire it and unable to make their demand for it heard. The need to address the needs of the most impoverished has been discussed in the sections on incentive schemes, parent-teacher committees and so on, below.

Importance of incentive schemes

Abject poverty force the parents to employ children in activities other than studying and also in many cases compel them to gather their own food. Malnutrition and ill health are commonplace and often they aggravate absenteeism among the children. The intricate relationship of poverty, ill health and indebtedness³³ has also its implications on enrolment and attendance. Wage earning through migration is a phenomenon not only of Dumka

³² See the PROBE Report, the Pratichi Education Report I.

³³ For detail, See Pratichi Health Report (Forthcoming) and Kumar Rana and Liby Johnson, The Hot Tempered Cold Fever:How "Health" Kills the Adivasis of Dumka District of Jharkhand; mimeographed (2002)

district, but also of many parts of Jharkhand, which affects both enrolment and attendance in the schools (and also causes drop out).

In such a situation, setting up of schools and increase in the number of teachers alone cannot succeed in making primary education available for all. This needs sincere implementations of the present incentive schemes and introduction of some new policies.

The implementation of the mid day meal scheme – a real mid day meal with cooked food – is immensely important not only for the improvement in enrolment and attendance but also for providing certain nutrition to the malnourished children.

Cash incentive for attendance, free textbook, free uniform for the girl children and scholarship for the SC and ST children are also very important both for enrolment-attendance and improvement in achievement of learning. Proper implementation of these schemes is a must for the poverty stricken children many of whom cannot even buy the minimum of stationeries required for studying, clothes and books.

New schemes for the children of migrants and other poorer households

Simultaneously, besides long term programmes of poverty alleviation (including land reform, improvement in agriculture, creating job opportunities etc.) certain policies have to be developed for delivering primary education to the children of migrant workers. Residential schools for the children of migrant workers (at least during the migrating seasons) can be one way of getting these deprived children into the arena of primary education.

The school calendar can also be modified in accordance with the migration seasons.

Modification in the school timing too needs serious attention since many of the children are engaged in other activities like tending cattle and other domestic and farm work.

Low levels of literacy

The extremely low literacy levels in Jharkhand adversely affect the possibility of the poorest acquiring primary education. Women's literacy can have a positive impact on children's education, and a case can be made out for initiating a special drive for female education in Jharkhand.

“A literate father”, it has been said “does not necessarily assure literate children. But a literate mother guarantees that her children should not remain illiterate”.

Some special programme may be designed for enhancing education not only among the female children but also among the adult females. A number of NGOs (most of whom have special ‘mission’ of ‘GAD’- Gender and Development) are working in the district.

There is no reason why these NGOs cannot take up such an issue in their agenda. The government should also play a major role in this aspect.

The mother tongue and the medium of instruction

One major reason of low level of attendance and learning achievement of the children is the problem of understanding the prescribed textbooks since the language (Hindi) through which they are taught is absolutely foreign to them. Unless Santali and other tribal languages (for other parts of Jharkhand Mundari, Ho, Kurukh, etc.) are not made the medium of instruction children probably cannot overcome the problem of learning at all.

Historical evidences show that even the most educationally backward nations can also achieve high advancement in terms of education through propagating it in mother tongue. Some of the formerly Soviet republics are classic examples of this.³⁴

The language issue in Jharkhand is a complex one. Tribals are minorities in the state they dreamt and fought for. Again, the tribals are divided in many linguistic and ethnic groups. Yet, given the potential of these languages (as mentioned above Santali has a five volume dictionary and Mundari has a 14 volume (incomplete) encyclopaedia³⁵) they should immediately be given the status of mediums of instruction at primary level. No reason can be sufficient to keep the tribals deprived of their mother tongue being flourished and the flourishing can start with the mother tongue be made the medium of instruction.

In addition to these problems, which are particularly acute for Jharkhand as a whole, and in Dumka in particular, there are several other areas that need immediate attention.

Number of schools and teachers

For example, the rate of enrolment has to be improved to a much greater extent. All the children of primary school going age have to be brought under the fold of primary education.

This need immediate measures to improve the figures of primary schools and teachers (which are very poor as we have seen in this report) to make primary education accessible to all children of primary school going age.

Fighting teachers' absenteeism through inspection and public participation

The quality of learning achievements has to be improved to a much higher degree.

³⁴ See John Harris (ed) *The Family: A Social history of Twentieth century*, Oxford University Press (1991)

³⁵ *Encyclopaedia Mundarika*, by Rev. John Hoffmann, in collaboration with Rev. Arthur Van Emelen, Bihar Government Press, Patna (1950). Both Sidhu Kanu University, Dumka and Ranchi university, Ranchi conduct Graduate and Post Graduate teaching in Santali, Mundari, etc.

Teachers' absenteeism (both in terms of erratic attendance and the lesser time spent on actual teaching) is a serious concern. The school inspection system has to be deal with this problem strongly. The teachers' unions have to do make a positive move in this direction.

At the same time community participation in the governance of the primary schooling system has to be ensured. Parents of the primary school going children have to be given enough room for improving the inspection system and functioning of the primary schools. Formation of parent teacher committees (in each and every primary school) with legal power to make the school grants conditional subject to their approval may be proved to be a positive stepping forward for making the primary schools accountably and equitably functional. Given the social structure of the villages – which have strong community systems – ensuring community participation in the governance of primary schools will not be an impossible commission.

Setting up a uniform system of governance for all primary schools, including private schools

Some mechanism should be developed to check the mushrooming growth of private schools – which, in most cases, are mere institutions for extorting money – in order to make the relatively influential parents taking part in the governance of the government schools. The influential parents become indifferent towards the functioning of the government schools since they feel secured with the private schools.

However, given the present government's stand on primary education (inviting private players in this sector) such a move is seemingly unlikely unless tremendous public pressure is created upon the government to do so. It's not only the terrible growth of the private schools, but also the absolute lack of public accountability of such schools that gives enough reason for concern.

At least, the syllabus and the governance of such schools have to be accorded with the school education department and parents. It means a common syllabus has to be followed in all the primary schools of the state and all the schools have to be brought under the government inspection system. And these schools have also to be accountable to the parents, which can be done by forming parent teacher committees likewise with the government primary schools.

The same rule should be applied to the NGO run schools as well. However, enough care has to be taken to keep the education system free from bureaucratic red tapism. Absolute power in the hands of bureaucracy might be proved to be counterproductive and encourage corrupt practices, which the state is allegedly infamous for.

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VILLAGE PROFILES

Block: Jarmundi

VILLAGE CHANDANA

The village is located 32 km west of Dumka town. The nearest bus stop Dudhani on Dumka – Deoghar road is one km away from the village. The location of the village is very close to one of the famous pilgrimage sites of the country – Baskinath, which is visited by millions of people particularly in the month of Sravana (July-August).

