



Working document in the series:  
*Strategies of education and training for disadvantaged groups*

# Education of India scheduled tribes:

A study of community schools in the district of  
Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

K. Sujatha

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# **Education of Indian Scheduled Tribes**

**A study of community schools in the district of  
Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh**

**K. Sujatha**



International Institute for Educational Planning

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This study was prepared by Dr K. Sujatha, Senior Fellow and Head of the International Unit at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), under the supervision of Ms Muriel Poisson, Assistant Programme Specialist at the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP).



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K. Sujatha

NIEPA

New Delhi

23 April, 1999



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## **PRESENTATION OF THE SERIES**

The theme of the education and training of disadvantaged groups is high on the agenda in many countries, because it is related to a much wider phenomenon: growing deprivation and social exclusion. This situation is not only disturbing, it is also a paradox in that the increase of poverty and exclusion often goes hand in hand with economic growth. This worrying observation implies that an increase in wealth is not a sufficient remedy, but must be accompanied by job creation and the redistribution of revenues.

It is evident that a scarcity of jobs or employment opportunities are often at the heart of the problem of deprivation and social exclusion. However, non-access to educational and training programmes is also a critical factor. In fact, low levels of schooling, or even the total absence of schooling, often contribute to a precarious integration into the job market.

The role of education is not just limited to giving young people access to jobs and a decent living wage. The admission of disadvantaged groups to educational and training programmes is part of the wider concern of promoting the educational process throughout one's life, the indispensable condition not only for a durable integration into the job market, but also for a full and active citizenship. Moreover, in most cases, educational investment produces long-term effects, allowing one to eradicate the transmission of poverty from one generation to the next.

Educational and training programmes are still poorly adapted to the needs of disadvantaged groups, a fact which is confirmed by the high percentage of children leaving school at an early age. To respond to these needs, the public sector has had recourse to various mechanisms. Moreover, private initiatives are proliferating outside of formal education channels thanks to the involvement of NGOs, often

drawing on outside aid. Despite the undeniable contribution that they have made to disadvantaged groups, their overall achievements do not constitute a satisfactory response, given the seriousness of the problem. No solution will really be found as long as the education system continues to produce social outcasts. That is why it is important to draw the appropriate conclusions from these evaluations, taken from both the public and private sectors, and to set up a funding process needed for a more global approach to the problem.

The research project on 'Alternative educational and training strategies for disadvantaged groups', which the Institute is continuing to develop and elaborate, has in fact as its main objective the gathering and sharing of information on educational and training projects and programmes aimed at the disadvantaged. The second objective consists of studying their content in detail. The third is to examine the existing machinery between public administrations and other key players, and to analyze the tools and methods used to evaluate these projects and programmes. The final aim is to encourage political and technical dialogue, and to bolster national capacities to create and implement programmes aimed at the disadvantaged.

The notion of disadvantaged groups is difficult to grasp in any concrete sense. It can be defined in several ways, according to various criteria (social, economic, etc.). It is also a relative concept, including different realities according to context. That is why the current project does not exhaust all aspects of this concept. It confines itself to studying unqualified young people who have not had access to schools or who have been prematurely excluded.

The project is especially interested in the role of the various players in the public sector. This preoccupation revolves around a double-pronged series of questions:

- How to open up and adapt educational and training systems so as to give access to the disadvantaged? Is this possible? What are the appropriate strategies? Under what conditions are they to be applied?
- How to delegate teaching and training responsibilities for disadvantaged groups to other players: NGOs, local initiatives, community associations, the business sector, etc.? How to promote, guide, control, co-ordinate, finance and evaluate their actions?

These two options are complementary. In fact, it can be assumed that the experience gained in initiatives launched on behalf of disadvantaged groups will have wider repercussions of benefit to overall educational policies.

India, with a population of 67.75 million (1991 census) has the single largest tribal population in the world, constituting 8 per cent of the total population of the country. There are 573 individual tribal groups with diverse sociocultural lives who are at various levels of social and economic development. One of their main distinguishing features is that the majority of them live in scattered and small habitations located in remote and inaccessible settlements in hilly and forest areas of the country. Most of the tribal-concentrated areas lack basic facilities such as roads, transport, communications, electricity, medical facilities, etc. The literacy rate among tribals is low and a considerable portion of tribal children continues to be outside the school system.

Planning for education is very often norm based. These norms, especially pertaining to distance and population size, do not reflect the specific requirements of tribal areas. The national and provincial governments of India have recognized these special features of tribal

groups and they have adopted, at times, approaches and norms which are flexible. However, it is now admitted that flexibility in norms alone does not help to universalize the access conditions for primary education. Hence many innovative approaches are being tested in various provinces. One of the recent innovative strategies seen to yield benefits is that of establishing community schools in the State of Andhra Pradesh, in place of government schools.

These community schools have been functioning for the past eight years. They have several innovative features and have been diffused in large scale in the past five years. The demand for the community schools was internally generated through different approaches and strategies adopted for community mobilization and participation. Local tribals have been appointed as teachers by relaxing educational qualification and training requirements. The village community has been given the power to hire or fire teachers, besides being responsible for the provision of a schoolhouse and contributing towards the teacher's salary. Alternative pedagogical strategies called 'Joyful Learning' and multi-graded materials have been adopted for teaching/learning in these schools.

This monograph documents several aspects of this innovative, alternative strategy in meeting the educational needs of the disadvantaged population. It focuses on the desirability and viability of such an approach and the benefits the community has gained from such schools. An attempt is also made to examine the possibilities and implications of the scaling up of the analyzed project.

The author concludes that although the idea of community schools started as an alternative to improve access in deprived and difficult areas, it has lost its earlier features. It is said to have been used as a cost-effective measure to provide schooling facilities, even in places where formal schools can be opened. In that connection, it

is recommended that when replicating the model of community schools in similar contexts, adequate care should be taken to ensure teacher competency, decentralized administration and community participation. It should be organized in a way that would facilitate the evolution of norms, rules policies and programmes from the joint perspective of the community and administration. This cannot be achieved without decentralizing administrative mechanisms, endowing the community with the capacity to assess its needs and the ability to assert its rights and ensuring appropriate selection procedures that can reduce local influences. In this framework, the idea of community schools can be seen as having regional and area-specific significance.





# INTRODUCTION

India is a pluralist country, with rich diversity, reflected in the multitude of cultures, religions, languages and racial stocks. The Indian population includes different castes, communities and social groups. The prevalence of such pluralism has made the social fabric stratified and hierarchical, consequently, social and economic opportunities are differentially distributed on the lines of caste and class affiliations. At the geographical level also, India has equally pervasive and diverse features. It has large tracts of hinterland, hilly terrain, a dense forest cover and fertile coastal belts besides Indo-Gangetic plains. Such divergence in ecology and geography has ensured an occupational and spatial differentiation, but the predominant occupation is agriculture, which is a major occupation of three-quarters of Indians. Apart from a minuscule minority the rest live in the rural areas of India; almost 80 per cent of India's population live in rural areas.

Rural India is characterized by lack of infrastructural facilities, poverty and indebtedness, which has led to the perpetuation of layers of inequalities and disparities at various levels. As a result, not only have certain deprived groups and sections of the population been unable to partake in the process of development, but also affected has been the very pace of the country's process of socio-economic development. This is particularly severe in the case of Scheduled Tribes as they not only live in hinterlands, bereft of basic amenities of modern life, but are also socially and economically marginalized. Their social deprivation is aptly reflected in their educational backwardness. In this context it can be said that tribal India is the least developed area and the tribals are the worst sufferers as they are doubly disadvantaged.

The preponderance of an elitist and discriminatory social order has ensured that certain segments of the population will remain disadvantaged. In the course of time, the gap between them and others has further widened. This segmentation of population in terms of their access to social and economic opportunities and their participation in the process of development is based on two factors. The first is spatial differentiation, which refers to the viability of a region in terms of geographical location. If a region is well served by roadways, near to areas of political, financial, industrial or business and entrepreneurial importance, not hindered by natural barriers etc., then the location enjoys an advantage in terms of infrastructural development over others. The second factor is the characteristic of population or, in other words, the social disposition of the inhabitants of the region. For example, in the Indian social system it has invariably been the upper castes who have enjoyed the privileges due to their caste status. The dominance of one category over others is based on the ascriptive strengths and rooted in the social stratification system. This inequality and differentiation is ubiquitous in India, especially in the case of formal education. One such marginalized group is the Scheduled Tribes.

While the Scheduled Castes are the lowest rung of Caste Hindus subjected to social discrimination, i.e. untouchability due to their lowly occupations, the Scheduled Tribes had suffered physical isolation, remote from civilization, and have therefore maintained their cultural uniqueness. Consequently, both the groups lag far behind others in terms of social and economic development. The Constitution of India had rightly recognized these two segments of the population as weaker sections of society, based on their socio-economic backwardness and the age-old social discrimination and physical isolation that they had been subjected to.

## Who are the Scheduled Tribes?

The Constitution of India, in Article 366, has defined the Scheduled Tribes as such of those tribes or tribal communities which have been so declared by the Constitutional Order under Article 342 for the purpose of the Constitution. There are 574 tribal groups who have been identified as Scheduled Tribes<sup>1</sup>. They have been previously described as ‘aborigines’, ‘aboriginals’, ‘primitives’, ‘adivasis’, ‘vana jatis’ etc. Special provisions have been made in Articles 46, 275, 330, 332, 335, 338, 340, etc. to safeguard the interests of Scheduled Tribes and to protect them from social injustice and exploitation.

India, with a population of 67.75 million (1991 census), has the single largest tribal population in the world, constituting 8 per cent of the total population of the country. There are 573 individual tribal groups with diverse sociocultural life who are at various levels of social and economic development, with different degrees of exposure to modernity and social change. One of their distinguishing features is that the majority of them live in scattered and small habitations located in remote and inaccessible settlements in hilly and forest areas of the country. Most of the tribal-concentrated areas lack basic facilities such as roads, transport, communications, electricity, medical facilities, etc. The literacy rate among tribals is low, but also varies widely among different groups and regions. More importantly, a considerable portion of tribal children continue to be outside the school system.

Planning for education is very often norm based. These norms, especially pertaining to distance and population size, do not and cannot reflect the local specifics of requirements of tribal areas. This implies

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1. In the following text, the word ‘tribals’ is being used synonymous with ‘Scheduled Tribes’.

that planning for tribal groups needs to be seen as a special case, rather than applying the norms applicable for the general population. The national and provincial governments in India have recognized these special features of tribal groups and they have adopted, at times, approaches and norms which are flexible.

However, it is now admitted that flexibility in norms alone does not help to universalize the access conditions for primary education. Hence many innovative approaches are being tested in various provinces. One of the recent innovative strategies seen to yield benefits is that of establishing community schools called '*Maabadi*'<sup>2</sup> (meaning 'our school' in local tribal language) in the Province of Andhra Pradesh, in place of government schools in small and scattered habitations, where formal schools according to the existing norms, even after relaxation of rules, are not possible.

The community schools have been functioning for the past eight years. They have several innovative features and have been widely diffused over the last five years. This Monograph documents several aspects of this innovative, alternative strategy in meeting the educational needs of the disadvantaged population. It focuses on the desirability and viability of such an alternative approach and the benefits the community has gained from such schools. An attempt is also made to examine the possibilities and implications of the scaling up of such schools.

The Monograph is based on an empirical study, which examines the innovativeness of these schools in terms of organization, management and feasibility for scaling up and replicating their features in formal schools. Attempts are also made to study the working of

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2. In the following analysis and discussion, the word 'community school' is being used synonymous with '*Maabadi*'.

the partnership arrangement with the community to provide educational opportunities to the disadvantaged segment of the population.

## **Sample**

The empirical analysis for the Monograph is drawn from a larger research study conducted by the same author on 'Community participation in education in tribal areas (1998)' in Vishakhapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh, and also from the study on evaluation of 'Quality improvement programmes in education in tribal areas' in the same district (1998).

There are about 926 community schools in Vishakhapatnam district, constituting nearly 50 per cent of total schools in the area. The teachers' profile (education) includes all the teachers of community and formal schools of different management. The sample for the study consists of around 40 per cent of community teachers (370), 15 per cent of community schools (58) and 578 households vis-à-vis 87 formal schools and 752 households. A multi-stage stratified sample method was adopted for drawing the sample teachers, schools and community members.

The study involves application of quantitative and qualitative methods. The data on schools, teachers, parents and community members had been collected through structured questionnaire and interview schedules. In addition, to elicit opinions of the community, focus-group discussions were held in selected schools.

A standardized student achievement test developed by the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and used for baseline assessment studies under the District Primary Education Project (DPEP) was administered for conducting the competency test in mathematics and language for Grade I-completed

students. The achievement test was administered in 139 schools covering different management schools. Out of the 139 schools, 40 per cent were community schools.

## **Design**

The remaining part of the Monograph is arranged in different sections. The following part will present briefly the socio-economic scenario of tribal communities and profile area of the sample, including educational facilities and extent of participation.

The second section will examine the context in which the community school concept has emerged. The main features and criteria of establishment of community schools are presented in the third part. The growth in various stages will be discussed in the fourth section.

The fifth part reviews the process of teacher identification, teacher selection and their profile. The process of community mobilization is dealt with in the sixth section. The next section will deal with the management and financing process of these schools in comparison to government schools. The extent and nature of community participation is examined in the eighth section. The functioning and activities of community schools are examined in the next section, followed by the performance of community schools in terms of teachers' regularity, student attendance, levels of student achievement vis-à-vis formal schools. The final part gives a summary and conclusions.

## **Profile of sample area**

### **Province**

The Province of Andhra Pradesh is situated in the southern region of the country and has a geographical area of 276,814 square

kilometres. The province has a population strength of 66.34 million and is divided into 23 districts. It is one of the educationally backward provinces with a literacy rate (44.09) well below the national average. This is one province with a sizeable tribal population. There are 4.2 million tribals in the state, constituting 6.31 per cent of the total population of the province. In regard to the size of the tribal population, it occupies sixth place among the states and union territories of the country.

Tribal communities in Andhra Pradesh, like their counterparts in other parts of India, live under a subsistence economy. Agriculture is their main occupation; a considerable number of them practise both terrace and shifting cultivation (slash and burn). Most of the tribes have subsidiary occupations, such as collection of minor forest produce, forest labour and other non-agricultural labour, primarily government work, apart from the main occupation. Tribals have a close association with, and dependence on, the forest. For food, housing and minor forest produce, for barter transactions to acquire basic goods, they use the forest.

Socially, the tribal communities are very different from the general population. They have a diverse sociocultural life. They observe a variety of festivals and celebrations and there is considerable divergence and differentiation among various tribal groups in terms of rites, rituals and functions. They have separate identities. However, despite the declared diversities, the tribes in Andhra Pradesh have remained peaceful and have coexisted with each other. Inter-tribal conflicts are rare.

The literacy level of the tribals is very low in Andhra Pradesh, it is only 17.16 per cent as against 29.60 per cent at the all-India level. Andhra Pradesh stands at the bottom of the table in terms of tribal literacy. There is sharp inter-district and inter-tribal variation in lit-

eracy, apart from the gender variation. In the past five decades the tribal literacy rate has risen from a very low 3.46 in 1951 to 17.16 per cent in 1991.

In Andhra Pradesh there are 33 individual tribal groups with different levels of socio-economic development and different cultural life. Some of them are considered to be primitive due to their low level of development. More than 90 per cent of the tribal population in the province is concentrated in eight districts.

### **District profile**

Vishakhapatnam is one of the eight districts with a high tribal concentration. It is situated on the coastal belt of Andhra Pradesh. Out of the total geographical area of 11,167 square kilometres, 56 per cent makes up the tribal region. These are, of course, hilly, forest and high-altitude areas. Out of the total 43 Mandals (sub-district administrative units) tribals are concentrated in 11 Mandals spread over 3,400 habitations with a density of population of 72 persons per square kilometre.

The district has a total population of 3.2 million, with a tribal population of 0.42 million who constitute 14 per cent of the district population. There are 20 tribal groups in the district, with sharp social and educational differentiation. The total literacy rate of the district is 45.51 in the general population and 16.59 per cent for tribals, with a tribal female literacy rate of 7.83 per cent. Some of the tribal communities have only a 1.5 per cent literacy rate, and among females the literacy is almost zero.

### **Education**

As with the socio-economic conditions, the educational background of tribal communities is equally unstable. Among the 3,400 tribal habitations there are only 1,874 schools, out of which 1,801 (96



per cent) are primary schools, 26 are upper primary schools (1.38 per cent) and the remaining 47 (2.5 per cent) are high schools (*Table 1.1*). These schools are managed by different agencies. The Tribal Welfare Department is responsible for single-teacher schools and Ashram schools. Other management types include local bodies, government and private government-aided schools.

Table 1.1 Educational facilities (1997-98)

Management	Number of schools		
	Primary	Upper primary	Secondary
Community schools	926	-	-
Single-teacher schools	496	-	-
Ashram residential schools	47	22	26
Government schools	91	3	16
Local bodies	183	1	5
Private aided schools	58	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,801</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>47</b>

The above data refer only to tribal-concentrated 11 Mandals (Blocks) out of the total 45 Mandals (Blocks) in the district.

Out of a total of 1,820 primary schools, the community schools (926) constitute 50 per cent of total schools. Other schools include single-teacher schools (40 per cent), residential schools, numbering 47, and the remainder are under local-body management.

The enrolment and drop-out rates of tribals in primary education at both province and district levels are given below (*Table 1.2*). The enrolment ratios among the tribals at the primary stage have increased from 1993-94 to 1997-98 both at province and district levels. The girls have a lower enrolment ratio compared to boys. The drop-out rate among both boys and girls is very high and it has remained more or less the same during the period 1993 to 1997. Compared to

the provincial level, the tribals in Vishakhapatnam district have a low enrolment ratio and a high drop-out rate.

Table 1.2 Enrolment ratio and drop-out rate among tribals at the primary stage (I-V)<sup>3</sup>

	Year	Andhra Pradesh			Vishakhapatnam		
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Enrolment	1993-94	102.77	67.62	85.43	87.10	56.17	71.83
Ratio	1997-98	120.22	92.22	106.51	96.48	70.21	83.21
Drop-out	1993-94	72.48	78.08	74.63	79.27	80.54	79.71
rate	1997-98	71.11	78.14	74.05	77.56	80.15	78.05

Enrolment ratios are not adjusted for over-age and under-age children in the schools.

*Source:* Selected Educational Statistics 1997-98, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

As this is a tribal-dominated district, various special educational schemes have been introduced there. Special bodies such as the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) have been created to manage the schools and improve educational access for the tribal groups. Various incentives in the form of free textbooks, uniforms and learning materials are distributed among the students. Scholarships are given to students in order to improve the educational standard of the tribals.

3. The enrolment ratios and drop-out rates (*Table 1.2*) for all scheduled tribals in the state and district.

# THE CREATION OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The creation of community schools needs to be understood from the backdrop of policies, approaches, programmes and administrative structure adopted by the government for the socio-economic development of tribes in general, and education in particular, over the years.

### Colonial period

During the colonial period the tribal areas were the last to come under British power primarily due to the difficult and inaccessible terrains where they lived. Tribal development was not a priority area of the British Government. The tribal development policy of the British Government was isolationist and inclined to follow the policy of *laissez-faire*. However, this policy helped landlords, money-lenders and traders to exploit the tribals by way of depriving them of their lands and forestry rights, pushing them deep into the interior. No attempt was made either to educate the tribals or to strengthen their economic base (Ghurye, 1943).

The isolationist policy of the colonial government encouraged Christian missionary activities in the tribal areas. Christian missionaries, through their sustained work, introduced various social and educational reform measures in the tribal areas. Consequently, some of the tribal areas acquired schools, hospitals etc. The missionaries, in this sense, can be considered as pioneers, who initiated the process of an organized socio-economic transformation in the hitherto stagnant tribal life. However, the missionary activities were confined to a few pockets and they did not therefore have a very significant effect on the overall development of the tribals in general.

During the Nationalist Movement, some social workers had established a few 'Ashram residential schools'<sup>4</sup> for tribal children in Gujarat province to impart formal education along with craft-oriented vocational training (Thakkar Bapa, in 1939 and Godavari Purlekar established Ashram Schools as mentioned in G. D. Sharma and K. Sujatha, 1983). The model of these schools was replicated in large numbers in other parts of India after Independence. Considering the magnitude of the tribal population and its diversity, the efforts of Christian missionaries and social workers were very meagre and the tribals remained very backward socio-economically, particularly in their educational progress.

During the final phase of the colonial regime, opinion was divided regarding the formulation of a policy for tribal welfare. One section favoured protecting the tribals from degeneration and advocated the 'National Park Policy' and adoption of administration in such a way as to allow the tribals to live their own lives in happiness and freedom (Elwin, 1939). The National Park Policy advocates that the tribal groups and their cultures should be preserved as are antique pieces in museums. The other group pleaded for 'total assimilation' of the tribals into the mainstream of national life (Ghurye, 1943; Thakkar, 1941).

### **After Independence**

In post-independent India fresh initiatives were taken for tribal development by replacing the earlier policy of indifference and apathy. The Government of India advocated a policy which could com-

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4. The word *Ashram* denotes the traditional Indian concept of an institutional arrangement whereby the 'Guru', the teacher, and student live together and teaching-learning takes place through close interaction. Ashram schools are residential schools with free board and lodging facilities for the students. The teachers also reside in the same premises.

bine the welfare and socio-economic elevation of the tribals. In view of their socio-economic backwardness, geographical isolation and marginalization, the Constitution of India had incorporated specific provisions for promoting and safeguarding the interests of the tribals. Specifically, Article 46 of the Constitution envisages that: “The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the Scheduled Tribes and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation” (Constitution of India). The creation of scheduled areas for tribals, preference in admission to educational institutions and public services and the provision of incentives for education are some of the mechanisms visualized to fulfil the Constitutional directives.

In view of the Constitutional obligations, a policy of planned acculturation was adopted to pave the way for tribals to participate in mainstream development and integration (Majumdar, Furer-Haimendorf, C. von, 1949). In line with this approach, India had evolved a philosophy for tribal development known as *Panchasheel*. This philosophy propagates five guiding principles for tribal development (Jawaharlal Nehru, 1954). These principles envisage a policy of planned socio-economic development based on the tribal context, respecting their customary rights and traditions, initiating slow modernization through building self-confidence, strengthening of traditional institutions and protecting them from exploitation. Thus, efforts should be made to integrate the tribal communities with the mainstream, while protecting their identity.

### **Community development approach**

The early fifties witnessed some important structural changes in the administrative system of the country as the planned economic development was adopted as the national policy of India. During the first Five Year Plan (1952) the ‘Community development’ approach

was adopted. It was a comprehensive policy that included development of agriculture, animal husbandry, education, health, communications, social services etc., as a whole. Later it was accepted as a major strategy of tribal areas. But very soon it was found that the benefits of the community development programmes could not trickle down to the tribal areas, as the relatively developed areas and upper crust of the rural population cornered most of the benefits.

The community development approach, which applies to one and all, did not take into account the specificities of the tribal situation. The task in tribal areas is, however, more difficult as they consist of hilly and forest areas, and are sparsely populated, with poor communication and little institutional infrastructure. Tribal societies are generally heterogeneous and exhibit wide variations in socio-economic and cultural life apart from the levels of their exposure to modernity. Since the tribal areas are backward and lack infrastructural development, their absorptive capacity is also very low. Further, the routine norms and rules followed by the administration hindered the provision of educational facilities in tribal areas.

### **Supplementary programmes**

In realization of the fact that the tribal areas require higher financial investments, and greater efforts on the part of extension services, supplementary programmes were initiated by identifying the tribal concentrated areas. These supplementary programmes, with fixed outlay and specific schemes within the broad frame of community development, were visualized as a panacea for tribal development. But in practice, the supplementary programmes became synonymous with the complex task of tribal development, and the only source for their development, where the outlay and schemes were very few. This defeated the very purpose of providing supplementary programmes.

The supplementary schemes included housing, rehabilitation, and provision of primary schools and incentives. The rigid schematic practice constrained the educators in obtaining adequate finances even from the supplementary schemes. In addition to meagre resources, the administrative norms have restricted the establishment of primary schools in tribal areas. However, during the sixties a few single-teacher schools were established in central and relatively large villages, leaving a significant number of villages bereft of school facilities. Even these few schools were not functioning effectively.

Social development through formal education and transmission of higher skills, through the institution of schools, was something new to tribal society. Education, in its formalized structure, was never a part of traditional tribal culture; therefore, it took a longer period for this group to realize its importance. Being part of an under-developed and deprived section of society, the people were more concerned about the schemes having immediate and tangible benefits. Under such conditions neither the community development approach nor the development programmes under the supplementary schemes could create awareness on education and generate social demand for education among the tribals. Besides lack of awareness, some of the tribal peoples had apprehensions about formal education as it might alienate their children from their culture and traditions (Sachchidananda, 1967).

This led to a situation where even the few schools provided by the administration were not effective due to low enrolment, high absenteeism and alarming drop-out rate. Parental poverty and lack of incentives to households to send children to school also hindered participation in education (Ambasht, 1970). Many teachers working in tribal areas were non-tribals, for whom the tribal life and culture were alien and strange. They could not understand the tribal language, resulting in communication problems. Lack of basic facilities and the difficult

terrain of tribal areas demotivated teachers to work in tribal areas, resulting in teacher absenteeism (Ratnaiah, 1977). Thus, on the one hand the few primary schools provided were not effective and, on the other, a large number of habitations remained without school facilities, retarding the spread of formal education among the tribals.

### **Establishment of Ashram schools**

Considering the ineffectiveness of the primary schools, and also the need to extend access to education to a wider area, few alternatives were considered. Taking the example of the educational intervention models at primary stage from Gujarat and Maharashtra provinces, Ashram schools were established in Andhra Pradesh province during the early seventies by combining the few primary schools.

An Ashram school is a residential school with free board and lodging, also providing incentives such as free textbooks, uniforms and writing materials. The Ashram schools were established with an objective to provide a congenial atmosphere for teaching-learning activities. Teachers and children living together in the same premises were expected to have the benefit of close interaction and learning opportunities. The Ashram schools were expected to cover a cluster of villages. However, in view of their cost, Ashram schools were not only small in number, due to inadequate infrastructural facilities, but the sanctioned strength was also limited.

It is a fact that the establishment of Ashram schools has helped to provide educational opportunity to tribals who would otherwise not have had access to education. However, those who benefited from Ashram schools were relatively developed groups, who had exposure to modernity, and the people living nearest to the Ashram school location. The policy of admitting children to Ashram schools from a border distance of over five miles had certain disadvantages, particularly for interior areas.



The failure of general development programmes and supplementary plans has led to a rethinking at the highest level as far as ameliorating the tribal condition is concerned. Different committees and commissions (Renuka Ray Committee, 1959; Dhebar Commission 1962; Shilo Ao Committee, 1960) were appointed, from time to time, by the government to iron out deficiencies. The sectoral approach, the routine administrative mechanism and stereotype model of education were identified as the major constraints for the progress of tribal development in general, and education in particular, by these committees. However, the shortcomings noted by these committees remained unattended. There were some gains and many setbacks, although the tribal situation had, by and large, remained static. Close on these recommendations and observations, an expert committee was set up (Government of India, 1972) by the Government of India in order to devise policies of tribal development and to suggest an alternative framework to increase the progress of socio-economic development. The recommendation of this expert committee provided new orientation to tribal development and the emergence of the concept of the Tribal Sub-Plan was the product of such efforts.

