SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS
AND
THE PERSPECTIVE
OF
THE DISADVANTAGED

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RADHIKA MENON

ZAKIR HUSAIN CENTRE FOR EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARALAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110 067
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CERTIFICATE

Certified that this dissertation titled *SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE DISADVANTAGED,* submitted by Ms Radhika Menon is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in Sociology of Education. This dissertation has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other university.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Dr Geetha Nambissan

(Supervisor)

Dr Deepak Kumar
Chairperson
Zakir Husain Centre for
Educational Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawhar Lal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

Declaration

I, Radhika Menon, do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled "**Sociology Of Educational Inequality: Theoretical Frameworks and The Perspective of The Disadvantaged**", submitted by me for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy, is my own work, and has not been submitted for any other degree or diploma of this university or any other university.

July 2003 .

Radhika Menon

Zakir Hussain Centre for educational stuides

Jawharlal Nehru University

New Delhi 110067

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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

BA	:	Bachelor of Arts
CBSE	:	Central Board of Secondary Education
CPWD	:	Central Public Works Department
DDA	:	Delhi Development Authority
ICSSSR	:	Indian Council of Social Science Research
ISA	:	Ideological State Apparatus
JJ colony	:	*Jhuggi Jhopri* Colony
MA	:	Master of Arts
MCD	:	Municipal Corporation of Delhi
MPCE	:	Monthly Per-Capita Consumption Expenditure
NDMC	:	New Delhi Municipal corporation
NIOS	:	National Institute of Open School
NOS	:	National Open School
NSSO	:	National Sample Survey Organisation
OBC	:	Other Backward Caste
SC	:	Scheduled Caste
ST	:	Scheduled Tribe
U.K.	:	United Kingdom

TABLES

Chapter1

INTRODUCTION

Conceptualisation of educational inequality has emerged from the larger conceptualisation of education itself. As perceptions of education changed in society so did the definition of educational inequality. In feudal and caste based societies, different groups were expected to follow different professions. Members of one strata were not expected to have access to the knowledge of other caste groups (Durkheim:1956). And superiority of mental knowledge over that arising from production process was not only accepted but also celebrated. Mental preoccupations were for the powerful, who tightly guarded their learning and unleashed barbaric punishments for those who tried to break the boundaries of knowledge division. For instance in the traditional Indian caste based society the 'shudra' who mustered the courage to listen to Vedas-the repository of brahamanical knowledge, was punished by pouring molten lead in their ears. The survival skills developed by the poor and the powerless were part of the production knowledge which was considered lowly. Thus, in a rigidly divided caste or feudal society, educational inequality is infact social inequality.

With French Revolution and Enlightenment and slogans of Equality, Liberty, Justice and Reason and the development of modern societies, education was presented as the panacea for all problems. Mass schooling was projected as the tool for human emancipation and for democratisation of societies (Halsey:1979). The understanding of educational inequality changed with the emergence of the modern state and social rights to education was not restricted to any one group.

It is noted by historians that in India the introduction of modern education in the 18th century was mainly to fulfil the agenda of the colonial rulers (Kumar:1991). However, Indian social reformers of different political hues with a variety of concerns from women's emancipation to the liberation of oppressed castes and classes began to espouse the cause of mass education. Post-independence, the Indian Constitution emphasised the right to education of all children and also made provisions to ensure that socially disadvantaged groups could access education.

Educational inequality at one level, is seen as the differences in the abilities and capacities of different human beings. However, that will not be the focus of the dissertation. I will primarily be looking at educational inequality faced by social groups emerging from their disadvantaged position in society.

Analysis of different theoretical frameworks in sociology of education indicates that educational inequality is understood in a diverse number of ways. The conceptualisation is dependent on how education is viewed within the specific theoretical framework. Educational inequality is said to be an outcome not only of structural factors arising from socio-economic reasons but is also seen to be a product of the curriculum and everyday school processes.

At another level, it is to be noted that it is not scholars alone who discuss education. Increasing school fees, demands from school going children for notebooks, uniforms and shoes, poor performances and failure, improper teaching, good tuition etc. are common subjects for discussion amongst ordinary people going about their daily occupation as drivers, shop-keepers, domestic help, sweepers, teachers, clerks and doctors. Education is taken as the ticket to social and occupational mobility as signified by popular proverbs like *'Padho ge likhoge banoge nawab, kheloge kudoge banoge kharab*[1]. Yet, educational inequality is part of their lived experiences.

Urban areas predominated by the manufacturing and service sector offer employment to the hordes seeking it, on conditions of a certain minimal level of education. Life within cities also makes immense demands on the literacy-numeracy abilities of its residents, as there is an abundance of written information. However, institutions offering education like schools are severely stratified. Posh, well equipped internationally comparable schools for the rich and elite stand adjacent to dilapidated-dreary schools for the poor. The results are similarly visible; in 2003, as many as 86.5 per cent of students in private schools passed their class X public examination (held by the CBSE) while in the government schools only 40.05 per cent passed.(*Hindustan Times:*24.5.2003*).

The question arises, how do the disadvantaged in the city view this educational inequality? How do they experience the educational process given that inequality is part of it? This subject has not been researched enough and is only sketchily

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[1] If you read and write you can become a *nawab*, if you play around, you will be good for nothing.

understood. Thus, there is a need to apply a 'sociological imagination' to the meanings associated with educational inequality.

The Study: Rationale

Educational Inequality has been a major concern in sociology of education and sociological studies have decided policy formulations, pedagogic practices, curriculum content and school structures. However, we find that few studies have actually looked at what the disadvantaged groups have to say about their own educational inequalities. It has only been in the last twenty-thirty years that studies in the west have begun to consider perceptions from below. As for the Indian studies, they are too few to even suggest a tentative hypothesis. Thus, this dissertation takes different sociological pathways to critically view theoretical perspectives on educational inequality and goes on to examine from existing literature, perceptions of the disadvantaged. It then contextualises educational inequality for the urban disadvantaged with field findings from an exploratory study conducted in Delhi.

The exploratory study is located in a working class settlement and based on the perspectives of dalit youth, who have atleast been to middle school and between 13-23 years. The youth belong to the Arundhatiyar community, ranked low in the caste hierarchy of Tamil Nadu and from families that migrated to the capital city 20-30 years ago and now occupying low ranked jobs. It was felt that the youth having spent a number of years in school would be able to reflect adequately about their experience of education in the city. Discussions with the community, parents and teachers supplement the interviews with the youth to gain insights on the perspectives of the disadvantaged.

Objectives

1. To analyse how the major theoretical perspectives in sociology of education construct educational inequality.
2. To review literature in order to understand how the disadvantaged groups particularly the urban poor perceive their own educational inequality.

3. To conduct an exploratory study of youth disadvantaged by caste and class in a poor settlement in Delhi in order to understand their *experience* of schooling and perceptions of educational inequality.

Methodology

The theoretical review is based on secondary sources, mainly in English, from the disciplines of sociology, education, development-economics, dalit literature. In addition statistical data was obtained from Census: 2001, Sixth All India Educational Survey and NSS 55th Round.

The study was located in a working class settlement in Delhi. Fieldwork was conducted to get insights on the perspectives of youth, their parents and teachers. Primary qualitative data was collected through participatory mapping of the field area and in-depth interviews of the youth, parents and teachers.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of the dissertation is defined to look at educational inequality in urban India, particularly in the metropolitan city of Delhi and amongst those disadvantaged by caste and class. Gender issues are explored within the selected group to illustrate the differences and similarities between perceptions and responses of male and female participants. It was a deliberate decision to look at overlapping zones of exclusion caused by caste and class to see how multiple disadvantages operate to create conditions for educational inequality.

A discussion on the urban disadvantaged with reference to urban sociology and urban education, though interesting, has been avoided as it falls beyond the scope of the dissertation.

Though the poor state of elementary education is a cause for concern even in urban areas, this study primarily looks at youth who have managed to reach middle and secondary school. This has been for three reasons. One, there is a predomination of manufacturing and service sector occupations in the urban areas and to avail employment here, a certain minimal level of education is required as mentioned earlier. Two, secondary and higher education is necessary for white collar jobs.

Thirdly, the research design requires participants who have had enough number of years in school to make it easier for them to articulate a variety of school experiences.

The scope of the dissertation is also being limited to understanding the educational experiences through the voices of the Arundhatiyar community of L Block, Shakurpur Basti. A comparative study of different castes within the same class and colony, though interesting, was not taken up as it is beyond the scope set for the study given the limited time available at MPhil.

Clarification of Concepts/terms used

'Disadvantage' is a relative concept. It connotes the advantages that some may have and of which others are deprived. It is thus directly associated with inequality. Kabeer(2000) says that the disadvantaged are those who have suffered economic injustice on one end to cultural injustice at another. They include the poor who bear patriarchal domination and injustice, people of colour bearing the brunt of ethnic and racial discrimination, socially despised sexualities, people ill with stigmatised disease, caste discriminations and so on. Brickman(1972) identifies historically disadvantaged groups as those who have suffered because of racial discriminations, gender bias, ethnic origin or language or religious difference. He says disadvantage could also be due to differences in mental and physical factors as well as remoteness from urban settlements.

Disadvantage, for purposes of this study, refers to groups who have been deprived of resources/ advantages/privileges because of class, caste and gender oppression. However, other words like 'disprivileged' (Bhattacharya:2000) and 'dispossessed' (found in literature on inequality and which have the same implication as that conveyed by disadvantage) have also been used interchangeably.

Two other words used in the dissertation and referring to processes of educational inequality are 'exclusion' and 'marginalisation'. (Kabeer:2000) writes that exclusion is associated with principles of membership and forms of access. hooks (1984) writes that "to be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body." Marginalisation thus presents the picture of 'a centre' of power, prestige and privilege, thus implying a margin where these are absent. These terms are used in

several other studies (Kabeer:2000, Balagopalan:2003, hooks:1990) on educational inequality.

The term dalit[2] is used to refer to those oppressed by caste and particularly those Issacs(1965) refers to as the ex-touchables. The Constitution refers to it as the Scheduled Caste and Gandhi as Harijans. In studies where other terms are used to refer to dalits, it has been retained as such. In the field study most of the participants called themselves as SC (for Scheduled Caste) or by their caste names. Thus in several places the references are made according to the group they belonged i.e. the Chakliar, Pallar so on.

Chapterisation

The discussion that follows is divided into another four chapters. Chapter 2 maps the conceptualisation of educational inequality and tries to locate the theories wherein the perceptions of the disadvantaged are taken into cognisance. A case is made for theorisation of educational inequality based on the perceptions of the disadvantaged. In chapter 3, I have tried to locate the current educational situation of the disadvantaged in Delhi and have identified the factors of educational inequality based on a survey of literature. Chapter 4 is based on analysis of data collected in the exploratory study on the schooling experience of the Arundhatiyar youth. The Conclusion draws linkages between field findings and review of literature to present a picture of educational inequality as perceived by the urban disadvantaged. Comparisons have been drawn between theoretical positions and the research findings to present a tentative hypothesis and possibilities for further research.

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[2] The term comes from the Marthi word ground to bits or oppressed and was popularised by the Dalit Panther movement.

Chapter 2

THEORISING EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY:
MAPPING THE PATHWAYS AND SELECTING THE ROUTE

In this chapter, I present the theoretical pathways in the sociology of education. The structural functionalists, direct reproductionist, interpretativist, resistance theorist and postmodernist contribution to the conceptualisation of educational inequality is discussed in separate sections. The methodological issues they raise and the nature of studies taken up under the aegis of these theoretical frameworks are also discussed therein and critiqued with reference to the element of agency

The theoretical and methodological aspects of the dissertation, are touched upon in the last section of this chapter. Here, I locate the theories wherein the perceptions of the disadvantaged are taken into cognisance and a case is made for a study based on the on way the disadvantaged look at educational inequality.

2.1   The Alternate Pathways

'Different sociological perspectives give rise to different questions and different sets of evidence on the same substantive topic' Burgess (1986:10).

Burgess' statement holds true for the sociological efforts to conceptualise educational inequality as there are alternate paths or perspectives that can be taken. They differ in fundamental ways depending on their larger vision of society and social structures and the importance attributed to the element of agency. Tony Edwards et al (1984:140)   has summed this up precisely, *"Theoretical Paradigm in the social sciences differ in atleast four respects: they employ different presuppositions about relationships among conceptually constructed elements of society; they rest on differing philosophical anthropologies, particularly concerning the relationship of structure and agency in human history; and they are inspired by different 'knowledge informing interests.... "*

Texts on sociology of education (Burgess:1986, Hurn:1993, Blackledge and Hunt:1985, Meighan:1981, Parelius and Parelius:1987 and Robinson:1981) are more or less in agreement about the three theoretical trends in the explanation of educational inequality- the functionalists, conflict theorists and the interpretativists. Amongst the conflict theorists, I present the reproductionists and the resistance theorists but

separately as they have differing position on the element of agency. In addition to the three trends, I will also look at post modernist theorisation of education and therein educational inequality, as it has significantly influenced studies in the last decade.

2.2 The Functionalist Theory and Educational Inequality

The functionalists owe some of their basic assumptions on education to the Durkhemian tradition of looking at society and education. Education was seen to fit in with the needs and structures of society. The existence of different types of societies meant there could be no such thing as universal education thus explaining the existence of different educational systems at different historical periods. (Blackledge and Hunt:1985:25)

Durkheim posited that society was superior to the individual and hence dictated its will over the latter by socialising individuals to conform to its needs and functions. Socialisation was then a means to mould individuals into an accepted 'ideal type'- of a certain intellectual, physical and moral calibre. Conformity to the ideal type was rewarded and non-conformity punished. Durkheim viewed the pupil as blank slate with a potential to be 'humanised ' such that it could fit into the ' destined position' in society. This could be at the top of a highly differentiated ' society' or at the bottom of it, based on their success in keeping upto the ideal type. He proposed that this happened naturally as the individual imbibed the values of society through 'morality' that controlled him internally and externally in tune with the political society and social milieu, to fit his destined role (Durkheim:1956)

Schooling being a major socialisation agency thus maintained social solidarity by instilling morality. Development of an individual was to be designed as desired by society and failure to do so was seen as 'anomie'." *The man whom education should realise in us is not the man such as nature has made him but as society wished him to me, and it wishes him such as its internal economy calls for" (Durkheim, quoted in Blackledge and Hunt :1985:122).* The Durkheimian tradition reflects in the emphasis on integration, stability and consensus in society adopted by sociologists of education adopting this framework. Parelius and Parelius note that since the functionalists look for the goals of education in values, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and sentiments that

generate consensus amongst the individuals in a society, this is also called a consensus perspective(1987:3).

Consensus has an important implication for the conceptualisation of inequality. It implies that things are accepted as they are in society and education is only appropriately allocating 'conformed individuals' into the economy. For the functionalists, social inequality is seen as an outcome of educational inequality and stratification as part of division of labour. Inequalities of power, wealth and prestige are seen as rewards for individual achievements , beginning from performances in school. They hold immense faith in the meritocratic aspect of the system.

The functionalists view education as a means of 'selection' and 'socialisation'. It is linked with the functioning of other institutions in the system. In the meritocratic system, the functioning of the 'selection' principle is said to ensure that ability and effort get rewarded rather than privilege and inherited status. Hurn (1993:45) observes that this is in keeping with the belief that modern societies have economies that require a large percentage of highly skilled people. Thus, the most skilled[1] and talented individuals should take up these positions if everything goes well. Meritocratic models[2] are thus the policy extensions of the functionalist perspective. And with modern societies considered as meritocratic societies, ability and effort are considered more important than privilege and inherited status. Since academic performance is supposed to be a reflection of student and parent aspirations for achievement and an outcome of the ability and motivation of students, the talented and gifted students are said to attain scholastic merit. They thereby get to achieve hierarchically higher positions in the stratified society.

The functionalists have claimed the inevitability of social inequality on the basis of differences in motivation to perform, differential functional importance of jobs and social roles and differential scarcity of personnel. They also hold that jobs requiring higher training are important and need to be paid a higher remuneration to

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[1] The functionalists interestingly do not differentiate the concept of intelligence and achievement and both are associated with success in schools.

[2] Tyler(1977) identifies these 4 models of educational inequality each with different explainable variables: (I)Richard Hernstein's meritocratic model, where inequality is said to be stemming from unequal learning abilities; (ii) The traditional or elitist model, which assumes that children from privileged families are intellectually better endowed because of centuries of cultural breeding; (iii) The evolutionary model claiming that giving equal opportunities could cover the gaps between ability and family background; (iv)And the compensatory model seeking to overcome inequality through government's active intervention in a welfare state and thereby open up vistas for social mobility.

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compensate for the long investment made by the individual in training and education. Social inequality is thus said to be a consequence of the different roles that people occupy and the differing worthiness of these roles.

'Selection' taken on its own is a mechanistic process and not in keeping with the functionalists' view of society as an organic whole. So, functionalists supplement it with the principle of 'socialisation'. Talcott Parsons(1959) posited that 'socialisation' induces individuals to accept the values and norms of the society through a process of 'internalisation'. *"The main structure of personality is built through the process of social interaction. It develops through the internalisation of social objects and of the normative patterns governing the child's interaction in social situations."* (Parsons, quoted in Meighan:1981:211.)Socialisation within school then refers to both cognitive activities and performances 'appropriate to the school situation' as well as 'necessary' attitudes and behaviours for life as adults in society.

Schools, according to the functionalists, sort and select individuals into specific roles, both technical as well as social and then socialise them into accepting the norms and values of a highly differentiated society based on unequal reward and status. Educational inequality is thus seen as both necessary and fair, *".... There is thus a basic sense in which the elementary school class is an embodiment of the fundamental American value of equality of opportunity, in that it places both on initial equality and on differential achievement".* Parsons (1959: 64)

With the functionalists' concern revolving around 'sorting' and 'selecting' from a limited pool of talent, social inequality is said to be an outcome of educational inequality. The following comment sums this up precisely,

"... economic efficiency in advanced industrial societies depends on getting the most talented people into the most important and technically demanding jobs, regardless of their social circumstances ...It was assumed that in society there was a limited pool of individuals with high intelligence who were required to run the engines of industrial growth. This pool of talent needed to be selected and promoted through the educational system." Brown et al (1997:5)

Any impediment to the efficiency of the educational system's activities of selection and socialisation is seen as dysfunction. And dysfunction is considered to be because of faults internally within the educational system or as a problem in the structural relationship between education and other social systems by the structural

functionalists. Since dysfunction is considered to cause inefficiency and inequality in educational opportunities, question of educational inequality thus centres around resolving issues of co-ordination between the social systems and structural inequality that prevents disadvantaged groups from getting education.

Sociology of education was developed by the structural functionalists as a largely macroeconomic study of educational institutions (Banks: 1976:5) and rooted in positivism.

Methodologically, studies inspired by functionalist investigations on educational inequality is concerned *"with large questions about relationships between substantial aspects of social life,"* (*Meighan: 1981: 215*).