Although the village is spread over a relatively large geographical area there are only 68 households with a total population of about 350. The households are spread over two hamlets (tola) and all belong to different scheduled caste communities (Chamar, Mochi, Dom, etc.).

However, the traditional occupations of the different castes are no longer the main source of income because of socioeconomic changes in the society. Wage work is the main source of livelihood for all the households. Since availability of work in the locality is very limited (people get work only for few days during the cultivation seasons) almost all the households (including men, women and children) migrate to Birbhum and Bardhaman districts of West Bengal to work in the brick kilns. Migration is such a regular occurrence that almost all the respondents speak Bengali fluently.

Besides migration and other manual work some of the villagers (men) are engaged in rickshaw pulling at Deoghar, Dumka and Baskinath.

In spite of some land ownership (about 2 acres per household on average) villagers suffer from acute hunger and poverty. The infertile and undulating nature of the lands do not allow the villagers to cultivate even 25% of their lands; and that too completely rain-fed. Peoples' frustration is so high that they wanted to sell the lands off, but the Santal Pargana Tenancy Act [1949] does not allow them to do so. To add to their misery some of their lands have been acquired by the [central] government (for the project of setting up of railways for the first time in the district); but "not a single penny was paid as compensation".

(Upper) Primary school, health sub-centre and post office are at Dudhani. The school has a well-constructed building with four classrooms to teach seven classes (1-7). There are six teachers in position and the student-teacher ratio was found to be very good (39:1 – while the district average is 73:1). Teachers sounded helpless about the absenteeism of students. Many of the parents felt that a primary school within the village could enable the children to enroll and attend the school regularly. Rate of dropouts was reported to be very high mainly due to the nature of migration of the families that involves six months of the year. Many of the children were reportedly engaged in other income generating activities. Rate of enrolment and attendance, as reported by the parents and teachers, was lower among the girl children.

According to the villagers, a Sarva Siksha Abhiyan school was supposed to be started in this village but conflict between two groups of villagers regarding the recruitment of the teacher aborted the process.

There is an Anganwadi centre in the village about which the majority of the villagers expressed dissatisfaction. On the day of our visit, at around 11 am some children were seen playing at the centre but the workers of the centre were absent. Irregularity is a regular phenomenon, parents said.

The health condition of the village was not reported to be very different from the other villages of Dumka. Malaria, diarrhoea, tuberculosis and dysentery are the common ailments. Although there are health sub-centre and primary health centre at relatively close distance (one and six km respectively), their reliability was highly questioned by the respondents.

According to the villagers, the government health system suffered from shortage of or irregularity of distribution of medicines. Situation got exacerbated through the negligence by doctors and health staff. “dawai to dur, thikse bato na kartau- let alone giving free medicine they don’t even speak nicely”, was a common experience of the villagers.

This has made the local quacks indispensable for the patients of the locality. They charge money, but allow credit purchases of medicines. A few of the well-off families see qualified private doctors in the towns.

The sub centre at Dudhani is reportedly defunct. Health workers were said to be highly irregular. The health awareness among the villagers was found to be extremely poor. Not a single female respondent had even heard of tetanus injections or iron tablets.

VILLAGE DHAMNA

The village is located 30 km west of Dumka town and 4 km north of Baskinath temple. A kuccha road connects the village with the nearest bus stop at Baskinath.

Though many of the villagers engage themselves in generating some extra income during the peak season of pilgrimage (selling food items, flowers and other objects used for worshipping, pulling rickshaw etc.), the main economic activities of the village centre around agriculture and allied activities. Because of lack of irrigation facilities, agricultural practices are completely rain fed and thus mono-crop. Rice is the major crop grown in the undulating lands. The mono-crop pattern of agriculture influences the employment pattern as well. Since many of the villagers have not have enough cultivable land and the scope of wage employment in agriculture is limited, the majority of the villagers depend upon non-agricultural wage work in the surrounding localities. Some people also commute to the urban and semi-urban areas (Deoghar, Dumka and Jarmundi) on a daily basis in search of wage employment.

The village is comprised of a mixed population of both tribals and non-tribals. While the scheduled tribe (ST) community of the village is comprised of Santals, the non-tribal community has scheduled castes (SC) and other backward castes (OBC). Of a total of 120 households 50 are ST, 25 are SC and 45 are OBC. The estimated population of the village is 623.

The village is sub-divided into three caste-based tolas (hamlets), Santal tola (ST), Yadav tola (OBC) and Harijan tola (SC). Although the houses of all the three tolas are located beside a kuccha road that stretches along the length of the village, large distances between the tolas distinguish them from each other.

The village is yet to receive electricity or telephone connections. However, it is equipped with a Post Office (located in a different Mouja, Dhamnilata, but very close to the village). The public distribution shop (ration shop) is located in the village itself. There are a few tube wells that fulfil the requirement of drinking water.

The village has a Primary school. The DPEP, Dumka, has recently set up another primary school. Besides, there is a private school situated one kilometre away from the village. An Anganwadi centre is also there.

The primary school is located in the Yadav tola with an enrolment of 104 children (54 boys and 50 girls) from all the different tolas, though the enrolment and attendance rate of

the SC and ST children was, as reported by a teacher, low. Another big problem mentioned both by teachers and ST students was that of the medium of instruction. Teachers do not understand Santali – the mother tongue of the ST children of the locality - and the children are quite unfamiliar with Hindi - the medium of instruction.

There are two female teachers of other caste background. The school has a pucca building with two classrooms. According to the villagers the quality of education delivered was not satisfactory and hence some of the parents (from relatively higher income group) have enrolled their children in the private school. Interestingly, some of the children were found to have enrolled in both the primary school and the private school. The private school for better quality of education and the primary school for availing of the incentive schemes and also the school certificate to be used for enrolling in high school. (Some parents are still not sure whether the private school certificate will enable the children to get admission in higher classes in the government schools or not).

The DPEP school is located in Harijan tola with one female teacher of SC background. According to the teacher, approximately 25 children are enrolled in the school, mainly from SC households. The parents of Harijan tola however did not seem very aware of the functioning of the school.

The Anganwadi centre is situated in the Santal tola where, according to the villagers, children of other tolas did not come, mainly because of the distance (it is about one km away from the Harijan tola and about half a kilometre away from the Yadavtola). The Anganwadi has no other activity than distributing food to the children. Villagers were not found to be very happy with the quantity and the quality of the food. Some people also complained about the irregular functioning of the centre.

The health sub centre for this village is at Ghormara, one km away. The primary health centre at the block headquarter Jarmundi is seven km away.

Malaria and diarrhoea are the main diseases that people suffer from, that affects them both physically and economically.

There are two quack doctors in the village, one lives at the Yadav tola and another at the Harijan tola. Villagers largely depend upon these quacks for health care services, particularly since the quacks were readily available and serve people (including providing medicines) on credit.