### **Tribal Sub-Plan approach**

This approach had three major objectives, namely, administrative streamlining, i.e. the establishment of single-line administration in the form of separate ministries and departments; area-specific planning and financial autonomy; and broadening the resource base by pooling resources from other sectors.

The aims of the Sub-Plan approach were narrowing the gap between the levels of development of tribal areas vis-à-vis other areas and improving the quality of life of tribal communities. Some of the immediate objectives were: (i) elimination of exploitation of tribals in all forms; (ii) speeding up of the process of their socio-economic

development; (iii) building up of their inner strength; and (iv) improving their organizational capabilities. In order to achieve these objectives, the tribal Sub-Plan had accorded the highest importance to elementary education, along with the adoption of a bottom-top planning procedure with respect to economic development.

### **Decentralized administrative model**

Given the wide diversity of tribal areas and tribal groups, even a district was considered a non-viable unit for integrating planning and administration of socio-economic development programmes. Secondly, in order to achieve the objectives of the Sub-Plan approach and to increase the pace of development in tribal areas, considerable flexibility and innovations were required. Therefore, a suitable administrative unit was created by establishing the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), covering a cluster of Blocks.<sup>5</sup>

The tribal Sub-Plan approach and ITDA had come into operation (and still exist) following the fifth Five Year Plan. The State of Andhra Pradesh was the first to adopt this model, from 1975. The ITDA in this state was registered as an autonomous society, fully funded by the Tribal Welfare Department, and headed by a Project Officer who was a senior administrator, from Indian Administrative Service personnel. This was required in order to overcome the structural constraints of uniform administrative norms and procedures. Adopting flexible and innovative strategies is a prerequisite in development administration, particularly when the programmes are planned at micro level based on local needs. This was possibly the first time that local-level and decentralized planning had become a reality. This was a major breakthrough in the planning process in general, and in terms of the efforts for tribal development in particular, as under normal

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5. A Block is an administrative unit below the district level.

administration, even at the district level, hardly any planning took place.

In an effort to improve educational access in the Province of Andhra Pradesh, the Tribal Welfare Department had expanded the Ashram schools from 45 to 180 during the latter part of the seventies. It also upgraded some of the earlier schools into upper primary and secondary schools and strengthened incentives such as the free supply of textbooks and uniforms, and scholarships for all children attending primary schools. However, the routine norms followed by the local bodies continued to affect the expansion of primary schools in tribal villages, as they did not fulfil the population norms. Secondly, although the number of Ashram schools was increased, owing to the large number of tribal villages and magnitude of school-age tribal children, they could serve only a very small segment of the population, which was far from the requirement to achieve the universalization of primary education.

Since children are required at an early age to leave their parents to join Ashram schools, enrolment was low. The Ashram schools could not provide a home environment and emotional support to young children and this also resulted in a high drop-out rate in Grades I and II, who very soon relapsed into illiteracy (Sharma and Sujatha, 1984). Further, the cultural and social traditions did not allow the girls to participate in education in Ashram schools, as they had to stay away from the family. Therefore, the tribal girls largely remained outside the system. However, upgrading of Ashram schools to upper primary and secondary stages had enabled some of the tribal students to attain education up to secondary level. But the efforts to provide educational opportunity were not only limited, but also covered only a small segment of the tribal population. Thus, the contribution of Ashram schools to spreading formal education was very limited.

## **Impact of ITDA**

The establishment of ITDA has brought significant changes in the sociocultural context of tribal communities. It has been able to bring the administration closer to the community and has led to increased interaction with the development agencies. This has certainly brought a degree of awareness among the tribals, which includes educational awareness and aspirations (Sujatha, 1992). Most of them are now aware of different schemes and provisions for their social and economic development. In education, their information base includes free education, provision of incentives, Ashram schools, hostels etc., even if many of them have not been sending their children to school (Sujatha, 1992). Intensive and diversified socio-economic development programmes under ITDA not only brought about changes in their economic levels, but also introduced them to a monetary economy. Replacing the barter system not only increased their exposure to the market, but also increased interaction with the non-tribal population. Their interaction with development agencies and non-tribal communities led them to realize their inability to interact or to deal with others on equal terms was due to a lack of formal education. This consciousness had become more visible in the eighties after a decade of establishment of ITDAs.

The awareness of the importance of education was able to create a desire and aspiration for education among the tribals, at least for their younger generation. This desire had been transformed further into a demand for provision of schools in the villages. In other words, the change in the perceived values of education among the tribals evolved internally as a result of developmental interventions. Obviously, the demand for schools was first raised by those villages who had benefited from or were covered by different schemes such as agriculture, horticulture, infrastructure development, marketing of minor forest produce, etc. which had improved the household earn-

ings. These villages mostly correspond to interior areas as the ITDA programmes were mostly focused on interior and inaccessible locations.

This evidently proves that while conventionally tribals prefer and accept the programmes having visible and immediate benefits, it is also equally true that they aspire for education if certain necessary conditions are fulfilled, and it appears to be beneficial, besides which their economic condition improves. In other words, creation of demand and acceptance of formal education, among deprived groups, will be possible only when the necessary conditions such as close interaction between the traditional communities and development agencies are created. Implementation of locally relevant socio-economic development programmes having visible and immediate benefits, exposure to a market and monetary economy, interaction with other groups having formal education, efforts to protect them from exploitation by other unscrupulous groups etc. also leads to the creation of favourable conditions. These conditions are imperative to create awareness and demand for schools and this was possible only because of decentralized planning and implementation of intersectoral programmes in an integrated approach by the ITDA.

Simultaneously, the ITDA had also realized the fact that lack of education among the tribals was a major handicap for effective implementation and sustainability of the programmes, meaning that the benefits of school and education, in the tribal context, have larger scope and value besides the equity perspective. Therefore, the simple logic of economic viability and following routine norms for establishing schools was not considered applicable. Similarly, the provision of Ashram schools for clusters of villages could not achieve universal primary education, not only because of their limited number, but also due to sociocultural and psychological reasons. Of late, it has been realized that separating children from parents at a

tender age is not desirable, as the Ashram school cannot substitute the emotional security of the family. Therefore, the need for provision of educational facilities at close proximity had been considered not only for educational reasons per se, but also for the total development of the tribal communities. This implies that the universalization of primary education can be achieved only through universal provision of schools, even if obtained by relaxing the norms. Thus, on the one hand the community was aware of the importance of education and demand for schools, on the other the administration has also realized the need and importance of the provision of educational facilities for increasing the pace of education and socio-economic development in tribal areas.

### **Single-teacher schools**

The uniform norms envisaged by the Provincial government could not adapt to the tribal context. Therefore, the Tribal Welfare Department took a policy decision to establish primary schools. Accordingly, ITDA redefined the norms to establish primary schools, and adopted a policy of recruiting only local tribals as teachers. In view of the lack of qualified and trained persons among local people, the ITDA had adopted a policy of relaxation of educational and training qualifications by making only ten years of schooling (pass or failed) as the minimum requirement. Thus, during 1985-86, 3,500 single-teacher schools, called '*Girijan Vidya Vikas Kendras*' (Tribal Education Development Centres), were established, appointing local tribal educated youth as teachers in interior and inaccessible villages having 20 and above school-age children, by eight ITDAs in eight districts. Adoption of flexible norms and policy by local teachers was possible because of inbuilt flexibility in decentralized and autonomous administrative machinery, i.e. ITDA.

Most of the teachers in these schools were the first-generation beneficiaries of education and particularly the products of Ashram schools. However, the majority of them belonged to a few relatively developed tribal groups. The establishment of these schools had not only provided access to education for tribal villages, but, more importantly, it had helped in elevating the tribal teacher to become a role model for the tribal community, especially in terms of employment opportunities and occupational mobility of the tribals. The community became closer to the school and teacher due to sociological reasons such as cultural and language affinity, but also because of increased confidence in their educated youth. It is equally true that the teachers were also empathetic and helpful. The presence of an educated tribal as teacher had brought significant change in the village. As the teachers became the nodal point for development agencies, the community treated them as guide and adviser, particularly in the preparation of their applications and appeals to the revenue department; and ITDA for obtaining agricultural land, subsidies, bank loans etc. It was not uncommon for teachers to accompany the villagers to banks and the ITDA office in seeking sanctions. It was also found that when teachers attended meetings at ITDA, the villagers accompanied them, to aid in getting their work done. Thus the provision of schools had helped the community at large to overcome some of their shortcomings.

As a result of specific constitutional provision and financial autonomy, the ITDA was in a position to provide access to education by restructuring the routine area and population norms for establishing schools. The appointment of local teachers, by relaxing their educational qualification for specific purposes, was also under the jurisdiction of ITDA. In other words, decentralized planning and emphasis on intersectoral growth had transformed the entire approach of

the administration. It was the first time in India that such a decentralized decision, to adopt flexible norms for establishing schools and the policy of appointing local teachers on such a large scale, was taken, in Andhra Pradesh Province.

In spite of the relaxation of norms, a large number of habitations in Vishakhapatnam district still remained without school facilities. Out of 3,400 sparsely populated scattered tribal habitations, only 800 habitations were covered by primary schools by 1990. Even the ITDA was not in a position to establish schools in all the other habitations because the majority of them could not even fulfil the relaxed norms.

Although the ITDA was firmly rooted in the development of tribal areas, during 1990-91 an externally funded project called Andhra Pradesh Tribal Development Project (APTDP) had been initiated covering the eight tribal-concentrated districts including Vishakhapatnam district. The APTDP was implemented by the respective ITDAs in the districts.

### **Participatory development approach: APTDP model**

The APTDP was funded by the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) and the Royal Government of the Netherlands, with a total budget of \$25 million for a period of nine years covering 2,077 villages and 16 watersheds, in eight districts. In Vishakhapatnam district the project covers 1,728 villages and 41,528 families.

As in the Sub-Plan approach, the APTDP also aims at holistic development, i.e. simultaneous improvement in various infra-structures such as the economy, health, housing, education, etc. However, the major objective of this project was to foster self-reliant household food security by increasing the food production and raising the



incomes of families. It also aimed at promoting sustainable self-reliance among the participant group of the project, while pursuing a community-based participatory and co-operative approach within the context of the tribal environment, culture and values. In tune with the aims and objectives of the project, watershed-based participatory micro-level planning, execution and management were adopted for integrating ecological security (macro level), household security (micro level) and human-resource development (macro-micro level) facets of the programme. While the ITDA focused on area-context planning, the APTDP targeted the community and households. The APTDP comprises four separate but intertwined components, namely, natural resource development, community and women's development, marketing and credit support, and health and education development.

Community participation through the building and strengthening of village organization was the key strategy of the APTDP project. Under the tribal Sub-Plan approach the tribal communities were consulted and informed that there was hardly any involvement of the community in the planning and implementation of the developmental programmes. As a result, tribals had developed a dependency culture (Shastry, 1993). Sustainability and internalization of the programmes remained a problem. This had also eroded the traditional participatory culture of tribals in managing natural resources, environment protection, informal learning arrangements etc. due to governmental interventions. Therefore, the Tribal Welfare Department desired to move away from this approach through the creation of a mechanism whereby an informed community would define, access and manage the APTDP project inputs in a participatory manner. The intention was to achieve self-reliance, sustainability and responsibility among the tribal community.

## **Mobilization by community co-ordinators**

Towards this end, the degree of and capacity for control by the community is a significant factor in determining the successful implementation of the project. To realize this objective, Community Co-ordinators were appointed under the APTDP. The co-ordinators were responsible for the entire process of community mobilization for participation in the project. The community co-ordinators were given adequate autonomy to function in NGO mode and to represent the community interests rather than the ITDA, as each one of them was in charge of a cluster of 15 to 20 villages. There were three community co-ordinators working in Vishakhapatnam ITDA area, covering most backward and interior villages which lacked basic facilities and were inhabited by primitive tribal groups.

The community co-ordination team, while working with the communities faced a unique problem in the area of education in Vishakhapatnam district. While the basic approach of the APTDP was developing community awareness, mobilizing participation and strengthening the capacities, in the case of education, the problem was rooted in the lack of access to schools. Despite the tribals being aware of the importance of education, they could not educate their children due to the absence of a school in close proximity, which was mainly due to the nature and specificity of these localities.

The understanding of the ground realities by the community co-ordinators allowed them to foresee the situation where formal education would take years to reach these areas. However, realizing the importance of education for the sustainability of the development efforts, a search for an alternative was initiated. While searching for such an alternative, they based their design on the earlier experiences of community-based initiatives for education.

Experience of education for tribals was not new in the tribal tradition. As elsewhere in India, some of the tribal communities of this region followed the old custom of bringing an outsider to impart education. The practice was probably linked to the community's desire to prepare itself with some background knowledge of the outside community with whom it had to interact. It may also have stemmed from a desire to know about the other community. The practice was, however, discontinued due to the takeover of education by the formal agencies. But what is important is the community's capability to manage and arrange education for its members.

Another aspect of the educational tradition of tribals is fairly recent. In the 1980s, as a part of community mobilization, the administrators from the Tribal Welfare Department had an open interaction with the tribal communities. In one such meeting in one of the districts (Adilabad) the problem of educational access and the need to have education were thoroughly discussed. Although the government officials were able to motivate the community about the need to have education, they failed in finding a solution in the official framework.

The suggestion came from the tribal leaders of their wish to identify an educated youth from the community as a volunteer to impart education to children, provided the administration would pay a meagre sum of \$2.5 per month to the volunteer as salary. The administration agreed and, as a result of such an open agreement, schools started operating. Later, some other districts, including Vishakhapatnam, followed suit. However, the number of such schools was very small and they were organized based on an informal arrangement between community and volunteer, in isolation from formal schools. In 1985, when the government restructured the education policy and decided to establish single-teacher schools, these schools were upgraded as single-teacher schools and volunteers were absorbed as regular teachers.

During this period, a large number of single-teacher schools were established which met the demand of those who were interested in education. At this stage the community lost interest and this endeavour went into oblivion.

Drawing on inspiration from the experience of successful community participation in the planning and execution of different components of APTDP, the community co-ordinators felt that access to education was possible through involving the community. Their intimate understanding of the people, their economic and social abilities, aspirations and the local political context reaffirmed their belief. The only problem was the means to involve the community in the exercise of searching for such an alternative. Working under this premise, and under the base of the earlier experiences of the community's involvement in education, the community co-ordinators started working in this direction. The concerted and consistent efforts of the co-ordinators bore fruit and 15 village communities positively responded to the idea of villagers establishing and managing the 'community school', with the limited assistance of the administration. There thus entered a new phase in the educational development of the tribal communities during the years 1991-92.

### **Concept of the community school**

The 'community school' concept has emerged as a response to community need and demand for access to education. In other words, the framework for the community school was an internally evolved model through a participatory consultation process among the stakeholders and the community co-ordinators. Thus the urge for education and demand for a schooling facility among the community, and considering education as a necessary condition for the success and sustainability of the developmental programmes of the APTDP

by the project co-ordination team, led to the search for an alternative mechanism of providing schooling facilities.

‘Community school’ refers to any school owned and run by the community, in its generic connotation. However, in the present context, this refers to a system of education where the community and government are equal partners and the community plays a dominant and decisive role in the management and development of the school. The community establishes the structure of the school, the teacher is selected and paid a salary by the community, while the administration is responsible for academic support such as the supply of reading materials, uniforms to students, provision of blackboard, besides providing limited financial assistance. This is a unique intervention in the educational development of the hitherto underprivileged and disadvantaged community.

The logic behind the emergence of the concept of community schools, in the context of development project implementation through community participation, in these tribal areas, has two aspects. One is the physical-procedural and financial difficulty in transporting education to difficult terrain, and the second is the desire to elicit community participation in developmental activities and delegate responsibility to the community through partnership. It was also felt by the ITDA and the co-ordinators that mere community awareness and aspirations for educational facilities do not guarantee a positive response and effective participation by all the households, unless they are involved, in one form or another, and share the responsibility.

This was based on the experience of ineffective functioning of single-teacher schools, which were opened by ITDA after relaxing the norms. The drop-out rate among these schools remained very high,

besides low attendance. Teacher absenteeism was alarming. Although, at community level, there was a demand for school and education, at the household level the response varied. More importantly, the community did not hold the responsibility either to monitor the teacher's regular attendance or to help in school development, considering ITDA should be responsible for these matters. These two motives have been the guiding force behind the scheme of community schools. In other words, decentralization of management of schools was essential for effective functioning of schools.

### **INITIAL FEATURES AND CRITERIA**

Community schools have only Grades I and II and act as feeder schools for the Ashram residential schools. In fact, after Grade II the teachers of the community schools have to admit the children to the nearest Ashram residential schools to pursue higher grades. The teacher is specifically selected and appointed by the community for the school; therefore, he remains accountable to the community.

The Village Education Committee (VEC) ensures that the teacher resides in the village. VEC also has the responsibility of monitoring the school in order to ensure its effective functioning and that of the teacher. Teachers are encouraged to use tribal dialects in teaching-learning until the children are able to understand the regional language. Initially the tribal dialect should be used and then gradually switched to the regional language as the medium of instruction. For this, the teachers must prepare a glossary of words into tribal language from the textbook language.

During the initial years of community schools, the state curriculum and textbooks were followed and the play-way method was adopted to impart education. For the past two years a multi-graded material called the 'Joyful Learning' package has evolved in community schools and is now also implemented in formal schools. The school vacations and holidays were rescheduled to suit the local needs. The summer vacation and holidays were adjusted for local festivals and market days, instead of the routine vacation and holidays pattern followed in formal schools.

The formation of 'mothers committees' was another innovative aspect of community schools. This committee is responsible for the

management of the midday-meal scheme and monitoring of regular attendance of children.

The community schools are treated on a par with formal schools for the provision of student incentives, academic supervision, etc.

### **Criterion for establishing community schools**

Based on the assessment of community capacities and demand for schools the criteria and terms of establishing and managing the schools were evolved by ITDA. When the ITDA decided to scale up the schools, it specified and spelled out more clearly these same principles in the form of a guideline for establishing community schools.

While evolving the criteria, the initial features of the community schools have, by and large, remained the same, even though their numbers have been phenomenally increased. The community schools should be established under the following conditions:

- (i) the community must be situated in an extremely backward, difficult and inaccessible terrain, without any transport and communication facility;
- (ii) there should not be any existing school either in the village or in the village vicinity;
- (iii) the villagers should come forward to open a school on their own;
- (iv) the community should take the responsibility of finding a house for the school; normally they have to construct the house by using locally available raw materials, local resources and community labour;



- (v) parents must contribute a small fixed amount per child per month towards the teacher's salary, with six months' money in advance, either in cash or kind. If parents are unable to pay the money, they are exempted and encouraged to give in kind articles such as tamarind, broom-sticks, soap-nuts, honey etc., to the teacher, which are collected seasonally. Villagers also have an option to develop school horticulture for generating resources in cases where the parents are unable to pay the teacher's salary. However, more importantly, no child should be kept away from school, even if the parents cannot contribute in any form;
- (vi) the villagers should identify and select the teacher from local educated youth with minimum seventh-standard educational qualification (can be relaxed) preferably from the same habitation or from the nearest one. The teacher must reside in the same habitation. The villagers have to form a Village Education Committee (VEC) to manage the school. The teacher is accountable to the VEC;
- (vii) the Village Education Committee, along with the teacher, must open a bank account and deposit the amount, preferably equivalent to six months' salary of the teacher, in advance;
- (viii) the ITDA will organize a brief training session for teachers on teaching methods soon after they are selected;
- (ix) the ITDA will deposit Rs.150 (\$4) per month in the joint account of the VEC and the teacher in the bank. This money can be used for school development or supplementing the teacher's salary. The teacher's salary ranges between Rs.350 (\$8) as minimum and RS.500 (\$10) as the maximum amount, based on the number of children in the school; and

- (x) the ITDA supplies the school a blackboard and provides children with reading and writing materials and uniforms similar to those of the formal school children. Once the schools are found to be functioning satisfactorily, the ITDA provides a chair and table to the teacher, play materials and maps and charts for teaching aids.

The elaboration of the criteria for establishing community schools depicts two important aspects of the development perspective. It shows the emergence of the spirit of partnership, participation and involvement among the tribal communities in spreading education, while giving due emphasis to the role of the government agencies.

It would be erroneous to undermine the role of the ITDA in promoting education among the tribals. One thing is certain, that the ITDA has played its part perfectly well. It has given due support to the communities in establishing schools and has been an active partner in the scaling up of community schools. The ITDA has acted under the premise that community development efforts can best be successful when the community comes forward to participate and implement the process. This is why ITDA has waited for the community to show eagerness and the ability to take responsibility and accept a challenge; once this objective has been achieved, the ITDA has taken over the entire responsibility.

When the tribals showed the necessary keenness and desire to learn, the ITDA took upon itself the duty to provide access and opportunity to these communities. This demonstrates the will of the government to help those who have an interest in helping themselves. However, the norms, such as asking the parents to contribute for the education of their children, may seem preposterous from the perspective of impoverished tribal communities. But the fact of owning the school, which is important from the cultural perspective of tribals, serves a broader purpose.

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## GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Starting with 15 schools during 1991-92, the number of community schools had multiplied in large numbers to 900, over a period of five years, by 1996-97 (*Table 4.1*). The growth and scaling up of them took place in three different phases. Each phase was different on the basis of number of schools, enrolment, strategies adopted, and the role of community and administration.

Table 4.1 Enrolment and growth of community schools

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Year	Number of schools	Student strength (Grades I and II)
1991-92	15	350
1992-93	60	1,300
1993-94	266	8,459
1994-95	405	16,544
1995-96	567	23,367
1996-97	926	35,914
1997-98	864	32,606

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### First stage

The first stage of the growth of community schools is significant for two reasons. The effective functioning of a small number of community schools was able to convince and influence the neighbouring villages. Secondly, the request for assistance in establishing such schools had come from the villagers. This is significant in the context of the growth of community schools, because these were the same people who had not responded to the persuasions of the community co-ordinators at an earlier stage. Now, when they themselves were putting forward a request, this signified a radical change of attitude

and perception. However, this change of heart was possible due to the underplay of factors such as dissemination of information and demonstration of an effective model. The information about community schools had disseminated to other villages through traditional communication channels such as traditional weekly markets, where people from different villages exchanged information, the village festivals and celebrations in which people from different villages visited each other and also through their interaction with the coordinators. This cleared many a hurdle and initial hesitation and created interest among other villages to establish community schools in their villages. This response was more of a cultural characteristic of tribal society, where they like to act in a group rather than pacing the work through individual initiatives. They also had an opportunity to perceive the functioning of these schools in their neighbourhood and its impact on their fellow members of the community.

This dual impact of perception of functionality and group action has led to a rapid growth of community schools. Since some of the village communities have accepted the partnership, others have also felt confident and enthused. This has resulted in the four-fold increase in the number of schools from 15 to 60 in the span of a year. This phenomenal increase in the number of community schools explains the dormant demand for the schools, on the one hand, and secondly it has had a cascading effect on the other communities as far as their taking initiatives in establishing schools and sharing partnership responsibility are concerned.

The initial phase in the growth of community schools has critical significance. In this phase the community co-ordinators laid down the norms for opening and managing the community schools. Also, the schools had emerged mostly because of the community interest and zeal of the co-ordinators. As it was the beginning of a new approach for providing access to education, the rules and prescriptions

regarding establishing community schools were largely informal and based on a mutual understanding between the community and co-ordinators.

## **Second stage**

The cascading effects of opening community schools had a real impact in forming the stage for a second phase of scaling up. The first was the successful and effective functioning of the community schools set up in the first phase and gradual realization of the tribal communities to translate their dormant demand for education into reality. As a result of such activism, a number of requests started to flow continuously, to the ITDA, to assist them in establishing such schools in various other villages spread over a large tract of tribal terrain.

This situation prompted the development agency (ITDA) to seriously take up the expansion. When such a positive and emphatic demand for education, at least in the opening up of community schools, came from the tribal communities, it took little time for the ITDA to realize its role in providing such an access. At this point of time the ITDA felt that it could not undermine the importance of universal provision of schools to the marginalized communities because of the strictures of norms. Since an alternative model of schools was already functioning, the ITDA took necessary steps to institutionalize the system through the expansion of community schools by developing norms and guidelines. Secondly, this model of providing access has also been considered as a mechanism for reducing the cost of providing schools and to have large dissemination. As a result of such proactive action, the number of such schools has increased substantially every year. From 1992-93 to 1993-94 the number of schools have increased four-fold. Since then, up to 1996, the number of schools increased gradually to 567. However, during 1996-97, the number of

schools almost doubled, constituting 40 per cent of total primary schools in the tribal area of the district.

The phenomenal expansion of these schools was possible because of various reasons. One was the active partnership of the ITDA; secondly, the adoption of different strategies of community mobilization, which included the active participation of educated tribal youths in the opening up of community schools. Third was the establishment of community schools as a component of APTDP. Realizing the importance of education for sustainability of different components initiated in APTDP, the donor agencies agreed to include a component of education, particularly the establishment of community schools, in the APTDP project from 1996 onwards.

As the number of community schools rapidly increased, some of them were converted into formal schools each year. However, during 1998-99 a very large number of community schools were replaced by formal schools under the District Primary Education Project.

There is a pattern in the enrolment figures of the community schools. A glance at the enrolment figures of these schools will show an unusual growth. It is true that the community schools have been attracting large numbers of students compared to their counterparts in the government sector, but such a high growth rate is somewhat unbelievable. As the salary of teachers is linked to the number of students under the ITDA dispensation, it is natural, on the part of teachers, to put up an inflated enrolment figure for their own benefit. However, the fault is easily detectable due to the variance in the structure of the habitation and its population strength.

## **PROCESS OF TEACHER IDENTIFICATION AND TEACHER PROFILE**

The central idea behind the emergence and conceptualization of community schools is to make the school a community-based institution. The school becomes community based when the tribal community participates in decision-making and helps people to identify themselves with the school. Therefore, the operationalization of community schools focused on creating a sense of ownership of the school and a bond between the school and the community.

The principal strategy adopted to achieve the objectives of ownership and attachment was related to construction activities and teacher-recruitment processes. While involvement in the construction of school building gives the community physical ownership, the right to appoint the teacher provides the community with a sense of power and authority, psychological satisfaction and social self-esteem. It was believed that the power to select and appoint teachers would facilitate a close school-community nexus to ensure regular functioning of the school.

Entrusting the community with the power to select teachers is, in fact, an exercise in community empowerment. The community empowerment in respect of teachers has two dimensions – the authority of the local community to identify and appoint teachers and its authority to control teachers to make them more accountable to the community they serve. The change in the accountability was important in the tribal context, since the teachers in those areas were not only unreliable in regard to attendance but were also indifferent to their teaching duties. Since the community members had no power and authority, they could do very little in this regard. At best they

could complain to the authorities, which was also not very effective. By allowing the community to have its own teachers, under the rearrangement in the context of community schools, the government provided a mechanism to reassert the power and authority of the community.

There is an inherent logic behind the whole process of decentralizing primary education by providing the community the freedom to select and appoint teachers. The logic partly stems from the contextual reality of a tribal society and partly from the ethos of theories of community participation. The contextual dimension of the logic implies that community participation in any development programmes will be successful if it is local-specific. There are certain norms embedded in the cultural traditions of the tribals and unless one makes specific efforts to understand and absorb them, one cannot sustain the efforts of development. In the arena of education and knowledge, it is more important to diagnose the problems rather than prescribing remedies. Studies of tribal communities from anthropological perspectives reveal that developmental intervention through institutional reform can be attainable if the given society accepts the reform package as a part of its culture or finds it a linkage to its tradition. This perspective has given rise to awakening at least in the setting up of schools. In the case of these particular localities, there has always been a tradition of learning, at least among some communities, but what was absent was a formal institutional set-up to sustain that interest. When the idea of the community school came to the development agency, it was natural to let the community internalize the institution (school) and its functionaries (teacher). Moving in this direction, efforts were made to let the tribals adopt school as part of their social structure by exercising the choice in locating the school and selecting the teacher, rather than submitting to an imposed agency of social transformation.