The emphasis on efficiency leads to institutionalisation of practices like ability grouping and tracking in schools. Studies investigated the 'dysfunction' that made a large number of able pupils from working class backgrounds perform poorly in academics. Meighan (1981:215) states that research on internal dysfunction probed the regional variation in quality of schools available, the selection procedures used in schools, teachers' role performances, the internal organisation of schools, streaming and the generation of anti school attitudes. Investigations on the dysfunction in the structural co-ordination of different social systems raised the issue of the relationship between aspects of home life and school achievement, between attitudes to education of pupils, parents and success in school, the impact of local environment and neighbourhood upon educational performance and the interrelationship of pre-school language socialisation, social class and classroom life.

Educational provision has also been a major area of investigation by the structural functionalists as the problems are perceived to be arising due to co-ordination difficulties of the various parts of the social system. Functionalist studies have been the favoured research paradigm for policy reformers in liberal democratic countries as well as in India. They have often stressed on overcoming dysfunction in society through educational opportunities.

The structural functionalist approach was highly popular in the 50s and 60s but criticism was mounting at the way educational inequality was conceptualised. It explained the factors behind structural inequalities but failed to see the conflict existing within education. The interests of different groups were pulling education in different directions and this was completely overlooked bv the functionalists. For

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instance, Burgess (1986:14) writes that structural functionalists accepted the gender order in society as given and sex roles were not questioned. Similarly, conflict of interest between classes and also that between traditionally oppressed and oppressor groups was completely glossed over. Further studies also questioned th ecorrelation posited between ability and high status.

For the functionalists, educational inequality was the outcome of performances in schools. But it was found that individuals with high cognitive skills did not necessarily occupy high status jobs. Jencks (1972:187) demonstrated that educational credentials and family background wielded influence on attainment of high status jobs, thereby undermining the meritocratic argument of the liberal framework and indicating that variation in educational performance was not the reason behind social inequality. Another proposition of the liberals, that could not stand up to empirical evidence was that provision of universal educational would lead to educational equality of disadvantaged groups. No studies have shown that reversing inequalities emerging from inferior quality schools, adverse teacher pupil ratio, low expenses per pupil changed the performance levels. Hurn (1993:57) mentions that massive school reform followed liberal studies yet educational inequality based on race and social class persists. Also there exists highly educated unemployed and underemployed young people in credentialized societies. The functional paradigm rooted in liberal ideology is unable to explain several of these questions.

Ideology has formed the central defining force of theories and the other ideological trend that attempted to explain questions of inequality is the Marxist framework.

2.3 The Conflict Theory and Educational Inequality

For the conflict theorists, unlike the functionalist, the linkage between education and society is not based on solidarity and harmony. Education is an institution primarily serving the interests of the dominant sections of society rather than the needs of the society as a whole. In modern society, schooling is seen as the means for both the development of cognitive skills as well as the attitudes and behaviour necessary for the reinforcement of existing inequalities. As Paul Willis states, *"Education is not about equality, but inequality ... Education 's main purpose*

of the social integration of a class society could be achieved only by preparing most kids for an unequal future, and by insuring their personal underdevelopment. Far from productive roles in the economy simply waiting to be "fairly filled by the products of education, the 'reproduction' prospective reversed this to suggest that capitalists production and its roles required certain educational outcomes." (quoted in Arrnowitz and Giroux: 1986: 70)

The conflict paradigm is not 'a unitary set of unambiguous propositions about the relationship between schools and society', reminds Hurn (1993:57). Though largely associated with the work of Marxist scholars there are several non-Marxists, who have adopted this paradigm. Some basic assumptions held by conflict theorists are as follows-

1. The conflict theorists see control rather than order in society, unlike functionalists. Social order is seen to be established on the basis of force and coercion.

2. The presence of dominant and oppressed groups is taken as a sign of inequality and disruptions in society are not seen as problematic socialisation or as anomie (as the functionalist do) but as natural reactions to an exploitative system where conflicts of goals persists.

3. Change becomes the norm and struggles for power could mean a state of flux.

4. Stability is viewed as the success of a group in coercing the subjugated group into co-operation. And schools are seen as agents of coercion with or without the use of force and means of social and cultural reproduction (Meighan:1981)

5. Since schools are said to be organised in such a way that they advance privileges to the privileged and disadvantages to the dispossessed, equality of social opportunity through schooling is seen as non-realisable rhetoric within an unequal social order.

However despite these assumptions, even amongst the Marxist scholars there are differences in the understanding of agency. The direct reproductionists have explored the structural correspondence between educational inequality and economic order , the cultural reproductionists have studied the cultural beliefs and practices that support inequality in its creation, transmission and reproduction while the resistance

theorists, focus on everyday experience and resistance within school.(ibid:58) We will consider each separately but since their methodology differs, the direct reproductionist and cultural reproductionist approaches are taken up here while the resistance theorists are taken up in section 2.5

2.3.1 Direct Reproduction theory

In *German Ideology*, Marx writes that the control of means of production is the deciding factor in determining the dominant intellectual force, therefore dominant ideology. Marxist thinkers conceptualise educational equality based on this basic tenet; for them, the question of who controls the means of production is cruicial.

The direct reproductionists, also known as the correspondence theorists, look at social inequality as corresponding with educational inequality, to facilitate expropriation of surplus. They postulate that workers are neither commodities nor machines, therefore capitalist production is possible only if production relations move beyond technical processes and become part of social processes. Education is said to play a key role in this according to the correspondence theorists. Althusser (1971), with the model of Ideological State Apparatus in a capitalist society, laid the theoretical ground for the direct reproductionists. Schooling is said to be the one of the most powerful ideological apparatuses in a modern society. The school passes on the 'know- how ' or the skills along with the attitudes and values necessary for the functioning of a capitalist society.

Some of the non-Marxist theoreticians of the conflict paradigm take positions which imply similar conclusions, but they differ on the economic definition of class. Ralph Miliband proposes that the reproduction of inequalities is an outcome of the efforts of the ruling classes to maintain their privileges. Nicos Poulantzas and Stuart Hall criticise Miliband's non-economic interpretation of ruling class and state. They further say that economy is the basic unit of society and other institutions may have partial autonomy but are ultimately influenced by economy (Blackledge and Hunt:1985).

A classic study of the Correspondence theorists is the work of Bowles and Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America* (1976). A similar study in Britain is that of Sharp and Green (1975) who analyse existing data on teachers and pupils to explain

the process by which reproduction of production relations are justified through schooling.

Bowles and Gintis (1976) show how schooling prepares individuals for their role in the world of work in a capitalist society. They indicate how education forms the skills and attitudes of the workers as well as depoliticises the potentially explosive class relations of the productive process to perpetuate social, political and economic conditions. Mass schooling, according to Bowles and Gintis, not only imparts cognitive skills and prepares individuals for the transition from school to workplace, but also legitimises existing inequalities by suggesting that they are based on merit rather than coercion (Parelius and Parelius: 1987).

Bowles and Gintis term these processes Legitimisation and Socialisation. In complete contrast to the functionalist-meritocratic analysis, Bowles and Gintis (quoted in Blackledge and Hunt: 1985:205) assert that educational success has little to do with merit and superior cognitive ability. Education, with its systems of assessment and evaluation, is designed to reward the middle classes. They, in fact, note that there is correspondence between social relations of production and social relations of education in its form rather than content. It means that education reinforces the existing social and economic order. Therefore, it cannot be considered as a force for social change or for bringing any semblance of equality or justice unless the economic order itself was changed.

The direct reproductionist contribute to a better understanding of the coming together of the state and schooling in the reproduction of educational inequality. As most of the policy studies undertaken with state funding or with industry support were taken up in the functionalist paradigm, the reproductionists reinterpreted this data to give insights on how educational inequality is being perpetuated. They critique the meritocratic argument of liberal educationists and show how school reforms are ineffective in achieving egalitarianism. The direct reproductionists look at schooling and workplace, job opportunities for different social groups, relationship between the economic, ideological and repressive functions of the state and how they affect school policies and practices (Arrnowitz and Giroux:1986: 70).

The functionalist visualise an "oversocialised conception of man", who follows the predetermined path that society desires. This is highly criticised by sociologists interested in transformative education. The correspondence theorists inspite of

reinterpreting data continue to look at the individual as a victim of the ISA and the dominant ideology. Conceptualising a change without changing the economic order thus becomes impossible. The pall of economic determinism leaves little scope for explaining human intervention and agency. Arrnowitz (1986:71) comments that "*this has failed to provide insights into how students , teachers and other human agency come together within specific historical and social contents in order to make and reproduce the conditions of their existence.... Human subjects generally "disappear" amidst a theory that leaves no room for moments of self creation, mediation, and resistance.*

Blackledge and Hunt (1985:148) have pointed out that even Bowles and Gintis had to rethink reproduction as evidences mounted. They latter revised the position they had taken in Schooling in Capitalist America, in an article[3] where they introduce the element of contradiction by accepting that the state, family and capitalist production may be at odds with each other and need not exactly correspond.

This theory is able to draw attention to the differentiated model of social processes where ideology explains power in conceptualisations and world view. But the economic determinism subdues the complexities of the relationship between material reality and ideas to that solely determined by the economic base, specially in the works of Althusser.

Methodologically the direct reproductionists operate within the positivist framework. This similarity with functionalism prompts Eggleston (1974:11) to call Direct Reproduction theory "functional conflict". School for them continues to be a black box and activities therein ignored.

2.3.2 Cultural Reproduction Theory

Unlike Althusserian structuralism, which emphasises economic determinism, Bourdieu highlights the role of culture and the way it perpetuates inequality. He says that education is autonomous as far as schools are concerned and that they are only indirectly affected by economic and political situations (Arrnowitz and Giroux:1986:

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[3] ' Contradiction and Reproduction in Educational theory' Bowles and Gintis (1980)

80), Bourdieu and Passerson:1977). Class[4] domination in educational sites is through 'symbolic violence'[5] and by validating the culture of the ruling class as the approved school culture. Schools legitimise the dominant cultural capital[6] with school knowledge (Arrnowitz and Giroux: 1986: 82). As the knowledge of the upper classes is valued more and is the approved school knowledge, it creates advantages for children from privileged backgrounds and puts the working class children in disadvantage. It is as if children from upper and middle classes have the key to unlock the learning from school while children from working class families come without the key.

Studies by cultural reproductionist have considered questions of class-specific educational experience; culture of the school, and class defined cultures of the students who attend them. Apart from this Arrnowitz et al (1986) points out that the cultural reproductionist contribute to the understanding of hidden curriculum and the way ideology influenced educational systems. Bourdieu's theorisation of high and low[7] culture takes the discussion on educational inequality, to an engagement with the content of knowledge and his explanation of habitus[8] and habitat[9] gives insights into how the dispossessed participate in their own subjugation. Thus cultural reproductionists led by Bourdieu were able to explain how educational inequality was an outcome of the school knowledge and habitus.

Bourdieu's theorisation of educational inequality based on cultural capital and symbolic violence also suffers from an element of determinism by suggesting that domination is complete. It ignores the role of reflection and human agency in bringing about change in situations of conflict. Arrnowitz and Giroux (1986:84) say that for Bourdieu, resistance and conflict are not conceptualised in materialist terms. Instead

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[4] Bourdieu's definition of class is different from the traditional Marxist definition of class based on ownership of means of production. He views the middle class as part of the privileged class and even those without means of production, like teachers as part of the elite.
[5] Symbolic Violence: All pedagogic action is, objectively, symbolic violence in so far as it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power.
[6] Cultural capital: The different sets of linguistic competencies that individuals inherit by way of the class located boundaries of their family'(Arrnowitz: 1986: 82)
[7] High culture being the culture of the dominant sections which was also the school culture and low culture being the working class culture that school disapproved thereby making it appear to be low.
[8] Habitus or embodied history is the values and the disposition the body has imbibed in schooling ." (Arrnowitz:1986:82)
[9] Habitat or objectified history are the machines, buildings, monuments, books, theories, customs, law (Arrnowitz and Giroux:1986:82)

he sees conflict as occurring between two formalistic structures, one situated in the realm of the unconscious and the other situated in the social practices. Also, Bourdieu assumes that working class culture is homogeneous and brackets the entire range of working class experience together, something which is not corroborated by evidence.

The work of the French Sociologists, Claudio Baudelot and Roger Establet are said to be more open to the role of human agency. (ibid:77). refer to situations of working class youth resisting and rejecting school. In their work, *L' ecole Capitaliste en France*, resistance was said to originate from the cultural experiences of family, class, race as well as from the dominant and opposition ideologies. David Reynolds (1984) also writes that empirical evidence shows "the limited fit between education and economy" and explains it as an outcome of the struggles of the working class for equal educational opportunities. It seems that element of agency that people were exercising through political and economic struggles does not feature in the theoretical propositions of the cultural reproductionists.

The element of agency and autonomy exercised by people has been studied from both liberal and Marxist positions. Amongst the former are the interpretativist and amongst the latter are the resistance theorists. We will begin by looking at the interpretativist theories:

2.4   The Action Theory and Educational Inequality

Methodological and theoretical issues are closely entwined in these theories. They emphasise the *"intimate contact with people and a close analysis of their words and deeds to capture the subtleties, contradictions and menaces of everyday life" (Mehan: 1992:1)*

A tradition of micro studies has existed since the Chicago School of the1930s. The practitioners of this school however remained in the periphery of the sociology of education, which was dominated by those studying educational inequality from a structuralist perspective. The sociology of 'scientific arithmetic' eclipsed the descriptions of classroom and school life and debates centred on influence of family background and schooling and occupational success (Mehan: 1992:2). However, structural studies did not explain why differential academic achievement continue even when efficient provision of educational facilities are extended to disadvantaged

groups and inquiries are directed at the ' Black box' called school. And, interpretative[10] studies or action theory came out of the eclipse in the early 70s.[11]

In U.K. it came to be known as the 'New Sociology of Education' while in US, it emerged as the Interpretive approach (Mehan: 1992: 2). The two subsequently developed in distinct direction. *" The new sociology of education in England attached itself to the tradition of the sociology of knowledge, focussing on the content of the school curriculum, both manifest and latent. The Interpretive school in the US, influenced by ethnomethodology, sociolinguistics and symbolic interactionism, concentrated on the internal life of schools and home-school relations, often aided by the close analysis of videotapes taken in classrooms, testing and counselling settings." (Mehan: 1992:2).*

In the structuralist approach, there is no place for the subject's perception, instead large-scale generalisations are made on the basis of quantitative studies. The micro studies on the other hand are based on assumptions[12], which give a lot of weight to the subject's perception.

There are three streams within the interpretative approach, the symbolic-interactionists, the phenomenologists and the ethnomethodologists. I will present them briefly to explain the way they look at education.

Eggleston (1974:04) explains that "Symbolic interactionism is concerned to explore the ways in which human beings defend and benefit themselves, in the way in which they present themselves to others and the constant process of adjustment made by them in this presentation". They see educational inequality in the conflicts between the teacher and the pupil, with each striving for different goals and settlement based on negotiation and power play.

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[10] Spelt as interpretive by some writers.

[11] Pollard (1984: 179) writes that even as late as the 70s its influence was considered insignificant. Nevertheless, post structuralism in the philosophy of social science helped this stream take root more strongly.

[12] The assumptions are as follows:
1. A focus on everyday activity and everyday life of the educational system without discounting the possibility of changes through change in everyday activity.
2. Some autonomy exists in everyday life and people choose within this to create own roles and action.
3. As roles and actions are created and acted, people give meanings to their own behaviour.
4. Meanings are negotiable and continuous modifications takes place all the time.
5. A subjectivist approach is indispensable and that "we have to try to get inside the actors heads and see how they define the situation."(Summarised and Condensed from Blackledge and Hunt:1985:233-236)

The *phenomenologists* try to get the actors' (i.e. teachers, students, parents) knowledge of the situation. External reality is based on certain typifications. Consciousness formation by the subjects is central to phenomenological understanding. They focus on investigating the perceptions towards social situations and response towards it by individuals in society. For the phenomenologist truth, reality, objectivity are subjective factors and flexible to change. *Eggleston (1974:04) states that "it is this rediscovery and reinterpretation of the sociology of knowledge that forms an important part of phenomenology which goes on to explore the processes whereby individuals obtain or are denied access to knowledge. Infact the social control of knowledge".* The path-breaking treatise of Berger and Luckman (1976) in defining reality as a construction of participants, led to immense development of the interpretive tradition. At one level, it encouraged the New Sociologists of Education in England to look at curriculum and at another level social construction became an important methodology for the interpretativist.

The *ethnomethodologists* tries to unravel the processes whereby people make everyday life intelligible. These processes are said to be the order that people impose on what otherwise would be a chaotic world. (Blackledge and Hunt:1985:23). Developed by Garfinkel, its research is oriented towards studying the normal pattern of response in situations of 'deliberate'[13] breakdown of human interactions.

Amongst the three streams, interactionists and phenomenologists have looked at he question of education in greater detail. And, from their positions it can be summarised that the main aim of the interpretativist is to understand behaviour by classifying types of outlook and giving meanings to the actors' meanings by locating them within the wider context of society.

The New Sociologists of Education

As earlier mentioned, the new sociology of education was popularised in England as a reaction to the positivistic trends (known as old sociology of education). It was associated with curricular enquiries and in form became very close to the phenomenological studies.

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[13] Methodologically subjects are placed in bewildering environments and it is observed how they make sense of it and create a new order (Meighan:1981:228)

Blackledge and Hunt (1985:290-314) classify the basic assumptions of this tradition, which also explains their outlook to educational inequality.

1. Knowledge is socially constructed and the knowledge transmitted within the school is a 'socio-historical' construct of a particular time.

2. Truth and validity are socially constructed and knowledge is said to consist of logically different ways of enquiring, understanding and experiencing reality (Berger and Luckman:1976, Lawton:1983)

3. Ability, Knowledge and Educational Failure are said to be products of the educational system based on streaming and tracking, labelling and typifying people.

4. Educational Knowledge and Everyday Knowledge are treated at par and notions of superiority of one over the other are rejected. Educational knowledge is associated with the middle class and the everyday knowledge associated with the working class.

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2.4.1 The Interpretativist

Michael Young's work, Knowledge and Control (1971), was a landmark in the New Sociology of Education and was followed by substantial development in the understanding of curriculum as a source of educational inequality. Krishna Kumar (1989) writes that the nature of knowledge available in schools has to do with the overall classification of knowledge and skills that are appropriate for the tasks generated by the economy and supported by politics and culture. Similarly Lawton (1983) proclaims that certain kinds of knowledge have become a badge of rank to identify elites and exclude outsiders.

New sociologists give culture a high place in otherwise highly deterministic macro theories. They prise open the black box to examine the reflexive relations between institutional practices and student's careers. *"In the hands of interpretive theorists, culture is not merely a pale reflection of structural forces, it is a system of meaning that mediates social structure and human action. Social actors no longer function as passive role players, shaped exclusively by structural forces beyond their control; they become active sense makers, choosing among alternatives in often contradictory circumstances. Schools are not black boxes through which students pass*

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on their way to predetermined slots in the capitalist order; they have vibrant life, composed of processes and practices that respond to competing demands that often unwittingly contribute to inequality," Mehan (1992:03)

Interpretative sociology looks at schools in detail and has thus interested policy makers and welfare intervention. Eggleston (1974:10) comments that interpretive studies have opened up a host of possibilities for educational practice particularly for examining school and classroom behaviour. Things begin to change as the educator's perspective is not taken for granted. Instead, it itself becomes a subject of interrogation and the important task for researchers in sociology of education became making rather than taking problems. Studies focus on ethnographic work on classrooms, schools and homes. Apart from this, content analysis of curriculum, commentaries on the politics of selection of 'valid knowledge' the language and codes operating within classrooms and the hierarchy in language are also studied. Students are not accused for under-performing, rather the very concept of intelligence begins to be questioned and teaching comes to be scrutinised.

