

Pratichi Occasional Paper No. 1

Social Exclusion in and through Elementary Education: The Case of West Bengal

Kumar Rana

Pratichi (India) Trust in association with UNICEF Kolkata

February 2010

Pratichi (India) Trust
Chair: Amarty Sen
Managing Trustee: Antara Dev Sen

Registered and Head Office:
A 708, ANAND LOK
Mayur Vihar I
Delhi 110091
Phone +91 11 22752375

Pratichi Research Team
76, Uttar Purbachal Road, Kolkata 700078
Phone +91 33 24844229
Fax +91 3324843205
E MAIL: pratichi_team@sancharnet.in

Santiniketan Project Office
"Sujan", Deer Park, Santiniketan 731235

Social Exclusion in and through Elementary Education: The Case of West Bengal

Kumar Rana¹

1. Introduction

The connection between universalisation of elementary education and human development is one of the most widely acknowledged issues in public discourse across the globe. That elementary education plays a pivotal role in reducing social inequalities by expanding human capabilities has been clearly established. All of us have been talking about ways to universalise education and to deliver quality education in an equitable manner. Yet, the gaps in educational opportunities and achievements of students from certain class backgrounds, social identities, gender and geographical locations have not decreased, rather, they have risen. In fact, the very objective of reducing inequality through educational expansion is defeated at its inception with the failure to incorporate sections of society into the fold of education.

Literacy data (Census of India 2001) shows that three sections of Indian society - the Scheduled Tribes (Adivasis), Muslims and Scheduled Castes (Dalits) remain far below the country's average while the "others" (referring to the rest of the country's population, mainly high caste Hindus) have a much higher ranking in the statistical table. Moreover, this general pattern has particular impact on the female literacy rates of each social group. In other words, sections of the population are excluded from the educational arena, where the basis of exclusion is determined by the social background they come from - being members of particular social class (within the broader framework of four major divisions - Adivasi, Muslim, Dalit and Others) and again by the gender division within these categories.

However, the social variations in literacy rates do not seem to follow a particular pattern. Instead they tend to take different routes in different regions depending upon the particular social, economic and political fabric of the region- and are often historically evolved. An examination of the community-wise literacy rates (both in terms of absolute values as well as in terms of their differences with the state averages) of some of the most populous states in India reveal many interesting facts, some of which are highlighted below. With regard to the literacy rate of Dalits, Bihar's performance is the worst, both in value (28.5%). as well as in the difference between the state's average literacy rate (47%) and the Dalit literacy rate Bihar is followed by Karnataka with a

¹ The author is indebted to Lalita Patnaik, Education Officer, UNICEF, Kolkata for her inputs received in writing the paper. I gratefully acknowledge the help received from Kamal Pal, Subhasis Deb, Swati Bhattacharjee, Paromita Haldar, Rupa Dey and Manabesh Sarkar. Usual disclaimers apply.

state average of 67% and a Dalit literacy rate of 53%. In both states, Muslims are somewhat better placed.

In Andhra Pradesh, the literacy rate of Muslims (68%) is much higher than the state's average (61%), however, the literacy rate of Adivasis is far behind (37%). In Assam, the literacy rate of Dalits (67%) is higher than the state average (63%) but the literacy rate of Muslims (48%) is far below. Again, in Punjab, the literacy rates of both these communities (Dalits at 56%, and Muslims at 51%) are far behind the state average (70%).

Three of the 21 states considered under the analysis have Dalit literacy rates above the corresponding state averages and nine of the states have Muslim literacy rates above the corresponding state averages. The table below lists the state wise variations in literacy rates according to social groups.

Table 1. Social Variations of Literacy Rates in India

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Literacy Rate	All	Dalit	All – Dalit (Col. 1-2)	Adivasi	All – Adivasi (Col. 1-4)	Muslim	All-Muslim (Col. 1-6)
Andhra Pradesh	60.5	53.5	7	37	23.5	68	-7.5
Assam	63.3	66.8	-3.5	62.5	0.8	48.4	14.9
Bihar	47	28.5	18.5	28.2	18.8	42	5
Chhattisgarh	64.7	64	0.7	52.1	12.6	82.5	-17.8
Gujarat	69.1	70.5	-1.4	47.7	21.4	73.5	-4.4
Haryana	67.9	55.4	12.5	0	NA	40	27.9
Himachal Pradesh	76.5	70.3	6.2	65.5	11	57.5	19
J& Kashmir	55.5	59	-3.5	37.5	18	47.3	8.2
Jharkhand	53.6	37.6	16	40.7	12.9	55.6	-2
Karnataka	66.6	52.9	13.7	48.3	18.3	70.1	-3.5
Kerala	90.9	82.7	8.2	64.4	26.5	89.4	1.5
Madhya Pradesh	63.7	58.6	5.1	41.2	22.5	70.3	-6.6
Maharashtra	76.9	71.9	5	55.2	21.7	78.1	-1.2
Orissa	63.1	55.5	7.6	37.4	25.7	71.3	-8.2
Punjab	69.7	56.2	13.5	0	NA	51.2	18.5
Rajasthan	60.4	52.2	8.2	44.7	15.7	56.6	3.8
Tamil Nadu	73.5	63.2	10.3	41.5	32	82.9	-9.4
Uttar Pradesh	56.3	46.3	10	35.1	21.2	47.8	8.5
Uttaranchal	71.6	63.4	8.2	63.2	8.4	51.5	20.1
West Bengal	68.6	59	9.6	43.4	25.2	57.5	11.1
India**	64.8	54.7	10.1	47.1	17.7	59.1	5.7

Table 1A. Gender Gap in Literacy Rate in India

	All	Male	Female	Gender-gap
Andhra Pradesh	60	70	50	20
Assam	63	71	55	17
Bihar	47	60	33	27
Chhattisgarh	65	77	52	26
Gujarat	69	80	58	22
Haryana	68	78	56	23
Himachal Pradesh	76	85	67	18
Jammu & Kashmir	56	67	43	24

Jharkhand	54	67	39	28
Karnataka	67	76	57	19
Kerala	91	94	88	7
Madhya Pradesh	64	76	50	26
Maharashtra	77	86	67	19
Orissa	63	75	51	25
Punjab	70	75	63	12
Rajasthan	60	76	44	32
Tamil Nadu	73	82	64	18
Uttar Pradesh	56	69	42	27
Uttaranchal	72	83	60	24
West Bengal	69	77	60	17
India	65	75	54	22

Educational gaps, rooted in social backgrounds, intensify socio economic divisions.² As has been seen above, social divisions take different routes in different states, and this requires a detailed investigation, which is beyond the scope of this paper. However, a partial analysis taking the case of one state –West Bengal – would certainly give us some valuable indications on the patterns of social exclusion in education.

Groups that lag behind in educational achievement are highly dependent upon manual labour for their survival.³ As the Census 2001 data shows, while the above-mentioned three groups comprise 54% of the total population of West Bengal, they form 71% of the agricultural labourers in the state. Other evidence, such as the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) and the National Family and Health Survey – III (NFHS III) suggest that these groups suffer from various forms of discrimination in terms of food security, health facilities and so on. And all these forms of discrimination are linked with their educational backwardness, both causing and resulting in different forms of exclusion based on social opportunities.

There is perhaps no clear cut answer as to why social exclusion in education has not be properly addressed even after six decades of independence. While some blame faulty implementation others point to policy gaps as being the cause. Some even go as far as drawing a fatalistic causal connection between peoples' origin of birth and their educational achievement.

Can belonging to particular social class cause cognitive deficiency? There is, of course, no such scientific evidence. Rather, as Amartya Sen puts it, "Our capability to lead one kind of life rather than another does not depend only on what we are, but also on the circumstances in which we find ourselves."⁴ The anthropologist, Jared Diamond underlines, "History followed different courses for different peoples because of differences among peoples' environment, not because of biological

² The likelihood of a poor person being illiterate is much higher than a financially secure person. At the same time the likelihood of an illiterate person earning less is much higher than that of a literate person.

³ For a detailed discussion see Ray S and R Chand, (2004) *Socio-Economic Dimensions of Unemployment in India*, http://www.mospi.gov.in/mospi_seminarseries_nov04_4_1_final.pdf

⁴ Sen, Amartya (2002), "On the Darwinian View of Progress", in *Rationality and Freedom*, Belknap Harvard, Cambridge MA p. 486

differences among peoples themselves.”⁵ Of course, the term ‘environment’ has been used in much wider sense, where opportunities form a major part of human environment. Again, scientific research has clearly shown that, “social exclusion actually can bring changes in a person’s brain function and can lead to poor decision making and a diminished learning ability.”⁶ Indeed, as a scientist puts it, “social rejection can have a powerful influence on how people act.”⁷ And, this freedom or unfreedom to act plays a crucial role in the overall development achievement of any given society.⁸ The elimination of a particular section from social opportunities does not only affect the concerned group but it also exerts a negative impact on the overall level of progress.

Let us take the example of West Bengal. The average literacy rate of the state is 69%, a rate that could have been much higher had there been any symmetry in the literacy rates of the various communities. The much lower rates of literacy among women (59%), Adivasis (43%), Muslims (57%) and Dalits (59%) in general and among the women of the three communities in particular (29%, 49% and 47% for Adivasi, Muslim and Dalit respectively) have brought the average literacy rate to a regrettably low level. Of the total illiterate persons in West Bengal, the Adivasis, Muslims and Dalits form nearly two third, while their population share is much less (54%). Again, while Adivasi and Dalit women form about 12% of the state’s total population, they comprise nearly 20% of the total agricultural labourers in the state.