At the same time they pointed out the malfunctioning of the government health service system. Most of the villagers complained that not only has the government health centre failed to provide free medicines, the government doctors and medical personnel did not seem to care adequately for their sufferings. However, people believe, the same government doctors provided good treatment at their private clinics. But poor patients cannot afford the high costs involved in private healthcare. In such a situation, it is only helplessness that they could express, “hamrake dekhe ke koi na chhe – there is nobody to care for our sufferings”.

VILLAGE SHITALPUR

The village is a remote one, not because of the geographical distance but because of the poor communication facilities. A three-kilometer walk to Raikinari bus stop enables the people to catch the only bus that plies to and from Dumka town – about 50 km away. In emergency (and also sometime during rainy season when the bus frequently ceases the service) people have no other means of communication but to walk down to Sahara (9 km) a busy bus stop on the Dumka -Deoghar road.

The village with 50 households and an estimated population of 300 is mainly inhabited by the Santals (ST). There are few Yadav (OBC) households too.

Although almost all the households enjoy land ownership to some extent (about an acre on average) the poor quality of soil, lack of irrigation facilities and the rain fed nature of cultivation allow them a very poor harvest. In conformity with the erratic pattern of rain fall harvests also suffer from frequent uncertainties. The main crops grown are paddy and maize.

This, coupled to the lack of scope for wage employment or other income opportunities, has almost destroyed the base of the locality. This has both direct and indirect impacts on the educational and health status of the people.

In addition to poverty, high level of illiteracy among the villagers, particularly among the women, has worsened the situation. In addition, the distance to the primary school (one km), poor student teacher ratio (only two teachers to teach 104 children of five classes) and poor teaching quality in the school has apparently affected the attendance rate which was found to be 34% on the day of our visit. According to the head teacher the attendance was often poorer. Again, attendance rate of the girl children was found to be poorer than that of the boys.

While parents complained about poor functioning of the school, the teachers grumbled about the shortage of teachers and classrooms (there is only one), parents' negligence in sending their children to school etc.

Parents' helplessness, as stated, was manifold. First, they cannot afford the cost of schooling (buying books, stationery, clothes and food). Children are engaged in income-related work rather than 'wasting time' in the school, where the quality of teaching was said to be poor. Hence many of the parents (who could afford Rs 10 per child per month) preferred to send their children to an NGO school within the village where the timing of the school allows the children to work in income-oriented and household activities. Yet there are some households for whom the cost was too much and since they have none to assist the child at home (this is true for most of the households) children are made to quit studying. This has resulted in poor enrolment in Class 5 (only two children and we were told that there was no student in Class 5 last year).

Poverty and illiteracy have intermingled with poor health status. Suffering from tuberculosis, diarrhoea, dysentery, kala-azar, etc. is commonplace. Health affects both economy and education. Because of an adverse government health delivery system (people have no faith at all upon the health sub centre or the primary health centre for their alleged malpractices – charging money, not visiting the village, speaking rudely with the patients, etc.) people have to spend a lot of money for health care. Quacks are the main refuge for they provide services and medicines on credit. Again the ignorance of the patients created by illiteracy makes them easy prey for the quacks who reportedly charge astronomical amounts of money. Ill health, at the same time, results in poor rate of attendance in school.

No wonder that people feel “chakkar me phanse huye hain - we are stuck in a vicious cycle”.

VILLAGE THARI-BADRAMPUR

The village is located only 32 km west of the district headquarters, yet it took about four hours to reach there. A bumpy, back-breaking kuchha road links the village with Nonihat, six km away. Nonihat was also difficult to reach – a few minibuses ply (irregularly - they

don't move before they are packed to the last inch!) between Nonihat and Baskinath, the main stop on the Dumka-Deoghar bus route.

Nonihat is the main market place for the villagers to get their daily requirements. Most of the people depend on their foot to cover the distance. A few of the villagers have their own bicycles.

It is a multi-community village with 64 households consisting mainly of scheduled tribe (37 households), scheduled caste (13 households) and some other caste people (14 households). Total population of the village was 308. The village is divided into two tolas (hamlets), which are separated from each other by a distance of about 500 metres. The tolas are separated on ethnic lines – STs live in the Santaltola and the rest in the Dikutola. Barring a few tube-wells for drinking water (which dry up during summer) there are no other basic amenities available in the village.

The major economic activity revolves around cultivation and other wage earning activities. Cultivation is also constrained by infertile quality of land and complete absence of irrigation facilities. Scope of wage earning is also very limited and this makes the villagers commute to Nonihat, Baskinath, etc. for manual work. Some of the Santals migrate to Bardhaman for wage work.

Most of the children of the village attend Katimba Middle school (which has primary classes) one km away from the village. It has an enrolment of 300 children in seven classes but there are only two teachers to teach all the children. The school has a pucca building with five classrooms in use. It was reported by the villagers that the functioning of the school was not satisfactory, mainly due to the shortage of teachers.

There is a DPEP school in the village (in an open field between the two tolas) running under a mango tree. It has thus acquired the popular nomenclature of “Amtala school – school beneath the mango tree”. It has two female teachers. Very few children from the tolas visit the school. According to the parents the functioning of the school was very poor.

As regards health facilities, the village has nothing near its reach. No health staff were reported to have visited the village in the past one year. The nearest sub-centre is at Nonihat, which was also reported to function poorly. The primary health centre at Jarmundi was also not preferred by the villagers, as it did not provide free medicines and the treatment was also said to be poor. Regular incidence of major diseases like malaria, diarrhoea, kala-azar etc is a common phenomenon in the village but the poor villagers have no option but to bank upon the local quacks (of Katimba) or the qualified private doctors at Dumka; in both cases they were charged exorbitantly. Many poor patients could not get any treatment at all because of financial constraints.

Some Santals have a strong belief in traditional “Joributi” (herbal) medicines. The belief has perhaps gained in strength due to the inaccessibility of modern health care.

Block: Shikaripara

VILLAGE ASANBONI

The village is located at a distance of three km from Benagaria, which is a very important place, having one of the oldest Christian missions of the country. A narrow and completely dilapidated eight km. long road connects Benagaria with the Dumka-Rampurhat main road. The village is much closer to Rampurhat in Birbhum district of West Bengal (12 km) than the District capital of Dumka (62 km).

This proximity is well reflected in the soil quality, topography and subsequently in crop production. The relatively more fertile plain lands, despite being rain-fed and mono-crop, allow a better harvest. In addition, thanks to the absence of the alienation of tribal lands (unlike what is found to be prevalent all over the district), residents of this village, entirely inhabited by Santals, have a relatively high acreage of land ownership. The main crop is paddy, and many other crops such as maize, lentils, mustard and other pulses and cereals are grown.

While cultivation gives the villagers substantial support in terms of food, the scope of wage earning in the stone quarries of the nearby localities (there are more than a thousand stone quarries and stone crushers in operation in the West Bengal-Jharkhand border area) gives some more financial support. Quarries and crushers provide substantial work for the villagers. This is reflected in seasonal migration - one of the main features of the district. While seasonal labour exodus is a typical phenomenon of the district as a whole, this area has seasonal or long-term labour in-migration instead.