The teachers are understood to be socialising agents in both reproductionist and functionalist theory. But for the interpretativist, teachersare said to have choice. Pollard (1984:189) says that teachers could no longer shrug of their responsibilities as being an outcome of the capitalist order. They are seen to be having greater possibilities for "positive forms of praxis" that can be developed within classrooms, which are seen as sites of struggle. This is possibly why this theoretical framework is directly linked with teacher education and classroom practice (ibid.:177).

Bourdieu had explained the role of cultural capital in making or marring school performance. But those using the interpretative paradigm are able to focus on school practices, relationships and curriculum to explain how the working class culture was devalued. Their focus on language also opens up new areas of understanding inequality. They look at linguistics to understand common sense knowledge. Berger and Luckman refer to language as the tool for generating meanings and accumulation of knowledge for future generations. Linguistic studies further show that incongruence in school and home language result in under performance as per the set standards of school. Interactionists also identify culture specific learning patterns, which account for the difference in performance of groups with similar socio-economic status but with different cultural experience. Their categories of analysis

move beyond that of stratification based on class to incorporate cultural variance. Interactionists and ethnomethodologists pointed out the importance of constitutive action[14] in educational success and failure.

Emerging questions

The questions targeted at interpretativists are both ideological as well as methodological. Being micro studies, interpretative analysis often tends to lose the larger picture of social inequality wherein the school operates especially since they espouse a 'value-free' research[15]. Giroux (1984:329) points out that curriculum studies and text analysis, by the new sociologists, has restricted itself to 'registering' curriculum materials and 'practices ' and has desisted from linking with the ideological representation and historically constituted social relations in schools.

At another level, the very assumptions of micro-studies are questioned. Blackledge and Hunt state (1985:295-314) that assumption of truth and validity being socially constructed does not necessarily mean that knowledge is arbitrary. Hence the origin of a certain form of knowledge could be associated with the biased interests of a certain group but if it is able to stand up to rational investigations then it is valid. They pose that the problem with the assumption of truth being socially constructed is that there would be no criteria to judge anything. The problem with social construction is that any definition other than that of the participant is not considered as external reality. Eggleston (1974:05) quoting Berger and Berger says that since external reality is taken to be only that as defined by the subject in a classroom, anything and any behaviour can be legitimised by the phenomenologists. Also, saying that labelling results in self -prophecy is negated by the fact that students also resist labels. As for the assumption regarding the non-hierarchy of knowledge, there is a general understanding amongst Marxists, Liberals and Socialists that educational knowledge is cognitively and intellectually superior to everyday knowledge. Educational knowledge implies mastery over certain concepts, criteria and methodology therefore entitling a person who has mastered it to be in a position of authority and therefore also to teach it. But there are also ideas that educational knowledge is more complex, implying that it is not a substitute for everyday knowledge. In areas of educational inequality, this

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[14] The rules that people apply through institutional practices, cultural conventions and rituals.
[15] However this is not the case with New sociologist of education who often have set their problem in the larger social, political condition surrounding the working class.

has important implications. It means that there should not be ideally any differentiation in the knowledge given to different people. And giving educational knowledge to one section and everyday knowledge to another section of society sets the path for educational inequality, something the inetrpretativists completely overlook.

2.5 The Resistance Theory and Educational Inequality

The interpretativists, in America, developed their stream by insisting on 'value free' research. The Marxists refuted the possibility of value free science and said that research questions emerged from normative positions. Andrew Pollard (1984:173-174), who is not a Marxist emphasises that one can speak of scientific and value free methodological inquiry but questions of research and conclusions can hardly be value free. And in the 70s and 80s several sociologists began to use micro-interpretative methods of phenomenology and interactionism while keeping economic and larger social constraints in the larger framework. The studies that emerged accept the role of human agency within the constraints placed by the economic-social system. They are influenced by Marxist theory, particularly the writings of Gramsci(1971) and Lukacs (who built on the complexities of the relationship between material reality and idea which is also evident in the early works of Marx) and the positions taken by the Frankfurt School theorists. Closer to social democratic thought, they do not completely negate school reform. They accept the relative autonomy theory without abandoning the overall Marxist framework of looking at the limitations imposed by economic and production relations in society. Thus, they also came to be known as neo-Marxists.

The neo-Marxist theory cross the deterministic boundaries of reproduction theory and depiction of school as a prison house of ideology by noting instances of school autonomy and making efforts to document and expand it. Schools are not seen as input-output machines but as sites of conflict. It becomes possible not only to explain how pupils become subjects of domination but also to explain the phenomena of those who escape it by becoming radical enough to resist it. Within school, the teachers and students are not taken as passive receptacles of domination but actors engaged in giving meaning to their dispossession.

Giroux and others inspired by Gramsci's concept of hegemony elaborated on ideology, hegemony and culture to explain the relationship between the state, the economic system and the educational system. While ideology and hegemony expose the political nature of schooling and the inequality therein, culture becomes important as it creates different instances, meanings, practices which reproduces an unequal society.

The resistance theorists always emphasise the emancipatory role of education even as they critique schooling. They focus on the tensions and conflicts that mediate relationships among home, school and workplace as well as within them. Elaborating, Apple (1982:15) writes that schools are caught in contradictions as are ideologies." *They have elements within themselves that see through to the heart of the unequal benefits of a society and at one and the same time tend to reproduce the ideological relations and meanings that maintain the hegemony of dominant classes...Particular institutions become the sites of where this struggle takes place and where these dominant ideologies are produced. The school is crucial as one of these sites."*

The resistance theorists recognise that domination is not a one sided activity, it is rejected and accepted in the course of a struggle wherein the disadvantaged themselves participate in their subjugation albeit in the process of rejecting it. (Apple:1981:36, Blackledge and Hunt: 1985:186). Paul Willis' study[16] is a case in point. This analysis comes from the assumption that the education system enjoys a relative autonomy from economic structure and production relations, while accepting the boundaries of autonomy. We therefore see resistance theorists exploring the spaces of autonomy and the spaces of resistance within the prison of economic constraints. Hence, a more complex reproduction process is mapped by the neo-Marxists.

Apple (1982:14) takes into account both the hidden curriculum and formal curriculum but says that this is not accepted by the working class students passively. They interpret and arrive at their own meanings and practices based on their culture, class, race and gender. Student reinterpretation and rejection is hence part of resistance.

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[16] The next chapter refers to it in detail..

Giroux (1984:314) formulates the position on resistance theory though he is not exactly a neo-Marxist[17]. He addresses the educational inequality question from the pedagogic angle. He claims that ideology not only limits human action but also enables it. This reconstruction is possible by appropriating *" their material elements, skills and critical knowledge in order to restructure them as part of the production of new ideologies and collective experiences"* (ibid:331). He states that studies on curriculum are relevant but only so far as they link *" ideological representations to historically constituted social relations as they appear in schools"* (ibid.329).

Methodologically the resistance theorists have relied on ethnographic studies as well as curriculum studies and unlike interpretativis who have relied on heavy descriptions and methodological refinement, the neo-Marxists maintain a normative and Marxist position on educational inequality. (Arrnowitz:1986:96). Hammersely and Woods (quoted in West:1984:256) however have raised epistemological questions on the viability of tying up macro and micro analysis. *"If ethnography is centrally concerned with phenomenal microlevel experience, is empiricist, theoretically open, and value free, then how can it be combined with macro level system -oriented , objectivist , value committed approach of Marxism?"*. West answers by asserting that this is not only possible epistemologically but also desirable.

Emerging Questions

Andy Hargreaves (in Blackledge and Hunt:1985:207) remarks that anything goes in relative autonomy theory as education is claimed to be both determined and not determined by economic factors. This complex formulation of schools being both dependent on wider social pressures as well as independent of them has led to a deeper understanding, atleast of educational inequality. Reynolds (1984:290) calls it a case of "wanting to have the cake and eating it too". However mapping the micro within the macro has led to a more complex understanding of the way educational inequality operates.

Studies by resistance theorists have been criticised for not conceptualising oppositional behaviours adequately, as any opposition is hailed, irrespective of its socio-historical origin. The excessive focus on overt rebellion also rules out the

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[17] Giroux's writing falls somewhere in between neo marxist and post modernist position since his critical pedagogy is eclectic. He will also be considered in the section on post modernism as his later writings more or less are from the post modernist position

nuances of rebellion experienced in schools dominated by working class children. Also not all working class children reject knowledge. Peter Woods has distinguished various modes of pupil resistance[18]. But an overemphasis on rebellion by resistance theorists ends up justifying anything as resistance. And the Marxist meaning of class struggle gets robbed when all working class behaviour[19] including high consumerism by pupils, ruffian behaviour, lumpen proletarian activities are as portrayed as resistance.

Feminists have questioned the sexism and racism in the oppositional behaviours which is approved by the early resistance theorists like Willis (Britzman:1995). The feminists feel that such rebellion may not lead to emancipation but to reproduction and reinforcement of hegemonic ideologies. The later writings of neo-Marxists, though, do look at gender issues.

2.6 The Postmodern Moment and Educational Inequality

In the 60s and 70s black and feminist movements were on the streets demanding equal opportunity including those in education. Towards the end of this period much of it had shifted into the academic discourse. They began to question the biases in knowledge and its claims of objectivity. The insights on the politics of culture developed by these movements found its way into the writings of Derrida and Foucault.

Though there are as many streams of feminists and black thinkers as there are streams in political theory. In the late 80s a number of feminist and black writers initiated a dialogue with postmodernism. This, at one level, was an outcome of the marginality women and blacks faced after entering the mainstream, particularly in academics, which led them sharing ground with postmodernism. With post

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[18] Peter Woods (mentioned in Blackledge and Hunt:1985:218) has classified pupil behaviour as follows:
Ingratiating: Becoming the teacher's pet, **Compliance:** Academic work seen as valuable but only as a means to an end. **Ritualism:** Pupil accepts school as a way of life but shows no identification with school goals. **Opportunism:** Conformity and other adaptation to school, Resistance is seen to be manifested in three forms: **Retreatism:** School is taken as a waste of time therefore pupil spends time "mucking about". **Colonisation:** Where the students tries to work through the system, **Intransigence:** Antipathy towards school and its authorities therefore awkward to handle **Rebel:** Replaces the goals of the school with his/her own.
[19] Most work by the neo marxist look at the situation of the working class and other issues are looked therein.

structuralism's influence on social science, educational inequality began to be investigated from this perspective by several sociologists.

Post modernist studies are not part of 'a systematic theory' or a 'comprehensive philosophy'. Neither do they refer to a 'system of ideas or concepts nor is it a name denoting a unified social, cultural movement' (Usher and Edwards:1994:07). Postmodernism is discernible from certain features common to postmodernist thought. What marked these investigations as different was the doubt placed on notions of progress, equality and modernity and their treatment of education as 'Project of Enlightenment'[20]. Hence, education and postmodernism sit quite uneasily with each other, as education is much the dutiful child of Enlightenment. Education infact is "the vehicle by which enlightenment ideals of critical reason, humanistic individual freedom and benevolent progress are substantiated and realised." (Sadovnik:1995).Postmodernism is known to question notions of 'equality'; but the fact is that the postmodernist critique of Enlightenment, reason and rationality. And serves to show the Enlightenment model of equality had failed to include secveral groups which faced discrimination. The Enlightenment excluded blacks and women, and political rights for these groups were gained out of struggles much later. Inequality led to questioning of the enlightenment itself and thus gave space for expanding the understanding of equality, justice and liberty.

The post modernists question the universal in Enlightenment and pitch for plurality and difference (Usher and Edwards:1994:25) as power is seen any institution. Joseph (1998:13) says that power in post modernism is "all pervasive in society, institutions and practices-dominating, co-opting and negating" and knowledge is associated with power and how "reality can be known only through its representations and how providing an account of it itself becomes a mode of power".

For the postmodernists therefore struggle against educational inequality is a struggle for alternate meanings and expression of subjective realities. Foucault infact argues that resistance is in the emergence of another discourse and not in emancipatory practice which in turn may have oppressive consequences. Alternative

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[20] Post modernity is associated with questioning the Project of Enlightenment. And this means doubting modernity and Enlightenment.Alan R Sadovnik(1995) says that **modernity** refers to the industrial revolution in England, the political revolution of 1789 in France and the acceptance of scientific and rationalist principles that found gain during Enlightenment. **Enlightenment** is associated with belief in

discourses, which have the perspective of the 'other', then become the site of resistance. Inequality is conceptualised in the very nature of knowledge and it is said to be understood through a process of deconstruction of specific discourses.

Post modernism holds the de-legitimisation of the knowledge of the oppressed groups to be a reason for their powerlessness. And, Foucault terms education in governmentality and knowledge as an exercise of power. He claims that no power could be exercised without extraction, appropriation, distribution or retention of knowledge (Foucault quoted in Usher and Edwards:1994:87)

Wexler (1995:329) suggests that boundary deregulation or the collapse of boundaries or what Bernstein terms as weakening of classification implies the collapse of the barriers between theory, research and practise. This collapse of boundaries is also associated with dissolution of hierarchical barriers between high and popular culture, art and everyday life (as the new sociologist also aimed). Usher and Edwards (1994:13) feel that this enabled the sociologist to move from everyday practices and experiences of different social groups to more 'rarified' artistic, intellectual and academic activities. They feel that postmodernism allows the concerns and questions of the post structuralist world to be raised particularly those associated with language texts, interpretation, subjectivity, as larger historical, cultural questions tend to inhabit the post modern moments. (ibid:18)

Post modernist studies place competing discourses on an equal footing by calling all totalising theories as potentially anti-democratic and emphasising the centrality of local and situated meanings, in educational practise and curricular selections. A unique feature of postmodernist ethnography is the way it has emphasised "the dialogical character of the relationship between the social scientist 'writing culture and the subject" and the way it has managed to "incorporate in to the ethnographic account the self understanding of the subjects so that it would have authenticity for them." (Joseph:1998:38).

The post modern studies redirected research across levels and fields raising the question of the relation between the development of individual lives and social institutions. (Sadovnik:318, Wexler: 331). Their critique of school curriculum, knowledge and curriculum is based on how it is constructed and achieved within

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progress through science and technology, belief in reason and rationality and in principles of equality, liberty and justice.

classroom unlike Marxist and neo- Marxist critiques premised on the assumption that systematic distortions and misrepresentations of social facts and economic and political realities have served identifiable class interests. (Luke and Luke:1995:368)

Uneasy as the relationship is between education and post modernism, the latter has prescriptions for education (other than what Giroux has to offer, which in any case an amalgamation of neo-Marxist and critical theory within a post modern moment).

Emerging Questions

Alan Sokal's[21](1996) academic parody dismissed postmodernist discourse as a philosophical enterprise engaged in jugglery of words and to a large extent eroded its credibility. However, other criticisms though less dramatic have also raised important questions, especially on issues of equality. In complete opposition to conflict theorists who emphasise that the goals of the groups with differing interests are contradictory, the postmodernist talk of "dialogue across differences". Hence, it ends up justifying exploitation and domination (and therefore educational inequality itself) by emphasising differences when the economic divide and social divides are very high.

A repeated criticism facing post modernist discourse is that, it is difficult to extrapolate a theory of political interventions from such studies. Although they may throw light on the processes of social reproduction in actual practical forms of combating educational inequality, postmodernism offers little as their own only concrete proposition for subversion is by putting forward counter discourses.

There is also very little empirical work associated with the post-modern moment. Torres (1998) finds the central problem with postmodernist perspectives in the way they bypass critical contributions of modernism, thereby depoliticising the concept of human empowerment and liberation.

The element of subjectivity allowed in a postmodern moment can get extended to such an extent that it could imply that educational inequality is a construction and not necessarily an external reality. The preoccupation with individual experience in the post modern moment bears the danger of becoming exclusionary into the philosophical territory of solipsism, as external reality is taken to be that conceived by

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[21] Alan Sokal's pulled off an intellectual bluff by pointing to the howlers in the usage of concepts of physics, quantum physics in the writing of well known French postmodernist philosophers like Lacan, Derrida, Baudrillard by writing it in dense postmodernist style parody and getting it published in the well known journal, Social Text. This led to severe embarrassment, after the prank was exposed, for the postmodernist writers, who hailed Sokal unwittingly.

individual. It is this reason which makes several radical theorists reject postmodernism. Hartsock (quoted in Usher and Edwards:1994:22), a feminist claims that "postmodernism offers inadequate political direction."

The post-modern explanations when used as activities can end up reproducing the existing social order." *These approaches (referring to learner centred approaches stressing diversity and difference) are easily transformed into the kind of instrumentalism which underpins the increasingly dominant training and enterprise culture."* *(Usher and Edwards:1994).*

Postmodernism embroils the discussion in discourse and counter discourse thus paralysing educators. Some find this aspect of the post-modern moment suspect. ."*Why is it exactly at the moment when so many of us who have been silenced begin to demand the right to name ourselves , to act as subjects rather than objects of history , that just then the concept of subjecthood becomes 'problematic'? Just when we are forming our own theories about the world, uncertainty emerges about whether the world can be adequately theorised?"* *(Hartsock quoted in Usher and Edwards:1994:118)*

2.7 Framework of the Study

In this section, I will first compare the theories and then see the levels of educational inequality for the disadvantaged as viewed by different theories. Following this the framework of the study will be presented.

An overview of theories on educational inequality shows that there are several continuities and contradictions, in the debate on education and inequality. The concern has moved from a search for structural factors, alternate meanings of education, to the emphasis on difference rather than inequality in education.

Research questions on education inequality have changed over time. In the 1970s questions were about why working class children perform badly when they go to school and how is it that status achieved by the working class and the middle class with similar amounts of education vary so much? From the mid 1970s and 80s questions on classroom and school processes began to emerge in sociology of education and life within school was held up for scrutiny to see manifestation of

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inequality. Lately the question has been whether educational inequality is an outcome of the homogenisation processes that takes place within classrooms.

It is also seen that the philosophical debates engaging social science have affected enquiries on educational inequality. An emphasis on positivism in the mid 20th century led to analysis of inequality on the basis of empirical evidence obtained through quantitative research. The late 80s began with vigorous attack on the very basis of scientific knowledge, reason, and foundationalism. The new sociologists of education collapsed the boundaries between educational and everyday knowledge and argued that knowledge was socially constructed. Qualitative studies describing the situation became necessary to understand educational inequality. It began to be seen that educational inequality can be socially constructed. The perceptions of inequality need not vary only according to class but also based on race, gender and caste as well as between individuals therein.