West Bengal has a long history of pro-poor politics. Yet, as recent data shows, a substantial proportion of rural households (3.6%, or 480250 households) do not even have the security of one full meal a day, and as high as 12% of the households (1,545,473 households) reportedly remained insecure when it comes to two square meals a day.⁹ The majority of these households, as can be seen from various other data, belong to the so-called backward communities – the Dalits, Adivasis and the Muslims - who depend upon various manual work for their subsistence.¹⁰ This pattern of hunger, which denotes economic poverty, has a clear correlation with that of educational deprivation. As can be seen from the literacy data, the pattern of literacy achievement coincides with the exclusion of particular communities in general and especially the women in those communities. Further, literacy deprivation follows a geographical pattern, which again goes in line with the geography of hunger. Precisely, there is a clear pattern where sections of people in the society are adversely affected – they are excluded from social opportunities, particularly education, but are forcibly included in the fold of manual workers.

⁵ Diamond, Jared (1999), *Guns, Germs and Still: The Fates of Human Societies*, W.W.Norton, New York, p.25

⁶ A study by W. Keith Campbell et al, cited in the *Science Daily*, November 9, 2006

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ Sen Amartya, (1999) *Development as Freedom*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and Delhi

⁹ Cited in “Sahay Prakriya O Karmasuchi: Sangsodhita Nirdesika O Parichalan Bidhi”, Panchayat and Rural development Department, Government of West Bengal, Kolkata, 2008

¹⁰ Rana Kumar (2009), “Food Security and Popular Politics in West Bengal”, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata, 2009

How does this exclusion happen? Is it the result of policy failure? Or is it a case of failure in the implementation of programmes? Or is it the indifference of the local level implementers (such as teachers) towards the backward groups that causes the exclusion. This paper argues that it is a combination of various factors – policy design and implementation and other societal barriers – which contribute to the exclusion of particular groups from the educational domain. With an array of data, mainly from Census 2001 and DISE 2007 (if not mentioned otherwise) this paper attempts to develop a consistent format to understand the complexities involved in the patterns of exclusion so that public officials, activists, educators and others can face the issue squarely.

1. Exclusion in Literacy

Inequality acts in many ways. The very inequalities that universalization of primary education intends to remove appear to be embedded in the process of the delivery of education itself. Various social boundaries – class, caste, territory, gender and so on – are strongly linked to the barriers that reduce the possibilities of educational achievement. Let us begin with territorial borders.

While West Bengal's average of literacy rate is 68.6% (final Census figures 2001) the districts are clearly divided into two groups with the state average in the middle. Most of the districts in the central plain have a much higher literacy rate than the state average; some of them are even more advanced than the educationally advanced states of the country.

On the other hand, some of the districts have a much lower literacy rate than the state and national average, and are also below the average of some educationally poor states of the country. These backward districts not only host the majority of the agricultural labourers of the state¹¹ but also rank at the bottom of the Human Development list¹². Further, most of these districts are severely disadvantaged in terms of health, infrastructure, employment and other facilities¹³. Moreover, the 4612 'most backward villages' identified by the state government's Panchayat and Rural Development Department are concentrated in the generally backward districts of Puruliya, Uttar Dinajpur, Medinipur West, Murshidabad, Dakshin Dinajpur, and Birbhum.

While there is a strong territorial association between education and development, social linkages are also clearly visible. Disaggregated figures of the literacy rate in West Bengal point towards two striking divisions: one between men and women, and the other between the privileged and the underprivileged. The gender gap in literacy in West Bengal stands at 17.4% points (male 77%, female 59.6% according to 2001 Census) and clearly points to the discrimination women face in accessing educational opportunities. Further, while dividing the blocks of West Bengal along female

¹¹ *Census of India, 2001*

¹² *West Bengal Human Development Report*, Planning Department, Government of West Bengal, Kolkata, 2004

¹³ *Towards a District Development Report*, State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development, West Bengal, Kolkata, 2004

literacy rates we find that, (a) majority of the blocks (235) fall below the state average, indicating highly uneven literacy achievement levels in the population, and (b) the blocks with lower female literacy rates are relatively deprived of educational facilities: the backward blocks have a lesser number of upper primary schools than the state average and a higher (meaning negative) ratio of pupil-teacher at both primary and upper primary levels (This has been elaborated on in a later section of this paper)

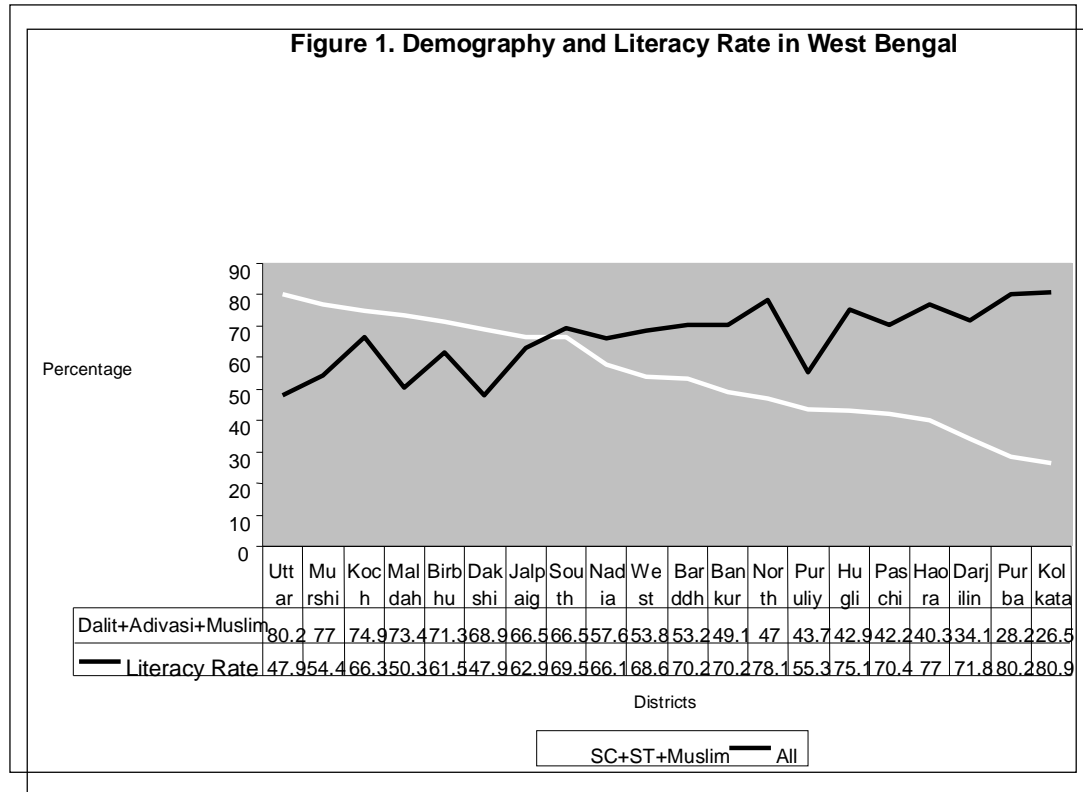
Table 2. Female Literacy Rate and Schooling Opportunities

Female Literacy Rate	Number of blocks	Mean ratio of primary and upper primary schools	Pupil-teacher ratio – Primary	Pupil-teacher ratio – upper primary
Below state average	235	6.9	50	50
Above state average	106	5.2	44	43
state average	341	6.3	48	47

When the factors determining deprivation – class, caste and gender – are combined, the level of exclusion intensifies. While the overall gender gap in literacy in the state is 17.4%, the corresponding figures for the SC and ST communities are 23.6 and 28.2% points respectively. However, amongst Muslims there is a narrower gender gap of 14.8% point in literacy (which is lower than the overall gender gap in the state).

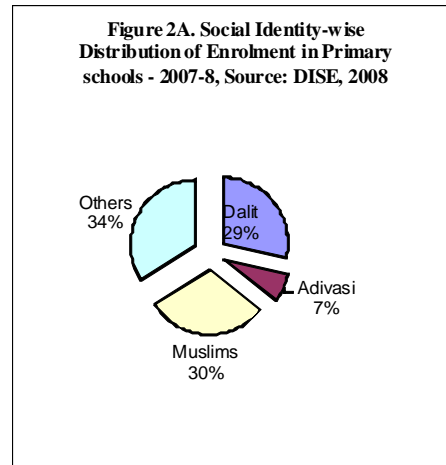
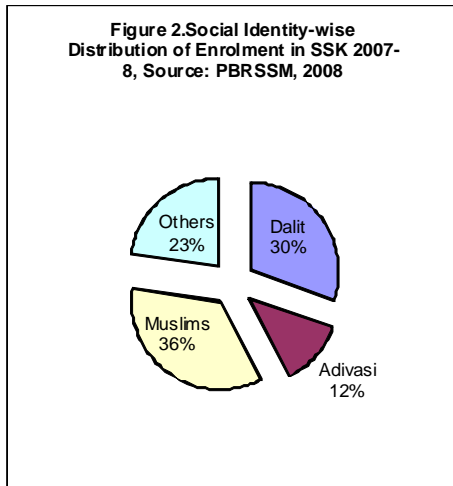
As is shown in Figure 1, districts with a higher concentration of Adivasis, Muslims and Dalits tend to have lower literacy rates. The correlation between a high concentration of backward communities and a lower rate of literacy is quite strong (correlation coefficient being -0.77995). However, there are some aberrations in this pattern which require an in-depth inquiry. For example, all the districts, with a backward population of more than 50%, except for Bardhaman, have a literacy rate lower than the state average. Again, all the districts with a backward population of less than 50%, except for Puruliya, have a literacy rate above the state average. These aberrations seem to have caused by some intra-community variations in the different groups. For example the literacy rate of Muslims in Bardhaman (69%) is higher than the state average of literacy among Muslims (57%); as is the case for “others”.