Many educated villagers feel that the losses in terms of health hazards created by the crushers, exploitation in terms of low wages, sexual abuse and harassment of tribal women workers and alleged land grabbing by the quarry owners are taking a devastating toll on the lives of the people.

The relatively better economic condition has its impact on the general educational scenario of the village. The literacy rate is relatively high. Enrolment and attendance in the school was also found to be much better compared to the overall situation of the district. The male-female ratio of the enrolled children was also found almost equal – 33:30. Proximity to the Benagaria Mission is also a positive factor for the educational environment.

However, the remoteness of the area, the demographic profile (440 persons in 84 households - all tribal) and the overall sickness of the primary education system have their negative influences. One lady teacher runs the primary school that has an enrolment of 63 children. The school building – two classrooms with no doors or windows – is on the verge of collapse. Shortage of teachers has made the job of the existing teacher extremely difficult.

The village has one Anganwadi Centre and one Primary School. The Anganwadi Centre does not have its own building. A Sevika's house is used as the makeshift centre.

On the day of our visit 26 children (10 boys and 16 girls) were present in the primary school. According to the teacher children's attendance was low because harvesting was going on and children were engaged in many different kinds of domestic and farm work. During transplantation and harvest attendance falls drastically, she said.

As in the other sampled villages, malaria and diarrhoea were the major diseases that the villagers suffered from. Many of the villagers complained that they did not get any facility from the government health services. The health sub-centre is located at Hutbari, 1.5 km away from the village. According to the villagers, personnel from that centre did not visit the sub-centre regularly. The Primary Health Centre is located at Shikaripara –15 km away.

Villagers, as reported, depend upon the quacks of the surrounding localities for health care. In some cases qualified doctors at Rampurhat were also consulted. The unreliability of the government health system and the expensive treatment of the qualified doctors have created a large ground for the quacks to ply their trade.

VILLAGE BISUNPUR

The nearest bus stop to the village is at Baromasia – 4 km away. A kutcha road connects the village with Baromasia on the Dumka-Rampurhat main road. Baromasia being a relatively big market place (with electricity, wholesale and retail groceries, sawmills, husking mills, wood merchants and contractors, quack medical practitioners and medicine shops, etc.) is an important place for the villagers of Bisunpur for job opportunities, buying provisions and medication and most importantly getting loans from the moneylenders. Besides, the villagers have to depend upon Baromasia for Post Office, Bank and High School.

Barring two Scheduled Caste (blacksmith) households the entire village is inhabited by Santal tribals. A total population of 362 is spread over 80 households in two tolas. Interestingly, the sex ratio among the Santals was found to be equal (176 males and as many females). Perhaps, the dependence on agriculture, at some point in history had made the role of blacksmiths very important (for agricultural implements) which not only led the villagers to invite them into the village to settle in but also name the tola inhabited by the blacksmiths as Kamartola ('kamar' means 'blacksmith').

However, now both the customers (Santals) and the servicing artisans (blacksmiths) have become agricultural or other wage earners. The best part of the lands have been alienated to the non-tribals, leaving the tribals with only some infertile uplands and the scope of agriculture and allied activities have shrunk to a large extent.

Most of the households earn their livelihood from wage employment in the fields of the non-tribal landowners around the locality, in Bardhaman of West Bengal (on a seasonal migration basis) and in the houses and shops of the traders of Baromasia.

The economic poverty of the village gets further exacerbated because of the poor availability of basic amenities. The primary School is at Saharjori – two km away. There is no Anganwadi centre around. An NGO has started running a school at Kamartola, with an enrolment of 23 children (only class 1). At the time of our visit the attendance was found to be very low. The main reasons for low attendance were, according to the parents, the irregular functioning of the school (sometimes remaining closed for weeks) and their doubts regarding the legal status of the NGO-run school. "It might not be possible to get the children enrolled in higher classes after passing out from the NGO school," said a parent.

The Primary School building at Saharjori appeared well constructed with six classrooms in use and with two female teachers taking classes during our visit. The enrolment was also found to be very healthy - 199 children (104 boys, 95 girls). Yet attendance was very poor – only 32 students were present. Teachers said that because of the poor economic condition of the families, children were engaged in various domestic and farm activities (particularly during the cultivation season). However, many of the parents at Bisunpur complained that children, particularly of classes 1 & 2 simply did not want to go to the school because of the distance.

The health status of the people of the village and the health delivery system was found to be poor. Most of the people depend upon the "mobile health service" of a quack doctor whose only qualification is a short course in veterinary medicine! The distance to the health centres and more particularly the near non-availability of services in them has made people absolutely dependent upon the quack for two reasons – ready availability and providing medical assistance on credit.

VILLAGE HARIPUR

The village is located 45 km away from the district headquarter Dumka on the Dumka-Rampurhat bus route. Bagan-Haripur or Bagantola, one of the two hamlets of the village is the bus stop and also the entry point to the village. The nearest town and railway station is at Rampurhat in West Bengal - 17 km away.

The other tola of the village – Bon-Haripur is about one km away from the first and is linked by a kuchha road. It is totally inhabited by Santal tribal people with 113 households. Estimated population of the village is 544.

Inside the village there are no other basic amenities other than a public distribution (ration) shop, a primary school, an Anganwadi centre and a few tube wells. There is no electricity or telephone connection.

The quality of land in the locality is relatively better than that of the other parts of the district. Lands are relatively fertile and allow the people better harvest. However, the lack of irrigation facilities leads to single cropping. People of this village seemed to be better placed in terms of land ownership (compared to the other areas of the district). In addition to agricultural production people get extra income opportunity in the large number of stone quarries surrounding the area. Many of the villagers (both men and women) work in them as daily manual labourers after finishing their farm work (transplanting and harvest). A few of them are also employed in the quarries as permanent workers.

In spite of providing extra income opportunity, some of the villagers complained that the quarries are creating many different problems including land grabbing, exploitation of workers, particularly women, and health hazards.

The primary school is located at Bagan-tola. Although the school has a pucca building the condition of the building was almost dilapidated. More serious was the quality of schooling. The lone teacher of the school who has already earned a bad name among the parents for his reported irregularity and irresponsibility was not even available for an interview (by the researchers). The researchers paid five subsequent visits on four of which he was absent and in the last visit he was found in a complete inebriated condition.

The health sub-centre is at Sarasdangal - two km away from the village. The primary health centre is located at a distance of 13 km at Shikaripara, the block headquarters. Malaria and diarrhoea are the major diseases found in this village. A quack medical practitioner from Benagaria (three km from this village) on whom the people depended for health care was said to visit the village regularly. According to the villagers the government health staff rarely visited the village. In addition, the health facilities available in the sub centre and health centre were abysmally poor. In the year prior to our visits two patients reportedly died of malaria. Despite the incidents being duly reported to the health sub-centre none came to make an enquiry.