With Foundationalism being questioned, postmodernists theorised anti-foundationalism and the conceptualisation of educational inequality changed. From a given scientific definition of educational inequality, where it meant that there was either a problem in the distribution of education or inadequate representation of knowledge belonging to different groups, anti-foundationalism began to question the very nature of education calling it a Project of Enlightenment. Joseph (1998:11) for instance says that ,*"Questions emerged on the relationship between language , meaning and reality, questioning the belief that experience dictates truth and meaning in ways which are independent of particular languages."* While studies had earlier focussed largely on questions of access, efficiency, and status attainment, the studies influenced by anti foundationalism began to look at production of power within knowledge. This is a variation from the Marxist understanding of educational inequality, where class is considered as a nodal point of power and reproduction and resistance is seen from these power centres, while for Foucault and other postmodernists, power is discussed within cultural practices. Thus the latter seek to explain educational inequality in day to day school language and practices. There are of course problems with such conceptualisations of educational inequality as power appears to be mystified concept[22] and role of classes is negated.

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[22] Edward Said infact has criticised Foucault for mystifying power and obliterating role of classes, economics, insurgency and rebellion (see Joseph:1998:175)

It is to be noted that specific groups were the focus of different theoretical frameworks. While class was an important category of analysis in the functionalist and conflict studies, in the postmodernist studies new cultural categories of analysis have emerged. These claims have reflected the political assertions of groups (disadvantaged) who sometimes share common interests and at others are in at conflict with each other. They point out the biases in the received forms of knowledge, which were shown to be positivist, behavioural, eurocentric, colonial and mostly mainstream and conservative. (Joseph:1998:99).

Plurality of categories of analysis in inequality began with what was claimed as the rightful place of the specific in the experience of the disadvantaged groups. Hartsock (quoted in Joseph:1998:101)defends these stand point theories on the ground that material life structures and sets limits to social relations which then influence ideas and goals. And the location that different groups hold on structures of production and exchange determining their viewpoint. Thus the perspective of the oppressed is said to be more incisive and liberating than elite perspectives because it holds current social arrangements critically. But this viewpoint she says is achievable only through a struggle and is not given for just being born in to the disadvantaged group. This explanation of standpoint theories is important when looking at studies on the perspectives of the disadvantaged groups because not all perspectives by those in the group may qualify to be a standpoint of the group as only the voices of those in struggle against current arrangements in educational structures causing educational inequality could be taken as standpoint.

While talking of categories, a few other observations are worth noting, In recent studies class is being replaced with caste, ethnicity, community which are then conceptualised as cultural phenomena not grounded in the structures of social relations. At other levels, class is taken as just another identity, based on economic factors. Joseph (1998:186) writes that to take such a position is with the notion that individual chooses their identity voluntarily thus ignoring the role of power and privilege in the social processes and the inherent inequality

The ideological positions have decided the normative concerns of educational inequality. Liberal, Conservative positions are based on functionalist analysis while Marxist analysis are based on the conflict approach. The extent of difference that can come about on the basis of ideological position can be seen from the fact that same

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data has been used both by Marxists as well as the structural functionalist to arrive at completely different explanation and causes of educational inequality.

Similarly, the interpretativist refuse to take normative positions, even as the neo-Marxists argue that educational inequality could not be a value free research inspite both of them adopting micro-framework. These frameworks observed resistance, as they endowed the subject with agency. However, unlike the interpretativistd, the neo-Marxists see conflict in the central analysis of educational inequality and see agency operating only within the limits set by the economic and social structures.

Though a chronological sequence is presented here in the development of the conceptualisation of educational inequality, it has hardly been a linear process. Similarly, end of ideology proclamations by the postmodernist did not bury Marxist questions on issues of oppression and exploitation.

As has been seen, the recognition given to agency in education meant a greater appreciation of the meaning people gave to their educational situations. Several ethnographic works and narratives have documented the education experience of disadvantaged groups and the meanings that they associate with it. In countries, like US and UK, several such studies have been done. However, in India such studies are fewer in number as educational inequality is largely because of the sheer unavailability of the school itself (in terms of physical access) for the disadvantaged groups.

2.7.1 The perspective of the study

Theoretically, the need for looking at the meanings people attribute to their actions, behaviour and interaction stems from the interpretative framework. And attempts to seek the meanings that people give to factors of educational inequality (even if it is identified from all theoretical frameworks) should therefore come under interpretative perspective, atleast methodologically. However, the emphasis on the perspective of the disadvantaged implies that the way they perceive is different from the way the advantaged or the privileged perceive, assuming a conflict of interest. This places the study amongst the micro studies of the conflict theory, which is the area of focus of the resistance theorists.

Like most micro studies, the stress in this research has also been on getting qualitative information. An ethnographic approach[23] is adopted for the analysis with education viewed in relation to family, community, tradition, ethnicity and gender within the larger canvas of caste and class.

2.7.2 The frame of analysis

The theoretical review indicates that educational inequality amongst disadvantaged groups could actually mean different things depending upon the framework adopted in the study. The functionalists identify it as differences in educational opportunities emerging from dysfunction at structural level between institutions. The Reproductionists identify it as differences in educational outcomes emerging from the nature of the capitalist economy to reproduce production relations. The new sociologists and resistance theorists look at educational inequality as the differences in the hierarchy of knowledge and thus what gets included in the curriculum of the school. The resistance theorists, the interpretativists and to some extent the postmodernists look at the life in the school wherein educational inequality is a consequence of the differences in the power relations within the school.

Hence, even if we take educational inequality as the differences in educational attainment and opportunities the explaining factors could be several and grouped together at three levels:

The structural factors of educational inequality: These are the factors associated with the position in the socio-economic structure, institutional context of schooling and manifests as unequal access to different social strata.

The curricular factors of educational inequality: This includes not only the curriculum but also the curricular transaction, which includes the text, the pedagogic encounter and the method of evaluation i.e. the factors leading to the differences between pupils because of de-legitimisation of the knowledge of the disadvantaged pupils while including the knowledge of the privileged pupil in the school curriculum. Therefore educational inequality would be misrepresentation, no representation, under representation of the disadvantaged group and its life in what is being presented as knowledge itself.

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[23] As defined by Hitchcock and Hughes (1989:144)

Everyday school life and classroom processes includes those associated with teacher's authority, attitudes, pupils attitude, authority, the subcultures within school, the interaction between teachers, parents, the school administration and management.

When a disadvantaged group has access to education, several points needs deliberation including the one of educational inequality, which to a large extent is a product of social and political inequality. But as presented here atleast at three levels causes for it can be found.

In the next three chapters, literature will be surveyed and the findings from the field will be analysed with reference to the perspective of those disadvantaged in urban areas in the overlapping zone of class, caste and gender.

Chapter 3

LOCATING EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY AMONGST THE DISADVANTAGED

In this chapter, I review studies on the education of disadvantaged groups, primarily working class, dalits and women in urban India. I analyse the factors that underlie educational inequality at structural, curricular and in everyday school processes. The nature of studies and the gaps are taken up in the conclusion.

3.1 Caste and Class Issues

Stratification based on caste and class have created deep fissures within the Indian society. Within urban India, however caste and class have undergone changes and adaptations. Caste[1] continues to be an aspect of hereditary social status but its influence has declined particularly in urban centres where different groups have come into close association. McKimm Marriot (1993) indicates that caste in the urban and metropolitan centres is open and unbounded system, in which any person/ group coming from outside the city could take the reference group's behaviour, which often meant adopting the upper caste/class rituals and style of life.

In India, the growth of urban centres and capitalism has been the story of class differentiation, which is other major division of society. Bottomore (1986) has stated that social classes are de facto, not legally or religiously defined and sanctioned, groups that are relatively open unlike closed characteristic of castes. The basis of class is purely economic but they are more than economic group as it is linked to styles of life and so on. Mukherjee (1993) argues that caste is turning into class in urban areas as noticeable from 19th century Bengal which saw the growth of Bhadralok in Howrah city. Several sociologist have corroborated this position though there is considerable debate on the relationship between caste and class, for the purposes of this dissertation, it will suffice to say that caste and class continue to be the most significant cause of social inequality within urban India as much as in rest of the country. It also needs to be mentioned that lately the issue of educational inequality

has also been seen with reference to a variety of urban disadvantaged groups namely street children, migrant children, children of prostitutes, delinquent children (Chakrabarty:2002). Apart from these groups disabled are also a group that have suffered discrimination. Important as it is to see the specific issues of these groups, in the dissertation I will focus on groups disadvantaged by caste and class as these systems of stratification continue to determine the success or the failure within the existing educational system. The dimension of gender is also dwelt upon as women are disadvantaged across castes and classes.

3.1.1 Education and the Disadvantaged

Let us begin by looking at what is the educational position of those disadvantaged by caste, class and gender in India and particularly in Delhi, where the field study is situated.

The NSS,55th Round (2000) indicates that urban literacy rates are significantly higher than total literacy rate. 62 per cent of the Indian population is literate of this 73 per cent are male population and only 51 per cent are females. The gender differential, is indicative of poor educational situation of women in India. In urban Delhi, where the fieldwork for the dissertation was located, the differential remains substantial inspite of higher rates of overall literacy. See table 3.1

Table 3.1

Percentage of Literate Persons -Year 2000*

	Male	Female	Total
India	73 (81)	51 (72)	62 (80)
Delhi	93 (92)	77 (80)	86 (86)

Source: NSS, 55 Round

(Urban literacy level)

*7 years and above, Rural + Urban figures

Certain social groups like SC, ST and OBC as well as religious communities like Muslims have lower educational levels than the national averages indicating their educationally disadvantaged positions. See table 3.2. the table indicates that for every

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[1] MN Srinivas (1998) has identified the 5 features of caste as: Hereditary, Endogamy, Hierarchy,

1000distribution the Dalits have the lowest number of persons at secondary, higher secondary and graduation level.

Table 3.2

Educational level for different social groups* per 1000 distribution**

-Year 2000

Social group	Not literate	Literate	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Graduate and above
All*	202	798	147	165	135	85	105
SC	338	662	157	152	81	46	31
ST	300	700	133	153	90	66	70
OBC	247	753	162	174	123	65	55

Source: Extracts from statement 3 And 5U of NSS Report No 473, NSS 55 Round

*: SC, ST, OBC, others, not recorded

** (7 years and above, Urban figures, male +female)

The class position determines educational access at different level as evident from the figures for the lowest and highest MPCE class taken in the 55th round of NSS. See table3.3. The lowest MPCE has highest number of illiterates per 1000 distribution while the highest MPCE has highest number of graduates. Similar picture is evident from the educational levels of households engaged in different occupations. As seen, households with members having regular salaried incomes are able to retain themselves the longest in the educational system without dropping-out. Those households in self-employment come second to the salaried in their survival at each educational level. And only a minuscule number amongst those households engaged in casual labour are able to end their children to higher education. See Table 3.4

Traditional Occupation and concepts of Purity and Pollution.

Table 3.3

Educational level for different MPCE per 1000 distribution* -Year 2000

MPCE Class	Not literate	Literate	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Graduate and above
0-300	485	515	133	114	42	21	6
1925+	31	969	71	97	152	156	425

Source: Extracts from statement 1U of NSS Report No 473, NSS 55 Round

* *(7 years and above, Urban figures, male +female)*

Table 3.4

Educational level for different household type per 1000 distribution *

-Year 2000

House-hold Type	Not literate	Literate	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Graduate and above
Self Employed	221	779	153	166	127	73	86
Regular wage/ salary	123	877	139	175	165	109	151
Casual Labour	407	593	163	143	59	18	7

Source: Extracts from statement 1U of NSS Report No 473, NSS 55 Round

* *(7 years and above, Urban figures, male +female)*

Educational inequality can be both exclusionary and overlapping, and multiple disadvantages may operate. For instance in cities, the slums are poorer settlements where low ranked classes reside. The economic disadvantage of the residents can be gauged from the absence of basic infrastructure and inadequate health and educational facilities available in these areas. Delhi slums are working class colonies places where atleast 30% of its population live. They have a substantial overrepresentation of Dalits and Muslims. While SC population within the country is almost around 16 per cent, their representation within the slum is 43 per cent (Jha and Jhingan;2002, Agarwal:2000) indicating the extensive migration from rural areas by Dalits seeking better opportunities in the face of loss of traditional occupations, landlessness and famine. Issacs (1972: 378) states that "the first generation that migrates usually picks up odd jobs and are the scavengers and sweepers ... who continue in the new

situation many of the conditions and divisions that they brought with them from their villages". Even when they are regular salaried and in government jobs we find that they mostly end up occupying class IV jobs "consisting mainly of manual workers and plain labourers in the government's agencies and enterprises...universally called peons." (ibid:395). This is corroborated by Nancharaaiah (2002:173) who found that the SC/ ST quota was filled completely only for class IV jobs and that too for jobs like sweeping and scavenging, as these were not taken by others due to the social stigma. In the city they inhabit the slums and poorer, underdeveloped parts of the city. The condition of the new migrants is worse and extremely difficult as they face shortage of water, inadequate toilet facilities, and costly electricity. Abject hygiene conditions health hazards and frequent illness are characteristic of these slums. Thus, we see an overlapping of caste and class disadvantages within the slum and poorer settlements of the cities.

3.1.2 Educational Inequality in Delhi; A statistical over view

As mentioned earlier Delhi has a higher literacy rate compared to the rest of the country. Agarwal (2000) shows that in 1993, 73.5 per cent children in the age group 6-11 years and 86.2 per cent in the age groups 12-14 years were attending school as compared to 51 per cent and 56.3 per cent respectively for the rest of the country. At each level, there is a higher percentage of children attending school even amongst the SC population. But as far as relative levels of schooling is concerned, the disparity is significantly high.

Table 3.5

Percentage of SC enrolled at each school stage- Year 1994

	Area	% of SC in total population.	I-V	VI-VIII	IX-X	XI-XII	I-XII
Delhi	Urban	18.73	20.98	15.83	13.30	8.50	17.63
	Total	*19.05*	*21.00*	*15.90*	*13.47*	*8.65*	*17.75*
India	Urban	11.99	16.86	14.08	12.34	10.97	15.05
	Total	*16.48*	*19.62*	*15.56*	*13.72*	*12.09*	*17.84*

Source; Sixth Educational Survey: Extracts from table IS 133, NCERT

Enrolment at primary level presents a relatively optimistic picture of the educational situation of the SC in Delhi. However, what is striking is the drop in enrolment from 19.05 per cent at the primary level to 8.65 per cent in class XI-XII. Educational opportunities are unequally available to the population within the city. The educational situation of the poor settlements is diametrically opposite to that of affluent localities of the city where the middle class reside. Jha and Jhingan (2002) refer to the imposing slum environment as not conducive to studies. However, poor parents do pin their hopes on white-collar jobs for their children as evident from enrolment rates of SC in middle (VI-VIII) and secondary school (IX-X). A study on secondary education (Agarwal:2002) shows that the proliferation of private tuition and coaching market is an outcome of these aspirations even amongst the poor. We find resettlement and unauthorised colonies, where a large section of the working class of the city lives teeming with tuition centres, and private schools.

Inspite of the premium associated with education still drop out rates within Delhi schools are significantly high. Of every 100 students enrolled in class I, 26% male and 31% female students disappear by class V. And by class X another 29% male and 29% of female students, discontinue school. See table 3.6

Table 3.6

Enrolment in classes I-X in Delhi as percentage of enrolment in class I - Year 1994

Class ▷	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
Male	100	87.52	84.04	79.70	74.43	89.09	71.85	64.57	62.77	46.91
Female	100	87.95	82.73	76.39	69.01	79.23	65.49	57.53	54.10	39.57
Total	100	87.73	83.40	78.08	71.78	84.27	68.74	61.12	58.52	43.32

Source: Sixth Educational Survey: Extracts from table IS 153, NCERT

The question then emerges why are so many children leaving school and what happens to them. We will look at this question in the next section.

3.2   Factors of Educational Inequality

The chapter on theoretical pathways indicated that educational inequality is an outcome of structural and curricular transactions as well as everyday school processes. Through a survey of literature, we can identify what are these structural, curricular factors and school processes that leads to educational inequality. In this section, we look at these factors of educational inequality with a focus on the perceptions, reflections and responses of the disadvantaged groups.

3.2.1

The structural factors of educational inequality

Theoretically, the search for structural factors has been an outcome of Functionalist Direct Reproductionist and Cultural Reproductionist studies. While the functionalist studies have looked at obstacles to equality of opportunity, the conflict theorists looked at factors leading to differences in educational outcomes. Nonetheless, both have looked at larger economic order of the society as well as social structure such as caste, class, patriarchal inequalities as well as the institution of schooling and family are seen to cause educational inequality.

Poverty and Financial Difficulties

Economic deprivation

In a study(Chitnis:1981) conducted across the country, it was found that poverty and economic deprivation was the biggest obstacle faced by SC students. Similarly Muralidharan's study (1997) taking into cognisance the responses of village leaders, parents and SC students on reasons for drop out, established that their economically deprived condition was proving to be a major impediment. Dreeze and Sen (1995) have pointed out that by being at the bottom of the social and economic ladder, they are not only educationally dispossessed but also have poor housing and health and hunger. Hence even when they come to school they are listless and disinterested in their studies. And a child with hunger pangs cannot be expected to be interested in studies[2].

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[2] Mid meals have been suggested by several planners and it also has been highly successful in drawing students to school as reported in Probe (1999). However, the operations of the mid meal programme desires much to be done as it much too entangled in bureaucratic hassles and lack of political will.

Noting the impact of economic inequality on education inequality, Nancharaiah (2002) says that poverty has been an important reason for the educational backwardness of the SC population as occupationally they were in non farm employment and often occupied menial jobs even when they were in government. He has pointed to the educational backwardness as a direct outcome of the relative poverty of Dalits- indicated by the lower per capita expenditure, work force distribution in low-grade government jobs, dependence on agriculture along with landlessness [3]. Sainath (*Hindu*: 1.7.2003) while tracing migration of the rural poor finds that they are also the urban poor taking up casual jobs in the cities to escape hunger and their children end up missing school left back in the villages.

Even amongst the urban poor, many go to the villages during the agricultural season, affecting the school attendance and studies of their children (Chitnis: 1987, Talib: 1998).

High Costs of Schooling

While poverty creates the conditions that are not conducive to learning, the high costs of schooling act as a major barrier to the schooling of poor children. These costs are both direct as well as indirect costs. Tilak (1988) has classified private costs of education as visible costs like-tuition fees and non visible maintenance costs like books, stationery, hostel, transport, uniforms etc. as well as opportunity costs.[4] Banerjee (2000) found that the proportion of monthly expenditure incurred by a poor household is higher than that incurred by a middle class household. This was even when they went to a school that had low tuition fees as other costs like bag, uniform etc had to be borne.

Aphale (1976) in a study of caste Hindus and SC children in Pune city found that the former almost always had pre-schooling and preparation to attend school while the latter mostly went to school without any preparation as they came from poorer households and could not afford pre-schooling. She notes that they also often came back from school to do household chores and never had enough money for engaging private guidance.

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[3] 50% of dalits in 1991 were said to be agricultural labourers.
[4] Foregone earnings during the schooling years.