In Puruliya, the overall literacy rate has remained lower for two reasons – the literacy rate amongst Dalits (45%) is much lower than the average Dalit literacy of the state (59%) and the literacy rate of the “others” (70%) is much lower than the corresponding state average (84%). The main reason behind the backwardness of the “others” in Puruliya is that a substantial population of the district, such as the Kurmi Mahatos who were in the Scheduled Tribe list till 1931 are now treated as part of the “general” population. This community and some other groups are very different from the Hindu upper and middle castes and socio-culturally are closer to the Adivasis than to the Caste Hindus. They are mainly agrarian in nature and are deprived of the social and political opportunities that play a decisive role in educational achievements as well.



2. Exclusion in Opportunities

That lower rates of literacy among backward social groups concentrated in particular geographical areas can be largely attributed to the lack of opportunity and accessibility to elementary schooling is evident enough from various sources of data.

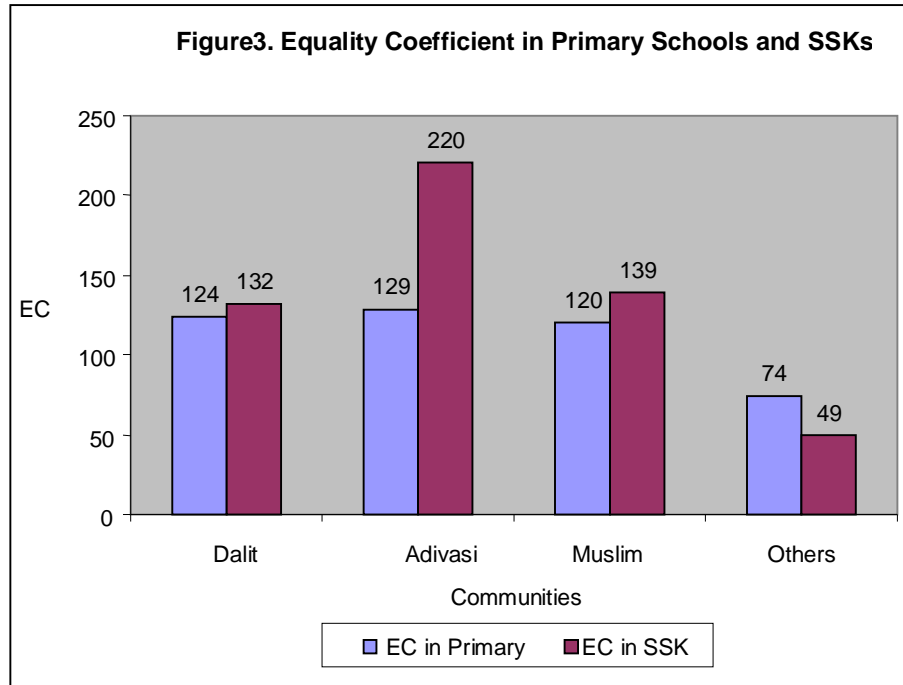


Let us take the enrolment pattern of the two different kinds of primary schooling institutions – one, the primary schools and two, the Sishu Siksha Kendra (SSK)s. In 1997, the Government of West Bengal, rather than depending only on the Department of School Education, decided to find alternate means of universalizing primary education and gave the responsibility to the Department of Panchayat and Rural Development¹⁴. The latter established a separate office, the Paschimbanga Rajya Sishu Siksha Mission to run a programme called Sishu Siksha Karmasuchi. The programme runs ‘supplementary centres’, named Sishu Siksha Kendras (SSKs) in disadvantaged areas, mainly in rural hamlets but also in some urban pockets¹⁵. The people’s response to the centres set up in the initial phase encouraged the government to extend the programme: by 2001 there were 11,000 SSKs and by 2007 the number was raised to 16,005 SSKs catering to 1,494, 150 children¹⁶ – roughly 15% of the total children enrolled at the primary level. Interestingly, the enrolment pattern in the SSKs shows a huge concentration of children from backward communities (78% as opposed to 66% in the primary schools). On the other hand, the enrolment ratio of the “other” children in primary schools and SSKs is 34: 22.

¹⁴ No. 3116(17)PN/O/Cell 1/O4 dated 4.8.1997

¹⁵ The urban SSKs are run mainly by civic bodies, for example, the Kolkata Municipal Corporation.

¹⁶ District-wise no. of SSK/Sahayika & Std.-wise Learners as per DISE 2007 Data provided by the Paschimbanga Rajya Sishu Siksha Mission.



This clearly means that there was a gap in making mainstream educational facilities accessible to the children of the backward groups. Further, even the attempts to eradicate the gaps followed a route which, despite many positive aspects (community participation, low cost, etc) raised many questions about the quality of the teachers and the level of achievement attained by the children.¹⁷

An analysis of the enrolment data on the basis of Equality Coefficient – an exercise that shows us the degree of representation of a particular population – proves the disadvantage even more clearly. Equality Coefficient is calculated as follows: Enrolment of particular community (E) divided by its share to total population (P) multiplied by 100, or, $[E/P] \times 100$. EC = 100 denotes equality in the representation; below 100 it is negative and above 100 it is positive.

Figure 3 clearly points out towards the disadvantages faced by the backward children, particularly the Adivasis, in terms of schooling facilities. Had there been proper schooling facilities there would have no reason for these children to go to the SSKs in such disproportionate numbers. It is true that in some cases Adivasi children prefer the SSKs to the primary schools even though there are primary schools in their respective localities. However these cases are rare, this choice often being induced by some opportunity factors – communicability (teachers speak or at least attempt to grasp the language spoken by the children which is different from Bangla), teacher being recruited from the

¹⁷ Rana K, SB Sen and M Sarkar (2009), *Small Schools for the Underprivileged: The SSK experiment in West Bengal*, paper presented at a seminar on Small Schools at the National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi on 5-6 February 2009; also see *Pratichi Education Report II, with an Introduction by Amartya Sen*, Pratichi (India) Trust, Delhi, 2009

same locality, parents' involvement and so on. This last point has been elaborated on later in this paper.

Table 3. Equality Coefficient (EC) of Enrolment of Different Social Categories in Primary Schools

District	Dalit(% to total enrolment)	EC	Adivasi(% to total enrolment)	EC	Minority(% to total enrolment)	EC	Others(% to total enrolment)	EC
Bankura	39.6	126.9	11.5	110.6	9.3	124.0	39.7	78.0
Bardhaman	38.4	142.2	8.8	137.5	23.5	118.7	29.3	62.6
Birbhum	33.9	114.9	8.6	128.4	38.8	110.5	18.7	65.2
D-Dinajpur	34.7	120.5	19.5	121.1	23.7	98.8	22.2	71.4
Howrah	19.1	124.0	0.3	60.0	34.5	141.4	46.2	77.4
Hoogly	33.5	141.9	6.1	145.2	17.6	116.6	42.8	75.0
Jalpaiguri	43.8	119.3	23.8	125.9	12.8	117.4	19.6	58.3
Koochbihar	51.7	103.2	0.8	133.3	25.1	103.7	22.4	89.2
Malda	22	131.0	7.2	104.3	46.7	94.0	24.0	90.6
Murshidabad	13.1	109.2	1.6	123.1	66.9	105.0	18.4	80.0
Nadia	32	107.7	3.4	136.0	33.3	131.1	31.3	73.6
N- 24 parganas	26.2	127.2	3.5	159.1	36.9	152.5	33.4	63.0
Pasc-Medinipore	24.2	134.1	16.3	109.7	9.6	102.8	49.9	86.4
PurbaMedinipore	16.9	116.9	0.6	100.0	15.6	118.6	66.9	93.2
Purulia	21.9	119.7	20.1	109.8	7.9	111.3	50.2	89.2
S-24-Pargana	32.8	102.2	1.6	133.3	38.2	115.1	27.4	82.0
U-Dinajpur	30.2	109.0	5.7	111.8	42.3	89.2	21.7	109.6
State Total	28.5	123.9	7.1	129.1	30.3	119.8	34.1	73.8

Figure 3 demonstrates that the EC for the “others” is negative, which means that sections of the children from “other” communities are enrolled somewhere other than the public primary schools (a negative exclusion that actually add to the weaknesses of the primary schools are now devoid of the ‘grumbling voices’ of the parents of these children, which has the potential of making a positive impact on the functioning of the schools)¹⁸. But, as we will see in Table 4, the negativity in EC in the SSKs is much higher than that in the primary schools – 49 as opposed to 74.

The tables show some other interesting patterns: the districts with poor literacy rates (Uttar Dinajpur, Malda, Puruliya) have a better EC even for the “others”. This means that the general standard of living is so poor that people of the “other” communities also depend upon “free schooling”. The enrolment pattern of the SSKs shows that the degree of dependence of the Dalits on the SSKs is much higher in the districts where they are numerically weaker. In some of the districts (Murshidabad, Purba Medinipur, South 24 Pargans and Puruliya), however, the EC in SSKs for the ‘others’ is much higher. The case of Murshidabad, South Dinajpur and Puruliya can be explained. In Murshidabad the number of schools is far too inadequate (the enrolment per school is much higher than the state average and all other districts). In South 24 Parganas some areas are quite isolated and

¹⁸ See for a perceptive analysis, Sen, Amartya (2002), “Introduction” to the *Pratichi Education Report I*, TLM Books in association with the Pratichi Trust, Delhi

have fewer schools, hence the total population may depend upon the SSKs. In Purulia, as discussed earlier, some of the backward communities are treated as “others”. But, the case of Purba Medinipur is a bit surprising: it may be similar to the case of South 24 Paragans, or there may be some other causes, which this paper does not have the scope to investigate.