Another aspect of this logic is that in conventional schools teacher absenteeism is rampant, which has hampered the teaching-learning process in an irreversible direction. The reason is the lack of accountability on the part of teachers as well as problems arising out of infrastructural difficulties. One of the problems is the selection of teachers. This is done at the district level and this centralized selection procedure may fulfil the norms and conditions of state-level teacher recruitment, but it does not take the contextual specificity into account. As the teachers are selected by the system and for the system, it is natural for them to remain accountable only to the system, and the community just does not exist in their domain. The community becomes a victim of this malaise. In most cases the community does not complain and even if it did, it takes a lot of time for state machinery to react. Even if community members take action, it may only lead to the transfer of the teacher, which does not solve the problem. Therefore, it was envisaged to provide the community with the power to select and appoint a local teacher. Similarly, as the teachers are centrally recruited and posted, it becomes next to impossible to order their appointment and ensure a pattern for their effective functioning. This has been disastrous; many teachers reside more than five kilometres away from their school and in such remote and difficult terrain, it is often impossible to commute to school in harsh seasons. Therefore, teacher absenteeism is a serious problem in these areas. As a result, a situation arises where there are schools, but no teachers! In order to avoid such a situation, it is necessary and beneficial to entrust the community with the necessary power to have its own teacher. This arrangement creates a reverse situation, where the teachers are first selected and schools are established later.

The second logic, which has its roots in the theories of community participation, believes that it is a logical and necessary precondition to provide maximum decision-making powers to the community

for successful implementation of the ethos of community participation. The natural corollary of community participation is decentralization of authority and devolution of power. So, in the structural framework of community participation, devolution power is *sine qua non*, and therefore, allowing the community the power to select and appoint teachers is a rule rather than an exception.

There are also other interesting aspects of teacher selection in the context of community schools from the perspective of the government. One is the legal aspect. According to the government rule, anyone employed by the government who continues to work consecutively for three months without a specific contract, is liable to be considered for a permanent position. By allowing the community to pay the community school teacher, the government has cleverly kept away from any legal wrangling. Another area is the acceptance of the teacher by the community. In complete contrast to the government school, the community school teacher is selected locally. This localized selection constrains the teacher to remain faithful and obliged to the community and, since the community has chosen its own teacher, the government has eschewed the risk of being branded partisan. In the community school, the teacher is selected first and then an appropriate school tracked down, rather than the other way round.

This situation has two impacts – one is the revitalization of the Village Education Committee (VEC), and the second is the employment of educated local youths. The investment of the power of teacher recruitment made the VEC dynamic and active. While the VEC in a normal school has a marginal role to play, here the VEC has turned into a powerful body. The VEC stresses three points when selecting a teacher. The first two are qualification and community attachment. The third is the identification of a prospective teacher that allows the community the liberty of selecting a teacher with whom it is comfortable and in

whom it can trust. This new development has encouraged the VEC members to play a more meaningful and important role in managing the school. This, in turn, has brought more awareness and the teacher is gradually being internalized in the community life. Notwithstanding the novelty of the scheme, it is not faultless, as in a few cases the president of the VEC has been found to be involved in nepotism, and in multi-tribe habitations the dominance of a particular group in selecting a teacher of its choice is also visible.

With the right to appoint teachers vested with the community, the Tribal Development Department has prescribed certain guidelines for smooth and proper selection of teachers. These guidelines include the following clauses:

- (i) the teacher should be selected from the same habitation or nearby;
- (ii) the minimum educational qualification should be 7th standard, which can be relaxed if the community wishes to waive the criteria for any special candidate who is otherwise qualified; and
- (iii) the selected candidate should reside in the village where the school is situated.

### **Process of teacher identification**

The process and norms of teacher identification for community schools are different from the procedures followed for teacher selection for formal schools, either in tribal areas or in teacher recruitment for the general population.

In tribal areas, schools are normally run either by local bodies or by the Tribal Welfare Department. The policy adopted by local bodies for the recruitment of teachers, for both the general population and tribal population, is different from the criteria set by the Tribal Welfare Department. For the local bodies, the district is the unit of administration and they prescribe a minimum of 12 years of educa-

tion and pre-service training for the recruitment of teachers. After the screening of applications a written test is conducted at the district level followed by an interview. The selected candidates are then posted at the Mandal (sub-district) level. The schools run by local bodies constitute 30 per cent of total schools in tribal areas.

In the case of selection of teachers by the Tribal Welfare Department through the ITDA in its schools for tribal areas such as single-teacher schools and Ashram schools, a different policy is followed. For ITDA, the teachers should be from local areas and by local they mean a candidate who belongs to a place within 10 kilometres' radius of the school. It also conducts an entrance test and interview for the selection of teachers. However, the minimum qualification for ITDA is 10 years of schooling and it does not ask for pre-service training. After the selection of teachers, the ITDA sends the selected teachers for a six-month condensed training course. The selection policy for each ITDA varies and autonomy is given to respective ITDAs to formulate standardized norms.

But the case of the community school is totally different. The policy of teacher selection is further decentralized and the concept of the local teacher is defined in terms of communities rather than distance. The community and the members of the VEC identify and select teachers for the community school and the minimum qualification is further reduced to eight years of schooling, which again can be relaxed if the community so desires in the case of a specific candidate. The relaxation of qualifications at various stages is linked to the paucity of qualified teachers due to emphasis on local candidates.

The process of teacher identification, in community schools, takes place at micro level and is specific for the individual school. As a result, educational qualifications of teachers and their selection procedure were different from the formal schools in tribal areas.

As a preliminary step towards opening a community school, the community must form a Village Education Committee (VEC) with five elected or nominated members. Normally the young, educated, resourceful and those who have experience and exposure of the outside world, and particularly of the educational world, are chosen in the meeting, while one of the members who is articulate is preferred as the president of the VEC. However, in many cases the president of the Village Tribal Development Association (VTDA) happens to be the president of the VEC also. This committee has the responsibility of identifying the teacher as the first step and of establishing the community school. It has then absolute power in educational matters. Naturally, this committee has the prerogative to select the teacher for the community school.

But, in practice, the tribals follow the traditional approach based on a more democratic and participatory tradition. So before any teacher can be appointed, the VEC calls a village meeting and a member of the VEC usually proposes the name of a prospective candidate and leaves everybody to decide the merits of the case. Then people discuss the issue in great depth and collective opinion is secured. Normally, the qualifications, competency, credibility, capability and willingness of the prospective candidates are analyzed in the meeting. However, the primary criterion for such an appointment is the residential status of the prospective candidate. One of the implicit assumptions regarding the community school is that a teacher will be from the same village or the nearest place. This gives the advantage of closely knowing the person to be considered as teacher in terms of his acceptance to the community, behaviour and interest in the work, besides the desirability of employing him. Therefore, the village community is always encouraged to find a local candidate. In the case that no suitable local candidate is found, then other nearby places can be explored and also an approach made to the village-level

development functionaries, as they continuously move around in various parts of the area, for help in suggesting people.

Once the teacher is selected and other formalities such as opening a joint bank account, finding a place for the school, etc. are completed, the VEC president sends the formal application along with the particulars of selected teachers to the ITDA, forwarding through the local nodal administration, for approval of the establishment of a community school. Although the community selects the teacher, it does not give any written orders to the teacher regarding the appointment, but informs the administration in writing of the name. However, in recent times, particularly since 1994, there have been some exceptions to this policy. In fact, in the second phase of the community school project, many educated tribal youths even from other localities have had their names recommended for the appointment of teacher by the community. This has certainly created more choice, but it is an outside initiative rather than an internal requirement.

The Village Education Committee has taken the responsibility to negotiate with the teacher in matters of residential provision, salary, responsibilities and proposed duties. The response of community members shows that the teachers were selected based on different considerations (*Table 5.1*). Out of 578 parents covered in 58 villages, 31 per cent of them said the teachers were selected because of the initiative taken by tribal youth and the mobilization of the community with the aim of improving the education of its children through the opening of a community school.

The role played by the educated tribal youth in community mobilization has not only motivated the community in establishing community schools, but has also helped them at an individual level to be selected as teachers. Teacher selection has favoured those who were

born in the village; good behaviour, and teaching ability also were criteria. Similarly, group identity and belonging to the same tribal group has also played a role in the choice of teachers.

Table 5.1 Criteria of selection of teachers according to community members

Sl. No.	Opinion	% of teachers
1	Has ability to teach children	24.9
2	Belongs to same village	25.2
3	Belongs to same community	17.1
4	Had approached to improve education in the village	31.5
5	No response	1.3

Total number of parents: 578.

Apart from selecting and appointing the teacher, the VEC is also empowered to dismiss the teacher. If the community finds the teacher is unreliable in attendance, unwilling or neglecting his duty due to his involvement in group activities and local politics, then it has the power to fire the teacher. Although the VEC is empowered to take any action against the errant teachers, it normally calls a village meeting before taking any drastic step. This makes the decision more democratic, participatory and receives support from all sections. Thus the selection process of teachers for community schools has varied greatly from the general teacher recruitment procedure and also with regard to the special policy of tribal areas.

### Reasons for accepting the job

Table 5.2 gives the reasons expressed by teachers for their choice of a community school post, in spite of the low salary.

Table 5.2 Reasons for accepting a community school teaching post

Sl. No	Opinion	% of teachers
1	Job in same village/Nearest to the village	7.6
2	Will become permanent	58.7
3	Somebody suggested	1.6
4	Do not have any other work	28.6
5	No response	3.5

Total number of teachers: 370.

Nearly 60 per cent of the teachers had taken up the post with the hope that they would become permanent teachers in the formal schools. More than one-fourth of them opted for the job because they were unemployed, and they could not find any other job with their low qualifications. Some people working in their native village or near their native home had been encouraged to apply for the teaching job. The teachers' motivation to become permanent teachers was a strong reason for them to mobilize the communities to establish schools.

### Change of teachers

The process of teacher identification by the community has an in-built mechanism for firing the teacher if he should prove ineffective. Since the teacher's position was not permanent, many better-qualified teachers left a school in search of greater opportunities. *Table 5.3* shows that in 79 per cent of cases the community has not changed the teacher, while in 13.7 per cent of cases the community has changed the teacher only once. Teachers have been changed twice in 5 per cent of schools and thrice in 2 per cent of cases.



Table 5.3 Frequency of changing teachers

Number of times	% of teachers
No change	50.27
Once	13.78
Twice	5.13
Thrice	2.16
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Number of schools: 370.

The turnover of teachers in community schools is a matter of concern (*Table 5.4*). It is not only that the community may decide to change the teacher, but, more often, the teacher will leave the post as he has been selected for a formal school. Some of the teachers leave the community schools to pursue studies to improve qualifications so that they can get into formal schools. The frequent change of teachers poses a problem for sustainability of community schools and community motivation.

Table 5.4 Reasons for change of teachers

Reasons	% of teachers
To join other community schools	24.36
Community changed	30.77
For further studies	15.38
To seek agricultural work	15.38
Found permanent post	14.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Number of sample schools: 58.

Viewed in the context of formal schools, even this low level of change of teachers looks significant. This is due to the lack of any distinct teacher-transfer policy in the tribal area, where such a policy

is essential in view of difficult terrain and climate. In the absence of such a policy, no periodic transfer of teachers was taking place, particularly in this district. The occasional transfers were the result of a formal request or due to inevitable compulsions. There are many instances (80 per cent) where a teacher continues to work in the same school for more than eight years. This apparent apathy and continuity in allowing teachers to stay in the same school for years has only succeeded in institutionalizing teachers' absenteeism. In this respect community schools are far better in resolving the problems.

### **Teachers' profile**

In view of the change in the policy and process of teacher selection, the academic and social profile of teachers in community schools is distinctly different from those in the formal schools.

### **Social background**

Nearly 70 per cent of community school teachers belong to three major tribal groups that are numerically large, relatively advanced and have a high profile in the district. Lowering the educational levels and village-specific selection has also opened avenues to most educationally backward tribal groups, though in a small proportion.

Furthermore, this has helped at least a few villages to have teachers from their own social group, thus avoiding inter-tribal language problems. Moreover, some of the primitive tribal groups for the first time have representation among the teachers (*Table 5.5*). Tribal groups such as *Kondhu*, *Gadabha*, *Kutiya*, *Porja*, and *Nooka Dora* are now being represented only due to the present change in the policy of teacher selection. Inter-tribal disparities in educational progress have been clearly reflected in the disproportionate representation of certain tribal groups among teachers in spite of

Table 5.5 Community school teachers' social background

Name of the tribe	% of teachers
Bagatha	26.46
Gadabha	0.65
Konda Dora	26.89
Konda Kammari	4.64
Kondhu	4.86
Kutiya	0.33
Mali	3.56
Nooka Dora	1.74
Porja	3.56
Valmiki	23.21
Other Tribal Groups	4.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Total number of teachers: 926.

micro-level teacher identification. Lack of access to schools has for a long time created a double disadvantage to small, and the most backward, tribes – firstly by denying educational opportunity, and, secondly, lack of even the localized teacher-selection benefit, to provide them space in occupational and economic mobility. This selective distribution of benefits to a selected group may lead to social animosity and conflict. It may not result in violence, but it certainly has the potential to be prejudicial. However, the in-built mechanism of tribal society is such that social status and group domination is not determined by economic standards, in fact the ritual hierarchy places some tribal groups at a higher level of social status in spite of their educational backwardness. Secondly, the benefits of being appointed as a teacher are largely limited only to the first generation of learners even among the major tribal groups. The educational background of the community school teachers is evident from the fact that 73 per cent of teachers had illiterate fathers, and 93 per cent of them

had illiterate mothers, as against 53 and 91 per cent, respectively, in the case of formal school teachers.

Thus the community school is not only different in its structure, but also in its uniqueness, which is evident in the profile of its teachers. There are various aspects of the profile. Besides social background, other important dimensions are educational qualifications, training, age, gender, residence, etc.

### **Educational qualifications**

In terms of educational qualifications a wide variation exists among teachers of various schools (*Table 5.6*). The variation is less between the teachers in the single-teacher schools and community schools. Fifty per cent of the community school teachers have educational qualifications equivalent to those of the required qualifications for teachers in single-teacher schools. However, when the same are compared with the teachers managed by local bodies, the discrepancy becomes larger. Even in their comparison with single-teacher schools, the gap is low, not because the community school teachers are better qualified, but due to the lowering of educational qualifications even in the single-teacher schools. The teachers in the schools managed by local bodies are better qualified because they follow a standardized policy and are recruited across the district.

The intention to have local educated youths as teachers has put a severe constraint on prescribing a higher educational qualification for the post. One of the features of the community schools is the prerogative of the VEC to fix the qualification of the teacher, albeit relatively. The VEC is authorized to relax the qualification standard of a prospective teacher who is otherwise qualified. Therefore, on the one hand, there is a high degree of educational variation among the community school teachers and, on the other, these teachers have

much lower educational qualifications compared to formal school teachers.

Table 5.6 Teachers' educational (General) qualification

Number of years' education	Community schools*		Single-teacher schools*		Ashram schools**		Other (.) management schools**	
Five	2.16	(20)	0.00	(0)	0.00	(0)	0.00	(0)
Six	4.43	(41)	0.00	(0)	0.00	(0)	0.00	(0)
Seven	5.51	(51)	0.00	(0)	0.00	(0)	0.00	(0)
Eight	3.02	(28)	0.00	(0)	0.00	(0)	0.00	(0)
Nine	5.83	(54)	2.63	(13)	7.10	(1)	4.28	(3)
Ten	63.07	(584)	50.60	(251)	42.90	(6)	24.28	(17)
Twelve	15.23	(141)	25.20	(125)	21.40	(3)	22.86	(16)
Undergraduate	0.75	(7)	19.96	(99)	21.40	(3)	38.58	(27)
Postgraduate	0.00	(0)	1.61	(8)	7.10	(1)	10.00	(7)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>(926)</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>(496)</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>(14)</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>(70)</b>

\* For all schools.

\*\* For only sample schools.

(.) Government and aided schools.

Sixty-three per cent of teachers working in community schools had tenth-standard education, which is the minimum educational qualification for formal school teachers in tribal areas. A little more than one-tenth of teachers had only five to seven years of education. Nearly 9 per cent of teachers had education up to 8-9 standard. However, 15 per cent of them had education up to 12 years and above. A few teachers were even undergraduates.

In formal schools, while 50 per cent of teachers had minimum prescribed qualifications others had higher; there was a large number of under-qualified teachers, which may be due to the flexibility of educational qualifications for teachers of community schools. In the initial years, the main educational qualifications of teachers were at

upper-primary level, whereas, since 1994-95, the corresponding mean educational qualifications are consistently rising. This may be attributed to the large participation and leadership of educated tribal youths in opening these schools and nominating themselves as teachers.

## Training

None of the teachers employed in the community schools had any formal teacher training qualification (*Table 5.7*). Even in the formal system in tribal areas, untrained candidates were recruited but were given a condensed six-month training programme, prior to their posting. But in the case of community school teachers, a different method was applied – they were given only a week’s training by the ITDA. However, since 1996, with the introduction of alternative pedagogy and multi-grade materials (Joyful Learning Package), the community school teachers, like the formal school teachers, have undergone a series of specific training programmes with regard to alternative pedagogy, ‘Joyful Learning’, multi-grade teaching etc.

Table 5.7 Teachers’ educational (Professional) qualification

Training qualification	Community schools	Single-teacher schools	Ashram schools	Other (.) management schools
Untrained	100.0 (926)	5.24 (26)	14.30 (2)	10.00 (7)
TTC*	0.00 (0)	91.13 (452)	78.36 (11)	44.28 (31)
B.Ed**	0.00 (0)	2.83 (14)	7.10 (1)	38.58 (27)
M.Ed***	100.00 (926)	0.80 (4)	100.00 (14)	7.14 (5)

\*TTC : Teacher Training Certificate.

\*\*B.Ed.: Bachelor of Education.

\*\*\*M.Ed.: Master of Education.

Since 1997 all the community school teachers, along with the formal school teachers, have been undergoing a rigorous one-day refresher course every month, at cluster resource centres called the 'school complex', in alternative pedagogy and methods of multi-grade teaching. In addition to this, the cluster resource person has to visit these schools once a month for a day to provide school-based guidance on multi-grade materials and an alternative methodology of teaching. In fact, it is the advent of the alternative pedagogy which has made it mandatory for teachers to have necessary training. As training harnesses the teaching skills of teachers, attention is being paid to this area, especially in educationally disadvantaged and deprived areas and segments. There is absolutely no discrimination between the formal and community school teachers in terms of in-service training.

However, despite increasing emphasis on facilities for in-service training, a training problem persists with the community school teachers. This is precisely because of the transition in the turn-out rate of the teachers due to the community replacing them with new teachers and, sometimes, a change of jobs by the teachers.

## **Experience**

Although the community schools were established from 1991-92, and they were scaled up in large numbers from 1993-94, only one-third of the teachers had had five years' experience of working in community schools (*Table 5.8*). A high majority (63 per cent) of teachers had had only one to three years' experience. This is mainly because of the considerable turnover of teachers due to such reasons as the change of teacher by the community, teachers being selected into the formal schools, and some of them re-joining schools for continuing studies.

Table 5.8 Teaching experience of teachers

Teaching experience	% of teachers
One year	2.20
Two years	41.30
Three years	19.40
Four years	6.60
Five years	30.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Total number of teachers: 926.

## Age

A majority of community school teachers belong to the younger age range. About half of the total teachers are below 25 years of age; more than one-third of them belong to the age-group of 25-30 years; only a little over one-tenth of teachers belong to the 30-40 years age-group, which is quite uncommon in any other service sector.

*Table 5.9* provides a detailed picture of the age-wise distribution of the community school teachers.

Table 5.9 Distribution of teachers by age

Age	% of teachers
16-20	15.00
21-25	32.90
26-30	38.70
31-35	11.20
36-40	1.20
41 and above	1.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Total number of teachers: 926.



## Gender

Gender is a critical and important component of the development package as well as a significant device of comparison. In the case of the community school teacher, gender disparity is at its highest ebb. Unlike the common pattern, a majority of these teachers are male (87 per cent), which is obvious, because of the low female literacy among the tribals. Since there is no specific provision for girls, or no relaxation of qualifications for female candidates, as a result, no concrete efforts have been made to recruit women candidates. It is quite interesting to note that in such a unique project, no specific efforts are made in this direction. We feel that if something could be done about this, then we may find certain positive and important outcomes.

## Residence

One of the features of the community school is the selection of a local teacher, which envisages that the teacher will live in the village and facilitate the effective functioning of the school. This is one of the reasons for relaxing the qualification in favour of the local teacher. The empirical evidence shows that a large majority of teachers are living in the same village or within the radius of a kilometre (70 per cent), while some teachers commute from three-four kilometres' distance (16.1 per cent), the remaining teachers (13.9 per cent) living five to ten kilometres away from the school. On the contrary, in the formal schools 80 per cent of the teachers reside five or more kilometres away from school, and only 20 per cent of the teachers live in the village where the school is located (*Table 5.10*).

The majority of teachers from the community school living in the village have a positive and significant effect on the functioning of the school. Advantages are the regular presence of the teacher, and

Table 5.10 Distance of the teacher's residence from school

Distance in km.	% of teachers
Same village	24.62
1-23	1.10
3-4	22.79
5-6	10.26
7-8	6.15
9-10	1.94
Above 10	3.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Total number of teachers: 926.

the working hours of the school remain unaffected as there is little commuting time taken up by the teachers, unlike in the formal school, where teachers must spend long hours in commuting to the school, leading to attendance irregularity. With the teacher living in the same village, this allows more interaction with the community and vice versa, leading to better school-community bonds. The community is pleased to help the school in its maintenance, decoration, management, etc.

### **PROCESS OF COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION**

The strategies and process of community mobilization to involve the community in establishing alternative schools (community schools) were varied at the initial stage and during the expansion and scaling-up phase.

#### **Mobilization by community co-ordinators**

At the initial stage, community mobilization for participation in education was not started per se as a separate strategy, but as a product of APTDP. This development project was intended to involve the community in the process of planning and implementation of various components. For APTDP, community participation was the key strategy for project implementation. To realize this objective, community co-ordinators were appointed for community mobilization and capacity building and village-level bodies were created and strengthened. Each community co-ordinator was assisted by a team of professionals, i.e. agriculture and horticulture consultants, civil engineers, a medical doctor, auxiliary nurse/midwife and a group of village liaison workers (VLW). The VLWs were selected by the members of the community. The community co-ordinator was in charge of a cluster of 15-20 villages. The clusters were formed by covering interior and backward villages which lacked basic facilities. Although the community co-ordinators were employed by the project administration, they were given autonomy to function in an NGO mode. This perspective of the role and function of the co-ordinator having autonomy, changed significantly the approach towards community mobilization.

Three community co-ordinators in Vishakhapatnam district were residing in the villages. They organized '*Gram Sabha*' (village meet-

ings) to motivate and create awareness among the village community regarding different components of the project. The co-ordinator, along with the VLWs, helped the community to elect representatives to form a village-level body called the Village Tribal Development Association (VTDA), which was the nodal agency for implementing all the project interventions as a para-government body. Enhancing the capacity of the VTDA to manage and make decisions on all project-related matters was built into the project design. Further specific interest groups such as the thrift society, grain banks, water management association, etc. were formed within the VTDA structure, in order to raise awareness and develop skills in the community co-ordinators-conducted Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). While the community co-ordinator was in overall charge of community mobilization and awareness building, other professionals were extending their support in specific areas. Thus, the community co-ordination team in Vishakhapatnam district was successful in community mobilization, capacity building and forming the village-level bodies. The village communities participated not only in planning the activities and setting targets, but also implementing the works related to natural resource development, small-scale irrigation and watershed activities.

The community co-ordinator played a crucial role in capacity building and strengthening the village-level community group. The community co-ordinator and his team members made a concerted effort to propagate the adoption of high-yielding variety seeds, developing horticulture and vegetable gardens, besides developing co-operatives to facilitate marketing of minor forest produce and cash crops. In the sphere of medical care, tribals were persuaded to adopt methods of modern medical care such as immunization, etc. However, in this district the community co-ordinators faced a problem with regard to education; it was the lack of access to education that was the major obstacle, rather than the lack of awareness.

The prolonged and intimate interaction of the co-ordinators with the community had given them feedback to open a line of communication with the people. The co-ordinators also found that the community was equally eager to have access to school. This insightful appraisal of dual need intensified the desire to have a dialogue with the community. By utilizing the inputs from their previous experience, the co-ordinators initiated community mobilization specifically for education to develop partnership in the endeavour of creating access to education. Towards this end, the co-ordinators organized a series of village meetings in selected interior villages where 20 or more school-age children were available. Emphasis was given to villages where the community involvement and participation in different components of project activities were at a higher than normal level; areas having demand for a school, where the thrift society, grain banks and other community organizations were actively functioning, and marketing of minor forest produce had been identified. Efforts were made to organize community mobilization in these selected localities to form a partnership in providing alternative access to education.

The idea of involving the community in sharing the responsibility of providing access to school was based on several concepts. Firstly, the successful experience of community involvement in the planning and implementation of ongoing APTDP. Secondly, some of the tribal groups had the practice of hiring a non-tribal teacher to teach literary skills. This may have stemmed from natural curiosity to know other groups, or for the need to be equipped with a minimum level of skills for interaction and transaction of business with non-tribal groups. However, this practice was largely discontinued due to government intervention in promoting education. Formal schools came as a gift for these groups, and they started to look at formal education for their social elevation. Thirdly, during the early 1980s some of the villages were running the schools by identifying a local youth as teacher;

a small amount was paid by the ITDA. These schools were later converted into single-teacher schools by the ITDA.

A series of village-level participatory meetings were organized wherein issues and problems related to access to school were discussed by the community members. The community members, along with the co-ordinators, had explored alternatives to provide access to education. During the interaction with the community, the co-ordinators had also assessed the community's potential and willingness in sharing the responsibility of school management and the capacity to bear the financial responsibilities. After the co-ordinators were convinced of the desire and motivation of the community to have access to education, the co-ordinators started to mobilize and motivate the community to develop partnership, to establish an alternative school, by illustrating the benefits of partnership in the implementation of different components of APTDP.

As a cautious first step, the efforts were initially limited to selected villages. The consistent and concerted efforts of the community co-ordinators bore fruit and 15 village communities positively responded to the idea of villagers establishing a 'community school' with limited assistance from the administration. The process of community mobilization by the community co-ordinators had certain advantages. The mobilization for education was started after the community had had experience of involvement in the planning and implementation of programmes related to natural resource development, irrigation, horticulture, co-operative marketing of minor forest produce, self-help groups, etc., from which they had already derived visible benefits.

This, in turn, had helped the community to show a positive inclination towards a partnership in education. Another point is that the community co-ordinators were working in a non-governmental mode,

which had given them an opportunity to assess and attend to the immediate requirements of the community, bringing them closer to the community and helping to gain its confidence. More specifically, since the co-ordinators were residing in the villages and working in a limited area, their efforts were focused and concentrated, giving them, in turn, a degree of success.