VILLAGE SHYAMPUR

While one end of the village meets the main Dumka–Rampurhat road the other end stretches to the low rice fields, one kilometre away. The distance from Dumka town is only 17 km. the block headquarters is 10 km beyond Shyampur on the same road. The geographical division of the two tolas – Latartola (literally ‘lower hamlet’) and Turitola

(literally ‘hamlet of the Turis’ – a Scheduled Caste group) is made on the basis of ethnicity.

Of a total number of 70 households, 51 belonged to Santals, 18 to the Turis (SC) and only one to an Other Caste group. The sex ratio of the total population of 353 was a little above 1000 (176 male and 177 female).

The economy of the village is dependent on hiring out of labour. Due to the pattern of land ownership (due to gross land alienation per capita ownership of rice-growing lands is very low) and the structure of lands (villagers mostly own infertile uplands with no irrigation facility), agriculture was reported to be the secondary occupation for the tribals. While the tribals have some dependence upon agriculture the Scheduled Castes have no other occupation than hiring out labour since none of them have any cultivable land. Their traditional caste occupation – skinning dead animals, etc. – is no longer in practice.

As the availability of wage employment in and around the locality was reportedly very limited, people mainly depended upon seasonal migration to Bardhaman in West Bengal as agricultural labourers four times a year. Also some people migrated out to the distant states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Kashmir, etc. on a long-term basis.

The village has no primary school inside it. Children were enrolled at Durgapur Primary School - one km away. This primary school had two teachers, one male (SC) and another female (ST). The school building appeared to be in good condition with two classrooms.

The village has one Anganwadi centre, which was established in 1990. The two Anganwadi staff are Santals and the villagers expressed satisfaction with their performance. It was however reported that the centre had only one main activity – distributing cooked food among the children.

The health sub-centre is located at Pattabari - three km away. The Primary Health Centre is located at Shikaripara – the block headquarters. A well-known mission hospital is located at Mohulpahari - only four km from the village.

Villagers reported that because of the non-functional nature of the government health service and the high cost of treatment at Mohulpahari Mission Hospital, they had no other option than depending upon the quacks of Durgapur and Pattabari. Villagers, it seems, have a dialectical relationship with the quacks – the latter were often taunted by the villagers as jholdanga (the nearest meaning is ‘man with a ragged bag’) and yet the same jholdangas appeared before them as their saviours.

Block: Gopikandar

VILLAGE CHIRUDI

“Ghari kabhi nahi bhulna,
Torch kabhi nahi bhulna.
Jis thali me khana khate ho
Usko kabhi mat phekna.”

(“Never forget to carry a watch and a torch and never throw away the plate on which you eat.”)

A teacher of Chirudi Primary School was somewhat philosophical while explaining his thoughts towards his duty to the primary school through which he believed to have been serving his own people.

The school is located in a village covered with dense forest and is totally inhabited by tribals (Santal and Mal Pahariya). A total population of 406 was spread over 76 households and the households were scattered in six tolas (hamlets).

The distance of the village from the bus stop at Durgapur on the main road (Dumka-Pakur) is not less than eight km. A daily mini bus service was launched but has recently been withdrawn. People have no other mode of transportation for communicating with the outer world than their feet. The block and district headquarters are located 19 km and 53 km away respectively. Even the post office is 10 km away. No surprise that the village has no electricity connection.

It was however surprising to note that despite such remoteness the functioning of the primary school was enviably better than many other schools we have visited. The school has a pucca building with only one classroom but the classroom walls were decorated with coloured numbers, alphabets, tables, and pictures in Hindi, English and some in Santhali. Teachers involve the children in many different activities like drawing pictures, paper cutting, etc.

The school has a big playground and it is famous for organising sports. (Of the two teachers one had gone to attend a meeting concerning the organisation of the event.) One of the teachers was tribal, however the non-tribal teacher was said to understand and speak Santali. Parents of this village were found to be very satisfied with the performance of the teachers and the children. According to them, both the teachers were very regular, dynamic and dedicated.

“Why should the children come to the school if the school and teaching is not attractive?” the teacher asked. “We are paid for this and we must not leave any stone unturned to bring the children into the classroom and make them educated citizens of the country.”

Perhaps, it was his philosophy that paid off. Children, unlike in many other schools, were found to perform much better in terms of reading, writing, counting, solving sums and so on.

All the children were reported to have come from very poor families who can't even provide sufficient food to the children. Moreover, poverty forced them to engage the children for some or other kind of activities unrelated to studying. Proper implementation of the incentive schemes, particularly the midday meal scheme could have made the school into a model one.

The health situation of the villagers was reported to be very poor. Although all the households have some cultivable land, because of their rain-fed nature and insufficiency in area, none of them could get a yield that could provide food for the whole year. Many of the villagers, particularly women, engage themselves in collecting forest produce. Men

engage themselves as wage labourers when work is available. Yet, many of them could not manage a square meal round the year. Particularly during July-September all the families depend on roots and fruits for a large part of their diet.

Almost all the households suffered from malaria and other “expensive” diseases. Expensive in many ways – the draining of money by the local quacks, forced absence from work, taking loans to pay for treatment and losing all the income made from harvests to repay loans. Government health facilities were found to be completely non-existent. The primary health centre is located at a distance of 19 km and did not assure them treatment. The health sub centre is only 2.5 km away, but it had no reported function.

This has apparently had strong implications on the physical and economic health of the villagers and has created a vicious cycle of poverty, hunger, ill health and indebtedness. The cycle was made even stronger through the illiteracy of the people in general. Hopefully the philosophical teacher’s values and the children’s dreams will help bring about a change.

VILLAGE DHARAMPUR

A newly built pucca road connects this completely Santal inhabited village (with a population of 302 in 72 households spread over three tolas) with Chatarchua (1.5 km away from the village), the bus stop on the Dumka-Pakur road which is about 43 km from the district headquarters. The village, unlike many of the villages we have surveyed, was found to be placed in a relatively better economic situation. Despite the lack of electricity connection, one household was found to possess a battery-operated television set and another had a wireless telephone connection backed up with solar energy. While government jobs have ensured economic empowerment for some people, some other factors have also worked to make a positive impact both on the economy and the social set up.

Firstly, the quality of land – which is relatively more fertile than that of some other villages – and relatively higher acreage of land ownership – alienation was relatively less – guarantee an assured income for livelihood support for a considerable part of the year. In addition, a treasury of vegetation, like mahua (*Basica latifolia*), kendu (*Diaspora monosperma*), Sal (*Shorea robusta*) plays a booster role for the economy.

Secondly, the relative economic independence coupled with the Christian influence (there is a church in the village and a large section of the population is Christian) have played a role in spreading education among the villagers. Educational achievement has its impact in the employment scenario. Unlike many other villages surveyed, people of this village were found to be less desperate to find wage employment.