The opportunity cost of education prompts several poor parents to withdraw their children in situations of dire needs and engage them in wage labour. Children were often withdrawn from school for domestic labour and agricultural operations (Muralidharan:1997, Talib:1998, Chitnis:1987). Children's earnings also contributed to poverty stricken households to keep off hunger (Desai:1989). Girl children were kept back in households to look after younger siblings when both parents were away at work. (PROBE:1999).

However, it is not correct to generalise that in poor households child labour is the major cause of drop out. Banerjee (2000) found that most children who were not enrolled in schools in the 6-7 years were not child labourers as they were too young to enter urban unskilled jobs. PROBE (1999) similarly found that boys who dropped out of school in the 6-12 age group actually spent on an average 4.2 hours of work while girls spent 5.1 hours of work. Thus, schooling could have been possible for these children.

What happens to children in secondary school is not very clear. Do they join the workforce or do they remain at home after dropping out from school, that is question that has not been answered by any of the surveyed literature.

The need to take into consideration the perceptions of the disadvantaged groups even for something "objective" like structural factors becomes clear from the observations of Banerjee (PROBE: 1999: 30). In a study of a resettlement colony in Delhi, it was observed there was a remarkable difference in the perceptions of teachers and parents on drop out. The teachers thought migration and child labour was the reason for the children's discontinuation from school while parents explained that they had been settled in the colony for 15 years and held teachers and poor teaching as responsible for drop out.

Social Discrimination

The girl child in disadvantaged households is educationally most vulnerable as evident from the NSSO data and other reports and studies (Towards Equality Report :1974, Nayar:2002). Household chores and patriarchal demands on the girl child often led to their being burdened with housework even when they attended school, resulting in their drop out. Kulkarni (PROBE: 1999: 34) observes that girls are withdrawn for

both social and economic reasons. In poorer households, the scare resources are kept aside for boys education as it is seen as an investment while the girls are expected to leave their parental homes after marriage.

PROBE also points out how girl children are seen less favourably in the classroom as compared to the boys. Bhattacharjee (1999) observes gender division of chores in the classroom, thus instilling in the girls the legitimacy of the sexual division of labour that they witness in their families.

In the village schools, the report brings to light open discrimination of poor-dalit students, who are made to sit separately in schools. Talib (1998) points that this is true even in urban schools for the poor, where children from deprived backgrounds were made to do errands for the teacher. Velaskar (1990) says that feelings of discrimination, isolation or alienation neutralise the impact of better school facilities in mixed schools while referring to the findings of Pande and Tripathi's study (1982).[5]

Institutional Barriers

Institutional barriers both overtly and covertly create unequal educational conditions for the socially and economically disadvantaged. *Overt barriers* are constructed within the educational system itself which is so heavily stratified. Kumar (1987) points out the paradox of exclusive educational facilities right from pre-schooling years for elite children, in a clearly spelt out path of sponsored mobility, even as the examination system provides a ritual façade of contest mobility to poorer children. Thus, it is not a surprise that the failures are much higher amongst the disadvantaged children. As an example it is adequate to look at the board (CBSE) examination results of Class X and XII in the year 2003. In the government, schools the pass percentage was 48.7%[6] in class X and 77.09 % in XII. In the government-aided schools it was for 56.5% for class and in XII it was 72.8%. The private schools catering to the elites and better of sections in society had much higher pass percentage of 86.85% in class X and 90.48%. Out of the 990 government schools in Delhi only 8 had 100% pass percentage in X and 40 had cent per cent result in XII but in 78 of

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[5] A study which noted that scheduled caste students had lower aspiration levels and academic concepts in caste Hindu dominated schools as compared to those in Harijan ashram sponsored schools.
[6] Hindustan Times (24, May, 2003) however reported it as 40.05%. Nevertheless the argument remains.

these schools less than one-fifth of the students had passed (Data: *Times of India*, 27.5.2003)

But it is not as if the examination system is equal within the country. There are several boards which conduct examination- the central boards and the state boards, the latter being considered inferior. In the last five years, national newspapers are full of advertisements about "international schools" offering International Baccalaureate certificate and preparing students for getting into international universities. Thus, the examination system has also given up veneer of contest mobility.

Student segregation through schools starts in the early years itself. Velaskar (1990:136) divides all schools within the country into tiered system. The top tier constitutes the elite schools, which include the exclusive public schools and the unaided private schools with high fees rendering them an exclusive preserve of the upper classes. The next layer consists of government central schools and good quality private aided schools. The third tier includes private aided or unaided of average or indifferent quality. Both these types cater largely to the upper middle, middle and increasingly lower middle strata of society. Lastly, there are the provincial regional government / local body schools for the poorer segment. With exceptions, they are seen as inferior to private schools.

School differentiation happens also on the basis of the medium of instruction and the facilities available in the school. Chitnis (1987) reports the social class differences in the composition of the three type of schools i.e. Municipal, Private aided and Private Unaided Schools and has shown in her study of Bombay City that high fees in private unaided school (the elite schools) ensure its exclusiveness. Parents who can afford to send them there manage to ensure superior physical amenities and surroundings, better teaching aids, smaller student- teacher ratio, a variety of extra curricular courses, which lead to all round development and better performance at School Leaving Certificate examination, which ensures a seat in the favourable courses in the University. The Municipal schools on the other hand are not only poorly equipped but also lack basic learning atmosphere. The mass of working class children go to Municipal schools which is indicated by the fact that children in these schools come from families with the lowest household income. Their parents are also much less educated than the parents of the students who go to elite schools. Many of

the children from elite schools had Father's who had professional and college education while Muncipal school students had Father's who at the most acquired an SSC. Drop out rate and irregular attendance is visible in children from Muncipal schools than those in private schools. Balagopalan and Subrahmaniam (2003) and Vasavi (2003) have also observed the predomination of students from disadvantaged background particularly *dalit* and *adivasi* children in the government primary schools in six states where a study was conducted. In the higher classes, educational inequality is once again visible in the overcrowding of the disadvantaged groups in non-prestigious colleges (Neelsen:1972).

Stratification is blatant in the second track educational facilities like *shramik vidyapeeths, mahila shikshan kendra, jan shiksha kendras, mahila samkhya* which are promoted amongst the disadvantaged groups as a substitute for regular educational streams. (Dreeze and Sen:1995:124). Similarly instead of streamlining and starting regular schools promotion of correspondence courses at early school levels it deepens existing educational inequalities which clearly point out that these courses are for the disadvantaged.

Covert barriers are through expectation of upper-class cultural capital before the student enters the school. Admission process for children in quality private schools, at the pre- school level is associated with tests for both the parent and the child. Even in government schools like Navodaya, Navyug and Model schools, the admission examination assumes a thorough understanding of the syllabus. Balagopalan and Subrahmaniam (2003) observed in their study that formal schooling is associated with emphasis on homework and rote learning for examinations, with the assumptions that the child has access to academic help at home. This selection process thus keeps out the children from deprived and disadvantaged families.

Family Background

After implementation of universal primary education in U.K., Halsey (1985) found disparities in learning and educational performance of children from different social class backgrounds. This was both at primary as well as at secondary levels inspite of rising aspirations from education. Studies conducted in India have found that deprived home backgrounds lacking in educational atmosphere and illiterate parents

have been a cause of differential educational attainment (Aphale: 1976, Chitnis:1987, Muralidhran:1997).

However even when the educational performance of the disadvantaged student matches the academic achievements of the privileged student, their educational and occupational aspiration tends to be lower. In Sewel's study on American students (mentioned in Shah and Shah: 1998: 65) a positive correlation between students socio-economic status and their educational and occupational aspirations was noticed. This was seen true even when other factors like sex, intelligence and parental encouragement were held constant. Similar findings can be seen in Kathryn Riley's study (1994) of three schools in England. She observed that Black girls whose families had middle class jobs in Guyana and Barbados and from urban backgrounds had higher expectation than girls from Jamaica whose families had rural backgrounds and lesser qualification even though after migrating to UK both groups held working class jobs. Thus family class background determines the occupational aspiration.

We can similar findings in India with reference to occupational aspiration of dalits. Chitnis (1981) says that younger generation of dalits who had access to school and college education showed interest in exploring different kinds of jobs but a large percentage of SC students had a tendency to cling to government jobs and trimmed their aspirations to fit the protected jobs. Exceptions to this are those dalit students whose fathers are educated and already in status occupations. *Times of India*(6.7.03) reported children of sweepers in Bombay Municipal corporation taking up their parents job after acquiring BA and MA degrees, to keep staff quarters. Thus, indicating that occupational aspiration has not changed with higher education.

3.2.2 The Curricular Factors of Educational Inequality

The New Sociology of Education, particularly the work of Michael Young (1971) became the landmark for curricular analysis in sociology of education. Reproductionist theorists have pointed to the disadvantaged clustering together in low status subjects but it has mainly been feminists, interpretativist and neo-Marxist who have taken up curricular studies to analyse social, political and educational struggles in official curriculum. Thus, curricular factors of educational inequality can be identified mainly from the works of these sociologists.

Subjects for the disadvantaged

Neelsen (1972) in a study of Banaras Hindu University and Ferguson College found that substantial number of students in Arts were from low income and low ranked castes while upper caste and high income students were found in relatively larger numbers in professional courses like medicine and engineering. For the first generation learners from poor households, being enrolled in arts courses in the university in itself was a big achievement. At another level, they were unable to compete for the few seats in prestigious, professional courses because of unequal competition. The backgrounds that they came from did not provide the cultural capital required for these courses nor were they able to afford the costs.

Studies on IITs have indicated a similar pattern. In fact a recent study showed that not a single dalit student had been taken in for PhD in Maths at IIT Madras, their chances of survival in other courses were also very low.[7] This pattern in higher education also reflects choices made at secondary and senior secondary school subjects.

The story is similar with girl students since the family resources are kept away for the boys education. In the autobiographical story of Shantabai Kamble (1992), *Naja goes to school- and doesn't,* the plight of Naja is evident, the middle school closest to her is an agricultural school, she is qualified to go there but the headmaster dissuades her explaining that being a girl she may not be able to cope with it and poverty does not allow her go elsewhere to study.

The history of women's education in India indicates that mass education for women meant a preparation for their social roles as mothers and wives. The major thrust of girl's education remained for almost a century the instilling of domesticity. Some of the popular schools for women run by Mataji Tapaswani and Annie Besant ran schools with carefully designed curriculum so as not to rile the conservatives. Sen (2002: 207-08).

Women continue to be lodged into low paid jobs, which is also because of the subject choices that they make. Payne (1980) reflecting on her experience as a working class girl in a grammar school notes that the least desirable subjects in schools were those associated with traditional female functions e.g. domestic science

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[7] http://www.ambedkar.org/research/CasteBased.htm

and needle work, perpetuating the image of the woman's role in society as insignificant. The 'clever ' girls in the school she notes avoided these subjects.

Riley's (1994) study of Black girls in England might illustrate what could be happening even within the Indian classrooms. In a co-educational school, which apparently offered no differences in subject choices, girls were counselled to save seats in 'male' subjects like technical drawing for boys. Within the same school the girls narrated how not only the curriculum but hidden curriculum, leisure facilities, school hierarchy and discipline practices reproduced male domination patterns.

The text

Apple (1999:267) comments that there is *"always a politics of official knowledge, a politics that embodies conflict over what some regard as simple neutral description of the world and others regard as elite conceptions that empower some groups while dis-empowering others"*. Biased textual representation or even partial representation could present some groups in the wrong light thus alienating pupils from those communities within the classroom.

Ambasht (2002) compares the opinions of indigenous people (Tinglet Indians)from Alaska and (Oraons) of Chotanagpur and finds some similarities in their perceptions of the curriculum. In both communities, there are people who find that the curriculum prepares their children to imbibe the values of the outsiders, who have traditionally been their oppressors. But, within the community some think that adopting modern education prepares them to join mainstream and move out of their backwardness. The problem lies with the curriculum, as it completely neglects or depicts tribal life as backward. This affects not only the perceptions of the disadvantaged of their own communities but also the way the privileged look at them. Through a curricular transaction of a Scheduled Tribe boy in an urban classroom Kumar (1989) relates how the biased text if learnt well would make the disadvantaged imbibe a sense of cultural backwardness while not learning it would imply educational backwardness.

The contradictions between the real life and what the text says is so striking that even a description of a topic like 'My School' is like entering the realms of fantasy (PROBE:1999). Talib(1998) describes a lesson on a zoo in a textbook, used

by children of stone quarry workers in Delhi. The hygienic conditions in which animals are said to live is in stark contrast to the surroundings in which they are forced to live. The reality of the text is not the reality of the child from disadvantaged backgrounds. Menon (unpublished paper) notes that the new NCERT textbooks for Maths carry pictures straight from American cartoon serials. These pictures may be the reality for children who travel abroad and watch a lot of cartoons on television. However, the absence of traditional and familiar symbols of teaching numeracy like mangoes, which is familiar even to the child from poorer disadvantaged households indicates the bias in textbook illustrations.

The text that may be full of meaning for the child from the privileged family could be replete with prejudice and sheer fantasy for the child from the disadvantaged household. The unfortunate fact is that the child is tested on this text to pass examinations. But as Rampal (2002:156) observes there are only few children amongst millions who would actually be able to point out the faults in their textbooks as most would have been conditioned to accept it.

The Language

Language creates the bridge to communicate between human beings but in school, it often disables the child from disadvantaged background. Sen (2002:197) mentions how in the 19th century, fee paying, English medium schools were for upper caste/ class men and free schools in vernacular languages were for lower caste women thus establishing distinctions of class, caste and gender. The situation continues to remain the same and the medium of instruction in a school decides its place in the school hierarchy.

An explanation on why struggle for educational inequality is associated with opening up of "English" schools and English education is indicated by the politics of language. Ilaiah (1996) writes how both the Telugu textbook and the English textbook were equally alien to them as school children. But the Telugu text with its stories of Brahamanical Gods and Goddesses represented caste oppression for the dalit child while English education atleast at the higher level brought in concepts like Equality. Hopes of liberation from caste oppression through language is evident from the early 19th century amongst the oppressed.

Infact Phule (1991) singing paeans to the English language writes "*Manu is consigned to flames (now) and the English language has become our (foster) Mother dispensing (the healing balm of education to us all). (Our foster mother English is sucking at her breast). Do not retreat now, O shudras! Condemn and banish once for all, the accursed doctrine of Manu, You will indeed be happy, when you take education. Accept this as my 'New Gospel' declares Joti. Poem no (3),p 82* The issue of language is close to issues of inequality as indicated by another poem by a dalit poet asking 'Which language should I speak' (Kamble:1992).

While linguists and psychologist prescribe learning in the first few years through the mother tongue, for the disadvantaged English is the language of social mobility and the language of the upper classes. The proliferation of private English medium schools across the length and breadth of the country and the efforts that poor parents go through to put their children in it indicates their willingness to learn the language in the hope of social-occupational mobility. As Fanon (1986:38) writes," The Negro wants to learn French because it is the key that can open doors which were still barred to him 50 years ago." For the disadvantaged in India English is perceived to be the key.

Yet, the fact is English continue to be the language of the elite in the country and imposition of a completely alien language imposes problems of comprehension for children, whatsoever their parents willingness to educate them in the language. PROBE (1999) indicates that the biggest problem of incomprehension in class is associated with language itself. And in the absence of the cultural capital necessary to succeed in these English medium schools, the disadvantaged children start falling behind the class.

Pedagogic practices

Anyon's study(1981) is reflective of the differences in pedagogic methods used in classroom. While the children of privileged are taught to think and make decisions, the working class children were taught to obey orders.

There is an emphasis on memorization for all children but for the disadvantaged it becomes more so as the content as well as the language of curriculum is incomprehensible. Sarangapani (1999) finds that memorisation is the single most

popular means of learning in schools. PROBE (1999) noted how in the absence of proper facilities, school children were made to recite and learn even subjects like science as if they were *mantras*. Teaching is looked upon as an information giving exercise and emphasis is laid on listening to other students read, copying down words from the board and in getting the correct answers (Rampal:2002).

The problems associated with curriculum is sometimes solved with cosmetic changes in pedagogic methods. The response to this is best known from the perceptions of the disadvantaged parents who send their children to school with immense sacrifice and effort. Delpitt (1997) argues that letting black working class children be as they are in classrooms leads to a situation where they end up learning little reading, writing and numeracy skills. She found that black American parents were upset by experiments of letting black children read, write and speak as they did at home. They found it biased and perpetuating the difference between black and white children. She mentions how black parents prefer teaching methods wherein their children learnt the basics clearly and well so that they would atleast find jobs. This study of Delpitt highlights the difference between contextualised curriculum and pedagogic methods for ensuring that skills are developed. Unfortunately this rarely happens and even some of these partial experiments end up disadvantaging children.

Similarly, in India while at one level the 'great Indian tradition of memorisation' (Sarangapani:2000) is followed, at the other end experimentation with teaching practices is associated with cutting costs. For instance instead of appointing regular trained teachers, substitution is made with the appointment of para- teachers and shiksha karmis. The outcome of such an approach is found in a school about 2 hours from Delhi by Talib (2000). He finds that the child centred approach has been concretised as child let loose approach in the setting, with teachers abdicating all responsibilities in the name of child based learning.

Memorisation or partial and poorly implemented experiments of teaching, result in the educational under performance of children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

3.2.3 Everyday School Processes and Educational Inequality

Several educationist and visionaries have thought of school as a place where barriers created by social and economic inequalities could be crossed. However, studies that have looked into school processes have commented on the role schools have played in perpetuating existing inequities. Most of these studies have adopted the interactionist, neo-marxist or the postmodernist framework. This section mainly draws from these studies.

Teacher's attitudes

For a student the teacher represents the school authority. Hence, teacher attitudes towards the disadvantaged pupil, to a large extent determines their interest in education. Talib (2000:29) states that a *"constellation of expressions and interactions in and out of the school produces their own knowledge forms in active competition with what school teaches...children do not merely listen to teachers talking about equality but also see them practising inequality"*

Inequities in classroom, Keddie (1971:155) feels is an outcome of the image constructed by the school system of an ideal pupil. This is evident in the definitions of ability, which is equivalent to appropriate middle class behaviour. In the Indian situation class, biases are overlapping with caste biases. Ilaiah (1996:12) reflecting on his school experiences notes that upper caste teachers used to look down upon them. They would make adverse remarks on the occupations of dalits thus alienating them inside and outside the class. In a study in Delhi, Talib (1998) found that most teachers were upper caste-class than their pupils. Even the lower middle class teachers refused to identify with the strata that their pupils came from and displayed utter ignorance of the conditions prevailing in their pupil's homes.