### **Large-scale expansion**

The successful mobilization of the community by the community co-ordinators to develop a partnership with the government for providing access to primary education had a burgeoning effect. Based on the effective functioning of community schools and also increasing demand for such schools from the community, the ITDA took an instant interest in the scaling up of the community schools in larger numbers in order to improve access to education.

This large-scale expansion necessitated certain changes from the earlier process of community mobilization, as well as in the norms regarding the establishment of such schools. A perceptible change was the transfer of responsibility of community mobilization from the hands of community co-ordinators to the ITDA. When the ITDA decided to take responsibility, it visualized a greater expansion and a larger role for the official functionaries.

There were several factors responsible for such a shift in the strategy. One is that in fact this scaling-up operation would not have been possible without adequate manpower for community mobilization. In view of the large number of villages, spread over a wide area, it was imperative, on the part of the ITDA, to involve functionaries working at the grass-roots level rather than employing the co-ordinators. There were only three community co-ordinators involved in the earlier stage and, considering the vastness of the area, it was

natural to include more people and formalize the process of community mobilization. Secondly, since the initiative for scaling was taken by the ITDA, it wanted, on the one hand, to formalize the partnership with the community and, on the other, to integrate them within the system.

The result of such change was formalization of norms, the criteria for establishing community schools. This formalization of norms and emphasis on procedural codes has been a major change in the pattern of establishing community schools, adopting different strategies for community mobilization.

As a first step of community mobilization, different strategies were adopted and emphasis was given to the dissemination of information regarding establishment of community schools, and procedures to be followed, such as criteria and the application format for such an endeavour. Special emphasis was placed on widening the circulation of the news, publicizing through the local newspapers and traditional communication channels in the entire tribal area in the district.

### **Mobilization by functionaries**

Under the ITDA dispensation, a systematic and decentralized mechanism was evolved by involving the local-level administrative units, called the Mandal Development Offices, and different field-level functionaries such as education, revenue and agriculture officers. While the Mandal Development Officer was in charge of co-ordination of the entire process of community mobilization and ensuring the fulfilment of the criteria, the education, revenue and agriculture functionaries were entrusted with the task of mobilizing the community, for which they had to undergo brief training. In view of the importance of the task and the difficulty in covering these localities, the ITDA had totally decentralized the function. It was felt that if all



the functionaries worked together, they could solve problems such as the education functionary's lack of familiarity with these communities because he had had no role to play when there was no school in the village. But the revenue functionary was a known person due to his involvement in land-distribution activities. Similarly, the agriculture functionaries had had interaction with the community for the provision of agriculture inputs. Another point was that this integrated approach would be helpful in creating intersectoral development and in winning the confidence of the community.

These functionaries had adopted a systematic approach towards community mobilization. They had organized village-level meetings and conducted open discussions on the proposal of a community school and the criteria for its establishment. It was the duty of these functionaries to motivate the community so that it would come forward to demand a partnership with the government to improve access to education. The functionaries were expected to oversee the formation of a Village Education Committee (VEC), identification of teachers by the community, the opening of a joint bank account by the VEC and the selected teacher, providing a school-house etc. Once these formalities were completed, the community was allowed to submit the application for establishing the community school to ITDA through the functionaries. These applications were scrutinized to ensure that they met the criteria at the Mandal level, and forwarded for approval by the ITDA. Thus community mobilization includes both mobilizing the community to accept the partnership, and also to see that the criteria are met for its establishment.

The reason behind involving the local-level functionaries was not just for decentralization, which indeed removed over-dependency on a sub-district-level agency such as ITDA, but to create a sustained resource support for further expansion and to maintain the continuity of the system. It was also realized that for the sustainability of these

novel alternative institutions, it was essential to build a strong support base for soliciting the help of the academic and administrative resources. A significant change in such a takeover was the setting up of a target, in particular the targeting of a particular number of village communities to mobilize and provide access to community schools. In other words, the entire efforts, through the change in the process of community mobilization, were geared towards having the existing system own and strengthen the alternative system, thus avoiding the risk of it being seen as an inferior system.

Along with the functionaries, some educated tribal youth took an interest in mobilizing the community. The role of the educated tribal youth cannot be underestimated because, despite the missionary role of the community co-ordinators and active mobilization by the local-level functionaries, they had failed to motivate many communities and it was only after the intervention of the educated tribal youth that the situation improved. Although advertisements were put in the newspapers for community mobilization in the initial stage, the response was less than lukewarm; but in this phase, many a tribal youth came forward to open such a school in his locality and approached the community and ITDA. Whatever the reason, it is important to note that the initiative of tribal youth in mobilizing their own community, had a more fundamental and lasting effect.

### **Mobilization by educated tribal youth**

The opening of community schools by now had given a golden opportunity to a substantial number of educated through their appointment as local teachers. This had motivated other such persons to follow the same path. This new level of awareness had two origins: at the group level it had a philanthropic and reformist orientation, that is, helping the community to 'come of age', and, second, was the individual benefit of obtaining a job. There were some other

factors which were also responsible in setting this trend. The formation of a union of community school teachers, in line with government school teachers, allowed the community school teachers to improve their bargaining power to enhance their salary to a fixed amount of Rs.500 (\$12) per month, and through pay centres rather than from the community. This unionization also helped the community school teachers to fix the school timetable and vacation period in the manner of government schools, which made the teacher's task a shade easier. The crucial factor that motivated the educated tribal youths to become teachers in the community schools is linked to their earlier experience of community schools.

In the late eighties, many such tribal schools were upgraded to government schools, and even many of the community schools established in 1992-93 were upgraded to government schools by 1996-97. The immediate benefit was to the teacher, who turned into a fully-fledged government servant as soon as the takeover occurred. This advantage for the educated tribal youths was responsible for the exceptional enthusiasm generated among them in establishing community schools.

Thus have the strategies and agents for community mobilization undergone change from the initial period, where only the community co-ordinators were responsible for a limited area, focusing on a cluster of villages in NGO mode. Then, many grass-roots-level functionaries were covering a large number of villages over a vast area, eventually to be taken over by the tribal community representatives, the educated youth. During the process, the criteria and norms had been specified and formalized. The successful scaling up of these schools in such large numbers over such a short period was mainly due to the adoption of the decentralized mechanism for community mobilization through local functionaries, and the important role played by the tribal youth.

## Facilities available to the community schools

There was a clear understanding between the community and the ITDA that the community had to provide accommodation.

The data reveal that 67 per cent of community schools have their own thatched houses constructed by the village community (*Table 6.1*). In only 3 per cent of cases has the ITDA provided tiles for replacing the thatched roof of houses. Out of the remaining 30 per cent of cases, schools are conducted at different places such as a villager's house (16 per cent), in the VEC member's house (5 per cent), teacher's house (2.4 per cent) and in rented houses (2 per cent).

Table 6.1 Facilities for school building

School held*	% of schools	
	Community*	Formal**
Own building (thatched)	66.95	14.93
Own building (concrete)	0.00	64.92
VEC member's house	4.86	0.00
Villager's house	16.52	9.07
Rented house	1.94	0.00
Teacher's house	2.40	0.00
Government building	3.55	0.00
Other places	3.78	11.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

\* Number of community schools: 926.

\*\* Number of formal schools: 496.

With regard to school buildings, these schools are the worst off. Here the school-house does not mean a four-walled house, but more often than not the school consists of an open structure with just a thatched roof for cover. In the case of formal schools, all of them except the (25 per cent) single-teacher schools, have a permanent school building with one or two rooms. Even in the case of the

availability of teaching-learning materials, the community schools have an unenviable record.

As the majority of formal schools have at least minimum facilities such as a blackboard and a few teaching aids, i.e., maps, charts, etc., it is surprising to note that although the exchequer has a minimal burden from the community schools, still the administration has not provided basic requirements such as blackboards, chalk, dusters and teaching aids (*Table 6.2*). Only one-fifth of the schools are supplied with blackboard and chalk in 39.45 per cent of schools, and a duster is available in just 5.40 per cent of schools. However, some of the teachers themselves have purchased blackboards, cloths and a few teaching aids. In 39.73 per cent of schools the teacher has a chair, and a table in 15.40 per cent. In many cases the villagers have prepared the playground (53 per cent) and provided play materials for the school from local materials, under the school beautification programme.

Table 6.2 Facilities available in schools

Sl. No.	Facilities	% of schools	
		Community schools*	Formal schools**
1.	Blackboard	45.90	77.42
2.	Table	15.44	72.58
3.	Chair	39.74	77.42
4.	School bell	27.54	52.02
5.	Maps	15.66	20.16
6.	Charts	45.68	62.50
7.	Flash cards	17.60	50.00
8.	Globe	0.00	2.42
9.	Playground	5.07	15.93
10.	Play material	10.26	15.12
11.	Medical kit	0.00	0.00

\*Number of community schools: 926.

\*\*Number of formal schools: 496.



# MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The management and financing of community schools need to be examined in the broad context of management of school education in general and educational administration and management in tribal areas of Andhra Pradesh in particular.

The provincial government is responsible for policy-making, planning, and administration of school education. In other words, the government formulates the policies, and frames rules, regulations and norms with regard to teacher recruitment and service conditions, training, inspection, supervision and the finance mode. It also prescribes curricula and textbooks besides conducting examinations. Management and administration of the schools are the responsibility of local bodies at district and Mandal levels. There are also certain schools managed by government with private-aided funds which too follow the same guidelines.

The elected local bodies such as Municipalities and District Councils (*Zilla Praja Parishad*) are responsible for the planning and establishment of schools, recruitment of teachers and upgrading of schools etc. The Mandal Council (*Mandal Praja Parishad*) at the sub-district level is responsible for teacher appointment and transfer, leave sanction, salary payment, construction of school buildings, supply of teaching-learning materials, implementation of provincial and union government education programmes and schemes etc.

The academic supervision and school inspection are the responsibility of the education department, i.e. district and Mandal education officers respectively. At the school level, the headteacher manages the planning of school activities, allocation of teaching work, timetable preparation, and maintaining leave and school records,

while the teacher prepares the lesson plans and classroom timetable besides maintaining student registers, organizing classroom teaching and student evaluation.

At the primary stage, the state has the policy of a non-detention system; however, a minimum 75 per cent student attendance is compulsory for promotion. In the recent past a village-level committee was formed (Village Education Committee) for developing a community-level monitoring system. While this educational management system has been followed across the province, this uniformity does not take into account the specificity of the tribal areas. In view of this, certain additional efforts have been made by the Tribal Welfare Department through the adoption of special policies and flexible norms.

### **Management of education in tribal areas**

Apart from the above educational management system, the Tribal Welfare Department plays an important role in managing schools in tribal areas. The Tribal Welfare Department of the province formulates special educational policies and programmes to meet specific requirements of tribal areas and to help the tribal population to overcome disadvantages. These efforts are directed towards the establishment of schools by adopting flexible norms, providing residential schools (Ashram residential schools), provision of incentives, appointing local tribal teachers etc.

The Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), which is an autonomous body at sub-district level, is responsible for the planning and implementation of educational programmes in a project mode. It also formulates decentralized policies. ITDA establishes primary schools (single-teacher schools), Ashram schools, and is responsible for teacher recruitment, appointment and transfer by adopting the policy of engaging local tribals as teachers. It also provides school build-



ings, and supplies teaching-learning materials and student incentives. The ITDA follows the state-level curriculum and textbooks and examination system. It is also responsible for organizing in-service teacher training, and conducts academic supervision and school inspection. At school level, the headteacher and teacher are responsible for institutional planning and following the curricular design and teaching schedule followed by the schools managed by the local bodies.

Thus, in tribal areas the schools are managed by local bodies, ITDA and, in a few cases, government and private-aided sources, while the local bodies follow the same approach and norms in all areas, including the tribal areas. The Tribal Welfare Department and the ITDA have provided scope for more local-specific programmes and interventions in education, implementing in a project mode.

However, both under the local bodies and the ITDA, the efforts for decentralization of educational management did not percolate down to the village/community and school levels. In contrast to this, the community school system was designed to facilitate the decentralization of management up to community, school and teacher level, with devolution of responsibility and power. Another major change has been that the provincial-level tribal welfare and education departments are not involved in the management of community schools, unlike in the case of formal schools, where the policies, planning and norms are formulated at the state level.

The management of community schools consists of policy-making, planning, implementation and monitoring. These functions are carried out at different levels and by different agencies such as the ITDA, the cluster resource centre, community members, the village education committee, mothers' committee, and teacher, etc. The role and function of these agencies have been clearly defined and divested with adequate power and responsibility.

## **Role of ITDA in the management of community schools**

The ITDA plays an important role in the management of community schools in terms of policy-making, planning, financing, and academic and monitoring aspects, unlike in the formal system where policies and norms are framed at state level. The policy of establishing community schools and the decision for scaling up are taken at the ITDA level. The autonomy and in-built flexibility of the ITDA has helped in planning alternative schools for providing access for specific areas. In order to maintain the cohesiveness of the system, the criteria and guidelines for the establishment and management of community schools have been evolved by the ITDA. The ITDA approves the community proposal and sanctions the establishment of a community school after closely scrutinizing the fulfilment of the criteria. The academic management, such as curriculum planning, developing alternative material, pedagogical changes, etc. are decided at the ITDA level.

During 1996 the ITDA adopted a policy of locally relevant content and materials besides pedagogical reforms. A radical change was introduced in community schools through curricular and pedagogical reforms in the form of multi-grade materials and the alternative pedagogy called 'Joyful-Learning', replacing the conventional textbooks and teaching methods. The multi-grade materials were prepared at the ITDA level, involving the local teachers. In the case of the formal school, the curriculum and textbooks were prescribed by the state government, and were uniform across the entire state. However, the ITDA has introduced the curricular reforms also in formal schools in the tribal areas of Vishakhapatnam as supplementary to the textbook teaching methods. This was possible only because of the single-line administration through ITDA in tribal areas.

The ITDA is responsible for the training of community school teachers at induction level and also in-service training for the implementa-

tion of alternative materials. The ITDA provides a brief training session of one week to ten days to community school teachers soon after they are selected. When the curricular and pedagogical changes were introduced, the community school teachers were trained at the ITDA level with the assistance of an NGO. Even though the ITDA recruits untrained teachers for formal single-teacher schools under its management, they are sent for a condensed teacher-training course of six months in special teacher-training institutes of the Tribal Welfare Department. In the formal system, the local bodies recruit only trained and qualified persons. The District Institute of Education and Training provides both pre-service and in-service teacher training.

School holidays and vacation period for community schools are planned at the ITDA level, taking into consideration the local market days, festivals, seasonal work pattern, etc. In other words, the ITDA has adopted a policy of a flexible school schedule to suit the local context. In the case of formal schools, the holidays and school schedule are planned at the central level by the state government uniformly for all the areas. However, in 1997 the community school teachers formed a union and successfully negotiated with the ITDA to reschedule the school holidays and vacation similar to formal schools.

The ITDA treats the community schools on a par with the formal schools in providing student incentives and academic support to teachers. In fact, the community schools are given preference for more frequent in-service training and academic supervision. Children in the community schools are supplied with free slates, books, writing materials, and two sets of uniform, just as in formal schools. The ITDA has covered community schools under the midday-meals scheme, as in the formal schools. But in the case of community schools, the ITDA has adopted a policy of serving the noon meal, unlike in formal schools where, in a month, 3 kilograms of raw rice are provided to children based on their attendance. However, the management of

the midday-meal scheme has been entrusted to the community, it providing necessary materials such as utensils, rice, oil, pulses, etc.

From the initial stage there was a clear understanding between the ITDA and the community regarding the respective role and function in financial management of community schools. The source of finance to the community schools consists of the ITDA contribution towards recurring expenditure in the form of a matching grant of \$4 per month towards the teacher's salary and paying the cook's salary (\$5) for midday-meal preparation. Towards capital expenditure, the ITDA would supply teaching-learning materials such as blackboard, flash cards, play materials, costing approximately \$6. Depending on the functioning of the school, the ITDA also extends financial support for replacing the thatched roof of a school building with \$25 worth of tiles, supply of furniture for the teacher (chair and table) at the rate of \$8, and an incentive payment of \$25 for construction of a kitchen.

Since 1994-95 (after scaling up) the ITDA has enhanced its contribution towards teachers' salaries by introducing the differential-payment method based on the number of children in the school and socio-economic development of the community, with an upper-limit sealing. In 1996, a sub-project of educational component was incorporated in Andhra Pradesh Tribal Development Project. The community school scheme was included as one of the components of the education project. During 1996-97, a technical change took place with regard to the payment of teacher salaries, when the expansion of community schools was at its height. During this period, the community school teachers formed a union and successfully negotiated with the ITDA that their salaries should be paid by the ITDA itself, through formal school pay centres. As agreed in the negotiations, the ITDA thenceforth disbursed the teachers' salaries from pay centres and formalized the payment procedures. As a result, the ITDA fixed the teach-

er's salary according to the number of students, at the rate of 37 cents per student. However, in the case of primitive tribal groups, the teacher's salary is at the rate of 65 cents per student. Thus, the amount of the teachers' salary depends on the number of students and their relative socio-economic level; there is a procedure in the ITDA regulations which links enrolment with the teacher's salary.

However, the community school teachers continue their demand for the abolition of differential payments. The teachers are agitated over this differential payment and their pittance of a salary. They are also rallying around the point that their salary is less than the minimum wage, defined in the Minimum Wage Act. From this it is very clear that the ITDA has had substantial responsibility for the financing of community schools. Currently, the community school teachers receive their salary from cluster resource centres, which are the pay centres for formal school teachers. The average salary of the community school teacher is around \$13 per month. In spite of changes in the financing pattern and an increased contribution by the ITDA, the teachers' salaries in community schools are seven times less than the permanent teachers, and are only half those of the temporary teachers working in formal schools. Recently, in June 1998, the community school teachers' union was spearheading agitation that their salaries did not even meet the minimum wage of the Labour Act, as their salary was only one-third of the minimum wage. It is not uncommon for teachers to work in road construction or forest development during leave periods in order to have additional earnings.

In contrast to conditions in the community schools, the formal school teachers have a basic pay and are given allowances and annual increments. The salary scales for schoolteachers remain the same in spite of higher qualification or differing student strength of schools. The recently appointed para-teachers, under the District Primary Education Project in government schools, are paid \$25 per month

irrespective of their qualifications. The expenditure on salaries, provision of school building, supply of teaching-learning materials, furniture for teachers, etc. of formal schools is met by the state exchequer.

### **Role of the cluster resource centre (school complexes)**

At the initial stages the community co-ordinators and Mandal-level education functionaries were entrusted with academic supervision of the community schools. In view of the phenomenal growth of community schools and in order to improve academic supervision, 55 cluster resource centres, called the 'school complex', were established and cluster resource persons were appointed for regular academic monitoring, in-service training and school-based guidance. Each cluster consists of 25 to 30 schools. The monthly teacher review meetings are held at cluster level to monitor enrolment, attendance and academic progress of students. A one-day monthly refresher orientation programme is organized to improve the pedagogical skills of teachers. The cluster resource persons visit the community schools once a month for academic monitoring and to guide the teachers in alternative pedagogy; they not only visit the school, but also conduct meetings with VEC, mothers' committee and community members to motivate enrolment and review the activities and problems of school. The resource persons send monthly monitoring reports to the ITDA. Besides the resource person, educational functionaries and other departmental personnel also visit the community schools for academic monitoring, to receive feedback from the community and teachers. The ITDA conducts a monthly review meeting for cluster resource persons to review their visit reports and for monitoring the functioning of community schools.

In the case of formal schools, the academic supervision and inspection of schools is the responsibility of the Mandal-level education officer, who is accountable to the district education officer.

The norms of the number of school visits and format for the inspection and supervision reports are developed centrally, at state level. The consolidated reports are sent to district level. In the case of formal schools, the basic problem is the large number of schools that need to be visited by one functionary at the Mandal level, whereas in the case of community schools, each Mandal has five resource persons for academic supervision. As a result, the average number of visits by resource persons to community schools is higher than the number of visits by the Mandal education officer to formal schools. More importantly, the cluster resource persons have been provided with motorbikes to facilitate their regular school visits where the tribal areas lack transport facilities. In the case of formal education supervisors, they lack this conveyance, which therefore affects the regular supervision of schools.

### **Role of the community in the management of community schools**

A greater controlling and administrative role has been given to the community to incorporate local specificity and contextual priority. Although the participation of the entire community has been integral to the establishment and maintenance of community schools, village-level bodies such as the Village Education Committee (VEC) and mothers' committee were constituted for better co-ordination and streamlining of the management system. The VEC is the apex educational body at the village level. It consists of five elected members from the community, two of whom are women, and one of the members as president. The teacher is the convenor of the VEC.

The community functions encompass co-ordination, supervision, guidance and executive duties. Administrative responsibilities include providing school building, teacher management, school-development plans, monitoring of student enrolment and regular attendance, management of the midday-meals scheme, monitoring the regu-

lar functioning of school, etc. The management of community schools, at least in its administrative function, lies totally with the village community through the VEC.

The VEC, along with the other community members, is responsible for providing the accommodation for the school, preferably by construction of a school-house with locally available materials. The VEC and the community are responsible for the maintenance of the school-house.

The VEC is responsible for teacher management though the broad guidelines provided by the ITDA. It is responsible for teacher identification and selection from the same or nearby village. It monitors the teacher's attendance record. Teachers are not only accountable to the community; their leave applications must also be submitted to the VEC. The VEC can hire or fire teachers after discussion in village-level meetings with all the community members. The VEC visits the school once a fortnight to review the school activities, enrolment and regular attendance of students, besides supervising the management of midday meals.

The VEC meets at least once a month along with other community members, particularly parents of school-age children, to review school activities, mobilize and motivate parents towards improving enrolment and attendance, as well as to discuss school-development activities. The teacher is the convenor of the VEC meetings. The minutes of the VEC meetings are recorded and copied to administrative functionaries who visit these schools, or sent to the administration if there are any resolutions; action-taken points are included.

### **Management of the midday-meal scheme**

The midday-meal scheme was implemented from the early eighties in tribal areas under the special incentive programme. Later, in



1992, this scheme was introduced by the Union Government as a nationwide programme. Under this scheme, children are given 3 kilograms of raw rice, monthly, if they attend the school for at least 75 per cent of the working days. To cover the community schools under this scheme, the ITDA introduced a condition that the midday-meal scheme would be extended to the community schools, provided the community came forward, with the mothers' committee responsible for the conversion of the raw rice into midday meals and the serving of children in school during the lunch period, besides monitoring the regular attendance of students. The mothers' committee consists of five women members elected by the community.

The community must provide the firewood, seasonal vegetables, etc., construct a kitchen, manage the midday meals by collecting the rice and other goods from the government shop. The mothers' committee is responsible for managing the day-to-day supply of provisions and maintaining the stock registers and accounts. The VEC is empowered to appoint the cook in consultation with the mothers' committee. Efforts are designed not only to involve the community in managing the cooking and distribution of meals, but also to avoid disruption of the teachers' routine and school activities.

All the villages have accepted the midday-meal scheme and mothers' committees have been formed to manage the midday-meal programme. The VEC and mothers' committee together manage this scheme in accordance with the guidelines. The mothers' committee collects seasonal vegetables from the community members and pulses are collected from households during the harvest season, according to the number of children attending the school from a household. The food is preserved and used in addition to the ration supplied by the administration.

## Financial management

Financial management has involved the share of financial burden under the partnership, resource mobilization, accountancy and utilization etc. This has been the responsibility of both the administration and the community.

The source of finance to the community schools has consisted of community contributions in various forms, besides the ITDA support. The community has provided the land for the school and constructed the school-house by using local labour and materials.

There has been a clear devolution of power between the VEC and the ITDA in relation to the management and finances of the school. The VEC has collected the parental contributions and deposited the money in the joint account of the teacher and the VEC. The ITDA has also deposited its share of money in the bank from which the VEC has provided the teacher's salary. The VEC has also had responsibility for paying the cook's salary for the midday meal. The VEC has maintained all financial and accounts procedures. This practice prevailed until 1996.

Towards the teacher's salary, parents have paid a contributory sum of five rupees<sup>6</sup> per child per month, normally paid six months in advance. The ITDA has paid a matching grant of \$3.5 to the VEC towards the teacher's salary and school development. The VEC has paid the salary to the teachers. This differential salary payment has created wide dissatisfaction among the community school teachers and fissures have already developed.

After the expansion of community schools, the procedures of

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<sup>6</sup> The rupee is the Indian currency. One US dollar = Rs. 40 (approximately); wherever \$ sign is used it implies US \$.

financing to community schools have undergone a few changes. However, the parental contribution to the school has continued. There is a special provision for the payment of parental contributions, which allows the parents to pay either in cash or kind. The 'kind' means agricultural produce or minor forest produce.

The policy change of ITDA now paying the salary to the teacher is the result of certain problems:

- (i) The matching grant used to reach the bank late due to administrative delays on the part of the ITDA.
- (ii) Teachers preferred to receive the salary from the ITDA rather than from the VEC due to the fact that the banks were situated far from the villages and it was very difficult for the villagers to find time to collect money from the bank, creating problems in disbursement.
- (iii) The teachers had a feeling that if they were directly paid by the ITDA, then they would be considered as employees of the ITDA which, in turn, would make the transition easier from temporary VEC employee to permanent ITDA staff.
- (iv) Teachers were also eager to get rid of the monitoring and scrutiny of the VEC. Actually, the regular monitoring, scrutiny and supervision of community schools had led to many changes in the schools. The teachers were permanent and accountable to the VEC and this had created a problem for the formal school teachers. The teachers of the formal school instigated the community school teachers to form a separate union and bargain with the ITDA to have the same facilities and benefits as the regular teachers.
- (v) Now the community's contribution has diminished due to the negative attitude of teachers in collecting money from the community. During the expansion of community schools, many teachers even deposited the required sum in the bank on behalf

of the community, with the belief that once they were appointed as teachers it would be easy for them to obtain a permanent position. In their bid to become permanent teachers, they had consciously pursued a policy of discouragement in collecting money from the parents.

The data from the field show that the parents are ready to contribute towards the education of their children. More than three-quarters of the parents are willing to pay the money and concede that it is not difficult for them to arrange the money. As the ITDA has disconnected the matching grant from the parental contribution, teachers are less encouraged to pursue parents for their share of money. Although the ITDA has given the teachers freedom to collect parental contributions, the teachers have refused to do so, as it would put them under community obligation and scrutiny.

One of the significant changes in the community school structure is the evolution and strengthening of the teachers' association. Teachers had been successful in negotiating many issues with the ITDA, at least in terms of their salary and the procedures of salary payment; but what had not come to the negotiating table was the lack of qualifications and training among the community school teachers. In the wake of these hectic negotiations, the issue that has come into the open is that the relaxation of qualifications is not commensurate with a lesser pay packet. In the long run it may prove counterproductive, as by now it is evident that compromising quality does not necessarily reduce costs.

Despite these changes, represented by the formulation of new principles and in the emergence of a strong teacher union, the community has been able to retain some of its power, though much has been lost in the course of these changes. Although the teacher's salary is directly paid by the ITDA through its pay centres, the ITDA re-

quires a certificate from the VEC testifying to the competence and punctuality of the teacher before releasing his salary. The community even continues to support the school system financially by paying its share devised during the first phase of negotiation. A study has revealed that 45 per cent of the parents still pay their contribution towards the teacher's salary. Apart from this, the community also pays the salary of the cook, which it receives from the ITDA.