However, the village is not free from hunger, malnutrition, educational backwardness and ill health. Rather, uneven economic development (some households were found to be economically much more sound than others) has apparently been responsible for sharpening class divisions (while many other villages were more egalitarian, this village has a visible socio-economic stratification).

This stratification has its impact on the educational sector. The economically viable section of the society prefer to send their children (from primary level itself) to the schools run by Christian Missions at different places inside and outside the district. Their ability to meet the cost of education in the Mission Schools and their belief in the mission schools’ performance is mainly responsible for this dependence. The belief of better performance by the Mission Schools is both a result of the functioning of the local primary schools and also a resulting factor for the poor performance of the same.

The school, during our visit, had one untrained teacher, who was reportedly very irregular and insincere. The school had an enrolment of 46 but on the day of our visit (we visited the school five times and found the teacher only on the fifth day) there were only seven children present. Only those who could not afford the cost of the Mission School enrolled their children in the village primary school. Those who could have influenced the functioning of the village primary school have no direct interest in it.

Like our other sampled villages, malaria, diarrhoea, tuberculosis, other chest infections and kala-azar were also reported to be very common in this village. The health sub-centre is located at Jeetpur – 1.5 km away from this village. The Primary Health Centre is located at a distance of 6 km at Gopikandar. Since the government system, as reported, worked very poorly (the sub centre was defunct and the PHC hardly served them with medicine or treatment) a quack living in the village was serving the purpose of health care. However, in case of serious illness (like cerebral malaria, kala-azar, etc.) people said that they rely upon the Mohulpahari Mission Hospital or other private clinics run by qualified doctors.

VILLAGE GARIAPANI

There is an abandoned house at the end of the village, which belonged to Durbin Hembrom. The entire family of five reportedly fell victim to “biren malaria”- a disease caused by plasmodium falciparum and known to be a killer. Durbin’s is not the lone example; many others had faced a similar fate in the same year. Thirty-five (35) people died of cerebral malaria in this village!

Gariapani is located on the main Dumka-Pakur highway, one km from Gopikadar block and 35km from Dumka town. This is a relatively large village with three tolas and 93 households with an estimated population of 450. Barring two scheduled caste households the whole village is inhabited by Santals.

The most striking feature of the village is the helplessness of the villagers in utilizing the basic facilities of health and education despite - unlike in many villages of the district - their presence almost at their doorstep. The primary school and the post office are located inside the village. The primary health centre is just a kilometer away and accessibility to the district town is much easier (as the main road through which a large number of buses ply every day is very close). Yet, people live in a miserable situation – hunger, ill health, deaths and illiteracy are endemic.

The vicious cycle of illiteracy (62.4% villagers are illiterate), lack of income opportunity, nexus of money-lenders, ill health and poor delivery of the health services are interwoven to make the situation almost unbearable.

First of all, lands mainly being comprised of high ‘tandi’ uplands are mono crop (being rain fed) and allow little harvest, which is far too insufficient to sustain. This forces them to hire out labour in the surrounding localities and also in far away places like Bardhaman where they migrate out seasonally. The other livelihood option is to collect and sell forest produce. These sources are not adequate to extinguish the fire of hunger. A square meal a day largely remains a distant dream for most of the people.

There are many positive things as regards the primary school – the building is very good and has three classrooms. There are four teachers (which is rare in the rural areas of Dumka; the number of teachers is high compared to the district average of 2.5 teachers per school). The student teacher ratio is 27:1 (the district average is 73:1). Teachers were reported to be very regular and sincere.

Yet, the rate of attendance was found to be only 33% and teachers also confirmed that the attendance rate was seldom higher.

Acute hunger forces the children to collect forest produce and engage themselves in the struggle to fight hunger. Such a situation, as parents think, does not allow the children to attend the school, although all of them admitted that acquiring primary education is very important. According to some of the parents illiteracy aggravates hunger through the bondage of loan, inability to access health facilities and other benefits.

In spite of their accurate reading of the situation parents feel helpless. “We have no food to eat. No money to buy books and stationery. Diseases make our poverty more acute. And every year we are losing our lives. How can our children learn?” asked a parent.

The implementation of a proper midday meal scheme could have had a positive impact on children’s attendance. Yet, let alone a midday meal, even the present scheme of distributing rice was, as reported by parents and teachers, implemented very poorly. Also the other incentive schemes, such as cash incentive for attendance, suffered from gross irregularity and corruption.

Ease of physical accessibility to the primary health centre has apparently made no difference in terms of actual health care. People have no faith in the primary health centre. The centre, as villagers reported, did not provide medicines and so patients had to buy them from shops. In addition, one major complaint was that the doctors and other health staff did not at all take any care of the patients. Doctors and health staff of the primary health centre turned deaf ears to the repetitive prayers of the villagers for a visit, when patient after patient was dying of cerebral malaria. They went to the BDO to lodge their complain but no action was taken.

There is a popular belief prevailing among the villagers that the hospital supplies ordinary water in the name of saline solution and charges high sums of money. The health worker who reportedly visited the village once in a while provided one half of a paracetamol tablet for any sort of fever!

In spite of the presence of a primary health centre at stone throwing distance, people are entirely dependent on private doctors/quacks and medicine shops either at Kathikund or at Gopikandar who, as it happened, squeeze the villagers to the last drop.

VILLAGE KUMARBANDH

Although the village is located only three km away from Chatarchua bus stop on the main Dumka-Pakur road, the hilly tracks full of rocks and pebbles did not allow us to reach the village before a 45 minutes walk. Located about 40 km away from the district headquarters and about 5 km away from the block headquarters the village carries the memory of its past with its rapidly diminishing forest cover.

The village is divided into four tolas that have 54 households and a population of 259. Households are entirely constituted of two tribal groups – Santal (36) and Mal Pahariya (18). While Santals have a long history of settled agriculture and came to the area to settle in sometime in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the Mal Pahariyas despite being old settlers of the area are still shifting cultivators and gatherers. The Mal Pahariyas have their own language to communicate within the community but they also learn Santali right from childhood. Despite cultural differences (and historical conflicts) Santals and Mal Pahariyas at present live together peacefully.

The villagers are mainly dependent on agriculture. All the households have some cultivable land (average holdings = 7.5 bighas) but the land profile (hilly uplands) and the rain-fed nature of cultivation force people into finding other options for livelihood like

collection of forest produce, manual wage work etc. The collaborative impact of poverty, malnutrition, ill health, illiteracy and high-interest loans has had its affect on the forest – increased dependence on the forest has resulted in deforestation. Loss of forest cover has created the necessity for finding wage employment outside the locality.

The village has an Anganwadi Centre and a Primary School. According to the villagers, the Anganwadi Centre was functioning satisfactorily. However, it had no other function than distributing food to the children.