Apart from stereotypes and prejudices, the disadvantaged child has to battle labels and 'self fulfilling prophecy'. Keddie (1971) in a study of working class children in England, notes how the social background of the child determined the meaning attributed to their behaviour by the teachers. Children were expected to behave like the labels that were fixed on them and surprise greeted those students who differed. Muralidharan (1997) presents a teacher who expected *Ahir* [8]children to perform badly and thought that education held little meaning for them. Pawde (1992) states how

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[8] A backward caste.

renowned scholars refused to believe that a dalit girl could learn Sanskrit. In instances of a student not keeping upto his/her label Sarangapani(1999) found teachers behaving like the patrons of the lower caste children and singled them out for praise, " *Even though he is SC/ ST he has shown himself worthy.* "

Hence we find teachers prejudices not only creates an unfriendly atmosphere for the child but even the low expectations from well meaning teachers pushes large number of disadvantaged pupil towards poor performance so much so that when the child drops out from school it is with a poor image of their own learning abilities. A child reported in Talib's (1998:200) study that he had dropped out as his teachers had informed him that his head was full of *bhoosa*[9].

The pupil's attitude and subculture

The continuity observed in social inequality within and outside the classroom results in a major section of the disadvantaged pupils internalising their own subordinate position in society.

Paul Willis' (1976) ethnographic work[10] indicated how subverting the school authority and acts off vandalism by the 'lads' were basically acts of resistance and a continuity from the shop floor culture. He states that the lad's rejection of the 'High culture' is similar to their father's rejection of the alienating effects of capitalism in the factory. Willis suggests that the student's subculture of rejecting school ends up reproducing the social inequities as their 'resistance' and voluntary choice' often hurtles them towards the factory gates.

Payne (1980) finds that in the grammar school where she is one of the few working class girls, the conflicts between the values of her neighbourhood and that of the school begins to play up in the higher classes and those who were not able to adjust to the school values often dropped out after the sixth form. Thus accepting the middle class values were a precondition for getting further educated.

The role of subcultures becomes clearer with studies by Tomlinson (1983), Fuller (1983) and Riley (1994) who have looked at the response of Black working class girls to schooling. Interestingly their response differs from that of the 'Willis' lads, infact, even from that of black boys from their own families. They resist the

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[9] Straw

culture imposed by schools but do not the reject the knowledge and the school degree, which they feel is their key to escape from patriarchal, racial and class oppression.

Similar studies in the Indian context could not be found to make any conclusive comment on the role of sub-culture on educational inequality. Infact conclusive judgement are rarely possible from some of these studies as they are context specific. For e.g. in Willis' study the conformists or the *ear-oles* as the lads call them, also come from the same backgrounds yet their response is different.

Peer attitude

What is the nature of interaction of children from disadvantaged backgrounds with their more privileged peers? In urban areas, school stratification ensures relative segregation of pupils according to class. Descriptions in Dalit writings indicates that in the rural setting, upper caste classmates were told by their parents to keep away from dalit students (Ilaiah:1996, Pawde:1992). However not much is clear on how the upper caste children themselves behaved. Velaskar and Wankhede (1990) write about dalit students feeling isolated particularly in professional colleges. The upper caste - class students thought the dalit students were taking "undue advantage" because of reservations and that they had "inferiority complex" and that "they didn't try hard enough to improve"). Chitnis (1981) observes that the resentment against dalit students was primarily resentment against Reservation.

Conclusion

It is clear that the disadvantaged section of society in urban areas like the working class and particularly the dalits and girls amongst them are educationally the worst off as reflected in the data on enrolment and drop out.

The survey of literature indicates the multiplicity of factors that underlie educational inequality. At the structural level[11] we find that the factors include poverty and financial difficulties, social discrimination and institutional barriers operating both

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[10] English study

[11] A factor of educational inequality, not mentioned in the main section but relevant, emerges from the way a state is ruled. In Bihar, for instance police troops have been stationed in government school affecting the education of poor and disadvantaged children. In Patna, in the heart of the city, a government high school (The Miller School) was made a police camp resulting in the suspension of classes for months in the first quarter of 2003. High school students protested this gross neglect of their education by the state, demanding removal of police not only from their school but all schools of Bihar

overtly like school differentiation for different classes and second track education reserved for the poor and covertly in the advantage that privileged children have because of their cultural capital.

Student distribution in curriculum is often influenced by social background rather than aptitude and disadvantaged pupils tend to cluster in low prestige courses. The text and the content of the curriculum also tend to have alienating effect on the disadvantaged pupil in the absence of a contextualised curriculum. There is also a divide based on language of instruction within the school, particularly English for the elite and the regional language for the masses. Pedagogic practices also suggest a bias towards the disadvantaged child. Practices are rarely innovated upon and when they are, it is with aim of cutting costs rather than effective learning for the child. The emphasis on text ends with examinations to test the pupil's knowledge of it which prove to be the death knell for the educational life of the disadvantaged pupil. Moreover, even when they clear the examination, the hierarchy of the board that they pass from determines their future career.

Studies and literature on everyday life experience of schooling is scanty and that of poorer dalit children more so. However, whatever literature is available shows that disadvantaged pupils have often perceived biased teacher attitudes towards them. Many of them come from strata well above that of the pupil and thus are ignorant of the lives that their pupil lead. They have been observed to be hostile to the children, patronising or generally have low expectations from them. Very few have been noted to be encouraging and understanding. The attitude of the disadvantaged pupil, is pertinent and a studies have emphasised the importance of peer subculture. Studies suggest that working class subculture of the boys (both Blacks and Whites) encourages them to reject school while girls seemed to be responding differently. However, these findings require far greater study within specific contexts.

In the Indian context the absence of research on educational inequality in different socio-economic and cultural contexts is striking. The studies reviewed fail to provide an adequate understanding of the interplay of structural, curricular and school processes in influencing educational inequality. The scarcity of research on the conflict between the aspirations for social and occupational mobility with reproduction in education is notable. Enough studies have also not been done on curricular and

everyday school life and there is dearth of ethnographic work reflecting the educational lives of the urban poor, leading to a feeble and sketchy understanding of the meanings they attribute to education and educational inequality.

In the next two chapters, thus, the gaps identified in this chapter will be deliberated upon by analysing qualitative data collected from an exploratory study conducted in a working class settlement in Delhi.

Chapter 4

THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF A DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITY:
An Exploratory Study in Shakurpur Basti of North- West Delhi

In the first chapter, I looked at the theoretical questions on educational inequality. In the second chapter I had moved on to present the current educational situation of the urban disadvantaged and the factors of educational inequality as identified from studies and from literature which focussed on documented evidences of perceptions of the disadvantaged. However, it became clear from the literature survey that studies on perceptions of educational inequality in India were very few. Thus, in the following chapter, I have tried to explore the educational experience of working class, dalit (the Arundhatiyars) youth living in a poor settlement[1] in Delhi and through their eyes construct educational inequality. This chapter presents the perceptions of the youth to schooling and focuses on their reflections on school and neighbourhood to understand how they perceive educational inequality.

4.1 Shakurpur Basti : The Field Area Of Investigation

Shakurpur Basti is a JJ colony in North-West Delhi. It was built following the large-scale demolition of *jhuggis* from South Delhi during the Emergency, and their resettlement in the then village of Shakurpur.[2] Most residents, who own the plots in the *basti* have been settled here for the last 25 years since the mid-70s. It is reported that large sections of the population in Shakurpur are migrants from Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Haryana.

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[1] What is described as slum or a poor settlement is disparate. In Delhi these settlements have been categorised by government agencies as 1. *jhuggi- jhopris* : Shanties and hutment , 2. *jhuggi- jhopri* (JJ)colony: Colonies that have come up on land allotted by government , with each household given a plot of 25sq yard. 3. Resettlement colonies: Refugee colonies that came up in the post partition days, 4. Unauthorised colonies: The localities that people built on their own initiative without authorisation. In the study byslum/poor settlement , I imply a JJ colony.

[2] An internal state of Emergency was proclaimed on the night of June25,1975 by Indira Gandhi, then Prime Minister of India. It resulted in the severe suppression of political-democratic rights of the citizens of India. It was lifted a year later. For the people of several *jhuggi* settlements, in South Delhi particularly, it was associated with a reign of terror by demolition squads on beautification drives. Some of the homeless families were later allotted 25 square yard plots each, in the periphery of the city. Shakurpur Basti is one of these resettlement colonies.

As in all slums, there is an over-representation of dalits in Shakurpur. In L block, where this study is situated, most of the families are dalits such as Chamars, Valmikis, Arundhatiyars, and Pallars. Several christian families, particularly those from the pentecostal denomination, live here. Each block comprises of a number of lanes and each lane is predominated by one of the aforementioned communities. In a sense,there are more or less clear caste demarcations. For this study, three lanes of L Block were selected. The caste community called Chakliars or Chakkliyan or Arundhatiyar live here.[3]

The L block community

The Chakliars/Chakkliyan/Arundhatiyar were traditionally involved in clearing dead animals and making leather shoes. Lowest in the caste hierarchy of Tamil Nadu, they have been the target of severe caste oppression. There are 100 families from this community, living in three lanes of the Block.[4] People belonging to a similar caste from Haryana and Rajasthan also live in this block. Interaction is limited and functional between the groups, with each caste group having its own *panchayat* and *pradhan*.

Staying alongside the Arundhatiyar community is a lane resided by the Pallar[5] community (400 Pallar families also stay in E Block). Both the Arundhatiyars and Pallars migrated from Tamil Nadu, in the face of famines and lack of livelihood options. They came in the early 60s, from the district of Salem and Erode to escape grinding poverty.[6] Some heads of families recounted that their parents were bonded labourers in farms and had escaped and come to Delhi. Faced with the prospect of poverty and unemployment they moved from one place to another until they reached Delhi. In Delhi, they set up *jhuggis*, taking up the jobs that came their way. Men cleaned cars and women went to sweep floors in middle class homes. The demolition

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[3]Chakkilyans/Chakliar are caste communities spread all over Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala (Singh: 1992). However, they have also been recorded to have been inhabiting 19th century Mysore (Rao:1981). In this study the community is referred to as Arundhatiyar/ Chakliar.

[4] This was found during the participatory mapping undertaken with the residents as part of the field investigations. There are two other settlements, Sunlight Colony and Kela Gaon in Delhi where large number of Chakliars families stay.

[5] Pallar/ Pallan has been mentioned as traditional agricultural labourers found in Tanjore, Tripoly, Madura, Tinnevely, Salem, Coimbatore. (Rao:1981)

[6] Narrated from the memories of migration (Interviews: Sujatha:20.4/17, Selvan:5.5/1, Parvati:5.5/1)

of the *jhuggis* during the Emergency led to their resettlement in L Block. Many found jobs as labourers, peons, drivers, attendants, gardeners and painters in government bodies like NDMC, MCD, and DDA in the 1980s, as infrastructure building was at its peak in the city, in preparation for the 1982 Asian games.

Though both Arundhatiyars and Pallars are in the Scheduled Caste category, they do not inter-marry as Pallars declare their traditional superiority over the Arundhatiyars. However, it is interesting to note that economically as well as educationally, the situation of the Pallars is worse than that of Arundhatiyars, with several Pallar children in school going age dropping out even before they reach middle school[7]. There is underlying friction between the two communities over caste issues[8]. Arundhatiyars speak a dialect of Telugu but do not understand the Telugu script or the dialects spoken in Andhra Pradesh at all. For purposes of written communication, they use Tamil. In their homes, they prefer to watch Tamil rather than Telugu channels on television. They call Tamil their mother tongue. The Pallars on the other hand speak only speak Tamil. Amongst themselves, they distinguish between each other on the basis of language. The Pallars refer to the Arundhatiyars as *telengan* or telugu and they in turn call them *tamizhan* or Tamilian. In addition to these castes 12 other non Arundhatiyar-Pallar families live in these lanes – 1 Iyer (Tamil), 4 Valmiki (Rajasthani), 1 Countar (Tamil), 1 Ezhava (Malayali) and 5 Asari (Tamil). There are two main religious groups in the area, the Hindus and the Christians and the temple and the church is the centre of several community activities.[9]

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[7] This however is only the case in L Block. The situation of the *Pallars* is said to vary in the other blocks. It was mentioned by some of the respondents that *Pallars* of E b ^ck are in similar position to the *Chakliars*. Further investigation on this was not taken up, as such a question is beyond the problem set for exploration.

[8] Small quarrels between boys of the two castes have flared up often to involve the adult members of the families and finally the police. These colony fights have spilled over to the classroom and school where most of the boys and girls from the locality study. Disparaging remarks are hurled at the other community based on their habits. Young women, who had married and moved into L block, blamed boys of both the groups for the quarrels. In Sunlight colony, where the parents of one of the "daughters-in- law" stayed, the relationships between the two groups is said to be cordial.(Interview:Sujata:19.4/11, Babita:14.4/11).

[9] The Kali Mata temple has been built with the contributions of the local families. It is buzzing with activity in Februray and October when rituals coinciding with Pongal and Dusshera are observed. Ceremonial sacrifice of goats is said to be one of the reasons why there is no Brahmin poojari/ priest in the temple. The current priest is a resident of the area and from the Chakliar community.He is a class IV employee of NDMC during daytime and in the evenings and holidays is the *charge de affair* of the temple. The temple trust is a body elected by the residents. Built in the traditional style of the *mariam kovil* of Erode, Salem, Coimbatore it is the most imposing structure in the area. It has become so popular in the colony that people from the nearby middle class apartments also visit it. ·

Though the original plot holders came to L Block in the mid 70s and built their own houses, there are several residents in the locality who migrated during the last five or six years. They live as tenants or have set up their own *jhuggis*. The tenants/ *jhuggi dwellers* and the house-owners are often related to each other or from the same village and it is difficult not to feel a sense of déjà vu, that somehow the three lanes are part of a joint family. People often remarked *"yeh teen gali? Isme to sare hamare hi log hain, sab rishtedari mein hei"*[10]. But the residents did perceive a social class difference between the house owners and the tenants. Almost all the people who were part of the study had relatives in Tamil Nadu with whom they were in close contact.

4.2 Objectives and Methodology

The main objective of the research was to conduct an exploratory study of youth, disadvantaged by caste and class, in a poor settlement in order to understand their experience of schooling and perception of educational inequality. By educational inequality, I mean the inequality experienced by disadvantaged groups as a result of factors, which have already been identified in chapter 3, and originating at the structural level, curricular level and in everyday school life.

As the study aimed to understand social dynamics associated with educational inequality through the perceptions of the disadvantaged, it was necessary to focus on a small group of respondents using in-depth individual interviews and group discussions. Hence, only a few of the youth were included in the study. It was decided to focus on youth from the Arundhatiyar community for the following reasons.

1. They are at a disadvantage accruing to their residence in a poor settlement of Delhi.

2. Heads of households are in low ranked occupations (see Appendix 1).

3. Traditionally they have been one of the worst caste oppressed communities and have suffered severe discrimination after being relegated as an untouchable caste.

4. They are a language minority even in Tamil Nadu.

The church on the other hand is run in the house of the pastor, who also stays in the locality. It is a Tamil Pentecostal church and regular prayers and Sunday classes on Bible are organised here.

[10] *"Oh these three lanes, they are all our people, we all are related"*

Even as this community was being selected for the study, it was clear that this was not the most disadvantaged group in Shakurpur Basti or for that matter in L Block. Within L block itself, there are hutments of Valmiki families from Harayana and Rajasthan, many of whom live in temporary or kucha households. In contrast most Arundhatiyar families owned a *pucca* house, owing to their "older settler" status. Educationally also this was not the worst off. Amongst the Valmiki community there is said to be a greater magnitude of drop outs(M.Usha:14.4/16). As mentioned earlier even the Pallars of L block were said to be educationally worse off than Arundhatiyars (Interviews–Kali:14.4/15, Murugesh:14.4/15, M.Usha:14.4/15).

The Arundhatiyars were selected inspite of all these factors because, as mentioned earlier, it was necessary to include the experiences of young people who had managed to stay in the formal school system atleast till the middle and secondary school. Amongst the Telugu speaking Arundhatiyar community there were several such youth, who subsequently became respondents[11] in the study. [12]

The field investigations were carried out in the month of April-May 2003. There was familiarity with the place as the researcher had made earlier visits to Shakurpur Basti.

Selecting the sample

A census of the three lanes in Shakurpur Basti where Arundhatiyars resided undertaken using participatory mapping methods. I had been introduced to the potential respondents in the first few visits, through the snowball technique[13] and mapping. Persons born between 1980 and 1990 were identified. Participants were selected from this age group, as by the age of 13 years, a regular school going child would be in standard VIII and thus in middle school. Participants upto 23 years were taken so as to take into account late enrolment in school and possible failure in classes. Participants who had atleast been to middle school and above were identified so that

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[11] The respondents will henceforth be called participants as the study involves constructing educational inequality from the perceptions of these youth. They are seen to be actively involved in giving meanings to the situation around them and are not passive sources f information as the word respondent conjures. Methodologically also they were involved in mapping the lanes along with the researcher and often came back to discuss issues of education and school that they were perturbed about and felt needed contemplation.

[12] A comparative study of two or more communities and their experiences while interesting and pertinent was not done as it would have brought in new variables of comparison- language, regional affiliations and so on making the research extremely complex. Thus such a study would have failed to give adequate insights into the theme of research within the short period that was available.

they would have had spent enough years in school to make it easier for them to articulate on curriculum and school experiences also.

Table 4.1
Educational Status of the Participants

Educational Status of Youth	*Participants*			*School Attended*	
	Male	Female	All	Govt. school	Govt. Aided school
Drop Outs from regular School a) Left formal educational	3	2	5	2	3
b) In NOS*	3	1	4	-	4
Continuing Education a) Regular school b) Regular college	-	2	2	1	1
	-	1	1		1
Correspondence	2	3	5	-	5
Total Youth	8	9	17	3	14

   • NOS: National Open School

17 youth, of whom 9 were boys and 8 were girls were part of the study. Efforts were made to find respondents of different educational categories. There were 9 respondents in the category of dropouts, 6 boys and 3 girls. They were further broadly categorised into those who had completely dropped out of formal secondary and higher secondary school (3 boys, 2 girls) and those who were continuing their education through the National Institute of Open School, henceforth NOS(3 boys , 1 girl).

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[13] One respondent would give another potential respondent's contact.

In the sub category of continuing school, there were 2 girls, one of whom was pursuing school after having failed in a class and one who had not failed in any class. There were also those (2 boys, 3 girls) who had finished school and were doing graduation through correspondence. One respondent, the only girl to pursue regular college in the community was also included in the sample. The educational status of the sample are given in Table 4.1

In-depth interviews were also taken of 8 parents(3 fathers, 5 mothers) and 7 teachers from schools where a majority of the colony students studied. This school is run by a committee to promote the language and culture of the state that the participants come from , hence forth it will be called the community school. Appendix 2 gives the details and the youth, parents and teachers.

The interviews

As mentioned, the research methods utilised for the study were mainly in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, with the sample of youth, their parents and teachers of the community school. Discussions were also held with a management committee member from the community school. The data included 50 hours of recorded interviews, supported with hand-written notes[14] apart from the information gained from the mapping of the three lanes. The tapes were transcribed immediately after the interviews were over and other discussions and observations were added to the interviews.

The interviews started with close ended questions to gather basic information about age, schooling, educational levels of the participants and the other members of the families etc. Open-ended questions followed, guiding the respondents through a set of key issues (see Appendix 5) to ascertain their perceptions on educational inequality. Details of the research process are given in Appendix 3.