### **Maintenance of accounts**

The VEC maintains the account of the school. During the initial phase the VEC provided the salary to the teachers and was responsible for the collection of money from the parents. The VEC disburses the salary of the cook, which it receives from the ITDA. Prior to the formalization of new policies and rapid expansion of community schools, the VEC was looking after a significant portion of school finance, as it was in charge of utilization of the school development fund.

Compared to community schools, in the formal education system the role of the community is marginal and is confined to just a few activities such as help in the construction of school building, enrolment drive, etc. The community is not involved in teacher selection or appointment and it is rare that the community influences the administration in the teacher's transfer. Teachers are not accountable to the community in terms of their leave or regular attendance. The community need not contribute financially to the school, either towards the teacher's salary or any other expenditure. The teacher largely implements the midday-meal scheme by distributing raw rice to the children. The community in formal schools has no involvement in financial matters.

## **Management at school level**

At school level the teacher is the convenor of the VEC and the mothers' committee has the responsibility of organizing regular committee meetings besides seeking advice on school matters. The teacher mobilizes the community in matters of school beautification, environment building, repair and maintenance of the school etc. The teacher plays a crucial role in eliciting community co-operation and participation. The teacher also helps the VEC and mothers' committee in maintaining the accounts and stock register and with preparation of the minutes of the VEC meetings; the teacher should also seek the help of the committees in monitoring the attendance of students. The teacher, through the VEC, collects the parental contribution towards his salary. The school holidays are adjusted by the teacher, in consultation with the VEC, according to local festivals, market days, etc. The teacher must inform the VEC if absent for training, meetings, or on leave, and make alternative arrangements with the community members to keep open the school.

The teacher, along with the VEC, must open a bank account. The teacher co-ordinates the management of midday meals, accepts the parental contributions in kind, adjusting them so as to obtain equivalent amounts; and is responsible for collecting the student incentives from the cluster resource centre or ITDA.

The teacher must prepare a weekly plan for teaching/learning. The multi-grade materials must be adaptable for both group and individual learning and the teacher must develop teaching aids with locally available materials. The teacher should provide exposure to outdoor activities to teach environmental education. The teacher should regularly evaluate the students, record findings in a register called 'where we are' and ensure registers are updated.

One of the teacher's tasks is to inform the cluster resource person, when he visits the school, of any difficulties in using the alternative materials and methodologies. The resource person will identify problems and demonstrate the use of the materials and different methods. The teacher arranges a community meeting with the resource person and also informs him of any problems with the community regarding student attendance, drop-outs, managing midday meals etc. The resource person helps the teacher to give feedback on the functioning of the school to the ITDA.

In the community school system there is a clear-cut division of functions and responsibilities between the administration, i.e. the ITDA, and the community through the VEC. Both are important partners in managing the community school system. Community school management includes administrative, academic and financial aspects.

The sharing of the responsibilities of administrative, academic and financial management is prudently based on the ability and capacity of the community and administration. The community school system requires local-level decisions, contextual planning and close monitoring which can effectively deal with the community assistance, therefore, it is entirely entrusted to community members. Academic aspects need technical skills, professional expertise, consultative services and a uniform approach across the schools; these responsibilities are, rightly, in the hands of the administration. Financial responsibilities are shared by both the agencies, while the payment of teacher salaries and accounts maintenance are entrusted to the community.





### **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

Involvement of people and their participation are vital for the successful implementation of any social-intervention programme. The experiences from tribal areas show that, even though access to education is guaranteed, there is no respite from the deprivation caused by educational backwardness; teacher-related problems continue to persist and nullify the gains of access. As primary-school teachers are centrally selected and arbitrarily posted, they have little or nothing to do with the community. The teachers remain answerable to the system and the remote-control system has proved to be the bane of primary education, particularly in tribal areas, due to their remoteness and inaccessibility. Because of their limited access and exposure, the tribal people have failed to perceive beyond a particular point; chained to a cultural past, they have failed to accept and assimilate the development-oriented programmes. Added to this is the indifferent attitude of the community, which has put tremendous constraints on the effective educational participation of children.

As a mechanism to overcome these difficulties, associated with teacher and community, decentralization of the school system was developed, where the establishment of community schools, teacher management and effective participation were entrusted to the community. In ensuring the viability and sustainability of such an exercise, community participation was recognized and envisaged as the key strategy. In the context of community schools, community participation is the offshoot of the educational decentralization drive. The community school system has an in-built mechanism that guarantees community participation in the school management. Community participation is achieved through the involvement of the community

in various activities at the planning level, and also in the implementation of the planning.

Community participation has two levels, i.e. participation at the group level through various institutions, and participation of the individual or the household. At the group level, the participation is larger, intensive and effective. Group-level participation is facilitated by the formation of village-level institutions which, again, are representative bodies of the community and take part in their functioning. At the individual level, it is the enthusiasm, commitment and initiative of the individual which are tested as these are the qualities through which he contributes his share to the community by participating in various community programmes. Thus, community participation was considered as a necessary input for planning and a key strategy for effective management of the community school system. Towards this goal, community participation was envisaged through the construction of a school-house, financial contribution towards the teacher's salary, teacher management, monitoring of enrolment and regular attendance of students, creation of village-level institutions for sustaining group dynamism and leadership abilities, etc. In pursuance of these objectives, various agreements were made between the community and the administration.

### **Participation in planning**

Community participation at the planning stage involved appraising the educational situation and discussing the criteria and sharing of responsibilities for establishing the community schools. Towards this aim, the community mobilization approach was adopted. The extent and nature of community participation in the planning process varied in the different stages of establishment and scaling up of community schools. In the initial stage, it was the community coordinators who facilitated community participation in the planning exer-

cise. Their efforts took off with the use of the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) technique for encouraging the community to assess the educational problems and to create the internal realization of need for alternatives for access. At this stage all the members of the village community participated due to informal discussions, hectic negotiation and the persuasive skills of community co-ordinators. Wider community participation had helped to evolve a broad framework and criteria for setting community schools under the joint partnership of community and administration. This stage had a significant and full participation of community members, including women. At the subsequent stages of scaling up of schools, the community participation in planning the access was mostly confined to agreeing to the criteria and conditions for establishing the community schools through the organization of village meetings. However, with the lead taken by the tribal youths in establishing the community schools, the nature and approach of community participation at the initial planning stage has substantially changed. Instead of village members meeting together, acceptance for the establishment of a community school is taking place at the individual level.

### **Participation of village-level institutions**

In order to introduce leadership and group dynamism among the members of the community, two village-level committees were formed. Village education committees and mothers' committees were constituted to ensure community participation by directly intervening in the education of children. While the VEC is responsible for supporting the school system, the mothers' committee has the responsibility of managing the midday meals and ensuring regular attendance of the children.

The VEC had been closely involved in the planning and implementation of educational intervention as the first step towards commu-

nity participation. The VEC monitors activities such as teacher management, the enrolment and regular attendance of the children. VEC meetings are organized regularly and issues pertaining to the maintenance of the school-house, mobilization of parents towards total enrolment, and regular attendance are discussed. In the absence of the teacher for some reason, the VEC takes the responsibility of opening the school; therefore, unlike in the case of the formal school teacher's absence, the closure of the community school is avoided. In addition, the VEC also supplies certain materials to schools such as tables and chairs for teachers, mats and play materials for children, etc.

### **Frequency of VEC meetings**

It has been found that a VEC meeting is usually organized at least once a month in all the community schools. One of the reasons for the higher number of VEC meetings in community schools is attributed to their decentralized teacher management policy, which requires to record the minutes of every meeting for further reference. There is a distinct difference between the community schools and other schools in terms of the frequency of VEC meetings. Although the VECs are introduced in every village as a part of policy intervention under the District Primary Education Project (DPEP), many of them actually function in the way they were first envisaged. In contrast, 22 per cent of formal schools have not organized a single VEC meeting, and only in 21 per cent of schools has a monthly VEC meeting been arranged.

### **Participation in VEC meetings**

In VEC meetings of the community schools, the participation of all the parents with school-age children is mandatory, though other village members also participate. In other forms of school, the VEC meetings are restricted to members only. The effective functioning

of the VECs in community schools and their role in school management necessitates their replication in other schools provided the VECs are revitalized.

### Decision-making process

Decision-making is an important aspect of empowerment and the community is empowered with decisions pertaining to school management through the VEC. The study reveals that 80 per cent of the heads of household attend the VEC meetings even if they are not members (*Table 8.1*). Others have no time and a few of them said that they had not been informed. It is also possible that as these communities are poor and poverty stricken, they have found little time to note the announcement regarding the VEC meeting. A very few of them said that they do not attend the VEC meetings as the location is far from their house. But the crucial fact is that, when compared to other schools, the community schools have a better community participation record. Compared to community schools, only 21 per cent of the heads of household attend the VEC meetings in formal schools.

Table 8.1 Community members' participation in VEC meetings

Participation	Community schools		Other schools	
Participating	79.24	458	21.14	159
Not participating	20.76	120	78.86	593
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>752</b>

The issues discussed in the VEC meetings vary between community schools and formal schools. While in the VEC meetings in community schools, emphasis is on different aspects of education such as attendance of children, regular attendance of teacher, midday meal, fee payments, etc., in the case of formal schools, the VEC meetings focus mostly on one issue, i.e. midday meals (*Table 8.2*). About 80 per cent of the respondents answered that they were consulted before

any decision was taken. This is an indication of the democratic decision-making procedures followed by the VEC.

Table 8.2 Issues discussed in VEC meetings according to community members

Issues	Community schools		Other schools	
	Percentage of	Percentage of	Percentage of	Percentage of
	parents		parents	
Attendance of children	30.57	140	14.47	23
Attendance of teacher	12.45	57	3.14	5
Midday meal	37.77	173	82.39	131
Fees payment	19.21	88	0.00	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>159</b>

Responses were ascertained only from those who attend the meetings.

### Teacher management

As part of community responsibility the VEC was empowered not only to select and appoint teachers, but was also responsible for paying the salary of the teacher. During the first few years of operation the VEC used to collect the money from the community and pay the salary of the teacher, but with the scaling up of community schools, this function is now carried out by the regular pay centres. However, despite the change, in all communities the VEC is invariably in overall charge of teacher management, which includes the monitoring of the teacher's attendance, teacher selection and appointment, supervision of teacher activity and sanction of teacher's leave.

### Mothers' committee

The mothers' committee was established to help the VEC in the management and preparation of the midday-meal scheme. The role of the mothers' committee can be best understood from the fact

that the midday-meal scheme, which is centrally sponsored, provides only rice to the schools as a means to guarantee a minimum level of nutrition. Although this plan covered only formal schemes, the tribal administration extended it to the community schools, providing that the community would take the responsibility to provide cooked food. The tribal administration also gives cooking utensils, one rupee per child as management cost, and the cook's salary. The mothers' committee, by taking the responsibility of converting the raw rice into cooked meals, has turned the scheme into an incentive to attract students. The mothers' committee looks after the stock register and ration store of the midday-meal scheme. It was initially created to help in cooking the midday meal, but later a cook was appointed by the VEC to prepare the meals.

The mothers' committee makes specific efforts in collecting vegetables, pulses and firewood from the villagers for the preparation of the midday meal. During the harvesting season, the mothers' committee collects pulses from the households and stores them in the school's store, along with the normal ration. Similarly, vegetables are collected from the households according to the season. It also looks after the regular attendance of children. The scheme is successful and 83 per cent of community schools are serving cooked food. Due to the community's initiative, the teachers are freed of the extra burden. In other schools the midday meal is served uncooked and only raw rice is distributed. This positive feature of community schools could be implemented in other schools too.

### **Community participation at the individual level**

Community school progress, and the extent of participation and involvement of the community in the implementation process, can be traced by analyzing a few areas covered by the village-level committees, such as the construction of a school-house, environment

building, financial contribution towards the teacher's salary, participation in collective decision-making by the households, teacher management, enrolment drive, monitoring of school financial management, etc.

### Construction of the school-house

As far as community participation in the management of the school is concerned, the first thing that comes to mind is the community's responsibility in providing a house for the school. It is the community which has the responsibility for the provision of a house for the school. Without exception, all the village communities have responded positively to providing accommodation for the community schools, either by constructing a new school-house or by sub-letting a community member's house. In 70 per cent of the villages, a new school-house was constructed by the community providing man, material and money (*Table 8.3*). A significant fact is that almost all the households had participated in the construction of the school-house, apart from 8.65 per cent, and that was due to ill health.

Table 8.3 Parents' contribution in school-building construction

Type of contribution	Percentage of parents	
Participated in construction	62.80	363
Materials	26.99	156
Money	1.56	9
No contribution	8.65	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>578</b>

A high majority (63 per cent) of households participated in the construction of the school-house through labour, while 27 per cent provided material support and just 1.5 per cent contributed finan-



cially. The land for the school was invariably donated by one of the villagers. Although it was the first time that community members were participating in school provision, 90 per cent of heads of household felt that it was not difficult to contribute to the school construction in one form or another. What motivated them to contribute was interesting to discover; while the majority (65) of them felt it would be beneficial for their own children if the school was established, others felt that it was the collective decision of the villagers, which they felt obliged to support. More interestingly, among the heads of household covered in the sample were also parents who did not yet have school-age children, but they also took part. The enthusiasm and positive response of the community in providing the school-house illustrates that adequate mobilization and community-awareness building can lead to community participation. This is an aspect of community participation which can be replicated in formal schools.

Although the community was able to fulfil the responsibility of providing the school-house, the quality and durability of the school-house remained very poor as this was only a small thatched house, even without walls. In the absence of capacity for financial contribution, voluntary labour alone could not help the community to construct a good school building. In decentralized management, entrusting the responsibility of providing the school building to marginalized and poorer sections, invariably the quality and durability of the school building remained poor compared to the school buildings provided for the government schools. While a large number of formal schools have permanent, all-season buildings, most of the community schools do not have protection from rain and wind. Thus a new form of inequality in facilities for schools arose in tribal areas, particularly between the formal schools and the community schools.

## **Repair and maintenance**

A large number of schools were requiring repair and roof replacement besides suffering from a lack of maintenance. Many people were unhappy with the matter of repair and maintenance of the school building, a huge 80 per cent feeling that the community faced a problem in taking care of repair needs. As the thatched house deteriorated frequently, it would be unfeasible for community members to repair it every time as they were preoccupied in their daily struggle for survival. In other words, even free labour has an opportunity cost. Most of them felt that the school should have a permanent structure and that the government should take the responsibility for the construction of a permanent building. They also saw that in other areas the government was constructing buildings for schools and this had discouraged them from maintaining the school building. A few people had said that they had no time for free labour and only 32 per cent of respondents agreed to contribute in terms of free labour. In some cases it happened that even if they had leisure time, they spent it in entertainment activities true to their cultural tradition. However, the act of mobilizing the community for the repair and maintenance of a school building is a test for the leadership capabilities of the VEC and the teacher, a lot depends on them.

A serious question that needs to be answered is why did the village communities show such a spontaneous interest in the construction of a school building, yet then dither on the issue of maintenance? The fact is that while construction was a one-time affair and was a part of the agreement between the community and administration, maintenance, on the other hand, was a continuous process. The villagers did not find time to transfer their labour from their efforts to earn a livelihood. Secondly, their demand for a permanent building and their awareness that it was the government's responsibility, needs to be understood in the context of the changing socio-political con-

text of tribal communities. The phenomenal scaling up of the community schools and the different strategies adopted for community mobilization were the reasons for the lukewarm community response for participation. While the educated tribal youth had had responsibility for community mobilization for establishing schools, their major concern had been getting recommended for the teacher's post, rather than making serious efforts towards mobilizing community participation. Therefore, community participation remained limited and pertinent questions on the sustainability of such an effort must be asked.

### **Environment building**

As part of environment building, a school beautification programme was established. The community has been a willing supporter of the school beautification programme. The members of the community have provided the school with locally available and hand-made play materials. They have also helped in fencing the school, planting trees, and developing the school garden and horticulture on school land. All these activities show the depth of attachment that the school and the community share with each other. Participation in school beautification has not only helped in making school attractive for children, but community members also find occasion to visit the school to observe the children's learning. The environment building strategy has not only helped to improve the school, more importantly it has helped to strengthen the relationship between the school and the community. A close interaction with the school and teacher has led to the development of personal and cordial relations with the teacher. This has also helped to create interest among community members in the academic and outside activities of the school, besides providing access to the community into the school itself.

In other words, the fact of the community members entering the school premises has led to the removal of hesitation and inhibitions among them to interact with the teacher. They have continued to visit the school to watch the children learning. This could happen only because of community participation in school development activities. However, the teachers need persuasive skills to make this programme a continuous process. This is one of the important features of the community school which could be adopted in the formal school system.

Community schools have been able to close the gap between the school and community; as a result many parents are now visiting the school. This fact is reflected in the figure obtained from the field and gives a statistical view of the interaction between the school and community. Large numbers of parents (67 per cent) visit the school frequently while, in other schools, 52 per cent of parents do not visit the school at all and only 12 per cent of parents frequently visit the school (*Table 8.4*). This strategy of community involvement can be used in the formal schools to bridge the gap between the school and community and to create interest about the school. This increased interaction between the school and community needs to be practised in the formal schools too.

Table 8.4 Parents visiting the school

Frequency of visits	Community schools		Other schools	
Frequently	67.12	(388)*	11.97	(90)
Now and then	9.01	(52)	36.44	(274)
Never	23.87	(138)	51.59	(388)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>(578)</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>(752)</b>

\*Figures in parentheses indicate number of parents.

## Financial contribution

To provide a feeling of ownership and participation, the community was told to contribute financially for the payment of the teachers' salary. Although it was a nominal contribution, it had a lot to do with the psychological understanding of the community, in sharing the financial responsibility in a partnership.

In accordance with conditions imposed on the community, the parents continued to pay their share towards the teacher's salary. For the first few years, this practice continued unabated, but a perceptible decline took place during the second phase of scaling up.

From the time tribal youths took up community mobilization for establishing a community school, the slide increased alarmingly. During 1997-98, only 45 per cent of the target money was collected from the community. While 7 per cent of the parents expressed their inability to pay the contribution for teacher's salary, 48 per cent of parents were not asked to pay the money. It is not because the community is unwilling to pay, but teachers are not interested in taking it. The reason for the teachers' reluctance to collect money from villagers, lies in their aspiration to be included in the pay-roll of the administration and attain greater bargaining power for enhancement of salary and other benefits.

Household data show that 47 per cent of the respondents thought that it was not difficult to pay their share for the teacher's salary, while 7 per cent said that it was difficult to pay, and an alarming 45 per cent replied that they had not been approached. Out of the total contributors in 1997-98, all the parents paid in cash except for a negligible percentage who paid in kind (*Table 8.5*).

Table 8.5 Parents' opinion about school fee payment

Opinion of parents	Percentage of parents	
Not difficult	47.40	274
Difficult	7.09	41
Not applicable	45.50	263
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>578</b>

The frequency of payment also varied. Only 17 per cent could make a monthly payment, as against 16 per cent who were paying quarterly (*Table 8.6*). A considerable number (39 per cent) had no fixed time, they paid as and when they had money.

Table 8.6 Frequency of fee payment

Frequency of payment	Percentage of parents	
Monthly	17.46	55
Bi-monthly	3.49	11
Quarterly	16.19	51
Half-yearly	23.81	75
No fixed time	39.05	123
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>315</b>

Responses ascertained from those who are paying.

However, there are some community schools where the parents pay punctually. The VEC holds responsibility to collect the money in advance and teachers are regularly paid:

The village, by name 'Pamurai', is located in a very interior and inaccessible area, inhabited by one of the most backward and primitive tribal groups, called 'Khondu'. The community school in this village was started by the community voluntarily, even without any initiative from the administration, by seeing the neighbouring villages. The community employed an educated youth as teacher from a nearby village. The villagers pro-

vided him with a free house. He was provided food by the villagers in weekly turns, besides the contribution towards his salary. The community provided the school with a chair and table for the teacher, besides cane mats for the children. The villagers realized that

*“In our society parents used to train their children in the necessary skills for hunting, podu cultivation, collecting forest produce, etc. In the last few decades forests have disappeared, hunting has become only ritual, land for podu is scarce and production is very low. Now we need to teach different skills to our children to survive but we do not have such skills. Being illiterates we cannot help our children. It is only the school which can equip them. We have the responsibility to ensure their attendance at school. After that it is up to the teacher and the ITDA, who should take care of our children. We threaten our children to drown them in a stream if they do not go to school and we have taken a combined decision in the VEC meeting not to provide food to our children at home if they refuse to go to school”.*

This financial contribution by the community is under close scrutiny on various grounds. Education is a fundamental right of an individual and free and compulsory primary education is a constitutional obligation of the state and it is, therefore, legally untenable. The other aspect is that, looking at the subsistence level of the tribal economy and their poverty, the question would be, is it ethical to ask them to pay for their children’s education, however nominal it may be, while the well-off people are provided better facilities and free education? Replication of the policy of the community contributing towards teachers’ salaries in government schools may be difficult, as the children cannot be denied access even if the parents are unable to pay, as primary education is free for all. Secondly, if parents have the capacity to pay, they would prefer to send their children to private

schools, particularly the local English-medium schools, which are fast spreading even in the rural areas. But, at the same time, in tribal areas there are some villages, in spite of their poor economic condition, which are ready to pay for education and take care of the needs of the teacher in order to educate their children. This is because they see education as the only source for improving their conditions.

In some cases the community has taken the responsibility of providing food and shelter to the schoolteacher and has even helped him in his agricultural work. This sort of participation of the common man for the development of an educational infrastructure, in the form of a community school, stands out as a glowing example of community participation.

### **Educational awareness**

The relentless and effective community mobilization has resulted in high educational awareness among the community in matters related to the school. A very high percentage of parents (60 per cent) said that they send their children to school on their own, and a huge 93 per cent of parents confirmed that their children regularly go to the school. A similar percentage of parents prefer to continue the education of their children. It was also found that most of the parents (56.05 per cent) like to see their child attending secondary school. The reason may be that they have a role model in the form of community school teachers, who were appointed as teachers only after secondary level. The interesting fact is the perception of tribals towards education: 65 per cent of respondents felt that education provides access to knowledge and information, 68 per cent felt that educational achievement allows occupational mobility, and a huge 72.8 per cent replied that through education, better economic opportunities are available (*Table 8.7*). This perceptual change towards education is a great achievement of the community schools.



Table 8.7 Parents' expectation of education

Sl. No.	Parents' opinion	Percentage of parents
1.	Education provides knowledge	64.88
2.	Education provides occupational mobility	67.99
3.	Education provides economic opportunities	72.84

Total number of parents: 578.

Since the community is involved in many school developmental activities, a cordial and personal relationship with the teacher is developed, whereas in the case of formal schools, this is not possible, even if the teacher is a local man, due to lack of community involvement in school activities. The teacher of the formal school is treated as an outsider and interaction is restricted. In community schools, the community keeps close links with the teacher in terms of helping him to look after his personal work, providing food and shelter, etc.



## **FUNCTIONING OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS (TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS)**

The community schools were not only conceived as an alternative system of education for providing access, but also to improve school effectiveness by bringing innovative changes to overcome some of the perennial problems found in the formal schools. The slow progress of education among the tribes is due to the lack of availability of schools and also to structural constraints in the school system; the use of an alien language as the medium of instruction, the curriculum content and pedagogy that have no relevance to the local tribal cultural context. Moreover, the school schedule and vacations are not tied to local needs. Additionally, there are problems linked to teachers. These problems manifest themselves in the form of discontinuity between home and school socialization, children's lack of interest in education, fear of the school and teacher, low enrolment, high absenteeism, alarming drop-out rate and poor achievement levels. To overcome these structural anomalies of the formal schools, modifications, alternatives and changes have been incorporated in community schools, both in the provision and process of teaching-learning activities, namely:

- (i) School beautification, with the co-operation of the community, to make school attractive.
- (ii) Environment building and introduction of school-readiness activities in order to enable children to have a smooth transition from home to school.
- (iii) Use of the mother tongue: the tribal language as the medium of instruction at the initial stages, and then slowly switching over to the regional language.
- (iv) Adoption of a child-centred alternative pedagogy called 'Joyful Learning' and play-way method.

- (v) Adoption of culturally relevant, multi-grade materials, for Standards I and II, called the 'Joyful Learning' package.
- (vi) Changing the holidays and vacation according to local festivals and needs.
- (vii) Formation of cluster resource centres called 'school complexes' for academic support and monitoring.
- (viii) Appointing of cluster-level resource persons for regular academic monitoring and school-based guidance.
- (ix) Provision of midday meals to help the households and to improve the enrolment and regular attendance.

These changes and alternatives were specified as special features of community schools in their planning design by the ITDA. This was the first time that the internal problems of the school system were addressed, adopting alternative strategies through the community school system, while these problems remained unattended in the formal schools.

### **School beautification and environment building**

It had been felt that the physical appearance of the formal schools, and their location, did not attract and interest the children in school. With this in mind, environment building was envisaged when establishing the community schools. The idea of environment building has two aspects, namely physical improvement of the school building, and pedagogical reform. In an effort to build such an environment, particularly in improving the physical aspects, a school-beautification drive was initiated through community mobilization. The community was involved in the preparation and development of playgrounds and also in the production and supply of play materials for children, using local artists and local materials. The school-beautification drive included developing a school garden, planting trees, fencing the

school, and decorating the school with charts and drawings. In many cases the teachers themselves prepared low-cost teaching-learning materials to facilitate curricular transaction.

Although this programme should be a periodic activity, in most of the schools it was only a one-time affair. Lack of a permanent building and adequate space had been the problem for sustainability of such activities, as the decorations and improvements were easily spoiled due to rain, as the schools were mostly thatched houses, and often without even walls. Secondly, teachers failed to pursue the community for continued support for school beautification.

One of the important problems in the tribal context is that formal schools perpetuate a discontinuity between the school and home and it has impact on the socialization process of the child. While in tribal society, the socialization is smooth and children are accorded freedom, indulgence and the cultural pattern of learning is group oriented and they are allowed to learn at their own pace. Children are hardly ever punished. In other words, the socialization in tribal society is stress free and learning takes place in a more informal setting through mostly observing and assisting (Sachchidananda, 1987). One observes in a tribal village that children move around freely with the peer group, playing around the village, swimming in ponds, catching the birds and fishing, collecting the fruits and berries, riding the buffaloes, grazing the cattle etc. (Sujatha, 1987; Ratnaiah, 1977). Contrary to their free nature, in the school they have to sit orderly, listen passively, practise the alphabets monotonously; the medium of instruction is an alien language, individual achievement is insisted upon and silence is imposed. The children find it difficult to adjust to, and cope with, the regulations and process of school, and consequently develop a fear psychosis of school and teacher.

Therefore, in planning the community schools, importance was given to the smooth transition of the children from home to school. Towards this end, school-readiness activities such as action songs, story telling and outdoor activities were introduced to establish rapport with children, to obliterate the fear of school from the minds of the children, to develop communication skills and enhance self-confidence among the children. Another important strategy adopted was that VEC members and parents were encouraged to visit school frequently to observe the school activities and encourage the children to participate in learning. Serving of the midday meals by the mothers' committee had also not only attracted children to school, but had also provided a homely atmosphere.

### **Use of tribal language**

The tribals in this district speak their own tribal dialect. Although some of them, particularly menfolk, can understand and speak the regional language, the women and children are at a disadvantage in this regard; they cannot understand any language apart from their own, and this is more so in the case of some of the most primitive and backward tribes. Since the medium of instruction is the regional language, it is difficult for the tribals to understand. As a result of this, low performance, high drop-out rate and low enrolment are widespread among these communities (Sujatha, 1995).