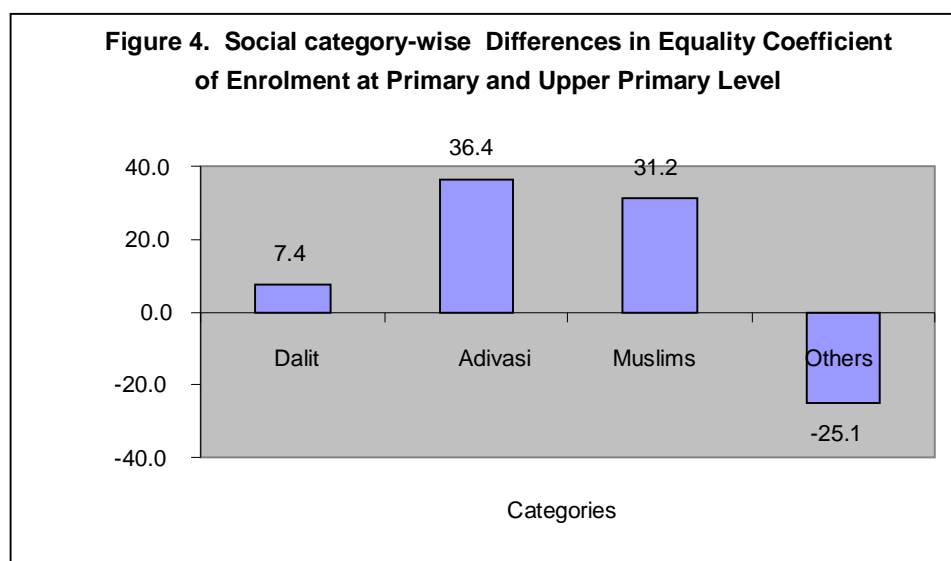
Whatever be the case, it is clear that the literacy pattern in the state has much to do with the accessibility to schools.

Table 3A. Enrolment of Different Social Categories in SSKs

District	Dalit	EC	Adivasi	EC	Muslim	EC	Others	EC
Bankura	49.4	158.3	21.4	205.8	10.4	138.7	18.9	37.1
Bardhaman	46.1	170.7	18.9	295.3	22.1	111.6	12.9	27.6
Birbhum	30.8	104.4	18.3	273.1	41.1	117.1	9.9	34.5
Dakshin Dinajpur	32.4	112.5	25.9	160.9	26.3	109.6	15.5	49.8
Haora	28.8	187.0	0.4	80.0	46.6	191.0	24.2	40.5
Hoogly	57.2	242.4	8.3	197.6	17.7	117.2	16.8	29.4
Jalpaiguri	44.3	120.7	28.8	152.4	13.0	119.3	13.9	41.4
Koch Bihar	50	99.8	0.6	100.0	33.9	140.1	15.5	61.8
Malda	21.6	128.6	6.5	94.2	57.0	114.7	14.9	56.2
Murshidabad	14.3	119.2	2.4	184.6	63.7	100.0	19.6	85.2
Nadia	36.8	123.9	5.7	228.0	35.0	137.8	22.6	53.2
North 24 Parganas	33.4	162.1	8.5	386.4	45.5	188.0	12.6	23.8
Paschim MDP	27	149.7	28.3	190.4	11.9	127.4	32.8	56.8
Purbo MDP	22.5	155.6	1.3	216.7	17.1	130.0	59.2	82.5
Purulia	22.7	124.0	31.9	174.3	4.8	67.6	40.6	72.1
South 24 Parganas	35.5	110.6	2.2	183.3	37.8	113.9	24.5	73.4
Uttar Dinajpur	24	86.6	6.4	125.5	61.8	130.4	7.8	39.4
Total	30.3	131.7	12.1	220.0	35.1	138.7	22.5	48.7

Further analysis of enrolment data of the primary and upper primary children shows that backward communities are far more deprived at the upper primary level. Figure 4 shows the differences in the Equality Coefficient of different social categories at the primary and upper primary level (EC primary level – EC upper primary level). While in the case of Dalits, Adivasis and Muslims the EC at upper primary level is much lower than the EC at primary level it is the reverse in case of the “others”. In other words the proportion of backward communities at upper primary level decreases while in case of the “others” it increases multi-fold.

A district-wise break-up of the differences in EC at primary and upper primary level shows that while the degree of exclusion at upper primary level is highest for Adivasis at the state level, in Howrah district it is otherwise. However, given the negligible population of Adivasis in Howrah this aberration does not seem to be significant.

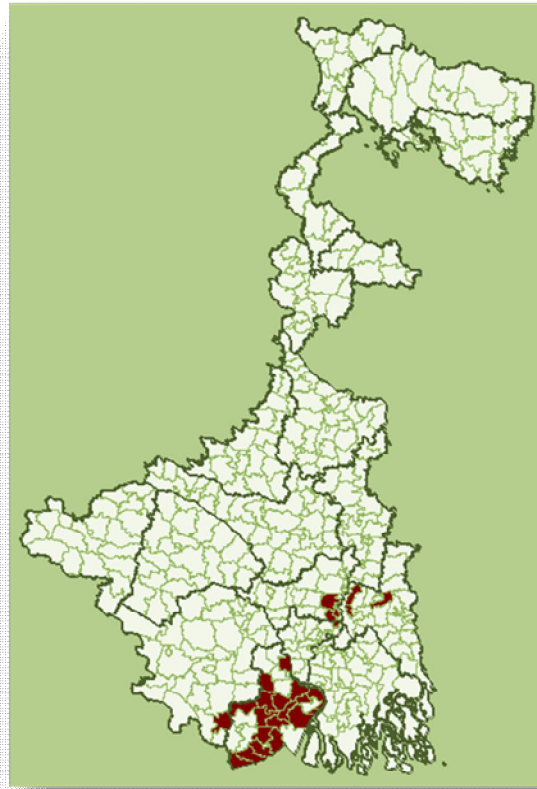


Again, in all districts, Muslims face much larger exclusion from the upper primary arena of schooling, though the degree is a little less than that of the Adivasis. The pattern of such exclusion among the SCs is mixed – in some districts it is negative but in others it is quite acute. This is related to intra-community variations of the SCs of West Bengal, some of whom have achieved a higher degree of success in education.¹⁹

Table 4. Differences in Equality Coefficient of Primary and Upper Primary Enrolment among Different Social categories

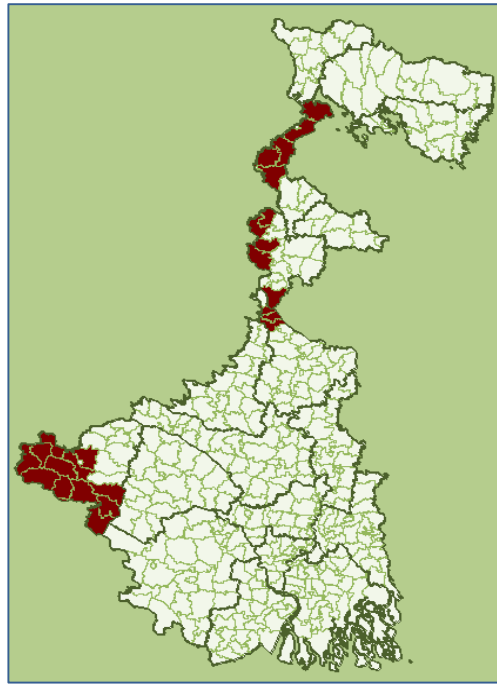
District	Difference in EC at primary and upper primary level among			
	Dalit	Adivasi	Muslims	Others
Uttar Dinajpur	-15.9	29.4	42.4	-87.9
Murshidabad	-5	30.8	16.3	-44.3
South 24 Parganas	-5.6	33.3	39.2	-35
Bardhaman	33	40.6	21.2	-33.5
Birbhum	12.5	47.8	6.8	-32.4
Dakshin Dinajpur	11.5	42.2	0	-32.2
Malda	-11.3	42	14.9	-32.1
Nadia	0	44	43.7	-28.5
Koochbihar	-4.8	33.3	38.4	-28.3
Bankura	36.9	4.8	28	-27.7
North 24 parganas	1.5	50	52.9	-26.8
Jalpaiguri	-6.3	40.2	22	-23.2
Paschim Medinipur	29.4	26.9	21.4	-19.6
Howrah	16.2	-20	31.6	-16.8
Hoogly	28	26.2	9.3	-15.9
Purulia	16.4	13.7	45.1	-15.3
Purba Medinipur	21.4	16.7	43.3	-12.4
State Total	7.4	36.4	31.2	-25.1

¹⁹ See for details, Rana K (2008), “Problems and Prospects of Dalit Emancipation in West Bengal”, in *Voice of Dalit*, July-December, 2008, New Delhi

Map 1. Top 25 C.D. Blocks on Female literacy rate (Census 2001) of West Bengal

District Name	C.D. Block Name	District Name	C.D. Block Name
Haora	Bally Jagachha	Purba Medinipur	Sahid Matangini
Hugli	Serampur Uttarpara	Purba Medinipur	Nandigram - II
Hugli	Chanditala - II	Purba Medinipur	Khejuri - I
Hugli	Singur	Purba Medinipur	Sutahata - II
N24	Barrackpur - II	Purba Medinipur	Moyna
N24	Barrackpur - I	Purba Medinipur	Sutahata - I
N24	Habra - I	Purba Medinipur	Ramnagar - I
Paschim Medinipur	Daspur - II	Purba Medinipur	Contai - II
Purba Medinipur	Contai - III	Purba Medinipur	Nandigram - I
Purba Medinipur	Bhagawanpur - II	Purba Medinipur	Bhagawanpur - I
Purba Medinipur	Contai - I	Purba Medinipur	Nandigram - III
Purba Medinipur	Ramnagar - II	Purba Medinipur	Potashpur - I
Purba Medinipur	Mahisadal		

**Map 2. Bottom 25 C.D. Blocks on Female literacy rate (Census 2001)
of West Bengal**



DISTRICT	C.D. BLOCK	DISTRICT	C.D. BLOCK
Maldah	Kaliachak - III	Puruliya	Balarampur
Maldah	Manikchak	Puruliya	Barabazar
Maldah	Harishchandrapur - II	Puruliya	Jhalda - I
Maldah	Harishchandrapur - I	Puruliya	Manbazar - II
Maldah	Ratua - I	Puruliya	Purulia - I
Murshidabad	Samsorganj	Puruliya	Purulia - II
Murshidabad	Suti - II	Puruliya	Manbazar - I
Murshidabad	Suti - I	Uttar Dinajpur	Goalpokhar - I
Puruliya	Jhalda - II	Uttar Dinajpur	Goalpokhar - II
Puruliya	Arsha	Uttar Dinajpur	Karandighi
Puruliya	Bagmundi	Uttar Dinajpur	Islampur
Puruliya	Jaipur	Uttar Dinajpur	Chopra
Puruliya	Bundwan		

This is further corroborated from the pattern of drop outs, which shows an uneven line of drop out rate among the Dalits across the districts, while among the Adivasis it follows a more or less straight line. Nevertheless, it is very clear that the chances of Adivasi and Dalits children going beyond primary level are very low. And the transition from upper primary to secondary appears to be a remote possibility. We do not have drop out data on Muslims, but as the enrolment pattern shows, the possibility of a Muslim child acquiring school education lies somewhere between the Adivasis and the Dalits.