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[14] This turned to be useful practice as the noise levels in the houses were very high. When using the tape, often the fights in the streets, discussions at neighbour's house, excited shrieks of children playing in the lane, drone of fans and coolers were recorded alongside, drowning out the interviewee. The notes were thus indispensable.

Analysis

The data from the interviews was transcribed in Hindi, the language in which most of the interview were conducted[15]. The interview with teachers was conducted in English. After transcribing and translating interviews into English, the data was sorted and themes identified. They were further sorted and clubbed together on the basis of the framework of educational inequality presented in the second chapter.. Excerpts from the interviews with minor editing have been reproduced in the text wherever appropriate with pseudonyms, the date of interview and transcriptions sheet number for e.g. Sujatha: 19.4/1 indicates,Sujatha interviewed on 19 April, data in transcription sheet 1(see Appendix 4 transcription details)

It must be understood that the perceptions of people are affected by several factors and these factors are coloured by experiences. ideologies, cultural contexts, beliefs, anecdotes, myths and propaganda at any point of time. To determine educational inequality from these might appear like collecting highly subjective data, particularly if the sample is small. However, this study emphasises the meanings that people give to their educational context. Given that education is more than skill training and the fact that any process of learning is associated with the overall life experience. With the research design emphasising qualitative research, a small sample had to be chosen to ensure exhaustive exploration so as to gain insights into the patterns and variations in perceptions and responses, which could then generate questions for further research.

4.3 Structural Factors of Educational Inequality

In this section, the socio-economic profile of the participants is presented along with the perceptions of the participant, parents and teachers on structural factors of educational inequality. This is followed by their reflections on their educational experiences emerging from their life in a JJ colony. Differences in perceptions and responses of boys and girls to education are also presented.

4.3.1 Socio-Economic Profile of the Participants

There was a clear hierarchy in economic status in the colony, depending on whether a family lived as a house owner or as a tenant.[16] The tenants were mainly fresh migrants from Tamil Nadu. Those who had relatives rented a room and stayed in the *pucca* building, where those who had no relatives set up a *jhuggi* or rented the *jhuggi*.

Most of the participants in the study lived in *pucca* houses and stayed in their own houses in the resettlement colony. They classified themselves as *garib* when it came to managing the family budget amongst the various expenses and when monetary inputs in education was calculated. They wondered how *garib log*[17] can possibly pay for the increasing expenses of education, as many of them had more than two children and were under constant tension of paying interests for the different loans that they had taken(mostly from unorganised money market) for building houses, marriages, illness and even school donation.

Most families had a minimum of 4 members. Sibling education often matched that of the participants, though there were some minor differences within the family. As mentioned in the methodology section earlier, the fathers of the participants, were in low ranked occupations. Many of them work in municipal, state and central government bodies like MCD, NDMC, CPWD, DDA, Indian Airlines and so on. They worked as loaders, attendants, drivers, welders, painters, gardeners, and electricians. In one family the father worked in a private shop as an assistant. Only one of the participant's father was in a class III post, as a Lower Division Clerk, he was the highest educated in the colony with a, BA, the fathers of the other participants were either illiterate or with middle schooling. (See Appendix 1)

Mothers of the participants were mostly illiterate (except one who had completed class X) and working as domestic help.One mother had been given a

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[15] To protect the identity of the participants, the names have been coded, identifying them as a participant/ guardian/ teacher, category i.e. drop out or other, male or female, Initials to represent their name in the transcription sheets, which are not being attached in the dissertation for reasons of volume.
[16] While trying to map the place, through the participatory method, it became obvious that the tenants were an invisible lot. The participants(who were house-owners) were not certain who all lived in the tenants house. The interaction with the tenants of neighbours was limited, as they would often shift.
[17] poor people

government job, on compassionate ground, after the death their husbands. She was appointed as *beldar*[18] but because of her age was kept as an office attendant.

Even though the household occupations puts the family in the category of the working class, their vocabulary did not have a word that signified it. On the other hand they used the term middle class to describe their condition.[19]. "Middle class" implied restrictions and being under community pressure (implying that those in the higher classes were not under such a pressure) apart from tension over family finances. For the girls and the women being "middle class" meant mobility restrictions, pressures for early marriage, restrictions on their aspirations(Babita:14.4, Komala:5.5, Vanaja:4.5) They mentioned about how middle class *"mein eisa hi hota hein" "hum middle class logon ke saath yeh hi dhikat hai"*[20]

Organised educational services are available to the people in the colony through the schools(government, government aided, private), tuition centre, open school, and earlier through the literacy campaign.

The participants, as we have seen earlier, are or have been students of the government school or the government aided privately managed school, which is being called the community school for reasons explained earlier.(see table 4.1). The government runs a primary school, middle school and the secondary and higher secondary schools in the locality, located within 1 km from the colony. However most participants went to the community school which was 8-10 km away (for reasons that will be presented in the subsequent section.).

Open school coaching was available for a fee, at a nearby private school cum tuition centre but only one girl availed of it. The majority of the participants who were in open school did not take any tutoring and only a few went for the contact classes held by NIOS.

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[18] Unskilled manual worker.

[19] There was no consciousness of being a separate class "a class in itself", though there was a definite consciousness of them being "*colonywala*". One of the girls approached me for teaching her political theory which was part of her course and which she was not able to understand. I explained what working class meant in Marxist theory, explaining it as those who sell their labour and those who do not own means of production and gave examples familiar to them. A friend of the girl who was listening to what was being said exclaimed in amazement along with some disbelief . " *kya hum middle class nahin hein ? kya hum us se bhi niche hein*" (so we are not middle class? Are we below that also". She wondered what could be lower than the middle class,

[20] "This is what happens when you are middle class"

Educational support was sought from tuition centres (run mostly from the homes). In the absence of tuition, help was sought from relatives and friends. Some of the boys saw television as an important source of information, however none of the girls mentioned television in the same light. However, both saw newspaypers as source of information. A Christian girl who regularly attended the Sunday school mentioned it as an important centre of learning. Those who left school and have gone on to work in shops and factories are picking up technical skills (especially motor and automobile repairing) as apprentices. And those who held office jobs said they learnt "about the world" from their workplaces. Some of the older women have become functionally literate by participating in the literacy campaign. Two people are reported to have learnt to read and write on their own because of exigencies of their jobs.

4.3.2 Living in a "Colony"

The middle class residential areas localities were called "*kothis* ". The "colony" in the day to day parlance of the people meant a JJ colony. There was a consciousness of an identity amongst the participants on the basis of their being residents of a poor settlement and often called themselves "*colonywale*"[21]

The L Block people have transformed the 28 years[22] of stay in this colony to make it into a vibrant, buzzing place. The block has narrow lanes with houses towering on both its sides. Most often the house spills into the narrow lane as people sit on the steps of their houses facing the street or on cots laid out in the *gali*[23] itself. These lanes are understood as shared spaces and as extensions of the house itself. In small spaces that were left for parks, few of the house owners have constructed toilets and a few others *jhuggis*.

For young people, living in the "colony" was associated with two primary experiences, which they marked out as different from that of living in other places. One was finding a job and the other was of education. At some levels, both were connected but that we will consider that later. As for the educational experience, people were conscious about their disadvantages. As one of the participant,

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[21] Colony people.
[22] See footnote 3
[23] Lane

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(Shambhu:21.4:10), who had failed put it, *what is the big deal about failing, in the JJ colonies and in colonies like this you will find lakhs of people who have failed*

Distractions and Excitement

The educational problems associated with living in a "colony" included the absence of qualified people to guide the school going children. It was a place, where the congested lanes held distractions from studies and invited young boys to join their friends for "hanging out". They often ganged up against young boys from other *galis* to fight for imagined and real wrongs done to them. For the girls, there were several *galis* that they could not use fearing unwarranted and undesirable male attention thus restricting them from going for tuition, school or seeking help from friends, without an escort. A girl participant who discontinued her studies said,

> .---- *The locality is also not good , there is no place to study, children keep coming and going, there are always fights happening here. Boys keep following around when I went to school, there were 5 of them. I just gave up.* -*(Devi:19.4/6)*

The "colony" had no community spaces, libraries or study centres where they could sit and work when the house offered no space to study. This affected their performance. Babu (21.4/6) and Sunil(29.4/6) are two such participants[24], whose performances in school deteriorated after they shifted from a locality of neatly laid out government houses(where they lived in the "servant's quarters") with relatives. The absence of other distractions in the middle class colony and the overall atmosphere, where it was the norm for children to study, kept them also glued to books. A participant who has always lived in the settlement said,

> *The matter is, the surrounding here is not good. There are fights, and then you do not feel like it. You go out..then you find friends That is the story everyday. On holidays somebody or the other comes and begins "let's go, let's go". If we were staying in our house and they were staying in their house, in some other place, then we would get bored and would turn back to studies. Here we stay together. There are fights 24 hours. The boys also say yaar, you have started studying.. acha yaar ..You are going to get ahead of us.. Then we take him and*

> *go out as somebody has hit somebody. And then the cricket madness(...)* –
> *(Bhanu:22.4/8)*

From what Bhanu says, it is clear that living in the colony is full of distractions and excitement as against the boredom of "other" places. However, this boredom created better study situations. A mother, of one of the participant said,

> *(...) we shifted and came here.. now he has a "compartment"[25] in Maths. He failed two years .. who would take him....Gave him money the second time .. but failed that time too.. they cut his name from there(from the community school where he was a student).. (the school)won't give another chance.. then open(NOS).* - *(Mala:4.5/4)*

4.3.3 Have the Girls done Better?

The general picture constructed by the people in the colony is that the girls have done better than boys in education. Their responses were markedly different. Boys and girls who had been in the same class and with similar family background and educational inputs, sharing the curriculum and pedagogic encounters, responded differently to issues raised by the researcher. The girls were excited about studies and school and their self esteem was connected to their performance in school. They thought the boys were complacent and didn't have the drive to do well in school. At the same time they were enthusiastic about future plans and said it was this spirit that kept them motivated in school. A 20 year old girl who is doing her second year of graduation through correspondence, while speaking about her male classmates(who are still trying to clear the Class X examinations) and staying in the same colony said,

> *Don't ask about the boys, the girls have such excitement to do something, there is nothing in them. If they had then they would be able to do something. There were 5 girls..It felt as Savita would make it, Lekha would make it and it would be such humiliation if one gets stuck(failed). Because of competition we managed to pass.* - *(Valli:20.4/23)*

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[24] The participants are being referred by their pseudonyms, for details about their backgrounds and coding see Appendix 2.

[25] Compartment: Students have to pass 5 subjects in class X , failure in any one subject implies that they could be passed provided they sit for a re-examination and clear it..

The other girls corroborated her version. The boys also agreed that the girls took their studies seriously and had left them behind educationally. Shambhu, a 22 year old participant, who failed class X in 1995 for the first time and is still is trying to get the secondary school certificate, noted that girls did well because they kept to the house and worked very hard:

> *From our batch, no boy passed.. the girls would be at home all day so they would study.---. They stay at home, that gives them an advantage. The boys come back and immediately set off to play cricket, they roam around. Those who go for tuition come back at 6-7, those who don't they play cricket till 6-7.*

Subcultures

There appears to be differences in the subculture of boys and girls, and they are influenced by different set of factors. Girls thought education as important and saw a link between self esteem, better future and schooling while for boys enjoying the immediate present, in the neighbourhood, "hanging around" with friends and playing cricket appears a priority. The greater freedom available to boys after school meant that they could move out of the house freely while parents kept girls indoors as they were expected to help at home. As mentioned earlier, the environment of the JJ colony, also meant that girls did not have any place to be with their friends apart from each other's houses, under the watchful eyes of adults. This restriction on their mobility was highly resented by the girls, though they did not overtly protest as they saw it as the culture of the middle class.[26] At home, they would turn to the television but they did not have much control over programmes watched. Parents would nag them for not studying since they were always within view, forcing the girls to turn to books. But having reconciled to their limited mobility and freedom they tried to study in the hope that in the long run they would benefit from it This is evident from interviews with a number of girl participants. The girls weigh future benefits over current losses in freedom:

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[26] Discussions on this led them to declare that this was a problem with middle class. The term middle class used by three of the women participants had been with reference to the position of women and the restrictions imposed on their mobility and aspirations.

> *As girls, we can't go out----Our parents have seen .. which is why they wanted us to clear atleast 12th so that we may do something or the other. So that we don't depend on them(....) -(Savita:20.4/6)*

The new found confidence of the girls is a result of their having finished school compared to the colony boys, who have failed repeatedly. For boys school did not matter much as they could fail and still get a chance to continue school, while girls inspite of good performances had to constantly prove themselves. The contrast between the ways in which boys and girls view the situation becomes evident from the comments of two girls:

> *There isn't one boy here, who has been able to study.... We study thinking about our parents.. they are working so hard... if once the route to education is made then it is made for good. We only have today to do it. - (Savita:20.4/22)*

> *When there is competition , then it is as if something has to be done but amongst the boys there isn't one fellow who would do a thing. Not one boy has done 10th ---- they think they will do it later, "Let us enjoy ourselves now, if we don't do it now then when will we do it". - (Lekha:20.4/22)*

Marriage and Education

> *Everybody makes fools of uneducated people. If you have studied till 12th and you get married and divorced , still you could be self reliant (pairon par khade ho sakte hain[27]). If it does not work, we will not be in a situation where we are not able to do a thing - (Lekha:20.4 /6)*

The girls optimism is associated with the changes that have come in the family with economic prosperity and stability of a permanent (which meant a government) job to atleast one member in the household. And, except in cases where this stability was disturbed by the death of a parent, the outlook to girl's education and marriage has changed in a generation. While most of these mothers (in their mid30s to early 40s) are illiterate, their daughters are in secondary and sometimes even senior-secondary school. Girls education has given them confidence to stand up and resist parental pressure to get marriedas evident from what a girl participant in the locality had to say:

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[27] A popular Hindi proverb for becoming self reliant ,which means to stand on one's own feet.

> *Parents compel girls to get married. But I did not agree. For marriage, education is not important but education itself is important. There are many who are educated but not married. To grow big, education is important. (Komala:5.5/12)*

This participant could actually dream of a career irrespective of marriage. She was an exceptionally good student and her success in school had paved her way to college. But, even for other girls they had to perform well in school to ward of early marriage. Performing well, often meant just passing in the classes as even the best amongst them are average students (for reasons which will be touched upon later). Failure meant being either pushed out of school or being pulled out of school for an early marriage.

Though marriage was perceived to be an inevitable fact of life, many of them think of it as a further restriction on their little freedom and want to postpone the burden of domestic responsibility and nurture dreams of independence. They know that getting promoted to next class is the is the only key to doing so:

> *Our education turned out to be very useful.. the day our education stops, that day we would be married off. They say study as much as you want we will spend for that. - (Valli:20.4/10)*

> *... Whatever I am studying, is fine, if a good alliance comes and if they feel it is a good match.... We have explained to parents about it.. let us finish graduation first.... But thinking about the expenses we are not doing any course because if we are married then it will all go waste. That is why we are quiet. You have to think about the family. -(Lekha:20.4/10)*

Though the girls who were in school and continuing education first wanted to become independent, the exception was a girl who dropped out of school after failing. She was not enrolled in any educational system, and she looked towards marriage as an escape from the boredom of being a domestic help and the dreariness of her surrounding.

However, social pressure to marry, was considerable. It was not decided by the family alone but often was a community matter leaving the girl with little choice, especially when household stability was disturbed by the death of a parent. A girl

participant, who had been a reasonably good student, was pulled out of school to be married, when she was only 13:

(....)If I refused to get married after my grandparents had fixed it, my character would have been discussed. This is a close knit community everybody knows what is happening where. My husband's marriage had been fixed elsewhere, when that girl refused her character was discussed. I got scared. (Babita:14.4/5)

Another single mother who had started working after her husband's death and enjoyed the confidence that she got from it, expressed the concerns which prompted her to get her 16 year old school going daughter married. She spoke about how social pressure and her own worries about the girl's safety encouraged her to look for a match.

(....)It is good to go to work, at home its useless, feels like budhu (budhu jaise). But at home if girl (youngest daughter) hangs around it is not quite safe, so got her married and a burden was off the head(.....)Everybody said how long will you keep her at home (...)nobody wants an illiterate(girl) now It is essential for them to study. - (Mala:4.5/4)

Even the youngest participant a 13 year old girl spoke knowingly of the need to have education for a good match,

(...)You have to study anyway. When some one comes (the groom's family) to see the girl and they ask how much has the girl studied, and if you have to say she has not studied, it feels so bad, no one would want to marry her(....)

(Rose:15.4/12)

Apart from hopes of a good match with education, girls also studied in preparation for their future responsibilities as wives and mothers. They felt educ. tion was important for them to " educate our children", "to improve future generations", "set the route" for their children and if marriages collapses as an emergency tool:

We will become independent and the main thing is we will be able to educate our children. (Valli:20.4/6)

--- I keep thinking whatever that I gain I will be able to give to my children. Their minds will be that much mature. Generation after generation will develop. (Lekha:20.4/22.)