The primary school appeared nearly dilapidated – of its two classrooms only one was somewhat functional. The other was abandoned. A single teacher has to take care of the school with 45 children. The attendance on the day of our visit was found to be very poor – only six. According to the teacher (who was reported to be regular) children's engagement in work other than studying was a major hindrance to attendance. Other major problems mentioned included ill health – many of the families (including the children) were reported to have been suffering from various physical ailments. Even when a child herself was not ill, her involvement in caring for siblings, doing other domestic work when other members of the families suffered, made her abstain from attending school.

Among various ailments diarrhoea and malaria are the main. Given the poor condition of drinking water facilities, people are forced to fetch water from Chatarchua and sometimes they have to depend upon the small wells dug in the rice fields. They have three dug wells in the village but none of them provide sufficient water, particularly between January and June. In summer all dry up. Unsafe drinking water has, it seems, made diarrhoea a permanent menace for the villagers.

The suffering increases, according to the villagers, by the near absence of health facilities. All have to depend upon the quack practitioners and many of the villagers reported that not only had several people died of ill health most of them had become absolutely enslaved by the loans they had been forced to take in order to pay for health care.

XXXXXXXXXX

TABLES

Table 1. Caste wise respondent details

	Households having 6–11 years old children	No. of households with no school going children	Households with children of 6-11 age group not enrolled or drop out	Parents interviewed	Children interviewed
SC	10	11	4	7	7
ST	100	71	22	77	40
Others	16	8	0	16	13
Total	126	90	26	100	60

Table 2. Caste, sex and literacy status of the head of the households

	Literate			Illiterate			Total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
ST	47	14	61	43	66	109	90	80	170
SC	8	1	9	3	10	13	11	11	22
Others	14	0	14	3	7	10	17	7	24
Total	69 (58)	15 (15)	84 (39)	49 (42)	83 (85)	132 (61)	118 (55)	98 (45)	216

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Table 3. Religion-wise distribution of sample households

	SC	ST	Others	TOTAL
Hindu	22 (100)	47 (28)	24 (100)	93 (43)
Mari	0	92 (54)	0	92 (43)
Christian	0	31 (18)	0	31 (14)
Total	22(100)	170 (100)	24 (100)	216 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Table 4. Size of the sample households

Children (6-11 yrs)			Children (0-14yrs)			Adults		
M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
82	78	160	204	209	413	347	354	701

- Average family size: 5.16
- Average number of male children per family: 0.94
- Average number of female children per family: 0.97
- Average number of children per family: 1.91

Table 5. Caste and institution wise distribution of school going children

	Primary School	Private school	NGO school	Total
SC	6 (8)	1 (7)	0 (0)	7 (7)
ST	59 (74)	12 (86)	6 (100)	77 (77)
Others	15 (18)	1 (7)	0 (0)	16 (16)
Total	80 (100)	14 (100)	6 (100)	100 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Table 6. Number of teachers in primary schools

Number of teachers	Number of schools
One teacher	3 (27.3)
Two teachers	6 (54.5)
Three teachers	0 (0)
Four teachers	1 (9.1)
Above four teachers	1 (9.1)
Total	11 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Table 7. Teachers' gender break up, by caste

SC			ST			OBC			Others			Total		
M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
1	0	1(4)	6	4	10(40)	9	3	12(48)	0	2	2(8)	16	9	25 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

- Male teachers: 64%
- Female teachers: 36%

Table 8. Aspiration for education

Yes		No	
Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
126 (100)	120 (95)	0	6(5)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Table 9. Distribution of children in 6-11 age group

Caste	Children in 6-11 year age group		Schooling status of the child					
			Male			Female		
	Male	Female	Currently Enrolled	Never Enrolled	Drop Out	Currently Enrolled	Never Enrolled	Drop Out
ST	334	281	218 (65)	92 (28)	24 (7)	182 (65)	73 (26)	26 (9)
SC	48	39	38 (79)	9 (19)	1 (2)	33 (84)	5 (13)	1 (3)
Others	40	32	36 (90)	0 (0)	4 (10)	26 (81)	2 (6)	4 (13)
Total	422	352	292 (69)	101 (24)	29 (7)	241 (68)	80 (23)	31 (9)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Table 10. Distribution of children in 6-11 age group in the sampled households

Caste	Children in 6-11 age group		Schooling status of the child					
			Male			Female		
	Male	Female	Currently enrolled	Never Enrolled	Drop Out	Currently enrolled	Never Enrolled	Drop Out
ST	62	62	39 (63)	16 (26)	7 (11)	41 (66)	14 (23)	7 (11)
SC	9	11	6 (67)	2 (22)	1 (11)	5 (45.5)	5 (45.5)	1 (9)
Others	11	5	11 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (80)	1 (20)	0 (0)
Total	82	78	56 (68)	18 (22)	8 (10)	50 (64)	20 (26)	8 (10)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Table 11. Total enrolment and attendance

	Enrolment	Attendance
Male	738	NA
Female	510	NA
Total	1,248 (Avg.: 113.4/school)	535 (43%)

Table 12. Attendance of children (parents' responses)

No. of days attended during last school week	No. of responses
1-3 days	8
4-6 days	53
Did not attend at all	33
No response	6
Total number of parents interviewed	100

Table 13. Main reasons for absence (parents' responses)

Reasons	Number of respondents
Caring of siblings	14
Other domestic work	38
Helping parents – farm work	9
Visiting relatives	11
Child less interested	27
Ill health of family members	20
Due to ill health	29
Tending cattle	14
No definite reason	4
Wage earning	1
Parents insist	5

(Total number of respondents: 100/Responses not mutually exclusive)

Table 14. Ranking of the major reasons for Never Enrolment, Drop Out and Poor Attendance

Categories and rank	Never Enrolment	Drop Out	Poor Attendance
1	Child was needed for other household activities	Child did not wish to continue	Child was needed for other household activities
2	Poor Family Condition	Child was needed for other household activities	Child less interested
3	School far away	Parents withdrew the child for irregular schooling	Teacher did not come
4	Child less interested in studying	Parents withdrew children for domestic work	Ill health of child or other family members
5	Caring for siblings	Caring for siblings	Tending cattle
6		Tending cattle	Caring siblings
7			Helping parents in farm work

Table 15. Reasons for never enrolment

Reasons	Male			Female			Total
	ST	SC	OBC	ST	SC	OBC	
Child is needed for other activities.	2	1	0	7	2	0	12
School is too expensive.	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
School is far away	2	0	0	5	0	0	7
Child is disabled	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Child is not interested in study	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
Poor family condition	2	0	0	1	5	0	8
Parents are not interested in study	2	0	0	3	0	0	5
Total no. of respondents	8	1	0	18	4	0	31

(Responses not mutually exclusive)

Table 16. Reasons for drop out

Reasons	Male			Female			Total
	ST	SC	OBC	ST	SC	OBC	
Child did not wish to continue.	4	0	0	8	0	0	12
Attendance fizzled out.	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
For poor economic condition.	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Withdrawn for other activities	5	1	0	0	1	0	7
Withdrawn by parents.	1	1	0	8	3	0	13
Total no. of respondents	10	1	0	17	3	0	31

(Responses not mutually exclusive)

Table 17. Basic amenities in primary schools

Basic Amenities	Number of schools
Schools with no buildings	0
Schools with no doors and windows	3 (27.3)
Schools need repair	8 (72.7)
Schools with no toilet facilities	11(100)
Schools with no playground	6 (54.5)
Schools without drinking water facilities	3 (27.3)
Schools without blackboard	1 (9.1)
Schools without maps and charts	7 (63.6)
Schools without toys and games	6 (54.5)
Schools without teaching kit	8 (72.7)
Schools with no musical instruments	11 (100)
Total number of schools	11 (100)

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

•Teachers' attendance on the days of visits: 80%. Teachers' absenteeism was found to be higher in the tribal villages.