One of the special features of the community school was the introduction of a local tribal dialect for classroom teaching in the initial stage. Since the student drop-out rate was very high in the first two standards, it had been realized that instead of having sudden exposure to an alien language, i.e. the regional language, which was the medium of instruction, the use of the mother tongue in the beginning of schooling and a gradual switch-over to the regional language, while learning the alphabets, would benefit the children from

community schools, who should not then find it a problem to join the formal schools in higher standards. The tribal dialect is expected to be used in school-readiness activities, teaching aspects such as cleanliness, health and hygiene so that the children can learn and understand the message. Attempts have also been made by some of the teachers to prepare a glossary of words of tribal dialect. Even though they gradually switch over to the regional language, most of the teachers have tried to explain in tribal dialect also, in order to make learning easier. The appointment of local teachers in the community schools has certainly put them in a better position to use tribal dialect. But in some cases the problem still persists. During the scaling up of community schools, many teachers were recruited from a relatively distant area and some of them belong to a different tribal group from that of the community where they teach, and in this case inter-tribal variation in language exists, thereby creating a little difficulty.

This is also a problem with the formal schools, but it has not been given due attention. It is a special feature of the community school which, besides diagnosing the problem, has also adopted remedial measures.

### **Rescheduling of vacation and holidays**

Tribals, in general, celebrate a variety of festivals, which are different from the common festivals of other social groups. This is the case with the tribal communities residing in the Vishakhapatnam district. Starting from the sowing of seeds on agricultural land, harvesting, eating the new crop, to the hunting festivals, they celebrate almost every occasion of sociocultural specificity. The festivals and celebrations continue for days on end. Children are part of the entire process of community celebration and, more often than not, have to miss school. This is one of the reasons for student absenteeism in

the formal schools. In view of this situation, holidays and vacation have been rescheduled according to local (village) requirements. Instead of Sunday, weekly '*shandy*' (market) day has been declared a holiday, and holidays for the general festivals have been replaced by the holidays for local festivals. Similarly, the summer vacation has been rescheduled according to agricultural work, the rainy season, etc.

However, after the scaling of schools in 1996-97, teachers have negotiated with the ITDA to retain the traditional pattern of holidays as in the formal schools. The unionization provided teachers an opportunity to bargain over holidays and vacation to suit their convenience, rather than suiting the tribal context. Of real concern is that the ITDA, instead of introducing the alternative holiday system in the formal schools, also came under pressure from the teachers' union and reintroduced the old pattern even for the community schools. Surprisingly, it was the community school teachers who had motivated the tribals to establish the community schools for their educational development. But, once they became teachers, they were more concerned with their own interests rather than those of the community, and started comparing their status with that of formal school teachers. These developments question the very sustainability of several initial features of the community schools.

### **Decentralized monitoring system**

After the scaling up of the community schools, academic monitoring of the schools became a problem because, due to the large number of schools spread over a large area, the normal administrative supervisory system could not extend support. As a result, a decentralized academic supervision and monitoring system was introduced by establishing cluster-level resource centres in one of the lead schools, called the 'school complex'. Each resource centre covers 25-30 schools. The cluster-level resource person is entrusted to visit the



school, once a month, and provide academic guidance. The cluster-level resource persons are given motorbikes in order to facilitate their movement in the area. They are supposed to visit both the formal and community schools, but preference is given to the community schools. The resource person's responsibility involves the supervision of the schools, monitoring of teachers' activities, providing school-based guidance to the teacher, and organizing a meeting with the villagers and the VEC. The meeting with the VEC culminates in a discussion on the problems and progress of the school. He also discusses enrolment, regular attendance of students etc. for maintaining better school-community relations. Apart from the cluster resource person, other educational functionaries also visit the schools for monitoring and supervision. The resource person visits the community schools once a month. This system has overcome isolation among the teachers. More importantly, the system has aided regular academic monitoring of schools, unlike in formal schools, which have rarely been visited.

The regular monthly meeting held at the cluster level helps the teachers to have peer-group interaction, besides reviewing schools with regard to enrolment and attendance of students. This is one of the important features of the community school, which can replicate the formal system not only in tribal areas but also in other areas.

### **Multi-grade materials and pedagogic changes**

Until 1996 the community schools were following the same textbooks and curriculum of formal schools, but were adopting the play-way method at the initial stage of teaching. However, the brief pre-induction orientation provided to teachers could not help in imparting the required teaching skills, as they were untrained. Realizing this problem, contextualized materials and comprehensive pedagogy were introduced as an alternative to the conventional system. It was

against this background during 1996, as a part of quality-improvement programmes in education, that multi-grade materials called the 'Joyful Learning' kit were prepared at the ITDA level by local teachers, adopting a broad framework of the 'Joyful Learning' package developed by an NGO for Standards I and II. The local teachers from the community and formal schools prepared the materials; the content consisted of lessons on language, mathematics and environmental education drawn from contextualized tribal culture and life, using largely local tribal vocabulary. These materials were based on the concept of child-centred education, with an emphasis on the fact that learning should be a joyful activity and the teacher a facilitator. Thus, the uniqueness of the materials was that they were not only local specific, but also prepared by the local teachers. This decentralized preparation of materials was possible due to the ITDA, which had the autonomy to adopt alternative strategies.

The 'Joyful Learning' materials were introduced for Standards I and II from 1996 not only in community schools, but also in all the formal schools as a supplement. Each school was supplied with a kit.

### **Components of the 'Joyful Learning' package**

The multi-graded materials in the 'Joyful Learning' kit consist of two major components. The first part consists of school-readiness activities. Initially, the children are prepared for learning through school-readiness activity, i.e. developing listening, speaking and motor skills. The school-readiness methodology includes action songs, story-line approach, outdoor activities, craftwork etc. The school-readiness activities cover the first ten weeks of schooling. The second part consists of graded materials in the form of printed cards arranged in sequence, categorized under different 'logos'. Different methods are envisaged for transaction of the materials. Both individual and group methods have been included to encourage mastery

learning. Some of the important approaches for teaching-learning methods are practising, recognition, quiz, games, role-play, puppetry, mimicry, mime, craftwork, outdoor activities, etc.

The multi-graded material in the kit is based on different principles of classroom transaction, which require adoption of different methods. Some cards require group work and practice, while some have been linked with outdoor activities. Similarly, some of the materials demand the need for craftwork, puppetry, mimicry, etc. The effective use of the material depends on the teacher's creativity, skills, innovativeness and interest, besides spending time on proper planning of use of materials according to the ladder system. More importantly, the role of the teacher turns into that of facilitator and guide, who needs to attend to the needs of individual children (Sujatha, 1998).

The ladder system is arranged according to the concept of effective learning. The materials are divided into different 'logos' and consist of different reinforcement and learning items. Both individual and group learning sessions have been introduced to facilitate the learning environment. Action songs are used to enthuse students and enlarge the span of attention. The objective of this material is to encourage children to participate fully and learn in a simple and systematic way from the contextualized and immediate environment where they can identify themselves.

One of the basic features of this multi-grade kit is its emphasis on the principles of group learning, with flexibility for an individual pace of learning, particularly in the initial stages, so that children do not fear failure or worry about achieving individual targets. Teachers have been trained to use this multi-grade material teaching methodology for effective transaction of classroom activities, and a guidebook is supplied. The 'Joyful Learning' package also has an in-built mechanism to enable continuous student evaluation. This allows the teacher

to adopt different methods for different students, in relation to their abilities and standards of performance. In contrast to the conventional mode of teaching, classes are no longer accepted as a homogeneous unit of students. Rather, the teachers are increasingly recognizing individual differences of students. The group learning procedure still persists, but children are allowed to learn at their own pace as a rule rather than exception. The emphasis on textbook learning has been replaced by an alternative system where learning takes place from immediate and pre-arranged cards.

A recent study on the effectiveness of 'Joyful Learning' methods and materials (Sujatha, 1998) shows that the introduction of this new method has brought a perceptible change in the school environment. The children find this method interesting and the introduction of this method has immensely benefited the students, not least in dispelling fears about the school and teacher. Now, they can freely associate themselves with school, curriculum and the teacher. As a result, enrolment has increased due to the entry of under-age and over-age children into the school.

The introduction of local dialect and language for classroom transaction and the adoption of the 'Joyful Learning' approach have provided the necessary confidence, communication ability and willingness to learn (Sujatha, 1998). The provision of midday meals, coupled with the alternative methodology, have contributed handsomely towards increasing enrolment and attendance. A fact, corroborated by parents, is that children no longer need chasing to attend school, as in earlier days.

The style of teaching adopted for the 'Joyful Learning' package has found acceptance among tribal groups as it has a resemblance to tribal cultural traits of learning. As with tribes in other areas, the culture of these communities also has a strong component of music and dance.

The use of the action-song package in the school-readiness programme has been able to bridge the cultural gap. Tribes, being close-knit and homogeneous sub-units, have a tradition of group learning, and the group-learning method, practised through multi-grade materials, has only reaffirmed their cultural learning and they associate themselves with it easily. This unique method of learning not only appealed to children, but also to their parents (Sujatha, 1998).

Most tribal people, including parents, now prefer to visit the school and oversee the children learning through different methods and they encourage them. The notion of school as a 'silence zone' has vanished. The community has taken up many responsibilities, one of which is to keep the school open in the absence of the teacher. Whenever the teacher goes for training or any mandatory work, he informs the community in advance and the community, in most of the villages, takes up the responsibility to keep the school open and allows children to distribute the materials and learn in groups. The midday meal is served, even in the absence of the teacher. This increasing interaction between the school and the community has been one of the bright spots of the alternative methodology.

Although the school-readiness activity in the 'Joyful Learning' package had been effectively implemented, the effective performance of other parts of the material in the curriculum remained a problem. In spite of inherent advantages, the alternative materials and methodologies required certain necessary conditions to have an impact. Conditions such as teacher competency, adequate infrastructure in schools, viable student strength, regular academic support, etc. are some of the areas of concern. In other words, alternative materials and methodology per se cannot ensure school effectiveness. In the majority of community schools the alternative materials were not implemented effectively (except for the school-readiness programme) due to lack of the necessary conditions.

One of the important problems was inadequate teacher competency. The centralized short training programmes could not develop methodological skills among the teachers (Sujatha, 1998), who were unqualified and untrained. Although the community school teachers were enthusiastic and willing to adopt alternative materials and methodologies, the teachers found it difficult to understand the intricacy of materials and methods due to lack of adequate competences. Despite training, the majority of the community school teachers (79 per cent) could not achieve the required mastery in handling the materials (Sujatha, 1998). As a result, the teachers could not follow the complexities of adopting different methods. The teachers did not plan the learning activities sequentially and follow the classroom principles envisaged in the kit; they did not prepare the time schedule for different activities and subjects. Teachers also lacked the necessary skills for adopting methodologies such as puppetry, mimicry, action-songs etc., which were essential in using some of the materials.

Another problem was that the teachers were ineffective in their changed role as facilitator and guide in the classroom, attending to individual student needs. Consequently, they relied on teachers who had adopted a group-work method, which kept children occupied with self-learning, and left the teachers free. Due to lack of individual and appropriate guidance, children often remained practising the initial series of alphabets only. The vocabulary used in the materials was mainly drawn from the local tribal language.

Similarly, the teachers were often unable to decide the learning levels of the students, either for assigning differential activity or making relevant groupings or providing individual attention to children. This had severely constrained the effective use of materials, consequently leading to ineffective learning and stagnation of students at lower levels of learning for a longer period. In the case of

the formal school the teachers, in single-teacher schools, had similar problems in understanding the methodologies of the 'Joyful Learning' kit in using the materials. However, the teachers in local-body schools had a better understanding of the methodology, but they lacked enthusiasm. No doubt the tribal children found it easy to follow and understand the materials; however, the vocabulary was drawn from the language of major tribal groups. The educationally most backward and primitive tribal groups found the language used in the materials as difficult as that used for the earlier textbooks. In spite of the decentralized preparation of materials, the heterogeneity of the tribal situation posed problems.

Apart from the lack of teacher competences, the absence of necessary physical facilities in schools also hampered the effect of the new pedagogy. The envisaged methodologies require an adequate building and physical space; for instance, to display the craftwork of students, charts, maps and other materials requires walls, whereas most of the community schools are thatched houses and without walls. Similarly, there is a need for adequate space for different groups of students to work without disturbing each other. The unavailability of space and lack of safety, particularly to keep the materials, has further obstructed the achievement and progress of the new method.

The process of learning requires viable student strength. Each school is provided with a kit, which does not create a problem as long as there is the required number of students. In community schools, where the number of students varies considerably from school to school, it creates a difficult problem. If the number is high, then not only is more space required but also more cards; if the number is low, the group is very small, making the group-work ineffective. In addition to this, another problem is the durability of mate-

rials. Since the cards are made up of thin sheets of paper and used independently by the children, they get spoiled easily. In such cases, neither the teacher nor the ITDA replaces them.

In order to facilitate the effective implementation of the alternative methodology, the cluster-level resource person is required to visit the school once a month and provide academic guidance. However, due to the large number of schools in each cluster, the resource person has been unable to visit monthly. Secondly, they have also failed to spend a full day in the school to help the teacher in understanding the alternative methodology.

The above analysis shows that improvement of quality of education not only lies in the provision of alternative materials and methods, but also depends upon the excellence of the delivery mechanism. It has been clearly established that teacher competency is a major dimension of quality improvement, and it is where the community schools have a problem. The decentralized teacher selection, particularly the policy of the local teacher, has led to the lowering of educational qualifications in the case of the community school teacher, coupled with lack of training. The result is that the introduction of an alternative pedagogy which requires competent teachers to improve the quality of teaching is in the doldrums. Therefore, teacher training is an important area of quality improvement, and it should not be overlooked in favour of quantity. It is a question of ethics and educational concern, whether quality can be sacrificed at the altar of quantity which, in course of time, jeopardizes the entire system. Particularly in the case of community schools, it has immense significance since there are only two classes in the school and it would not take the community long to assess the quality of education that it has been given. Therefore, for the benefit of education and the community, the teacher-training aspect must be given due emphasis and recognition. Similarly, alternative schools cannot be run in a void;



necessary conditions need to be fulfilled before any change can be generated.

As a result of the lack of necessary conditions, the effectiveness of the alternative materials is very limited with regard to the students' learning.



## **COST ANALYSIS OF EDUCATION IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

Investment in education takes place in two domains – the institutional or social domain, and the individual or household domain (Majumdar, 1983). In general, cost estimates in education are based on public expenditure on education. Public expenditure on education consists of recurring and capital expenditure. However, only the recurring expenditure is considered in estimating the unit or average cost of education. Costs on salaries, incentives, non-teaching cost etc. belong to recurring expenditure.

The other sources of educational expenditure are the private or household expenditure. The household expenditure comprises direct expenditure, such as payment of fees and other compulsory remittances made to the state account, and expenditure on textbooks, uniforms, private tuition, transport etc., which are not compulsory payments but are necessary inputs to facilitate the education of children. Information on household expenditure on education in India is mainly available from National Accounts Statistics and it shows that households in India do spend a large amount of resources on education. The households, in total, invest about 6.1 per cent of the GNP, of which 1.9 per cent as direct expenditure, and 4.2 per cent as opportunity cost (Tilak, 1988). These data do not provide information on household expenditure by levels of education. Similarly, the opportunity cost of education may vary based on the socio-economic status of the family.

The present study makes an effort to analyze expenditure on education based on primary data collected from sample schools and households for the year 1997-98. The institutional expenditure data were

collected from the community schools and other formal schools of different management types, to examine the comparative institutional expenditure in alternative and formal schools. The household expenditure on education was collected from sample households whose children were attending community schools and other formal schools. The average per-student household expenditure is compared between community schools and other formal schools besides examining its proportion to total income of the household.

The institutional expenditure is analyzed from different aspects. Firstly, the average salary of teachers from community schools and other types of formal schools are compared. Secondly, per-student expenditure is estimated for students studying in different types of schools, taking into account different cost components such as teaching cost, teaching aids, incentives, midday meals, boarding etc. Inter-school variation of the average per-student expenditure is also examined.

The household expenditure had been analyzed to calculate the average amount spent by the households on the education of their children. Average per-child household expenditure in community schools is compared with other formal schools in order to obtain a clear and comparative assessment of the cost of education at the institutional level. An attempt is also made to examine per-child household expenditure on different items, and the proportion of household investment on education of the children to the total household income.

### **Institutional expenditure**

The institutional-level expenditure comprises different components such as teacher's salary, non-teaching staff salaries, teaching aids, incentives, midday meals, boarding costs, etc. Teacher's salary

accounts for a major share of institutional expenditure and, therefore, it is important to make a comparative assessment of the salary structure of the teachers of community schools and other formal primary-school teachers managed by different bodies (*Table 10.1*).

Table 10.1 Average salary of teachers in different management-type schools

Management	Average annual salary (in rupees)
Community schools	3,800*
Single-teacher schools	40,006
Ashram schools	42,756
Government schools	45,892
Local bodies	36,213
Aided schools	45,122

\*Average salary of teachers in community schools refers only to salary paid by the government and does not include the parental contribution towards teacher's salary, in order to compare with other management schools where parents need not contribute.

The average salary of teachers in the community schools is 3,800 rupees (\$95) per annum, against an average salary of rupees 45,892 (\$1,147) for a teacher in government schools. It can be seen that the average salary of teachers in community schools is lower than that of teachers teaching in other types of school. In fact, average teachers' salary in government schools is nearly twelve times more than that of teachers of community schools. Similarly, the average salary of teachers in Ashram schools is eleven times higher than that in community schools. Surprisingly, the average teacher salary of the single-teacher school is ten times higher than that of community schools, though both of them have only Grades I and II.

A glance at the salary structure of teachers of various schools reveals that the government, aided schools and Ashram schools pay a higher salary to teachers than in single-teacher schools and local-body schools. However, the variation in teacher salaries between community schools and other schools is very large. On the other hand, variation in teacher salary among government, private aided, as well as among the teachers of primary schools managed by different bodies, is rather low. The major source of salary difference among these teachers can be accounted for due to the differences in their level of qualification and length of experience. Since a large number of teachers working in the local-body and single-teacher schools are paid a consolidated amount, the average salary of teachers in these schools is low. They continue to work at a consolidated salary because teachers are assured of becoming regular teachers after the three years' probation period and are entitled to draw the regular salary at par with the government school teachers.

In the case of community school teachers there is no such provision and their salary is linked to the number of students, unlike their counterparts in other schools managed by various bodies. The salary of the teachers in the community schools is based on enrolment figures and has little to do with experience and qualifications. Moreover, community school teachers are not paid salary during the two months' summer vacation. The fact remains that the teachers of the community schools receive only one-seventh of the salary received by the least-experienced and junior-most teachers of a school managed by other agencies. This discussion indicates that the average salary of a teacher in community schools is not only very low, but also that their prospects to have a higher salary and regular job are also very limited.

## Per-student expenditure

The per-student expenditure consists of a few items, notably teaching cost, teaching aids, incentives, midday meal, boarding etc. (see *Table 10.2*). It does not include parents' contribution towards teachers' salary. If parents' contribution were included, the per-student teaching cost would be Rs. 211.

Table 10.2 Per-student expenditure in different management-type schools

Type of school*	Expenditure per student (in rupees)						Total cost
	Teacher/pupil ratio	Teaching cost	Teaching aids	Incentives	Midday meal	Boarding	
Community schools (6)	30	121	13	65	267	-	556
Single-teacher schools (6)	40	1,000	10	65	250	-	1,325
Ashram schools (8)	29	1,469	3	178	-	2,854	1,650* 4,504**
Government schools (5)	36	1,286	3	98	214	-	1,601
Local-body schools (6)	34	1,055	9	98	238	-	1,400
Aided schools (6)	37	1,207	3	98	215	-	1,523

Figures in parentheses indicate number of schools.

\*Per-student expenditure without boarding cost.

\*\*Per-student expenditure including boarding cost.

Per-student expenditure varies according to the management type. Per-student expenditure is found to be lowest in the community schools, at Rs. 556 (\$13.5), against Rs. 1,650 (\$41) for the highest expenditure, which is found in the Ashram schools. Thus the average per-student expenditure in community schools is one-third of the average per-student expenditure in Ashram schools. However, if the boarding cost in the Ashram school is also added, the average per-student expenditure of the community school is as low as one-eighth of the per-student expenditure in the Ashram school. Similarly, per-student expenditure in the community schools is much lower than the other formal schools without residential facility. The per-student expenditure in community schools is only half of per-student expenditure in single-teacher schools, even though both of them have only Grades I and II.

### **Per-student teaching cost**

The per-student teaching cost depends upon the teacher/pupil ratio and the average salary of teachers. Per-student teaching cost is lowest in the community schools, when compared to formal schools of different management types. The average per-student teaching cost in community schools is 121 rupees (\$3) while, in Ashram schools, the per-student teaching cost is 1,469 rupees (\$36) even when the teacher/pupil ratio is more or less the same. There is a variation in per-student teaching cost among the other formal schools. This is primarily because of differential salary structure due to variation in qualification and length of experience of teachers.

Although the average teacher salary is higher in the government and government-aided schools, the per-student teaching cost in these schools is lower than that in Ashram schools. This is mainly due to the relatively larger size of the schools, indicated by a high teacher/



pupil ratio. The single-teacher schools have a low average per-student teaching cost in comparison to other formal schools, again due to a high teacher/pupil ratio. However, the crucial aspect is that the teaching cost is very low in community schools due to the low level of salaries paid to the teachers. Irrespective of the number of students, the teachers receive the same salary in formal schools, whereas in community schools this is not the case, where the salary of the teacher is linked to the number of students enrolled by fixing 300 rupees (\$7.5) as the minimum, and 500 rupees (\$12.5) as the maximum monthly salary.

Further, community school teachers are paid salary for only ten months of a year, depriving them of salary for the vacation period. Moreover, the per-student cost norm used as the basis for providing the teacher's salary is much lower than normally observed for student expenditure in government and other formal schools. Therefore, it is conceivable to have a situation where a community school teacher may be teaching a larger number of children, but still earn a lower salary than a teacher in a government or any other type of formal school. This illustrates how the teacher of a community school is doubly disadvantaged compared to his counterpart in a formal school.

### **Teaching aids**

Normally in the primary schools, 98 per cent of the recurring institutional expenditure on education is spent on teachers' salaries and only an insignificant amount is spent on teaching aids and other items. Under an education project Rs.400 (\$10) was given uniformly to all the schools, including the community schools, to buy the teaching aids. The per-student cost on teaching aids of community schools (Rs. 13) is higher compared to other schools, primarily due to low enrolment in community schools.

## **Incentives**

Students from the marginalized sections of society, particularly tribal students, are provided incentives for study. The incentives are given in the form of both cash and kind. Incentives at the primary level include the provision of free textbooks, uniforms and a small amount of scholarship. At primary level the incentives are uniform in all non-Ashram schools including the community schools. However, the amount of scholarship varies according to the grade in which the student is studying. In the case of Ashram schools, the incentives include two sets of uniform, box and bedding materials, writing materials and textbooks. The incentives in other management-type schools include one set of uniform, textbooks and writing materials, and scholarship. The amount of scholarship varies among different grades. The average per-student cost for incentives in community schools and single-teacher schools is the same, 65 rupees, as they operate only up to Grade II.; while in other management-type schools, the per-student cost is slightly higher as these schools educate students up to Grade V, and the cost of incentives is higher. Since in Ashram schools an extra set of uniform is provided and a special sum is paid to girls in the form of a cosmetics grant, the per-student incentives cost is higher than in the other schools. As far as incentives are concerned, no discrimination is made between the community schools and other formal schools.

## **Midday meal**

The midday meal scheme is another important dimension of the per-student total expenditure. It has two aspects, namely, expenses for the food ration; and the salary of the cook. Per-student allocation of expenditure on food is uniform across all the schools, and the

amount of the cook's salary is fixed and uniform to all the schools, irrespective of the number of students. Therefore, a higher per-student midday-meal expenditure is observed in the case of community schools.

### **Boarding cost**

The boarding cost of the Ashram school is unique to the Ashram residential school, as it is the only school of its type which provides boarding facility to students. The boarding cost of the Ashram school includes the student's stipend for food charges, salaries to the cook and caretaker of the hostel. The boarding cost of the Ashram school is 2,854 rupees (\$71), which is more than double the teaching cost. Of significance in this system is that the money spent on the boarding facility, to facilitate the learning, is much more than the money spent on the teaching cost. These extra efforts have made the per-student cost higher in these schools than in the formal schools. Although this boarding cost is not exactly an expenditure on education, one must recognize the fact that this amount is divested towards facilitation of learning among the marginal sections of the community.

### **Inter-schools variation**

The average per-student expenditure varies among schools of the same type and under the same management (*Table 10.3*). The inter-school variation in per-student expenditure among the community schools is mainly due to differential salary payment based on the social background of the students. For example, in the case of primitive tribal groups, the teachers are paid slightly higher than teachers for other tribal groups.

Table 10.3 Average per-student teaching cost:  
inter-school variation

Type of school	Average per-student teaching cost in rupees							
	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	School 6	School 7	School 8
Community schools (6)*	206	221	221	206	206	206	-	-
Single-teacher schools (6)	1,596	955	1,447	1,026	976	604	-	-
Ashram schools (8)	2,085	2,640	2,143	1,143	1,785	1,196	1,282	857
Government schools (5)	1,552	1,103	2,127	979	1,838	-	-	-
Local-body schools (6)	1,200	261	1,872	492	1,500	1,628	-	-
Aided schools (6)	1,718	1,959	2,317	1,198	583	369	-	-

Figures in parentheses indicate number of schools.

\*Does not include the fees paid by the households towards salary.

In the case of formal schools, inter-school variation is a common factor and is found in all aspects, including teaching cost, salary structure, etc. Variation largely depends on the teacher/pupil ratio. The other factors contributing to variation in per-student expenditure are qualification and length of experience of teachers. For example, the teacher/pupil ratio remaining the same, given the salary structure, a school with more qualified and experienced teachers will have a higher per-student expenditure when compared to another school which has less-qualified and less-experienced teachers.

### Household expenditure

Almost all of the households covered in the study have spent money on their children attending school. Although education is free, and compulsory, the parents sending children to community school

must pay an amount of five rupees monthly towards the teacher's salary, besides spending on other items. In the case of other schools, the households do not pay fees but they do spend money on various items. These sums are usually supplementary amounts to facilitate the schooling and vary among the households, based on several factors.

The average household expenditure on education ranges between a minimum of 20 rupees, which is half a dollar, to 1,000 rupees (\$25) as the maximum amount among the sample households (*Table 10.4*). The majority (62 per cent) of households spend up to 300 rupees on their children as private expenditure on education. Around 38 per cent of the households are spending more than 300 to 1,000 rupees (\$8-25) on the education of children. Nearly one-fourth of sample households is spending \$10 to \$25. Although there is variation in household expenditure, only a few households come under the category of the higher range of expenditure.

Table 10.4 Household average expenditure on education

Frequency of expenditure (rupees)	% of households*	
20-100	11.7	(129)
101-200	27.7	(305)
201-300	23.2	(255)
301 -400	11.6	(128)
401-500	9.2	(101)
501-600	6.2	(68)
601-700	4.5	(49)
701-800	3.5	(38)
801-900	1.5	(17)
901-1,000	1.0	(11)

\*Figures in parentheses indicate number of households.