Table- 5 Pattern of Drop Out Rate

District	Dalit		Adivasi		All	
	Primary	Upper Primary	Primary	Upper Primary	Primary	Upper Primary
Bankura	11	26.73	11.61	30.62	4.64	8.92
Bardhaman	14.24	38.95	20.33	47.04	7.7	5.76
Birbhum	7.38	37.96	14.25	48.44	6.65	8.27
Dakshin Dinajpur	24.55	30.92	30.82	41.48	9.85	6.44
Howrah	14.47	28.45	12.96	25.68	4.7	7.22
Hoogly	23.5	37.1	33.86	47.82	5.07	2.87
Jalpaiguri	14.06	16.83	21.09	24.94	7.69	2.33
Koochbihar	12.54	33.19	13.45	41.06	2.8	5.66
Kolkata	36.5	27.85	45.7	31.85	4.1	6.1
Malda	23.46	38.83	32.69	38.55	15.29	3.89
Murshidabad	12.4	32.72	23.35	38.37	7.98	9.12
Nadia	8.45	27.3	8.62	26.13	7.86	8
North 24 Parganas	13.01	30.85	19.16	32.17	3.69	5.94
Paschim Medinipur	15.95	43.83	20.36	49.78	4.14	6.39
Purba Medinipur	8.37	29.32	14.37	29.63	5.53	8.5
Purulia	16.15	41.27	18.51	40.02	11.35	8.7
Siliguri	9.27	12.4	18.47	13.61	10.1	-3.68
South 24 Parganas	17.9	34.01	23.24	42.81	9.42	9.01
Uttar Dinajpur	24.3	29.36	29.72	28.77	23.38	6.35
State Total	15.1	32.39	20.67	38.3	8.56	7.34

Source: A note on present status of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in West Bengal, Paschim Banga Sarva Shiksha Mission

3. Multiple Connection of Exclusion

We have seen above that the backward communities have highly unequal access to schooling institutions: at the primary level they are provided with some sort of stop-gap arrangements through the SSKs, and at the upper primary level even that access is limited. This lack of opportunity has multiple connections – both in terms of causes and consequences of exclusion. As a general phenomenon it is the areas with higher concentration of backward communities which have fewer primary and upper primary schools. These areas suffer from an acute shortage of teachers as well, and these are also the areas where people in general and women in particular become the worst victims of exclusion. For example, taking the case of female literacy, the bottom 25 blocks of West Bengal are concentrated in only four districts (Uttar Dinajpur, Puruliya, Murshidabad and Malda), again 19 of them are concentrated in only two districts (Uttar Dinajpur and Puruliya). On the other hand, all the top 25 blocks of West Bengal in terms of female literacy rate are concentrated in four districts (Purba Medinipur, Hugli, North 24 Parganas and Haora). Again, Purba Medinipur has the majority of them (18).

Table. 6. Comparison of facilities in the top and bottom 25 blocks of West Bengal in terms of female literacy

	Female literacy rates	% Proportion to total population			School child ratio		Pupil-teacher ratio		No. of Primary school per U-primary	Primary School /sq.km	Upper Primary/sq.km
		Dalits	Adivasi	Muslims	Primary	Upper-Primary	Pry	Up-Pry			
Mean of Top 25 blocks	72.6	15.4	0.7	12.8	162.4	680	46	43.2	4.6	0.9	0.2
Mean of bottom 25 blocks	29.8	13.6	12.6	35.1	190.9	571.8	74	59.1	8.6	0.5	0.1

Now, a look into the indicators. The summarization of data of the 25 blocks lying at the two extreme ends shows that the Adivasis and the Muslims are the worst sufferers of inaccessibility to educational opportunities. While the proportion of Adivasis and Muslims in the top 25 blocks in female literacy are 0.7% and 12.6% respectively the figures are much higher (12.8% and 35.1% respectively) in the 25 blocks having the lowest female literacy rate. The corresponding figures of School Children Ratio (SCR) at primary level in the top and bottom blocks (162 and 190 respectively) indicates the lack of schools; this is corroborated by the fact that while the top 25 blocks have nearly one primary school in each square kilometre area, the figure is 0.5 for the bottom blocks. This means that while the people in the top 25 blocks are included in the educational fold because of the existence of a primary school in each square kilometre area, the people of the bottom 25 blocks are excluded from education because educational facilities are inaccessible.

There are several other deprivations: in terms of Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) the advanced blocks have one teacher for an average for 46 children; but, in case of the backward blocks each teacher has to take care of an average of 74 children. While the top 25 blocks enjoy the privilege of having one upper primary school per 4.6 primary schools, in case of the bottom blocks the figure stands at 8.6 – nearly half.

The pattern of social exclusion in education follows a particular geography where the demographic constitution is clearly disadvantageous for certain communities. Let us take the example of West Medinipur district, where, of the 28 blocks (out of 29) we could gather the data, 10 blocks have literacy rates above the district average, and 18 fall below the district average.

Table 7. Blocks of West Medinipur District having literacy rate above district average and some related indicators

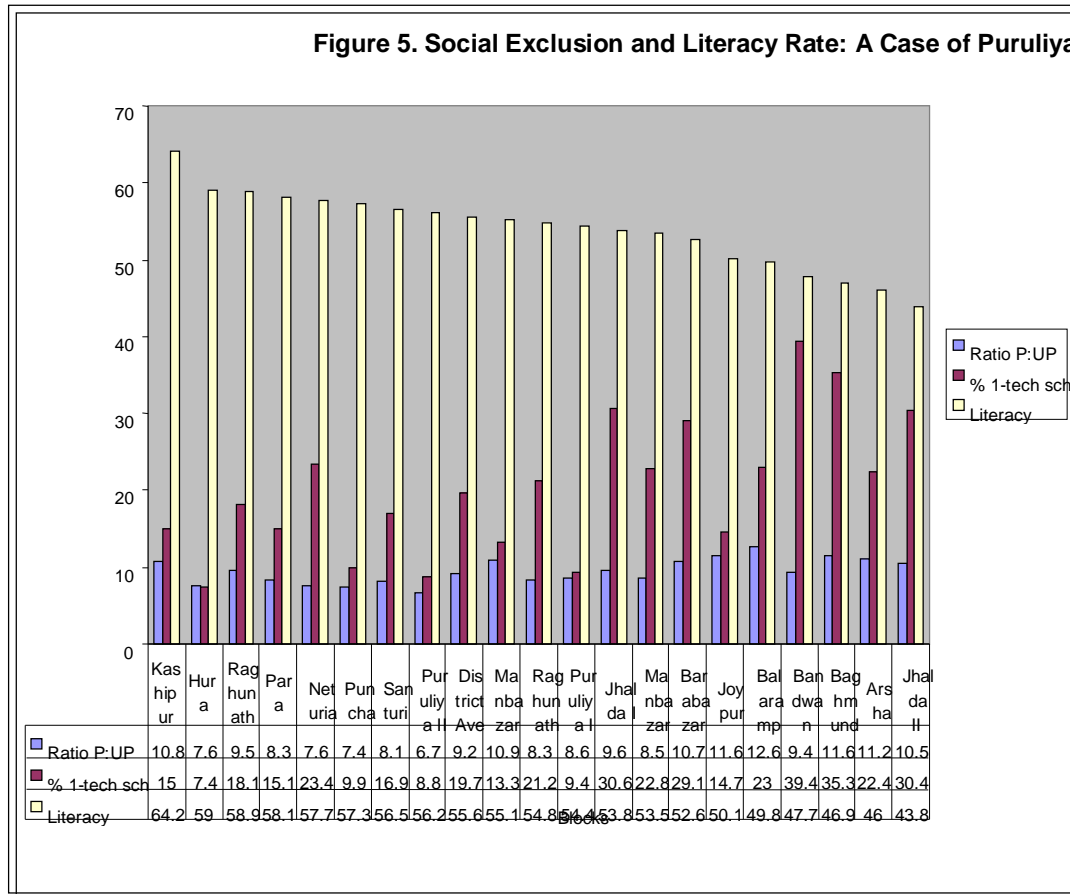
	Literacy rate	Female Literacy rate	Proportion to total population (%)		Dalit plus Adivasi%	Proportion of			Area (sq km) per school	Area(sq km) per school	Proportion of single teacher School
			Dalits	Adivasis		agri-labourers to main workers	cultivators to main work	agri-labourers + cultivators			
Average of the blocks above district average	74.6	63.9	18.2	8.8	27.0	2.7	36.2	61.9	1.7	10.6	2.0
Average of the blocks below district average	64.1	51.2	19.9	22.8	42.7	33.6	37.3	70.9	2.4	18.6	7.2
District	70.3	59.0	18.2	15.1	33.3	27.2	33.4	60.6	2.12	15.52	5.06