Table 18. Subjects taught on the day of visit

SUBJECTS	RESPONDENTS
No teaching	9
Hindi	25
Mathematics	22
English	1
History/geography	0
Sanskrit	1

(Total number of respondents: 43/Responses not mutually exclusive)

Table 19. Performance of teachers

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Don't know	Total
Govt.	38 (48)	29 (36)	13 (16)	80 (100)
Private	5 (36)	2 (14)	7 (50)	14 (100)
NGO	3 (50)	2 (33)	1 (17)	6 (100)
Total no. of respondents	46 (46)	33 (33)	21 (21)	100 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Table 20. Assessment of level of achievement of the children in primary classes

Categories	SC	ST	Others	Total
Cannot read and write properly	6 (46)	22 (54)	2 (22)	30 (48)
Can write but cannot read fluently	4 (31)	14 (34)	5 (56)	23 (36)
Can read, write and solve simple sums	3 (23)	5 (12)	2 (22)	10 (16)
Total	13 (100)	41 (100)	9 (100)	63 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Table 21. Assistance given at home

Response	PS	PVT	NGO	Total
Assistance given	34 (43)	4 (29)	1 (17)	39 (39)
Assistance not given	46 (57)	10 (71)	5 (83)	61 (61)
Total	80 (100)	14 (100)	6 (100)	100 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Table 22. Cost of schooling

Institution	PS	PVT	NGO	OTH	Total
Cost range (in Rs.)					
≤ 200	31	1	4	1	37
201 – 300	11	1	0	0	12
301 – 400	8	0	0	0	8
401 – 500	7	1	0	0	8
501 – 600	7	1	0	0	8
601-700	2	0	0	0	2
701- 800	3	0	1	0	4
801- 900	1	0	0	0	1
901- 1000	1	1	0	0	2
More than 1000	1	9	0	0	10
Can't say	7	0	1	0	8
Total no. of respondents	79	14	6	1	100

Table 23. Distribution of households by range of expenditure on private tuition (in Rs.)

Cost range (in Rs.)	PS	PVT	NGO	Total
≤ 200	6	0	1	7
201 – 300	0	1	0	1
301 – 400	2	2	0	4
401 – 500	1	0	0	1
501 – 600	4	0	0	4
601-700	0	0	0	0
701- 800	1	0	0	1
801- 900	0	0	0	0
901- 1000	1	0	0	1
More than 1000	0	0	0	0
Total no. of respondents	15	3	1	19

Table 24. Private tuition and performance

Categories and performances	Private tuition taken	Private tuition not taken
Cannot read and write properly	6 (35)	24 (52)
Can write but cannot read fluently	8 (47)	16 (35)
Can read, write and solve simple sums	3 (18)	6 (13)
Total	17 (100)	46 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Table 25. Extent of private tuition

	PS	PVT	NGO	Total
Private tuition taken	17 (21)	5 (36)	2 (33)	24 (24)
Private tuition not taken	63 (79)	9 (64)	4 (67)	76 (76)
Total	80 (100)	14 (100)	6 (100)	100 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Table 26. Incentive received

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Type of incentive	No of children benefited
Dry food ration	63(79)
Uniforms	0(0)
Text book	55(69)
Scholarship	12(18)**
Cash incentive	10(13)
No incentive	8(10)
Total no. of respondents	80

** Total SC and ST children enrolled in the government primary schools/Responses not mutually exclusive

Table 27. Incentive schemes- (teachers' view)

	Should continue unmodified	Should continue with modification
Dry Ration (mid day meal)	0	11(100)*
Text book	0	11(100)**
Uniform	3(27.3)	8(72.70)#
Scholarship	8(72.7.2)	3(27.3)
Cash incentive	4(36.4)	7(63.6)##

*Mid day meal- 100% wants replacement of dry ration with mid day meal. Again 82% want cooked food and 18% want tiffin.

**All the books should be provided and they should be supplied in time

#Uniform- all children should get uniform (irrespective of caste and gender)

##Cash incentives are meant for the children of BPL families, but the selection of BPL families have been erroneous, discriminatory and flawed with partiality. Hence many deserving children do not get this and many undeserving are benefited.

Table 28. Incentive Suggestions (teachers' view).

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Scheme	Responses
Cooked food	9(82)
Dry food	2(18)
Uniform for all	8(73)
Regular supply of all books	11(100)
Scholarship	3(27)
Cash incentive for eligible students	6(55)
Total no. of respondents	11(100)

Table 29. Number of inspections (per year)

Inspection	Number of schools
No inspection	2 (18.2)
Once a year	4 (36.4)
Twice in a year	4 (36.4)
Thrice in a year	1 (9.1)
Total number of schools	11 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Table 30. Parents' awareness of existence of parent-teacher committees

	PS	PVT	NGO	Total
Yes	17 (21)	3 (21)	0 (0)	20
No	53 (66)	6 (43)	5 (83)	64
Don't know	10 (13)	5 (36)	1 (17)	15
No. of respondents	80 (100)	14 (100)	6 (100)	100

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Table 31. Parents' awareness of parent-teacher meetings

	PS	PVT	NGO	Total
Yes	26 (33)	2 (14)	0 (0)	28
No	44 (55)	8 (57)	4 (67)	56
Don't know	10 (12)	4 (29)	2 (33)	16
No. of respondents	80 (100)	14 (100)	6 (100)	100

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Table 32. Parents' attendance at meetings

	PS	PVT	NGO	Total
Yes	17 (65)	2 (100)	0 (0)	19 (68)
No	9 (35)	0 (100)	0 (0)	9 (32)
No. of respondents who spoke affirmatively about teachers' holding of meetings with them.	26 (100)	2 (100)	0 (0)	28 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Table 33. Parents willingness to offer assistance

	PS	Pvt.	NGO
Willing	60 (75)	3 (21)	3 (50)
Indifferent	20 (25)	11 (79)	3 (50)
Total	80 (100)	14 (100)	6 (100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

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