## Average per-student household expenditure

While the community schools and single-teacher schools have only Grades I and II, schools under other management types have Grades I to V. Therefore, to facilitate comparison, the average per-student household expenditure was analyzed only for Grades I and II (*Table 10.5*).

The average per-student household expenditure in community schools is higher than the per-student household expenditure in all the other management-type schools for Grades I and II. The average household expenditure in community schools is 262 rupees (\$6.5), as against 198 rupees (\$4) for the aided schools. Average per-student household expenditure in community schools includes different components such as fees (Rs. 50) towards teacher's salary, clothes, writing materials, etc. In the case of other management-type schools, the households need not pay the fees since teachers' salaries are entirely provided by the government.

Table 10.5 Average per-student household expenditure

Management	Expenditure (in rupees) for Grades I and II	Percentage to total household income
Community schools	262 (585)	3.06
Single-teacher schools	236 (409)	2.44
Ashram schools	247 (101)	2.29
Government schools	230 (98)	1.87
Local-body schools	227 (97)	1.18
Aided schools	198 (76)	1.69

Figures in parentheses indicate number of students.

The per-student expenditure estimated on the basis of funding provided by the government in community schools is 556 rupees (see *Table 10.6*). As mentioned above, in addition to the government expenditure, the households spend 262 rupees per student. In other words, the households bear 32 per cent of the per-student expendi-

ture in the case of community schools. As can be seen from *Table 10.6*, this is the highest share borne by households in schools under any type of management. More importantly, the single-teacher school has the next highest share of household contribution in the total per-student expenditure, of only 15.1 per cent. Therefore, households sending children to community schools on average spend two-three times the amount borne by households sending children to schools under different management types.

Table 10.6 Per-student average expenditure

Management	Per-student expenditure (in rupees)			
	Public expenditure	Household expenditure	Total expenditure	Household expenditure as a share of total expenditure (%)
Community schools	556	262	818	32
Single-teacher schools	1,325	236	1,561	15
Ashram schools*	1,650	247	1,897	13
Government schools	1,601	230	1,831	13
Local-body schools	1,400	227	1,627	14
Aided schools	1,523	198	1,721	12

\*Boarding cost is not included.

Even if the per-student expenditure is calculated leaving aside the fees paid by the household, the household share in total per-student expenditure works out at 26 per cent in the case of parents sending their children to community schools, i.e. the non-fee household expenditure is higher among the children attending the community schools. In other words, the relative burden of parents sending children to community schools is higher than that of parents sending children to schools under other management types. This is true both in terms of the absolute amount spent by the households and in terms of the households' share in total per-student expenditure.

The community schools are established in those areas where very poor people live. If one considers the share of expenditure on education to the total household income, one may notice that the relative burden again is on those households sending children to community schools. For example, households sending children to community schools spend around 3 per cent of the household income on educating a child, the corresponding share among households sending children to local-body schools is only 1.18 per cent, 1.69 per cent in the case of aided schools, and 1.87 per cent in the case of government schools (*Table 10.5*).

From the household expenditure figures, it is evident that the belief that tribals are provided subsidy for education is not true particularly in the case of community schools. In fact, the households have to spend a considerable amount on education. Out of total household expenditure on education in community schools, around 20 per cent (50 rupees) is spent on teaching cost, 45 per cent on clothes, and the remainder on writing materials such as a slate etc. Households have to purchase clothes for school children since the government provides only one set of clothes, which is not adequate; moreover, the uniform is supplied normally at the end of the academic year. In the case of Ashram schools, two sets of uniform are supplied at the beginning of the year, therefore the amount spent on the purchase of clothes by households is comparatively less in this case.

Although community schools have improved access to education, the education provided becomes relatively more costly to the households when compared to other arrangements, such as those in formal schools. This illustrates that community schools are cost-saving alternatives for the government, but they are not necessarily a less expensive arrangement for households. Therefore, the argument that community schools are less expensive is not at all true from the point of view of households. In fact, one can argue that the innovation of



community schools has succeeded in reducing the financial burden on the government on two accounts. Firstly, by paying a low salary to teachers, the government saves resources; secondly, by transferring the financial burden to the households, the government is relieved of part of the financial burden.

The average household expenditure evidently proves that, in spite of free education and other incentives provided by the government, the households still need to incur expenditure on education in order to send their children to school. This expenditure may not look compulsory for the households, but is compulsory in practice. The expenditure on education of children as a proportion of the total household income shows that it varies among households, depending upon the type of school in which children are enrolled (see *Table 10.5*).

The proportion of household income spent on education in community schools is higher than that in other management-type schools and local-body schools. The amount spent by the households may look smaller and insignificant but, considering the economic condition of the tribal households, the proportion of income spent on the education of children constitutes a significant share. In the case of community schools the household expenditure includes the contribution towards teacher's salary, clothes, writing materials etc. In the case of Ashram schools, the major portion of the money is spent on transport and pocket-money, besides the purchase of clothes and writing materials.

The analysis of institutional and household expenditure on education in tribal areas, and a comparison of educational expenditure in the community schools and other formal schools managed by various bodies, bring two major observations. First, the teacher's salary is extremely low in the case of community schools. Community school

teachers, being tribals themselves, belong to the marginalized and deprived sections of society. The salary of the community school teachers is linked to the enrolment and is estimated based on a very low per-student expenditure. This puts the teacher of the community school at a disadvantage vis-à-vis formal school teachers. Thus they are locked in a double-disadvantage position. Consequently, it would be difficult either to sustain teacher motivation or to expect quality of education under such circumstances. The government has chosen to invest very little in providing access to education through alternative schools for the marginalized groups. The investment by the government is not only low, but the household share of expenditure in community schools is higher.

Secondly, the data indicate that tribal households spend a considerable amount on the education of their children, while primary education is largely free. The proportion of household expenditure to total income shows that the tribal families have to spend significant amounts if they want to send children to school. This is more so in the case of households sending children to community schools. Given their poor economic condition, it is a very difficult decision on the part of the households to seek education for their children. There is no doubt that the community schools are the most viable alternative to improve access to education in these sparsely populated and inaccessible areas. Therefore, the government has to work out a mechanism to improve the average salary of teachers in community schools and also conceive strategies to reduce the household expenditure on education in order to encourage households to send their children to school.

## PERFORMANCE OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Against the backdrop of decentralized teacher management, changes in school organization, alternative materials and methodology etc. adopted in community schools, it is interesting to examine the functioning of schools in terms of teachers' regular attendance, students' attendance and levels of student achievement vis-à-vis formal schools.

### Teachers' regular attendance

One of the reasons for adopting decentralized teacher management is to monitor the teachers' regular attendance and effective functioning of the school. The teachers' regular attendance depends upon factors such as teacher's residence, accountability to the community, and monitoring by the administration. Since the majority of community school teachers are residing in the same locality, or within a distance of one to two kilometres, this facilitates the regular attendance of teachers. A comparison of teachers' attendance of community schools and that of formal schools shows that the former have better attendance records than the latter (*Table 11.1*).

Table 11.1 Teachers' regular attendance according to community members

Regularity	Community schools		Formal schools	
Regular attendance	84.95	(491)	28.06	(211)
Few days a week	8.13	(47)	59.97	(451)
Irregular attendance	6.92	(40)	11.97	(90)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>(578)</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>(752)</b>

Figures in parentheses indicate number of parents.

In 85 per cent of the sample community schools, the teachers' attendance is regular, whereas 8 per cent of teachers have been attending the school for just a few days a week as they commute from a long distance. Seven per cent of the teachers are found to be regular absentees. In the case of formal schools, the teachers' attendance record varies vastly. In single-teacher schools which are under management, the teachers' attendance is found to be very poor; only in 28 per cent of the schools do the teachers attend regularly. The non-attendance of teachers in other schools varies, ranging from a few days a week to months together. In this category of school the majority of teachers reside beyond five kilometres' radius of the school. In other types of school such as the Ashram schools, schools run by local bodies and the education department and private-aided management, the teachers' attendance is very high as these schools are mostly located in larger and central villages. In the case of other schools, the teachers' regular attendance is maintained due to the provision of a headteacher, better monitoring system, and the teachers are, by and large, non-locals. However, these schools make up less than 20 per cent of the total number of schools.

In single-teacher schools the interaction between the school and the community is not only limited but also the VECs, although established, are not functional. Consequently, there is no accountability to the community from the teacher. He remains under the control of the administration, where the monitoring and supervision system is poor. The lack of a clear policy on teacher's transfer affects those teachers who are posted in remote areas and have little chance of a posting to a better place; this kills their interest and they are often absent from the school. Many of these teachers are local people and benefit from kinship ties, and the communities do not want to play a part in dismissing fellow kinsmen from the government service. One of the reasons for teacher absenteeism in the single-teacher schools

is the extra work that is thrust on them, such as census duties, the immunization programme, etc., meaning that they miss certain school days. This is not so in the community schools.

### Students' attendance

The average students' attendance record is higher in the community schools in comparison to other schools (*Table 11.2*). The active participation of the VEC, the mothers' committee, regular functioning of schools and the implementation of midday meals help to maintain a high attendance.

Table 11.2 Students' attendance pattern in different schools

Type of school	Percentage of attendance*		
	Boys	Girls	Total
Community schools	84.90	86.58	84.91
Single-teacher schools	77.49	75.83	76.61
Ashram schools (residential)	80.43	73.70	76.54
Other-management schools	75.50	77.38	76.32

\*Attendance for only sample schools (139).

Although non-community schools show an impressive attendance record in the register, the reality is quite different, particularly in the case of single-teacher schools, where the data are very unreliable. In these schools teacher absenteeism is so high that student attendance figures are impossible to obtain. For the provision of the midday-meal scheme, a minimum of 75 per cent attendance is mandatory, and the teacher manipulates the register to show a particular level of attendance, even if the students remain absent (Sujatha, 1995). The same is the case with the Ashram school, where the monetary allocation is

based on the number of students and their attendance. In these schools, although the attendance, particularly in lower grades, is quite low, it is always manipulated by entering an inflated attendance figure in order to maintain the benefits.

### Stagnation and drop-out

Grade repetition is very high in all the schools in tribal areas and alarmingly high in the community schools. An enormous 72 per cent of students are retained in the same grade for more than a year (*Table 11.3*). The main reasons for this are the enthusiasm among the community members and the zealous enrolment drive, coupled with the midday-meal scheme, which have brought a large number of under-age children. Second is the facility in community schools for admission to be continued throughout the year. Another reason is the introduction of the multi-grade material system, which is to be completed in the first year, and unless this is completed in the first year, promotion to the next grade is not permitted. In formal schools, grade repetition is lower in comparison to community schools but higher in comparison to the provincial figure.

Table 11.3 Drop-out and repetition in sample schools

	Grade I			Grade II		
	Community schools*	Formal schools**	Aided schools***	Community schools	Formal schools	Aided schools
Enrolment	100.00 (763)	100.00(1890)	100.00 (298)	100.00 (96)	100.00 (1253)	100.00 (221)
Promoted	21.62 (165)	47.41 (896)	50.6 (151)	59.37 (57)	76.69 (961)	68.32 (151)
Repeated	72.35 (552)	43.65 (825)	44.9 (134)	22.92 (22)	16.28 (204)	26.24 (58)
Drop-out	6.03 (46)	8.94 (169)	4.5 (14)	17.71 (17)	7.03 (88)	5.44 (12)

\*Number of sample community schools: 58.

\*\*Number of sample formal schools: 77 (includes all categories).

\*\*\*Number of sample aided schools: 58.

According to provincial official data, drop-out in tribal areas, in formal schools in Grades I to V, is 74 per cent. In the present study

the drop-out rate in formal schools vis-à-vis sample community schools was examined. Quite surprisingly, the drop-out rate in Grades I and II is very low in the sample schools compared to state-level data on the drop-out rate. In sample community schools, the drop-out rate is only 6 per cent in Grade I as against 9 per cent in formal schools, and 4 per cent in private aided schools. Similarly, the drop-out rate is low in Grade II. The drop-out rate in Grade II in community schools has increased; it is higher than for the first grade and also in comparison with the other schools. However, this low drop-out rate, particularly in formal schools, is rather surprising.

The provision of the midday-meal scheme is responsible for the low drop-out rate and children keep coming to school at intermittent intervals. From the teacher's point of view it is imperative to maintain the student strength or else the school will be declared non-viable and the teacher will face action.

### **Transition to Grade III**

Since the community schools have only Grades I and II, the students are expected to join Grade III elsewhere. For this, they have to join either Ashram schools, or other schools with higher grades. The second option is used as these schools are situated in far-away places and do not provide a residential facility. There are only 83 Ashram schools in the district, out of which 40 are primary, 23 upper primary and 26 are high schools. For 926 community schools, there are only 63 Ashram schools which provide admission to Grade III onwards (primary and upper primary). Except for a few high schools, others only give admission at Grade VI. These schools have to serve 926 community schools, apart from formal single-teacher schools and students from other schools. The transition rate from Grade II to Grade III has been found to be very low (*Table 11.4*).

Table 11.4 Transition rate of students to Grade III from community schools

	Boys	Girls	Total
1996-97			
Grade II strength	573	247	820
Number of children who joined			
Grade III in Ashram schools	155	19	174
in 1997-98	(27.05)	(7.69)	(21.22)

Number of sample community schools: 77.

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage.

During 1997-98 only 174 children out of 820 from 77 sample community schools joined Grade III, in different Ashram schools. This amounts to only 21 per cent. The transition rate among girls is much lower than for the boys. This illustrates that parents do not send girls away to join the higher grades in Ashram schools. The reasons for this are varied. Education in the Ashram school is costlier than studying in the home village school. In spite of free board and lodging in Ashram schools, the parents must spend money on clothes, pocket-money, transport, cosmetics etc. There are very few Ashram schools exclusively for girls and parents are often reluctant to send their girls to co-educational schools. Thus, the girls are disadvantaged if they should wish to continue education after completion of standard II in the community school. This, in turn, creates a larger gap between boys and girls in educational participation. Provision of community schools up to standard II has created this problem, thus the increased access through the use of community schools is rendered null and void.

This low transition rate indicates the high repetition rate in community schools, and discontinuity, as well as the problem of the considerable distances between the Ashram schools and the community schools. It further explains the low proportion of Ashram schools in



comparison to community schools. The limited intake capacity of Ashram schools, as well as an inadequate infrastructure facility, further obstructs the transition from Grade II to Grade III. The problem is exacerbated in the case of girls, as Ashram schools for girls are few and far between, and the parents do not like to send their girls to co-educational Ashram schools. With this kind of transition rate, the sustainability of community schools is under threat and they cannot help in the universalization of primary education. Community school students do not wish to study in other schools for higher grades, due to the distance and lack of facilities in Ashram schools. The parents (95 per cent covered in the sample) also prefer to send their children to community schools. The topographical conditions and lack of motivation among students deter them from pursuing education at distant schools. The students who fail to join the third grade in Ashram schools either continue in the same school, or terminate their schooling. The provision of the midday-meal scheme encourages such repetition and stagnation in community schools.

In comparison with the community schools, the transition rate in the formal schools, which have up to Grade V, of students transferring into Grade III and above is higher. However, in the case of single-teacher schools the problem remains because there are only Grades I and II.

### **Levels of student achievement**

We seem to know least about the most important issue, that is, the effect of decentralizing teacher management on learning outcomes, and scant attention is given in the literature (Gaynor, 1998).

In order to examine students' competency level an achievement test, prepared by the NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training) and used for the District Primary Education

Project baseline assessment, was administered (April, 1998) for language and mathematics for Grade I children, numbering 1,972 students covering 139 sample schools. The test was administered to students who had completed Grade I during 1997-98 (last working week of the academic year, April, 1998). The test did not require children to write as it was based only on identification and reading. Out of the total sample of students, 711 were drawn from 59 community schools and the remaining students were from the formal schools. The sample constituted 8 per cent of the total number of schools in the tribal areas in the district, whereas the sampled community schools constituted 40 per cent of total sample schools. The schools were selected based on a multi-staged stratified purposive sample giving representation to different locations and schools under different managements. Apart from the achievement test, the learning level in registers such as 'Know what we are doing' for the month of April 1998, were analyzed of 97 sample schools for which the registers were available.

### **Achievement test results**

The average mean score in language for total sample students was 38.82 per cent, whereas in mathematics it was 34.94 per cent (see *Table 11.5*). The general achievement level in the sample area is very low as the expected mean score achievement, according to minimum levels of learning, is at least 80 per cent. Although the community schools have shown better performances than formal schools in terms of teacher's regular attendance, students' attendance and their retention in the system, surprisingly the levels of student achievement are very poor and lower than in the formal schools.

Table 11.5 Learners' achievement mean score percentage (Grade I)

Type of school	Mean score percentage		Number of students
	Language	Mathematics	
Community schools	34.93	28.76	711
Single-teacher schools	37.26	32.74	518
Ashram schools	38.33	31.98	162
Other schools	45.10	45.28	581
<b>For all schools (Total)</b>	<b>38.82</b>	<b>34.94</b>	<b>1972</b>

Number of sample schools: 139.

Further, the average mean scores for language (34.93 per cent) and mathematics (28.76 per cent) in community schools are much lower than in other management formal schools (41.01 per cent in language and 38.42 in mathematics) in the same area. It may be noted that the single-teacher schools show equally poor results and, therefore, the difference between them and community schools is marginal (37.26 per cent in language and 32.74 per cent in mathematics). Within the community schools there is considerable variation in the achievement levels of boys and girls (see *Table 11.6*). Interestingly, the difference between the achievement scores of community schools located in roadside and interior areas is insignificant.

The analysis of achievement levels of students in different Mandals (administrative units) shows wide variation, ranging between 19.08 per cent as the lowest, to 42.78 as the highest per cent in language. Similarly, in mathematics, the community schools show different performances in different Mandals. Since both the Mandal and the management-type schools show varied achievement levels, it is difficult

to say whether the cause is the location or management which influence achievement levels. Therefore, an important question is, if any one type of management school performs at the same level in all the Mandals?

Table 11.6 Grade I learners' achievement mean score (%) by location and management-wise

Name of the Mandal	Community schools		Single-teacher schools		Ashram schools		Other schools	
	Language	Maths.	Language	Maths.	Language	Maths.	Language	Maths.
Anantagiri	42.78	31.85	30.42	27.92	58.24	50.00	42.04	56.67
Arakuvally	37.76	30.53	31.15	14.10	21.58	17.89	27.36	40.94
Chintapalli	30.24	24.35	25.89	28.44	-	-	53.19	41.81
Dumbriguda	40.93	32.09	17.19	14.69	33.85	9.23	35.00	41.86
G.K.Veedhi	38.01	46.16	43.00	37.56	54.38	50.00	38.75	35.00
G. Madugula	43.06	37.22	29.42	26.00	8.33	3.33	54.26	47.87
Hukumpeta	36.12	21.03	51.78	41.36	36.92	36.15	52.23	39.32
Koyyuru	34.83	23.50	42.92	49.38	42.97	48.13	33.20	32.81
Munchangiput	28.39	23.04	51.11	50.37	32.68	18.21	51.52	52.73
Paderu	36.45	29.21	51.02	30.91	48.18	49.09	56.42	63.21
Pedabayalu	19.08	17.18	41.74	41.30	39.00	26.00	42.30	51.80

In order to understand whether the location or the management is the dominant determining factor of the achievement level, an analysis is made taking both the Mandal and other types of school together (*Table 11.7*). Very surprisingly, the achievement means of community schools and other management schools vary significantly in different Mandals; this means that neither the location nor the type of school really determine the achievement levels of the students. For instance, in the community schools, which have the lowest aggregate, the mean score varies largely in their achievement levels in different locations. Similarly, other formal schools also have different levels of achievement in different locations.

An attempt was made to examine the achievement levels of children belonging to different tribal groups. But the achievement lev-

els also varied. Children from the advanced Konda Dora tribe had the highest mean score percentage, both in language (42.69 per cent) and mathematics (35.09). While among the backward tribal group, Konda Kammari, the achievement level was at the lowest.

From the above analysis of the achievement pattern it is evident that, irrespective of location, the different kind of schools showed differential achievement. In other words:

- (i) All schools of one type did not have the same level of performance.
- (ii) The performance of different management schools did not have similar levels of achievement either in one location or in all the locations.
- (iii) The achievement levels of individual tribal groups varied in different locations, which means that management and the tribe per se are not determining levels of achievement.

**Table 11.7** Learners' achievement mean score (%) by social background and management-wise (Grade I)

Learners' social background	Community schools		Single-teacher schools		Ashram schools		Other schools	
	Language	Maths.	Language	Maths.	Language	Maths.	Language	Maths.
Bagatha	36.24	31.79	43.15	42.24	31.00	24.00	40.93	35.64
Gadhaba	26.25	18.33	45.00	46.67	44.00	44.00	61.5	82.50
Kodhu	34.16	26.71	25.50	26.00	-	-	77.31	78.46
Konda Dora	42.69	35.09	42.57	35.45	40.98	33.90	45.82	48.09
Konda								
Kammari	15.86	-	47.83	-	51.66	-	48.94	49.09
Kotiya	29.23	20.00	20.81	7.44	38.75	21.25	37.96	38.15
Mali	28.50	14.00	76.67	53.33	-	-	73.75	65.00
Nooka Dora	34.40	33.10	17.14	25.71	50.00	30.00	46.84	61.05
Porja	36.76	32.43	28.97	27.24	32.62	15.24	53.57	62.14
Valmiki	37.78	26.67	25.45	17.27	37.89	38.16	51.27	45.54
Other tribal groups	19.00	13.14	26.79	24.29	55.00	10.00	37.43	36.22
Non-tribals	28.75	25.00	53.00	40.00	45.00	50.00	31.35	47.03

## School-wise achievement level

As the location, management type, and tribe are not the deciding factors for achievement scores, further examination is required of the levels of achievement by considering the school as a unit. This would give a better understanding of the factors that facilitate or affect the achievement of children. Each school is unique and has its own distinctive methods in terms of the process of educational activities, extent of activities and their utilization. The teacher variation and school-level factor have been found to be more significant than the type of management, location and group variable (Varghese, 1994) when a wide gap in the performance level of children in different schools has been observed.

School-wise mean score achievement levels of students have been analyzed for the entire sample schools. This analysis proved that the individual school is an important unit for the levels of achievement, rather than location, management or tribal group. There was a significantly large variation among the achievement levels. Among the community schools the highest mean score in language was 74.12 per cent, the lowest score was 1.67 per cent. Similarly, in mathematics it ranged between 76.47 to zero per cent among 52 sample community schools. Similar patterns of variation are seen in the achievement levels in all other formal schools.

The following table (*Table 11.8*) shows the number of schools under different frequency of achievement levels. In language, a little more than one-fourth of community schools had achievement mean scores ranging between 20 to 30 per cent, while less than 4 per cent of them had an achievement mean score of 70 to 76 per cent. However, in the case of formal schools, although there was a similar pattern, it was in different ranges. In the case of mathematics, nearly

one-third of community schools had mean scores ranging between 10 to 20 per cent only, and only one school had above 70 per cent.

Table 11.8 Frequency of mean score (%)

Frequency of mean score (%)	% of community schools	
	Language	Mathematics
0.0-10.0	3.8	11.5
10.01-20.0	13.5	28.8
20.01-30.0	26.9	15.4
30.01-40.0	21.2	15.4
40.01-50.0	25.0	17.3
50.01-60.0	0.0	5.8
60.01-70.0	5.8	3.8
70.01-77.0	3.8	1.9

Total number of schools: 52.

One of the distinguishing factors for various students is parental education. In the case of the community school students this factor does not play a significant role because the majority of the parents of these students are illiterate. The following table (*Table 11.9*) illus-

Table 11.9 Learners' achievement mean score (%) by parental educational qualification

Parental educational qualification	Father			Mother		
	Mean score (%)			Mean score (%)		
	Language	Mathematics	Number of learners	Language	Mathematics	Number of learners
Illiterate	35.01	28.33	670	35.33	28.85	698
Literate	30.53	39.47	19	16.15	26.15	13
Primary	35.77	35.38	13	0.00	0.00	0
Up to secondary	40.56	32.22	9	0.00	0.00	0

trates that the difference between the community school students is marginal as far as parental education is concerned.

### **The analysis of school registers: 'Know what we are doing'**

As a part of implementation of multi-graded materials and the 'Joyful Learning' approach, the teacher must continuously assess the learning levels of students by recording the students' progress, indicating the level of learning of each child with reference to the multi-grade material series. The learning levels of 1,920 students in Grade I were analyzed for language and mathematics, it also showed that the children were at different levels of learning as they were involved in different series of the multi-graded material. The levels of learning varied among different schools. In the case of community schools, the number of children who reached the higher series of learning was very few (4.48 per cent). However, the same kind of pattern was found in the single-teacher schools. In community schools, nearly 20 per cent of the students were at the level of the school-readiness stage, even at the final part of the year. The situation in the case of single-teacher schools was not much different from the community schools. As discussed earlier, a large number of children stagnate at different levels of practice on the multi-grade cards; it was explained by the teachers that the multi-grade kit consists of a large number of cards with a self-learning method and many students find it easy and interesting to play with the same set of cards for a longer period, without realizing that it will delay their progress.

### **Common characteristics of high-achieving schools**

There are six villages among the sample community schools which have a mean score of above 50 per cent in both language and mathematics. The examination of the profile of the schools illustrates that



there are certain common characteristics in these villages and schools. In all the six schools the teacher resides in the same village where the school is located. They have good understanding of the multi-grade kit. All of them have had 10 to 12 years of schooling as educational qualification. These teachers have prepared weekly plans and have followed the daily timetable. In these villages, community participation and school development were significant and continuous. In two villages, the teacher was provided free accommodation and food by the villagers. In two villages, the community provided support to the teacher in his agricultural work. In all six villages the VEC, along with the teacher, have met monthly and recorded the minutes of the meeting. In two of the villages the community members have taken responsibility to see that all the children attend school regularly. In all six villages mothers' committees have been active, ensuring provision of the midday meal and regular attendance of the students.

The community schools have proved themselves quite successful in providing considerable enrolment, retention and, importantly, the teachers have a good attendance record. Innovative methods, alternative pedagogy and materials have even been introduced, but what is perplexing is their failure in ensuring the students' achievement level. The problem lies in the lack of competences among the teachers. As the educational qualification and training were relaxed for the community school teachers, it affected the school effectiveness. The same is the case with the single-teacher schools, which are formal schools, which have a similar pattern in teacher recruitment. This argument is further bolstered by the profiles of the high-achievement schools. The teachers in those schools were more qualified and better trained and, as a result, they could understand the materials better. The success and sustainability of the community schools

depend on the schools' effectiveness, which is linked to teacher competency and performance. Therefore, equal, or more emphasis, should be placed on teacher competency building, while planning alternative schools.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The emergence of the concept of community schools in the context of tribal areas was a result of the culmination of several processes at the community and administrative levels. Extensive developmental work, namely building infrastructure, promotion of alternative economic activities, introduction of market mechanisms etc., among the tribal communities, was part of a community mobilization drive that ensured community participation. This, in the long run, proved catalytic in creating awareness about the prevailing educational deprivation in the community and generated a demand for access.

Similarly, the decentralized administration in the form of the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) facilitated the process of educational access by relaxing and improvizing the standardized norms. This was possible because of ITDA, which is an autonomous body and functions in a project mode. Such responsiveness from the administration is the precondition for creating the necessary environment for the genesis of the community schools.