Table 7A: Blocks of West Medinipur District with Literacy Rate below District Average and Related Indicators

Blocks	Literacy rate	Female Literacy rate	Proportion to total population (%)		Dalit plus Adivasi (%)	Proportion of			Area(sq km) per School	Area(sq km) per school	Proportion of single teacher School (%)
			Dalits	Adivasis		agri-labourers to main workers (%)	cultivators to main workers (%)	agri-labourers + cultivators (%)			
Chandrakona - II	66.5	56.3	25.4	3.6	29.1	35.4	46.1	81.5	1.3	9.4	11.6
Kharagpur - II	67.4	55.5	17.5	25.3	42.8	34.9	29.4	64.3	1.9	10.2	2.1
Garbeta - III	66.3	55.3	15.6	14.1	29.7	24.8	33.0	57.8	2.6	18.4	5.7
Keshiary	67.2	55.2	21.2	33.5	54.7	39.6	37.4	76.9	2.4	17.2	1.6
Keshpur	67.0	54.5	25.1	5.9	31.0	28.1	48.1	76.2	2	11.8	7.3
Garbeta - II	66.6	54.0	23.6	20.6	44.3	34.5	42.8	77.3	2.4	21.8	4.2
Dantan - I	66.5	53.7	16.1	16.1	32.3	31.8	42.4	74.2	2.4	13.5	3.7
Jamboni	67.0	53.3	15.4	29.8	45.2	36.0	28.0	63.9	2.8	19.9	9.7
Garbeta - I	64.3	53.0	22.1	8.1	30.2	32.5	38.0	70.5	2.0	16.5	7.9
Sankrail	65.8	52.9	16.9	24.6	41.5	34.6	42.5	77.1	1.8	19.8	11.3
Salbani	65.0	52.2	16.9	17.9	34.8	32.5	40.2	72.6	3.3	22.1	5.88
Jhargram	64.6	51.7	13.2	23.0	36.2	30.1	34.0	64.0	2.6	24.5	6.2
Gopi- II	63.7	49.6	29.3	23.7	53.0	42.1	39.1	81.1	1.4	11.3	11.1
Medinipore	60.1	47.8	18.8	18.8	37.5	34.1	26.1	60.2	2.6	20.2	1.6
Binpur - I	62.3	47.6	25.2	29.3	54.6	38.4	37.6	76.0	2.3	18.8	12.1
Binpur - II	61.6	46.7	14.7	42.1	56.8	28.7	37.9	66.6	3.4	30.7	19.4
Gopi - I	56.9	42.4	22.1	34.7	56.7	40.6	36.1	76.8	2.1	23.0	6.1
Nayagram	55.7	40.6	18.4	39.8	58.2	25.5	33.6	59.1	3.1	25.1	1.2
Average	64.1	51.2	19.9	22.8	42.7	33.6	37.3	70.9	2.4	18.6	7.2

There are clear distinctions between these blocks: those with lower level of literacy have a very high Adivasi concentration (23% as opposed to 9% for the advantaged blocks) and higher degree of dependence upon agricultural wage work (34% as opposed to 26% for the advantaged blocks) on the one hand and lesser availability of educational facilities (each primary school and upper primary school catering to 2.4 square km and 18.6 square km of area respectively as against the figures of 1.4 square km and 10.6 square km for the advanced blocks) on the other. The exclusion becomes even more glaring when we look at the provision of teachers: while 7.2% of primary schools in backward blocks are run by single teachers, the advanced blocks stand at a much more advantageous position where only 2% of primary schools are run by single teacher.

And, again, in the disadvantaged blocks the pattern of exclusion tends to follow a particular



geography – certain blocks which have very high Adivasi population appear to be the most deprived in terms of access to schools and the functionality therein (because of high number of single teacher schools). There is more such evidence: areas inhabited with marginalised people often face various sorts of exclusion, of which the deprivation of educational facilities is a major one. Let us take the example of Puruliya, which is a generally disadvantaged district in terms of educational opportunities. In Puruliya we can clearly see two different sets of blocks: the poorest of the blocks in terms of literacy are the worst victims of opportunity deprivation. Just take a single illustration: In Jhalda I and II blocks on the geographical margin of West Bengal (bordering Jharkhand) nearly one third of the primary schools are run by one teacher, while the district average is one fifth. It is the absence of educational facilities (schools and teachers) that has resulted in the poor level of literacy, and ironically that it is the poor status of educational empowerment that has resulted in the silence of peoples’ voices against this discrimination. The social mechanism of exclusion directly, and often indirectly, act not only to restrict the people from acquiring education but also from acquiring self empowerment.

4. Exclusion inside the School

Access to schools is not the only barrier faced by children from socially deprived communities. The exclusion extends into the classroom. The practice of home assignments as part of the education system has given rise to the “unavoidability” of private tuition. While this has a negative impact on all children, it has particular implication on the children of marginalised communities. In Amartya Sen’s words:

The issue of home tasks and private tuition also relates to the question of class divisions. The need for "home tasks" is particularly difficult to meet for parents from disadvantaged classes - these children may be the first generation to receive school education. Parents with the disadvantage of having received little education find it especially difficult to do anything for their children in helping them with their assigned home tasks. It is not surprising that they long for the ability to engage private tutors for their children, but of course very often they cannot in fact afford to help their kids in this way. The result is not only frustration and despair, but also continued transmission of education backwardness from one generation to the next.²⁰

The children of socially disadvantaged communities often face a major hurdle because of the language spoken by the teacher and the medium of instruction. For many of these the medium of instruction – Bangla – is as foreign as English. But, since the number of such children is measured in proportionate terms – their percentage to the total – there remained a big gap between the ground level necessity and policy design and implementation. The idea that language is something which cannot be dealt with in majority-minority terms and every language should be regarded equally has been accepted in theory. But, in practice, a majority of the non-Bengali speaking children, the Adivasis, have not yet been provided with a fuller opportunity to study in their mother tongue (non-Bengali children belonging to mainstream language groups – Hindi, Oriya, etc. have far better opportunities, though there may be a case for providing more). This results in the exclusion of Adivasi children in two ways. Firstly, this results in them dropping out during the initial years of schooling. As a study by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) found, the decline in school attendance between class 1 and class 2 is as high as 48%.²¹ Secondly, even those who continue studying often fail to acquire basic competencies and have poor achievement levels, preventing them from pursuing higher education (we have seen above the high degree of drop out at both primary and upper primary level). The success of some of the pilot projects such as one taken up by the Sishu

²⁰ See Sen A (2009), “Introduction”, *The Pratichi Education Report II, with an Introduction by Amartya Sen*, Pratichi (India) Trust, Delhi, 2009

²¹ SCERT, *A Report on Study of Reasons of Large Decline in Enrolment Between Classes I and II in West Bengal, Kolkata, 2008*

Siksha Mission in Birbhum district, shows that the distance of language is a real hindrance for Adivasi children in acquiring education. The project attempted with considerable success to narrow the gap.²²

The disadvantage posed by a severe teacher crisis in the areas inhabited by marginalised populations is made worse by a lack of teachers from the same community. Over a decade ago, Chattopaddhaya et al (1999) reported that the schools of West Bengal were over-dominated by caste Hindu male teachers.²³ There has not been much change in this trend: female teachers comprise only one fourth of the total number of teachers. Further, there is a gross under-representation of teachers from the Adivasis, Muslims and Dalits. A study by the Pratichi Trust found that the ratio of enrolled children and teachers in selected schools were 29:22 for SC, 8: 5 for ST and 45: 12 for Muslims while the ratio of the others was reversely 18: 61.²⁴ Does this matter in the delivery of education? Empirical findings across the world show that it has a strong connection with ensuring the delivery of education in an equitable manner. While this has direct bearing from the language point of view there are other factors such as culture, gender, and so on that have a profound impact on educational delivery. We have evidence at home: the better performance of the SSKs and their ability to attract the children from disadvantaged communities have much to do with the selection of the teachers who are women recruited from the neighbourhood.

5. A Concluding Remark

The above discussion demonstrates that there are major gaps in the policy and implementation of elementary education which results not only in the exclusion of a large section of the population from the arena of education but also excludes them from the larger societal plane. There is a circular relationship between social backwardness, educational advancement and overall development.

An analysis of the block level data of West Bengal shows that:

1. Adivasis, Muslims and Dalits, and more particularly the women in these communities are more likely to be illiterate than the 'others'. With higher proportion of these communities the propensity of lower level of literacy in general and female literacy in particular goes higher.
2. Geographical areas with lower literacy rate are likely to have a greater number of schools run by a single teacher; given the poor female literacy rate among the Adivasis, the areas inhabited by them are more likely to face educational in-accessibility (the areas inhabited by these communities have fewer schools than other areas; also, a major section of the Adivasi areas have a greater number of single teacher schools).
3. The literacy rate and the proportion of agriculture labourers are inversely proportionate: in groups where literacy is higher the proportion of agricultural labourers is lower.