Establishment of community schools was also possible due to the community's ability to take responsibilities and its capacity to discharge them effectively. In this respect the community's recent experience, of participation in planning and implementation of the externally funded development project, proved to be beneficial. Further, the sociocultural tradition of the tribal community where community participation is embedded, has allowed it to accept the partnership and take responsibility for managing the schools.

The establishment of community schools was followed by a massive effort to expand them. The scaling up of community schools was

possible, however, due to the presence of certain conditions. Firstly, it was the commitment and conscious efforts of ITDA to hold responsibility for improving access to schooling in these areas. Secondly, it was due to the demonstrative effect of the successful functioning of the initial community schools. Thirdly, the community's realization of the need for educational access, led to an increased demand for these schools. Fourthly, was the initiation of different approaches of community mobilization in order to involve the community in setting up these schools. In a nutshell, the prevalence of these conditions had helped in their scaling up over a short period. The role played by the local administrative functionaries and the educated tribal youth in community mobilization had increased the pace of scaling in a wider area. Finally, the administration decided to go for rapid expansion as it realized that establishing community schools is a cost-effective measure. In fact community schools have been opened in many villages where a formal norm-based school could have been opened.

Another aspect of the phenomenal growth of community schools at a later stage and in its sustained growth was the decisive role played by the administration. The administration formulated a policy, which treated these schools on par with the formal schools and provided incentives. This had enhanced the status of community schools. As a result, community schools gained acceptance among the academic fraternity as well as among the people. The policy has also ensured the institutionalization of the community schools within the framework of administration.

The decentralized teacher management, i.e. empowering the community to manage the school system (particularly teacher management in the form of selecting and appointing teachers, and with power to fire them), had a profound impact particularly on the teacher's regular attendance, which is a major problem in the case of formal

schools. Similarly, community participation in the implementation of midday meals, the enrolment drive and ensuring student attendance, could achieve not only a higher participation rate, but also improved student attendance. Thus, community schools were able to ensure the effective access to education.

It must be remembered that effective access to education does not guarantee school effectiveness. Community schools are not a substitute for well-equipped, better-managed schools with qualified and adequately trained teachers. The decentralized teacher management and devolution of power to the community for teacher accountability, and partial financing by the community, cannot be expected to have a direct effect on learning outcomes. The decentralized teacher management could not solve the deep-rooted problems of classroom transaction due to the poor teacher competences. This is a by-product of appointing unqualified and untrained teachers.

Another dimension of the community schools is the educational expenditure from the institutional and household perspective. The average salary of teachers in community schools is lower than that of teachers teaching in other management-type schools. The crucial aspect is that the per-student teaching cost is very low in community schools, due to the low level of salaries paid. Irrespective of the number of students, the teachers receive the same salary in formal schools, whereas in community schools this is not the case, the salary is linked to the number of students enrolled. Moreover, the per-student cost norm used as the basis for providing the teacher's salary is much lower than normally observed for formal schools. Therefore it is possible to have a situation where a community school teacher may be teaching a larger number of children, but still earning a lower salary than a teacher in a formal school. Lack of financial security and unequal pay structure has put a question mark over the sustainability of the community schools.

It has been found that the tribal households spend a relatively larger amount in order to provide primary education to their children. The average per-student household expenditure in community schools is higher than in all other management-type schools. Households bear 32 per cent of the per-student expenditure in the case of community schools. In other words, the relative burden for parents of sending children to community schools is higher than that for the parents sending children to formal schools. Similarly, the households sending children to community schools spend a higher proportion of their household income on educating their child, and the corresponding share among the households sending children to formal schools is low. Although community schools have led to improved access to education, the education provided has become relatively costlier to the households when compared to other arrangements such as formal schools. This illustrates that community schools are a cost-saving alternative for the government, but they are not necessarily a less-expensive arrangement for households. In fact, the innovation of community schools has reduced the financial burden on government and increased the households' financial commitments for the education of their children. The general belief that marginalized groups enjoy subsidies is found to be untrue in the case of community schools, at least.

The amount the households spend on the education of their children may look insignificant from a normal perspective, but considering the economic impoverishment of tribals, it is a hard task for them. The government must develop a suitable mechanism for improving the teachers' salaries and reduce the household burden for children's education for the sustainability and effectiveness of community schools.

It is quite surprising to note that the community schools, which have achieved considerable success in the areas of enrolment, attend-

ance, teacher attendance and following an alternative pedagogy, have not shown similar competence in learning outcomes. It has also been found that the students' achievement level is quite low in tribal areas and more so in community schools. This indicates an inconsistency in the system, and particularly with regard to the lack of teacher competency.

Another aspect that corroborates the lack of school effectiveness is the low transition rate of the community school students to Grade III. It is 22 per cent among the boys and much lower in the case of girls (7 per cent). In the presence of such preponderant gender variation, school effectiveness needs to be given priority. In the absence of higher grades, many students will relapse into illiteracy. In view of such a deplorable transition rate, a suggestion could be made regarding the up-gradation of some of the community schools into primary schools, with Vth grade. Such schools need to be identified on the basis of the availability of a competent teacher, viable student strength, better infrastructure, and availability of teaching-learning materials and, above all, a good catchment area. Such an effort will provide an opportunity to arrest stagnation and repetition among many community school students.

The possibility of relapsing into illiteracy is greater in such communities because learning in the community schools is limited only to Grades I and II which, after a long discontinuity, is equivalent to illiteracy. The students have no alternative access to learning and system of feedback. So, here the school effectiveness largely depends on teachers, since the tribes are marginalized and illiterate community groups who cannot provide academic support to children at home. In the case of community schools it is of crucial importance. Because the schools have only two grades, in the case of failure of the school, the community can easily and quickly assess what its children have learned and how much they have learned. Ultimately, it is

the school effectiveness that matters and if the community realizes that its children have learned nothing, soon it will lose interest in the entire project.

In the circumstances of such a widespread educational dilemma, particularly in the area of school effectiveness, appropriate action needs to be taken. Therefore, proper emphasis must be placed on the safe transition of students to higher grades. Most of the teachers in the community schools are less qualified and untrained, which has reduced their ability to comprehend and follow alternative pedagogy and materials. Poor teachers produce poor students and eventually it produces a poor system, leading to a vicious circle. The only way to avoid such a situation is to have well-qualified and trained teachers. Therefore, along with the emphasis on community participation, decentralization of school management etc., equal or more emphasis must be put on developing and enhancing teacher competency.

Thus, the necessary conditions for the effective functioning of the schools are assured at different levels, starting from household to the administration. At the administration level it is essential to develop the capacity for academic management, particularly expertise for improving the teacher competences. The administration must put special emphasis on teacher training and allocate more resources for building teacher competency. However, the Tribal Welfare Department being a developmental agency, with specialization on welfare of communities, it has no expertise on education in general and teacher training in particular. Although the Tribal Welfare Department was earlier also involved in the running of schools, academic management is something new to its area of operation. It is a special responsibility and therefore needs technical and professional expertise, particularly in improving teacher competency. This has become a major constraint in the field of school effectiveness.



In spite of community management of the schools, the administration has to play an important role in developing standard norms for teacher recruitment, an academic monitoring system, and in establishing a close link with the school and community. The guidelines and criteria must be evolved at the decentralized administrative creation. Although community schools follow decentralized teacher appointment at the community level, the involvement of parents and the community in meeting the salary cost of the teachers has implication for equity, especially where the qualified teachers are the scarce resources. With the policy of local teachers, the possibility of finding adequately educated and trained persons will remain the problem

At the community level, empowerment and decentralization in the management of schools are essential for developing teacher accountability, sustainability and acceptability of the community schools. However, the community requires skills to develop group dynamism, leadership qualities and negotiating abilities for effective partnership with the administration. Equipping the community with such skills and communication capabilities is essential in playing an effective role in sustaining community participation. Decentralization of the responsibility for teacher management to a lower level, such as the community, will not be effective unless the community has the necessary capability to sustain and reproduce the effort. Therefore, the necessary condition at community level is to have a better choice in the selection of teachers. In other words, the community should not follow a routine teacher-identification process, where they may get a teacher of their choice but not an effective teacher. For effective management of community schools another important precondition is the availability of sufficient capacity and resources at the community level. Given the economic condition of the disadvantaged groups, even provision of basic materials, or free labour contribu-

tion, may be difficult. Therefore, ensuring the facilities and materials becomes an essential condition.

At the household level, improving economic conditions through developmental programmes, creating awareness, developing interaction with school and teacher through involving them in school-development activities, are essential for effective participation. These conditions are crucial among marginalized groups due to their lack of access to information and poor economic conditions.

### **Scaling up**

In the large-scale scaling up of community schools, certain factors were overlooked and these have proved to be the bane of the system. In the bid to open such schools certain prerequisite criteria such as the demand for access for community schools were overlooked. In many cases schools were opened where the employment needs of the local tribal youth was the criteria, rather than the demand of the community for such a facility. Secondly, in a bid to reduce the cost of educational access, community schools were opened in villages which would otherwise fulfil the norms for having a formal school. This indiscriminate expansion is responsible for lack of school effectiveness.

Unionization of the community school teachers, and their deal with the administration on various issues, is linked to the practice of the dual system in the form of operating the formal as well as community schools in the same area at the same time. In fact, the regularity and strict monitoring system of the community schools have threatened the formal school teachers and they have tried to scuttle the move of strict community control. In such a situation it is prudent to enforce the similar holiday and rescheduling of vacation according to the suitability of the community.

One of the major problems in the scaling up of the community school system is that in its rapid and large-scale expansion, some of its basic features have been either diluted or have vanished. The issue of rescheduled holidays and vacation immediately comes to mind. It was thought that holidays and vacations should be planned in consonance with the community's calendar, so that student attendance could be ensured. But due to unionization of teachers, and their subsequent negotiation with the ITDA, this plan has been overturned. Similarly, the payment of the teacher's salary has gone to the administration from the VEC, snatching a certain level of control from the community in the process.

Community schools have only two grades and, despite a phenomenal increase in the number of these schools, attempts were not made to upgrade them, resulting in stagnation and repetition. Larger scaling up led to a high growth of students in respective grades and there were just not enough schools to tap the ever-increasing number of students. In the end this discrepancy led to stagnation and discontinuity of many students. Due to lack of access and an alternative learning system, many students either discontinued their education or repeated the same grade. The continuation of such a trend and its magnitude would ultimately affect the educational development of the community and it soon lost interest in the whole process.

In the process of expansion of community schools, the concept had shed most of its initial features. In the event, the unionization of teachers and subsequent transfer of power from the hands of the VEC to the administration, had a deleterious effect on the process of community participation. Studies and experiments have shown that once the community has achieved some sort of experience in management and is conscious of its power, it is always difficult to deprive it of its legitimate share. Therefore, when in the process of the scaling-up operation the community lost some of its earlier power

and privileges, it reacted by non-participation and later lost the motivation to share the responsibility.

### **Replication of the community school model**

Community school administration requires appropriate administrative arrangement at different levels. For joint management of the community school, a decentralized administrative mechanism is a prerequisite. In order to have effective functioning of schools, coordination between the community and administration is of paramount importance. A decentralized administrative system ensures autonomy that facilitates the context of specific improvisation and modification and, at times, preparation of policies, programmes and planning. The centralized administrative system will be a problem in the sharing of responsibilities and responding to the specific needs of the community. Delay in decision-making and attending to problems can affect the very sustainability of community participation and the effective functioning of the school.

The devolution of power to the community for teacher management does not automatically assure the community a good teacher, and this is an area that needs to be carefully looked at before replicating the community schools system. In fact, in some cases it has been found that inter- and intra-group identities, unscrupulous canvassing and nepotism are becoming the determinants of teacher selection. Due to such faulty selection policy and resultant teacher incompetency, learning outcomes are poor and, in the end, it is the community who suffers. Therefore, it is imperative on the part of the administration to endow the community with the capacity to assess its needs and the ability to assert its rights without falling prey to local identities and group loyalty. Thus, the administration needs to ensure an appropriate selection procedure that can reduce such influences.

Regarding the implementation of community schools in other areas, one must take cognizance of the financial aspect. Although the amount involved and the desire of the community to part with the money do not pose any threat, what is crucial is the issue of equity and ethics. Primary education is a constitutional right of the individual and an obligation of the state; therefore such a partnership does not have a strong legal back-up. Secondly, looking at the impoverished and subsistence economy of tribal communities, it is unethical on the part of the state to ask them to contribute towards their education, irrespective of the amount.

After the analysis of various aspects and comprehension of the entire system, it can be said that the idea of community schools has regional and area-specific significance. Although it started as an alternative to improve access in the hitherto deprived and difficult areas, it has lost its earlier features and optimism. It has been used as a cost-effective measure to provide schooling facilities even in places where formal schools can be opened. However, when replicating the model of community schools in similar contexts, adequate care should be taken to ensure teacher competency, decentralized administration, focus on a project mode, and community participation. It should be organized in a way that would facilitate the evolution of norms, rules, policies and programmes from the joint perspective of the community and administration.



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## APPENDIX I

### The tribal scenario in India

#### What is a tribe?

In the Indian context, tribals are the earliest settlers of the land if not autochthonous. Certain characteristics have been put forward as criteria for determining a tribal community.

A tribe may be defined as a community which has a name, endogamous in nature, lives in a common territory, has a common traditional culture with an unwritten language, is structurally and culturally distinctive, relatively homogeneous, largely self-governing, with no specialization of function, pervasively self-sufficient, and has a shared consciousness of ethnic identity and of belonging together (Majumdar, 1958). No tribe is likely to have these characteristics to perfection and in their entirety.

Certain specified tribal communities are designated as Scheduled Tribes in accordance with a provision of the Constitution of India. Article 342 of the Constitution provides that the President may, with respect to any Province or Union Territory, specify the tribe or tribal community, which shall be deemed to be a Scheduled Tribe. Such recognition should be based on their all-round backwardness. There are 573 Scheduled Tribes living in different parts of the country. The Government of India has recognized some Scheduled Tribes as being 'primitive' who are relatively more backward tribal groups and have lower level of acculturation.

The Scheduled Tribes, dispersed all over the country, differ from one another in racial traits, social organization and cultural pattern

etc. Most of the tribal communities have their own dialects, most of them without script. There are more than 270 of them. The tribal languages in India belong to all the major language families: the Austric, the Dravidian and Tibeto-Chinese, and Indo-European families are the dominant ones. The level of development of tribal dialects varies considerably.

In recent decades the accessibility of tribal areas has considerably influenced their dialects. Regional languages are being gradually accepted in a mixed form for communication with the non-tribal population. Stratification is emerging even within the tribal dialects. Some of them serve as Lingua Franca for a larger region comprising different tribal groups. There are, however, enclaves and groups which have not been influenced by other languages, who can hardly understand the languages of the non-tribal population.

### **Tribal habitation**

The pattern of tribal habitation is determined by a variety of factors - historical, social and economic. The habitations are small and the tribals prefer to live in small groups nearer to their fields. A dozen or more satellite hamlets constitute the revenue village. It is also not uncommon that some tribes prefer solitary huts in the middle of their fields, while certain tribal groups prefer to live on hill-tops. A common characteristic of tribes is that normally the habitations are small in size. According to a rough estimate, nearly 60 per cent of the tribal habitations have a population of less than 150. The majority of tribals in India are concentrated in eight provinces.

### **Tribal economy**

More than 90 per cent of scheduled tribe workers are engaged in the primary sector or the sector of the economy related to the ex-



exploitation of the natural resources. The secondary sector, or the sector related to manufacture, accounts for 3 per cent of the tribal workers. The tertiary sector or servicing sector accounts for less than 5 per cent of workers.

The Scheduled Tribes generally live in inhospitable terrain where the productivity of the soil is low. As in most of the world, economic involvement of tribes in India is also diverse and multiple. They are engaged in (i) forestry and food gathering; (ii) shifting cultivation; (iii) settled agriculture; (iv) agricultural labour and casual labour; (v) animal husbandry; (vi) household industry; and (vii) miscellaneous occupations.

There are few tribal communities who are engaged wholly in forestry and food gathering. Settled agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for the overwhelming majority of the tribal population in the country. Shifting cultivation (slash and burn) as the means of livelihood is found among many of the tribal communities in some of the states. Shifting cultivation as the subsidiary means is more widespread. In addition, many of them engage themselves as labourers in construction activities, forest labour, etc. Animal husbandry as the main source of livelihood exists only among a few tribal communities. Household industry, as the main source of livelihood, is found only among small tribes with scattered population. In the recent past some of the tribes have been drawn into modern industries as non-skilled workers. As subsidiary occupations are very common, the tribals are engaged in collection of minor forest produce; fishing and hunting are also practised. The size of their population and levels of education vary widely across different regions and provinces. The majority of them are concentrated in eight provinces constituting more than 85 per cent of the total tribal population in the country.

## Education

The level of educational development among tribes differs vastly across the provinces (*Table I.1*). The national average literacy rate among them is 29 per cent. Among the eight provinces, the highest literacy rate among the tribes is 36 per cent, in Gujarat, against 17 per cent in Andhra Pradesh, which is the lowest in the country. Compared to all the provinces, the tribals in Andhra Pradesh stand at the lowest level.

Appendix Table I.1 Tribal population and literacy rate among selected provinces

Province	ST population (in million)*	Literacy rate (1991)		
		Total	Male	Female
<b>India</b>	<b>67.8</b>	<b>29.60</b>	<b>40.65</b>	<b>18.19</b>
Andhra Pradesh	4.2	17.16	25.25	8.68
Bihar	6.6	26.78	38.40	14.75
Gujarat	6.1	36.45	48.25	24.20
Madhya Pradesh	15.4	21.54	32.16	10.73
Maharashtra	7.3	36.79	49.09	24.03
Orissa	7.0	22.31	34.44	10.21
Rajasthan	5.4	19.44	33.29	4.42
West Bengal	3.8	27.78	40.07	14.98

\*Scheduled Tribes only.

## APPENDIX II

Appendix Table II.1 Sample design of the study

		Sample size			
		Community schools	Single-teacher schools	Ashram (residential)	Other schools
Teachers' profile		926	496	14	70
For detailed information*		370	-	-	-
Number of schools		58	40	10	37
Total number of households		578	335	92	325
For educational expenditure	1. Schools	6	6	8	17
	2. Teachers	6	6	37	49
	3. Households (.)	386	310	84	321
	4. Students	585	409	101	271
Learners' achievement	1. Schools	52	40	10	37
	2. Students	711	518	162	581

\*Only for community schools.

(.) Those who have children in primary grades (I and II).

### Sample characteristics

Sl. No.	Table number	For detailed information
1.1		Educational facilities (1997-98) The data refer only to tribal-concentrated 11 Mandals (Blocks) out of the total 45 Mandals in the district.
1.2		Enrolment ratio and drop-out rate among tribals at the primary stage (I-V) The enrolment ratio and drop-out rates are given for all Scheduled Tribes in the state and district.

(Continued)

Sample characteristics (Continued)

Sl. No.	Table number	For detailed information
4.1		Enrolment and growth of community schools The data covered all the community schools in tribal-concentrated 11 Mandals (Blocks) out of total 45 Mandals in the district.
5.1		Criteria of selection of teachers according to community members The sample comprises 578 parents from 58 villages in tribal-concentrated 11 Mandals.
5.2		Reasons for accepting a community school teaching post The data sample of 370 community school teachers were covered.
5.3		Frequency of changing teachers Sample of 370 community school teachers.
5.4		Reasons for change of teachers Sample of 370 community school teachers.
5.5-5.10		Teachers data The basic data regarding social background, age, qualifications and residence of the teachers covered all 926 community school teachers and all the 496 single-teacher school teachers. For Ashram and other management school teachers, data had been collected only to sample schoolteachers of 14 Ashram and 70 other management school teachers.
6.2		Facilities available in schools All community schools and all the 496 single-teacher schools were covered.

(Continued)

## Sample characteristics (Continued)

Sl. No.	Table number	For detailed information																				
8.1-8.7	Parents data	Sample of 578 parents from community schools and 752 parents from other formal schools (single-teacher, Ashram and other management schools)																				
10.1-10.6	Educational expenditure	Data were taken from teachers, schools, households and students																				
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Management</th> <th>Households*</th> <th>Teachers</th> <th>Schools</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Community</td> <td>386</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Single teacher</td> <td>310</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ashram</td> <td>84</td> <td>37</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other management</td> <td>321</td> <td>49</td> <td>17</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Management	Households*	Teachers	Schools	Community	386	6	6	Single teacher	310	6	6	Ashram	84	37	8	Other management	321	49	17
Management	Households*	Teachers	Schools																			
Community	386	6	6																			
Single teacher	310	6	6																			
Ashram	84	37	8																			
Other management	321	49	17																			
		* Those who have children in Grade I and II.																				
11.1-11.9	Performance of community schools and	Data were collected from schools and students under different managements. The achievement test was administered in 52 community schools (711 students), 40 single-teacher schools (518 students), 10 Ashram schools (162 students) and 37 other management schools (581).																				
Appendix Tables I.1, II.1 and III.1																						



## APPENDIX III

Appendix Table III.1

Mean score percentage of (Grade I) students (school-wise)

Sample number	Name of the village	Language	Mathematics
<b>Community schools</b>			
1	Velagalapadu	50.00	47.06
2	Mardaguda	38.61	31.67
3	Seesaguda	48.89	11.11
4	Venkayyapalem	27.50	17.50
5	P.Bhalluguda	45.38	41.54
6	Pimpulaguda	23.46	41.54
7	Sandivalasa	47.31	13.85
8	Chedalapadu	42.73	35.45
9	Galipadu	13.28	8.28
10	Kottapakalu	33.53	15.29
11	Rabbarugondi	38.33	41.43
12	Ravimanupakalu	40.83	55.00
13	Ch. Anjoda	45.00	30.77
14	Gangavalasa	21.67	12.50
15	Gondivalasa	35.00	38.00
16	Kamalabandha	46.67	34.17
17	Panasaputtu	47.00	41.00
18	G.Teemulabandha	32.69	49.23
19	Kummarapalli	74.12	76.47
20	Panasapalli	27.50	44.29
21	Valasagedda	18.05	9.44
22	Varthundapadu	34.54	58.18
23	Gondipalli	73.57	65.71
24	Y.B.Gonduru	62.00	58.00
25	Pedabayalu	25.71	25.71
26	Sakirevu	11.67	6.67
27	Tiyyagundam	40.67	27.33
28	Vindulapanuku	36.67	37.78
29	Diguduputtu	65.00	18.00
30	Erukurai	20.00	0.00
31	Kotagummam	35.00	24.38
32	Pamurai	31.92	26.92

(Continued)

Appendix Table III.1 (Continued)

Sample number	Name of the village	Language	Mathematics
33	R.Ch.Puram	26.92	23.08
34	Gujju Manupakalu	64.64	50.00
35	Kathirallaloddi	32.14	38.57
36	K.T.Bandha	18.89	14.44
37	K.Nallagonda	26.33	10.33
38	Degalaputtu	30.00	37.50
39	Gudamaliput	30.00	12.73
40	Kenduputtu	23.13	7.50
41	Malagummi	25.00	19.50
42	Bailuveedhi	46.50	64.00
43	Eedulapalem	45.88	28.82
44	Jamuguda	40.83	45.00
45	Kodiguddlu	19.23	14.62
46	Vallapuram	29.23	23.85
47	Uggamgoyya	41.67	12.50
48	Borlada	10.00	23.75
49	Chintalaveedhi	25.94	20.00
50	Boddaput	11.56	18.75
51	Kowrupalli	5.00	2.50
52	Puruguduputtu	27.61	16.96
<b>Single-teacher schools</b>			
53	Beesupuram	3.33	0.00
54	Dasarithota	46.11	60.00
55	Jakaravalasa	32.14	4.29
56	Pandirivalasa	16.00	20.00
57	Dummaguda	28.64	10.00
58	Janamguda	38.50	6.00
59	Kodipunjuvalasa	30.45	14.55
60	Tadaka	12.14	20.00
61	Kolapari	12.22	7.78
62	Panasalapadu	42.33	40.00
63	Pisirimamidi	31.25	38.33
64	Vanajajula	14.50	23.00
65	Adapavalasa	22.08	26.25
66	Jogiputtu	6.33	3.33
67	Neruduvalasa	38.00	21.00
68	Cheedigunta	40.79	30.00
69	N.Mamidipalem	36.00	46.00

(Continued)



Appendix Table III.1 (Continued)

Sample number	Name of the village	Language	Mathematics
70	Vasuvada	51.67	35.83
71	Aragadapalli	2.75	3.00
72	Godda	13.00	6.00
73	Matchyapuram	65.56	53.33
74	Rachhapalli	61.67	62.00
75	B.Tadiputtu	1.67	0.00
76	G.Tadiputtu	57.00	81.00
77	Mattijoru	34.17	21.11
78	Matam	82.00	24.00
79	Santari	63.75	50.42
80	Kithalova	32.50	15.00
81	Nadimpalem	49.62	28.46
82	Ramannapalem	49.79	55.83
83	Ravanapalli	35.60	56.80
84	Kummariputtu	61.47	60.00
85	Mandibha	47.50	70.00
86	Poliputtu	10.00	0.00
87	Arlada	55.28	26.11
88	Jallipalli	51.07	20.71
89	Karakaputtu	44.09	54.55
90	Jeelugulaputtu	49.29	49.29
91	Kullubha	45.56	36.11
92	Sirasapalli	31.15	43.08
<b>Ashram residential schools</b>			
93	Sivalingapuram	58.24	50.00
94	Lotheru	21.58	17.89
95	Nandivalasa	33.85	9.23
96	R.V.Nagar	54.38	50.00
97	Nurmathi	7.86	2.86
98	Pedagaruvu	39.58	39.17
99	Kommika	42.97	48.13
100	Panasaput	32.68	18.21
101	Kandamamidi	48.18	49.09
102	Koravangi	39.00	26.00
<b>Government schools</b>			
103	Jeenabadu	39.38	10.00
104	Pedalabudu	67.69	38.46

(Continued)

Appendix Table III.1 (Continued)

Sample number	Name of the village	Language	Mathematics
105	Tjangi	43.19	23.06
106	Paridi	31.25	30.83
107	Sankada	43.89	37.78
108	Solabham	54.06	41.88
109	Kamayyapeta	46.25	47.50
110	Mampa	35.40	18.40
111	Kilagada	76.19	72.38
112	Gurupalli	95.00	93.33
113	Chanthalavedi	57.92	65.00
114	Laxmipeta	22.00	54.67
<b>Local-body schools</b>			
115	Tangeduvalasa	47.86	84.29
116	Pedavalasa	5.00	56.25
117	Kottapalem	84.57	82.61
118	Bailukinchangi	27.14	20.00
119	Gorapur	10.71	11.43
120	Korra	43.96	56.25
121	Sileru	41.00	44.00
122	Vantadapalli	28.85	19.23
123	Rapalli	25.50	5.00
124	V.Kodapalli	71.25	76.50
125	Buruguput	48.50	31.00
126	Ginjarti	40.94	45.63
127	Karimikiputtu	43.48	38.26
128	Kandulapalem	18.33	61.67
129	Dabbaput	13.00	40.00
130	Tamaraveedhi	42.69	38.46
<b>Government-aided private schools</b>			
131	Kasipatnam	43.16	76.32
132	Bondam	6.56	11.25
133	Barapalli	34.12	23.53
134	Konthili	71.73	48.08
135	Revallu	31.30	43.33
136	Pedaguda	36.36	49.09
137	Badimela	48.33	16.67
138	Kindangi	57.50	65.00
139	Galaganda	52.25	55.00

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