²² PBRSSM (2006) *First Step*, Paschim Banga Rajya Sishu Siksa Mission, Kolkata

²³ Chattopaddhaya Raghavendra et al (1998); *Status of Primary Education in West Bengal*, sponsored by the Government of West Bengal and UNICEF, Kolkata,

²⁴ See Pratichi Education Report II, with an Introduction by Amartya Sen, Pratichi (India) Trust, Delhi, 2009

4. Schools with a higher number of Muslim students are likely to have fewer teachers (high pupil-teacher ratio).

**Table 8. Some important Correlation Co-efficient
(based on data for 341 blocks of West Bengal)**

Variables	Correlation co-efficient	Interpretation
Proportion of Dalits & Female literacy rate	-0.028	With higher Dalit, Adivasi and Muslims population female literacy rate in total population becomes lower
Proportion of Adivasis & Female literacy rate	-0.378	
Proportion of Muslims & Female literacy rate	-0.260	
Literacy rate and proportion of single teacher school	-0.464	Areas with lower rate of literacy tend to have larger proportion of single teacher schools
Female Literacy Rate and Proportion of Agricultural labourers	-0.021	With lower rate of literacy among the women propensity of higher proportion of agricultural labourers among workers increases
Proportion of Muslims & Pupil teacher ratio	0.323	Areas with higher proportion of Muslims in the population tend to have greater (a negative factor) pupil-teacher ration

We have seen in the above discussion that elementary education in West Bengal is marked by exclusion of certain social groups not only on the basis of class but also on the basis of identity, gender, language, culture and other factors. And, all these different aspects are intertwined with each other. For example, the lower level of literacy among the Adivasi women coincides with their propensity to become agricultural labourers. At the same time they face the most aggressive exclusion from education through deprivation in terms of access to school, number of teachers, particularly female teachers, language, and so on. It is not only the question of delivery of education but also the of other public programmes, like the centrally important ICDS,²⁵ health services,²⁶ NREGA²⁷ and others, the performance of which are abysmal and severely affect the socially disadvantaged groups. Social exclusion has many routes and all of them are well connected with each other.

There are other nuances. On an average, Dalits of West Bengal are slightly better off than their Adivasi and Muslim counterparts; however, amongst Dalits there is a great divide, and this divide follows a particular geography.²⁸ This needs to be taken into account while forming policy. Again, unlike an imaginary notion prevailing among some sections of the society of the Muslims community's apathy towards education the potential of enhancement of education among this group is

²⁵ See Pratiche Child Report 1: The Delivery of ICDS in West Bengal, with an introduction by Amartya Sen, Pratiche Trust, Delhi and Kolkata, 2009

²⁶ The Pratiche Health Report 1, with an introduction by Amartya sen, Pratiche Trust, Delhi, 2005

²⁷ Rana S (2007) *Prakrita Daridra O BPL Talika*, Prashnabachi, Kolkata

²⁸ Rana K, (2008), "Problems and Prospects of Dalit Emancipation in West Bengal", in *Voice of Dalit*, July-December, 2008, New Delhi

just keenly awaiting to be fully utilised. We have seen above that in the Muslim areas child enrolment per school is much higher than in the other areas. Again, the gender gap in literacy among the Muslims is the narrowest among all communities. These clearly suggests a very high level of aspiration for education amongst Muslims. We have evidence that such aspirations have increased manifold among the Adivasis and the Dalits, and steps need to be taken to ensure that all these communities are effectively included through policy changes in the education as well as in the larger social fabric. The nation has seen how a simple intervention such as providing a Mid-day Meal in schools has had a dramatic positive change in the educational prospects of disadvantaged groups. This shows the keenness of the underprivileged to participate in education. According to the latest study by the Pratichi Trust, the rate of attendance in West Bengal, between 2001-02 (before the launching of the Mid Day Meal) and 2008-09 (5 years after the programme was launched) there has been a 17% point and 11% point increase in the rate of child attendance in primary schools and SSKs respectively (A mention may be made here of the fact that the rate of attendance in the SSKs was higher - 64%, while it was 58% in the primary schools. Currently, the rate in both stands at 75%). There are various other surveys that corroborate these findings.²⁹

Apart from the Mid-day Meal there have been some other interventions that have had a profound impact on the children of the disadvantaged groups. For example, in Bamnigram village of Birbhum the children of Adivasi and Dalit households failed to catch up with their caste Hindu counterparts for three distinct but related reasons: (a) Difficulty in access to school – as is usual, the school is located at the centre of the village, while the disadvantaged families live on the fringes – resulting in irregular attendance at school, particularly during the rains; (b) the Adivasi children could not grasp the lessons as they were taught in Bangla, and (c) they were unable to complete their home tasks as they had no one to help them at home. The school teachers motivated local educated youth to establish and run four evening support centres for the school children. As teacher Tapas Bhattachajee observed, “There appeared a remarkable change. The volunteers’ main job is not to teach them, but to ensure that children sit for an hour and two and revise the lessons taught in the school. This exercise changed the level of confidence of the disadvantaged children. Their fear is now gone and the level of attendance in school has also increased. Now, the performance level has improved in such a way that there is hardly any differentiating line.”³⁰ Another teacher, Ratan De Sarkar of Mohuldanga Primary School of Birbhum has developed some methods that have been “very useful in teaching the Adivasi children.” Firstly, he makes the children learn the alphabets not on the slate but on sand. Second, he exchanges his language (Bangla) with the Santhal children. “This has proved to be a very effective

²⁹ See Pratichi Education Report II, with an Introduction by Amartya Sen, Pratichi (India) Trust, Delhi, 2009 (forthcoming) and references therein.

³⁰ See Pratichi Education Report II, with an Introduction by Amartya Sen, Pratichi (India) Trust, Delhi, 2009 (forthcoming) and references therein.

way of language learning; I am not only a teacher, but also a student too.” There are plenty of such innovative ideas which our policy must take note of. There is, of course, a paucity of resources, but the major lack, perhaps, is in our preparedness to recognise the educational aspirations of the backward classes and amend policies with an inclusive approach.

Appendix 1.

Table A1. Top 25 Blocks of West Bengal according to Female Literacy Rate and the related indicators

District	Block	Female literacy rate	Proportion of Dalits (%) to total population	Proportion of Adivasis (%) to total population	Proportion of Muslims (%) to total population	School child ratio		Pupil-teacher ratio		No. of Primary school per U- primary	Primary School /sq.km	Upper Primary /sq.km
						Primary	Upper Primary	Pry	UP			
Haora	Bally Jagachha	79.1	15.8	1.0	4.82	973	3876	54	40	4	2.1	0.6
Hugli	Serampur Uttarpara	78.9	11.3	0.8	9.00	550	2909	41	46	5	1.3	0.2
Medini-E	Contai - III	75.5	12.5	0.1	3.54	154	489	43	36	6	0.8	0.1
Medini-E	Bhagawanpur - II	75.3	17.3	0.2	2.00	131	221	45	30	4	0.8	0.2
Medini-E	Contai - I	74.5	13.0	0.1	8.36	91	1099	35	43	8	0.9	0.1
N24	Barrackpur - II	73.8	25.8	1.5	19.46	136		44	40		0.9	0.0
N24	Barakpur I	73.5	27.9	4.0	13.51	112	385	41	26	4	0.7	0.2
Medini-E	RamNgr II	73.3	12.7	0.3	7.53	74	466	29	42	5	0.7	0.1
Hugli	Chandit II	73.3	6.6	0.8	21.99	176	703	41	62	4	1.3	0.3
Medini-E	Mahisadal	72.6	11.4	0.5	18.13	123	323	39	57	4	0.9	0.2
Medini-E	SahidMatan	72.4	6.1	0.3	13.94	101	501	48	42	5	1.2	0.2
Medini-E	NDgram II	71.9	13.6	0.2	10.64	84	490	38	31	4	0.9	0.2
Medini-E	Khejuri - I	71.9	13.5	0.1	7.68	92	404	34	43	4	0.8	0.2
Medini-E	Sutahata - II	71.8	7.3	0.3	14.79			36	60			
Medini-E	Moyna	71.3	23.9	0.1	8.68	113	573	42	45	5	1.0	0.2
Medini-E	Sutahata I	71.3	30.7	0.0	25.83	124	503	36	53	4		
Medini-E	Ramnaga I	70.8	12.9	0.6	11.82	108	266	42	33	6	0.8	0.1
Medini-W	Daspur - II	70.7	12.7	0.2	6.49	49	4	33	9	5	1.0	0.2
Medini-E	Contai - II	70.6	10.0	0.0	14.72	109	402	38	42	5	0.7	0.1
N24	Habra - I	70.6	32.1	2.4	25.31	86	316	140	57	5	0.8	0.2
Medini-E	NDgram - I	70.5	19.4	0.1	31.92	93	655	41	59	6	0.7	0.1
Medini-E	BHBNpur I	70.5	14.5	0.2	12.41	128	578	41	66	6	0.9	0.2
Medini-E	NDgram III	70.3	10.1	0.2	12.02	136	304	55	34	4	0.9	0.2
Medini-E	Potaspur - I	70.0	14.4	0.4	5.74	91	457	69	45	6	0.7	0.1
Hugli	Singur	69.9	8.3	2.3	8.68	227	1076	41	39	5	1.1	0.2
	Average	72.6	15.4	0.7	12.8	162.4	680	46.0	43.2	4.6	0.9	0.2

Table A2. Bottom 25 Blocks according to Female Literacy Rate and related indicators

Districts	Blocks	%_F_LIT	%_SC	%_ST	% Muslim	SCR		PTR		No. of Pry school to 1000	PS/sq.km	UPS/sq.km
						Pry	U-Pr	Pry	U-Pr			
Puruliya	Jhalda - II	18.4	9.8	12.9	4.29	131	510	76	41	10	0.4	0.0
Uttar Dinajpur	Goalpokhar - I	19.8	14.3	3.8	75.56	246	0		0	8	0.3	0.0
Uttar Dinajpur	Goalpokhar - II	23.5	23.2	6.2	61.50	264	715	105	72	7	0.4	0.1
Puruliya	Arsha	23.6	10.4	22.0	6.81	112	350	70	45	11	0.4	0.0
Puruliya	Bagmundi	25.1	9.9	24.2	2.95	84	479	53	54	12	0.3	0.0
Uttar Dinajpur	Karandighi	25.5	30.7	7.3	49.36	251	376	158	71	7	0.4	0.1
Uttar Dinajpur	Islampur	25.7	17.6	2.4	71.08	246	941	90	47	10	0.5	0.0
Puruliya	Jaipur	26.9	13.6	9.9	8.76	120	507	86	60	12	0.5	0.0
Puruliya	Bundwan	28.5	5.6	51.1	0.75	73	183	72	23	9	0.4	0.0
Uttar Dinajpur	Chopra	29.7	18.5	7.1	62.34	290	820	99	63	8	0.4	0.0
Murshidabad	Samserganj	30.0	7.1	0.0	81.22	355	2197	89	224	8	1.0	0.1
Puruliya	Balarampur	30.2	10.1	31.7	5.44	112	450	56	35	13	0.4	0.0
Maldah	Kaliachak - III	30.7	7.9	0.3	47.70	359	876	53	74	5	0.5	0.1
Maldah	Manikchak	31.9	11.3	10.1	42.68	210	725	58	92	7	0.5	0.1
Puruliya	Barabazar	32.0	6.8	18.4	4.40	98	131	57	38	11	0.5	0.0
Murshidabad	Suti - II	32.5	9.1	0.0	69.47	320	1132	91	118	8	0.8	0.1
Puruliya	Jhalda - I	33.2	11.1	10.4	7.68	88	472	49	29	10	0.5	0.0
Maldah	Harishchandrapur II	33.3	11.2	2.7	72.61	273	474	72	47	5	0.5	0.1
Puruliya	Manbazar - II	33.4	6.0	49.0	1.33	69	93	50	44	8	0.5	0.1
Puruliya	Purulia - I	33.5	15.1	7.7	6.69	112	496	62	32	9	0.5	0.1
Maldah	Harishchandrapur-I	34.6	25.1	2.1	57.81	239	730	93	61	8	0.6	0.1
Murshidabad	Suti - I	35.6	13.6	0.3	54.95	213	57	64	46	8	0.5	0.1
Puruliya	Purulia - II	35.7	24.7	4.3	14.09	136	337	60	35	7	0.5	0.1
Puruliya	Manbazar - I	35.9	20.3	23.0	2.89	80	398	42	38	11	0.5	0.0
Maldah	Ratua - I	36.2	8.1	7.4	65.28	290	848	145	88	6	0.5	0.1
	Average	29.8	13.6	12.6	35.1	190.9	571.8	74.0	59.1	8.6	0.5	0.1

Table A 3. Blocks of West Medinipur District with Literacy Rate above District Average and Related Indicators

NAME	Literacy rate	Female Literacy rate	%SC	%ST	SC plus ST %	%AgL	% Cult	% of AgL plus Cult	Area(sq km) per School	Area(sq km) per School	% Single Teacher School
Daspur - II	79.7	70.7	12.7	0.2	12.9	18.8	30.0	48.9	1.02	4.60	1.23
Pingla	78.8	68.4	8.2	9.6	17.8	29.2	42.3	71.6	1.56	7.74	0.00
Sabang	78.6	67.3	13.6	6.1	19.7	22.2	41.7	63.9	1.32	6.35	3.03
Daspur - I	74.7	64.5	24.2	3.0	27.2	19.7	40.0	59.7	1.30	5.61	2.33
Dantan - II	73.7	62.7	8.9	6.6	15.5	29.8	42.4	72.2	2.02	9.77	1.09
Debra	73.5	62.5	12.1	19.6	31.7	35.5	30.5	66.0	1.66	9.01	0.97
Ghatal	73.5	62.1	31.9	1.7	33.6	24.7	36.7	61.4	1.29	6.55	1.80
Kharagpur - I	71.7	61.1	16.8	15.7	32.5	14.7	11.8	26.5	3.23	34.81	2.06
Chandrakona - I	70.6	60.5	35.0	4.4	39.4	29.2	50.0	79.3	1.68	8.06	6.09
Narayangarh	70.8	59.3	18.2	21.6	39.7	32.8	36.7	69.6	2.14	13.50	1.29
Average of the top blocks	74.6	63.9	18.2	8.8	27.0	25.7	36.2	61.9	1.7	10.6	2.0
District Medipur West	70.3	59.0	18.2	15.1	33.3	27.2	33.4	60.6	2.12	15.52	5.06

Table-A4.Social Identity wise share of population in% age in West Bengal

District	SC	ST	Muslim	Others
Bankura	31.24	10.36	7.51	50.89
Bardhaman	26.98	6.41	19.78	46.82
Birbhum	29.51	6.74	35.08	28.67
Dakshin Dinajpur	28.78	16.12	24.02	31.08
Darjiling	16.09	12.69	5.31	65.92
Haora	15.42	0.45	24.44	59.70
Hugli	23.58	4.21	15.14	57.07
Jalpaiguri	36.71	18.87	10.85	33.57
Koch Bihar	50.11	0.57	24.24	25.07
Kolkata	6.01	0.21	20.27	73.51
Maldah	16.84	6.90	49.72	26.53
Medinipur	16.40	8.31	11.33	63.96
Murshidabad	12.00	1.29	63.67	23.04
Nadia	29.66	2.47	25.41	42.45
North 24 Parganas	20.60	2.23	24.22	52.95
Puruliya	18.29	18.27	7.12	56.31
South 24 Parganas	32.12	1.23	33.24	33.41
Uttar Dinajpur	27.71	5.11	47.36	19.82
West Bengal	23.02	5.50	25.25	46.24

Source: Census 2001

Table-A5A.Proportion of literates aged 7& above in West Bengal

District	SC	ST	Muslim	All
Bankura	42.92	49.6	59.91	70.18
Bardhaman	51.99	41.83	68.79	70.18
Birbhum	45.74	31.2	59.86	61.48
Coochbihar	64.35	55.31	56.07	66.3
Dakshin Dinajpur	54.55	42.82	67.21	47.89
Darjeeling	62.43	55.48	50.38	71.79
Hoogly	56.1	45.45	73.5	75.11
Howrah	61.13	52.06	67.8	77.01
Jalpaiguri	61.87	42.59	55.34	62.85
Kolkata	70.54	76.39	68.06	80.86
Malda	51.17	32.16	45.3	50.28
Medinipur	63.57	47.05	64.97	74.9
Murshidabad	48.91	35.79	48.63	54.35
Nadia	63.09	40.63	49.41	66.14
North 24 Parganas	70.79	46.09	65.05	78.07
Purulia	45.15	42.64	53.44	55.27
South 24 Parganas	67.36	43.29	59.83	69.45
Uttar Dinajpur	50.06	28.68	36.04	63.59
West Bengal	59.04	43.4	57.47	68.64

Table-A5B.Proportion of female literates aged 7&above in West Bengal

District	SC	ST	Muslim	All
Bankura	27.11	31.13	46.96	49.43
Bardhaman	39.59	28.19	61.39	60.95
Birbhum	33.05	18.17	50.97	51.55
Coochbihar	52.29	43.30	47.11	56.12
Dakshin Dinajpur	42.09	30.22	61.33	54.28
Darjeeling	50.31	45.85	37.92	62.94
Hoogly	44.43	31.94	67.31	67.21
Howrah	51.40	42.19	60.78	70.11
Jalpaiguri	49.62	30.67	45.01	52.21
Kolkata	62.26	67.07	63.61	77.30
Malda	38.87	19.63	38.68	41.25
Medinipur	49.84	30.83	54.36	64.42
Murshidabad	39.27	25.01	42.76	47.63
Nadia	53.94	29.20	44.03	59.58
North 24 Parganas	61.41	33.27	58.13	71.72
Purulia	26.35	23.40	34.14	36.50
South 24 Parganas	54.21	29.88	50.27	59.01
Uttar Dinajpur	35.71	17.63	25.50	36.51
West Bengal	46.90	29.15	49.75	59.61

Back Cover

Other Pratichi studies

ENGLISH

- *The Pratichi Education Report-I*; TLM books in association with Pratichi (India) Trust; Delhi, 2002.
- *The Pratichi Health Report*; TLM Books in association with Pratichi (India) Trust, Delhi, 2005.
- *The Impact of the Mid-day Meal Programme in West Bengal, 2005*; www.rightfoodindia.org.
- *The Delivery of Primary Education in Kolkata*; Pratichi (India) Trust, Delhi, 2006.
- *Public Private Interface in Primary Education*; Pratichi (India) Trust, Delhi, 2006.
- *The Pratichi Child Report: A Study on the Delivery of the ICDS Programme in West Bengal*; Pratichi (India) Trust, Delhi, 2009.
- *The Pratichi Education Report II: Primary Education in West Bengal, Changes and Challenges*; Pratichi (India) Trust, Delhi, 2009
- *The Pratichi Report on Mid -day Meal: The Mid-day Meal Programme in Urban Primary Schools and Rural Upper Primary Schools in West Bengal*; Pratichi (India) Trust, Delhi, 2010

BANGLA

- *Pratichi Siksha Pratibedan*; Deys Publishing, Kolkata, 2004.
- *Pratichi Swastha Pratibedan*; Pratichi (India) Trust, Delhi, 2005.
- *Prathamik Sikshaye Besarkari Udyog – Ekti Samiksh* ;Pratichi (India) Trust, Delhi, 2006.
- *Kolkataye Sorkari Prathamik Sikshar Rupayan - Ekti Samiksha* ; Pratichi (India) Trust, Delhi, 2006.
- *Pratichi Sishu Pratibedan*; (forthcoming)

SANTHALI

- *Jharkhandre ethop Secetreak' Obosta* ; Pratichi (India) Trust, Delhi, 2004.

REPORTS OF VARIOUS PUBLIC WORKSHOP ORGANISED BY THE PRATICHI (INDIA) TRUST) ARE ALSO
AVAILABLE