Girls were aware that their stay at the parental house, where they could hope for some support, was temporary. The uncertainty of the marital home heightened the urgency to get as much education as possible:

> --- *the boys are now doing NOS for the last 3-4 years. They enjoy themselves at parties, drink .. hang around in the evenings and yak(gup marna)... the boys are supported by their parents. They know that there is a house for them but we know no such thing. We have to go somewhere, if we don't get support there, what will we do. - (Valli:20.4/23)*

A participant who was already married and keen to support her husband financially to educate her child, embodied some of these hopes and aspirations despite the clear understanding that there were bound to be some restrictions:

> *Without studying nothing happens.. No job and without studies you can't even run the house, I have no sense of doing anything when I go out, what is available, not available.. railway..Problem everywhere... With father in law's salary, we can't run the house. If I could get the job atleast, I would be able to take the expenses of the girl. Regular would be a problem, there would be objections, husband also would have problem..after all these people want that they should have their work done on time at home, get food here. He would not want to wait for his wife to come back home from school. Immediately after the marriage I wanted(to study) but they did not want (....) Then, I thought of open(school). Now I am thinking..This girl's (daughter's) education would have to be taken care of, these days in schools they don't give admission to children whose parents have not studied, he has also not cleared his 10th.(...) (Babita:14.4/13)*

While widowed mothers were under immense social pressure, most other parents were keen to atleast ensure class X education for their girls:

> *.... (on an inquiry on marriage and education) If she was to get married atleast she would not be dependent on anybody, if there is a problem and there is a problem with the husband, or if some injustice with the husband and he can't find a job, can't go out, if she has studies then atleast she will be able to earn 4 paise on her own and run her family without becoming a burden on anybody. We think like this. (Vanaja:4.5/6)*

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I think that , from my experience, that the girl has to be independent as to stand on her own, to study, then look for work and when she is completely self reliant should she get married.--- She should study atleast till 10th, everybody should study till that level, be they rich or be they poor, and if they are poor more so , so that if for some reason in life she requires... beauty parlour, sewing and embroidery course.. whatever ..nobody knows how marriage will turn out. And if it does not work .. she should be able to stand on her own.   - (Aandal:19.4/6)

Boys Perspective

As seen earlier, boys were casual about their education, but why was it so? Was it only the freedom of mobility and the security they had of being supported by parents? Well, not really. The boys sense of alienation was very high and with greater exposure to the real world. In the conversations, both in casual talk as well in the research situation of an interview, the constant refrain from several male particpants was that jobs were difficult to come by even for graduates. They narrated tales of those who made money by sheer enterprise without school education. Then there was the lure of the easily available minor jobs, which yielded ready cash for the boys at a time when families were cash starved. It was noted that boys had more expenditure than girls as they would "go for movies", buy clothes and go to the gym[28]. Early exposure to earning affected the interest of boys in studies as evident from what this father had to say:

---- If for some money we send our child (son)to work, then it came to my mind that if he works then he will get disinterested in studies for Rs2000-3000. I asked him not to work and said that we could arrange for another 2-3 years of his education... this is for now.. don't know about future -(Velayuthan:4.5/7)

Yet keeping them away from the early work was tough for parents as the boys often made decisions with their friends, in the absence of educated and informed adults with whom they could consult. They were also much assured of their own knowledge as they thought they had seen the world:

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[28] The gym is major preoccupation with the adolescent boys. There are several gyms that have opened in the JJ colonies as well as in unauthorised " colonies" in Delhi that have made conscious of their physique.

what is it for girls.. they pass 12th.. In school for passing exams you need to mug up . you don't get knowledge with that. You ask them anything, they would not know a thing . I have spoken to graduates, they don't know a thing either(....) no big deal with girls, they keep studying, boys go out.. even if they pass they don't get any knowledge (Shambhu: 22-4/7)

In some families, the presence of sisters who had studied and cleared their secondary and senior secondary examinations influenced the boys in the family to study :

----*Those boys(the ones who studied with her in the class but failed) were also intelligent but they got entangled in such things that they did not study. Our brothers managed to clear because they thought our sisters have cleared, even though they never used to study anything from us... (...)* (Valli: 20.4/23)

Though the sample is small to make conclusive statements what emerges is that there are male participants who have failed despite having sisters who have made it through school. The foregoing analysis does suggest that sub-cultures need to be paid attention. Boys do appear to have value systems comparatively different from that of girls and they are also influenced by peer groups, which seems to hinder rather than facilitate school retention.

4.3.4 Costs of Schooling

The costs of schooling borne by the families varied across schools. Most students went to the community school (see table 4.1). Children were not sent to government school, it was determined rather by their inability to afford any other school. The tuition fee in the government school is Rs12 per month at the secondary level. The community school also charged a similar amount as tuition fees, which at times is for needy students. However, the transport fees was as high as Rs 350 per month (before it was further hiked in 2003). Over and above each parent is supposed to pay a subscription of Rs 50, for membership in the School Association.

The nature of jobs (permanent or casual) that parent held determined their ability to afford the community school. Those who didn't have a government /permanent job were financially severely constrained. One of the participant mentioned that as his father was a casual worker for a long time he had to initially

attend the Tamil medium MCD school in the neighbourhood. But after his father got a permanent (government) job he was shifted to the community school as they could manage to pay the subscription and bus fees (Shambhu,22.4/6). A parent who is not able to afford to send her children to the community school lamented:

> *All children study there(community school).... Didn't put them in the community school where others are studying because of transport fees...it is 300-400, who can pay that much, if I had a job.like them(in a government body) , I would also have done that.. - (Aandal:19.6/3)*

The same mother, who ran the household expenditure of 5 persons, with her earnings as a domestic help, held financial problems as the main reason for not being able to educate her children. Even after sending her children to government school she found school expenses heavy and was unable to afford tuition for her children which was seen as indispensable for their education. (Aandal: 19.6/3-4)

Fresh migrants who were in the colony as tenants or as *jhuggi* dwellers were educationally at a greater risk than the *pucca* house owners. The children of the former would drop out at the primary stage of education and at times in the first few years of the middle school. They would often begin to accompany their parents to work, mainly cleaning cars and doing domestic work in *kothis*. Referring to rising school cost another parent who had jhuggi life still fresh in her memory exclaimed:

> *How will the jhuggi people manage..we may somehow but how will they? (Parvati:5.5/8)*

Educational expenditure was heavy at the beginning of the academic year, with expenditure on new books, uniforms and shoes. In households where the financial situation was constrained this often meant that parents were unable to meet the essentials for schooling:

> *The books become very expensive as you keep growing up. The condition of our house is not such that we can afford. - (Rose:15.4/22)*

The same participant said that her sister's school had two school uniforms for specific days of the week and when one of them disappeared, she just stopped going to school. Though this was not the only reason for the drop out, the missing uniform acted as the final blow that cut her links with the school (Rose: 19.4/5).

A participant's mother recounted how she bought textbooks, shoes and uniform in instalments and never at one go. This often meant that the children would have the textbooks way after the classes started. They then tended to lag behind the classes. (Aandal: 19.6/3-4).

Thus, there does exist a section of families for whom the cost of education imposes a severe financial constraint because of their poor economic condition. Teachers in community school as well as in the government school mentioned about students who came to school hungry and listless (Interviews: teachers)

As mentioned earlier, most of the participants went to the community school, where about 150 students from the area are reported to be studying (Selvan:5.5/17). This indicates the better economic status of these families. However, they were also under financial pressure as a result of private tuition and incidental expenses of schooling. But they were not poverty stricken households and neither did they see it as a significant factor for student drop out. As one participant said,

> (....)the boys are not going to tell you the reason for their failure, they will say at home there was a financial problem. It is not like this, the matter is nobody studies here. (Shambhu: 21.4/1)

The open school is seen, as a major option when children fail or drop out but it is not cheaper either. As reported, it costs Rs 1400 approximately per each year's examination, if a student completed a class directly from the NOS. This is way below the costs borne by the participants as most participants do it through private agents and schools, which charge a fee of Rs 2500 for 1-2 hour classes. Usually tuition is taken to supplement the NOS. Some participants feared that they might fail in NOS and this would result in considerable financial loss to their families:

> Never tried open school. My aunt's daughter spent Rs 2500 still she failed.... I thought I would do it but what if I fail, all the money would get wasted. (Devi:19.4/7)

> I want to give exam through open school. I have also told mother about it. My mother has also asked my husband to do it. But she is afraid we might fail. She does not have so much money. Mother thinks I will not be able to study now with a child. Then there would be such expenditure. (Babita:14.4/7)

Scholarships

None of the students from this study ever got any scholarship or financial assistance. In the government school, uniforms were given to scheduled caste students. Several parents had not made the SC certificate, as most were not even aware of the possible benefits that they could avail with the certificate. Moreover from the benefits that they were aware of, they felt the procedures were too cumbersome and time consuming for benefits that were very small. This meant that even the girl (in the earlier mentioned case) who stopped going to school after losing her uniform could not avail of this scheme.

Students sometimes gave the national level scholarships without adequate preparation and encouragement. This resulted in failure and not knowing anyone who had ever received a scholarship, they would give up trying.

As the community school is a government aided school it does not provide government scholarships to SC/ ST students. However there are other provisions for financial aid in the school. For instance teachers leave endowments at retirement and small amounts would be given to meritorious students, those who got distinction in a subject or came first in the class. Students who formed part of the study barely managed to survive in the school system thus they were never the beneficiaries. Thus, scholarships went to students from well to do families and with the cultural capital to succeed in school. A teacher speaking of the "colony" children said:

> ---*they have no ambitions....teachers have made endowments , again students from good background get it . (L.Deepa:24.4/6)*

It must however, be pointed out that some teachers have extended help to students, especially in the provision of books. This has encouraged them to read books, which they would have otherwise not known about, nor had access to.(Interviews: Teachers).

Post school options

Post school education offers a number of possibilities: Regular College through Correspondence, private short-term courses, computer training. In most options, though finances came up as a major obstacle. To join courses that would make them employable in positions other than what their parents have achieved meant

doing expensive courses, which the participants felt their family could not afford. So much so that even going to regular college was an expensive proposition:

I never wanted regular college. Father had said take up regular college but there are a lot of expenses associated with regular college. Every day you need to go there , you need to buy clothes, if you go there then we would have to get along(mil jul kar rahana pdege)) with the other boys , then you would have to live like them, wear proper clothes, then for small- small things they would ask for money and we would not be able to deny, we would have to ask from home , that would create problems. (Kamal:4.5/6)

Similarly computer courses were aspired for but the fees were very high.

Went and enquired about NIIT. They said 50,000, after which they return 25,000, but we can't manage so much   (Savita:20.4/6)

Main problem is financial, I wanted to do some courses. .computer courses.. but problem was financial.   (Valli :20.4/7)

I don't spend much, only bus, books. The new books cost 200-300 and there are 7 subjects.   (Komala:5.5/22)

4.3.5 Home Environment

Almost all the participants, the teachers and the parents seemed to agree on lack of educational atmosphere within the family as a reason for the poor academic achievement. But it is interesting to note that there were some variations between the families. And the variations determined the academic survival of the students for this group also.

The support and encouragement from family was critical for ensuring the educational survival of the child in school. Support included parental perseverance in ensuring the child went to school, motivating them about benefits and ensuring necessary educational inputs for educating the child. A father of three children, two of whom had finished school(inspite of one of them failing once in Xth) explained how he kept a watch over the education of his children (Velayuthan:4.5/11). In another household, the perseverance of parents and elders in sending their child back to school resulted in her continuing studies:

> *I told my mother, I am not going to school ever again. Everybody was after me. My grandfather, my mother fell at my feet and wept that my elder sister had also left school and if I could please go back to school... I told them I was not willing to listen to anything. Papa cried a lot one day . He said there is nothing without education. You will not know now but later on you will regret. Father had a lot of confidence in me. He used to think that it is because of circumstances and teachers that we were left behind.. Seeing the condition of the house he would say you would be able to do it. If the family was not affected the way it was, I would not have gone to school after IX, I was certain I didn't want to do school . I was admitted back to the same class. And I refused to go and cried, ma'am refused . After many requests, father told them , 'look she doesn't even want to study(in the section that she was being asked to attend), please do it(admit her in another section)' after that I was put in A section. The teachers of that class were so good and they did a lot of help. That is why I was able to do 10th.*
> *—(Valli: 20.4/5)*

However much their perseverance, the choice of school that parents could afford for their children is restricted to that in the narrow segment for the poor. From what Aandal(*19.4/17*), another mother says, it is clear that lack of income can come in the way of educating the child.

> *From my experience those husband and wife who understand their responsibility are able to give good education to their children , the kind of things that happens here....single women can't do it alone. either she has a good job or business that it is different. .. Where I go to work ... I have thought of differences in backgrounds. They have money and according to money people bring up their children , where there is no money the thoughts are also bad, they are ignorant about what children want. Those who don't have money keep it in their mind.. I only hope I find another job to provide..*

Alcoholism was prevalent in many families and as reported by the participants this had two negative effect on children's education. Large amounts of money is siphoned away quarrels that followed it, led to disturbances within the family.

The 'home background', thus, is a broad term indicating that parents pay the costs of schooling, brace children with tuition, create time to meet teachers and encourage children to study. Most of it is associated with the jobs and leisure of families and parents in casual jobs are not able to do this adequately. Also, conducive family culture towards education is only one amongst the several influences on the child around the house - the others being locality, peer network and differences in gender norms. Hence, educational motivation and family culture actually play only limited role.

4.3.6 The School System

By the school system, I mean the organisation of schooling that confronts the disadvantaged: the educational hierarchy, the examination system and the educational "machinery" for getting students through the examinations, the tuition-centres, the parallel text book -"guide" industry. The perceptions of participants and some parents to each of these is taken up one by one.

The hierarchy of schools

School going children from this "colony" go to three types of school at the primary stage. These were the Tamil medium M.C.D. school and the Hindi medium M.C.D school, the privately managed government aided school (community school) and the unaided private school[1]. These school have been mentioned in an ascending order of perceived quality

At the secondary level they study mainly in the government run Senior Secondary school or the community school, with the latter perceived to be of better quality. No one studied in unaided private schools at this level.

The main criteria to define quality is that of medium of instruction and English medium schools are considered to be better than Hindi or Tamil medium schools. And, the other two factors that determine the quality of school in popular perception is the

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[1] These are in the lowest category of private schools, with low paid teachers, under equipped crowded buildings, almost no playground.These were co-educational school but had popularised themselves as convents even though they were not run by missionaries, priests, brothers or sisters. For parents all private English medium schools were "convents". These schools had names, which phonetically sounded like popular high-income middle class schools. For instance there was a VPS (to sound like DPS), St Colombo(a la St Columbus). Adjacent to L block, was a large private school, well equipped with a play ground and an impressive building but no child from the 'colony went there'

attention that parents felt the teachers would give to their wards and the maintenance of school discipline.

The govt schools are the least preferred by the people as the medium of education is in Hindi. Children who have studied in Hindi medium schools have difficulty in finding people who can help them with their studies. The teachers in the Hindi medium schools are also said to be less receptive to the worries of the parents and less accountable to them. Compared to this at the community school, parents felt their children would get to learn three languages (Tamil, Hindi, English).

The respondents' schooling is given in Table 4.1. As mentioned earlier the placement of the child in a school is dependent on the financial position of the family and medium of instruction in school. Thus, despite awareness about the hierarchy of quality, financial status constrained the element of choice.

> *When I was selling toys I had gone to DPS school , 5-6 year old children spoke English so well, felt which school had I been stuck in. We should also have taken admission in such a school. But, we have no money to be in such a school. (Sunil:29.4/15)*

Examinations, Failing and Dropping Out

The entire school life revolves around passing examinations. Private tuition, and a growing number of refreshers and "guides" are geared to prepare children to pass examinations. Students dread the first public examination at the end of class X because till then teachers within the school were often lenient and they managed to pass in the class. (Rose: 15.4/6, Valli:20.4/6) .

In the community school, the class X board examination is associated with year long preparations. In January the preparatory examinations(pre-boards) are held. Remedial classes and special inputs follow these pre-boards and special attention is given to students. Teachers sift/sort students coaches according to his/her ability A teacher said:

> *---- In the remedial classes after pre-boards. The brilliant are in one class , weaker in another class, we come to their level and make it easy . They manage to pass after that . But this is only after pre-board after we see their performance there. (L Deepa: 24.4/11)*

But failure is an integral experience of school for most children from the colony.10 out of 17 participants had failed atleast once in the school and lost a school year. Even the others,who were continuing their education through school and college, 3 out of the 7 had failed in a class (see table 4.2).

Table 4.2
Failure in schools and Reasons for Drop Out*

Name	Class last attended	Classes in which failed	Years repeated	Reasons attributed for discontinuing regular studies
Devi	VII	VI VII	3 years	School was bad repeated failure
Sriram	X	IX X	3 years	Failure, disinterest ,too old for class
Karthik	IX	IX	2 years	Failure, disinterest too old for class
Dhivya	X	X	1 year	Failure, disinterest
Babu	X	X	3 years	Failure, too old for class
Shambhu	X	VI X	4 years	Failure, disinterest
Bhanu	X	X	3 years	Failure, disinterest
Sunil	VI	-	-	School was bad,too old for class
Babita	VIII	-	-	Marriage
Kamal	BA,1st Year	X,	1 year	NA
Lekha	BA,2nd Year	X	1 year	NA
Valli	BA,2nd Year	IX	2 years	NA
Rose	VIII	VIII	2 years	NA

*3 participants finished school without failing in any class, they are not included in the table
1 participant is still in school and has not failed.

NA: Not applicable as the participant is continuing studies

In the community school, students who failed in Class X the first time were allowed to attend classes and give the exams once more but if they failed more than once then they were asked to leave school. Thus, many of the students had not left school but were told to leave school. It is evident Table 4.2 that largest number of failed in class X. All except 3 of the participants have failed in a class. And failure was an important reason for discontinuing studies, particularly in class X. Most participants had exhausted their chance to study. However not all who failed seemed to drop out. Three of the students who had failed in class IX and X had continued to study and managed to finish school showing an element of agency. Those who left school after failing in class X however did not drop out from school.

Students who failed had a poor self image in school and repeated attempts to clear a class reinforced the image and almost all those who had failed said they had lost interest in studies. Failure becomes a clear deterrent to further education and undermines the confidence and self esteem of the child:

> *In one class, they did not teach well. In one class, I did not study. If I was not studying well even when going to school, thought lets just leave it... what is the point.. Feeling sleepy... not understanding....fighting in school.. Just leave it.. What is the point?(Devi:19.4/6)*

A girl participant blamed the school for the lack of interest exhibited by students:

> *How will we develop interest ? If we are taught then only will we develop interest.   -(Valli:20.4/7)*

Being "too big for the class" was put forward as a reason for discontinuing education by several participants.
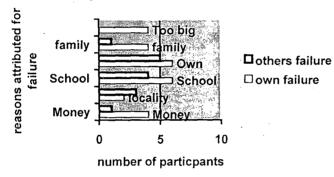
> *(....)When you fail there are smaller fellow in the class, did not feel like being with them.   -(Karthik:5.5/6)*

Several other persons in the colony who had left their schooling midway mentioned how they had been big for the class. Repeated failures meant they were much older than their classmates, their concerns began to change and rarely did they make friends with the younger classmates.(Babu:21.4/6, Bhanu:22.4/6, Sriram:20.4/6, Shambhu;21.4/6). Another participant who had not failed but had joined school late expressed the eroding effect "being big for the class" had on self esteem

(....) I was the tallest in the class. I also got disinterested because I was such a big boy in a small class. At 14-15 years I was in 6th and at that age children are in IX, It used to hurt me a lot that I was so big. (....)they(school authorities and teachers) would say he is so big, our children are so small he would hit them. *(Sunil:29.4/6)*

The following chart summarises the participant's perception on their own failure and other's failure. It is clear that the most participant hold themselves and school equally responsible for failure.

Table: 4.3

Perceptions on reasons for failure

Another Chance: The Open School

When students failed to get through the regular school system, they hoped for another chance from the examinations conducted by National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) (formerly known as National Open School :NOS) and popularly called by the participants as *Open* . It is a more flexible system of education and *"mainly caters to the educational needs of the out of school children in general and those belonging to school drop-outs and socially and economical backward section of the learner population".* [30] It was a popular option for those who fail to complete regular secondary schooling even in the locality. Every youth in the colony knew about the *Open* as a system that allowed them to pass examinations at their own pace *(Babu:21.4/24).* It was also seen to offer greater choice than the difficult subjects in the school. *(Shambhu:22.4/24)*

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[30] http://www.nos.org/Chairman.htm

It also appears that the availability of a parallel system of education may encourage drop out of disadvantaged students. However in such cases it is unlikely that students realise that their getting back to academics may not be as easy as they assume because of costs of NOS, lengthy procedures or because of the demands of their current occupation. Sometimes there was not enough awareness about the procedures for enrolling. For instance Sunil left his studies in the government school, thinking he would pursue his education elsewhere but when he tried getting admission to National Open School, he realised he needed the middle school certificate even to apply. His report cards could not be traced and school also had lost his class VI records and he has now reconciled to not doing the X and XII inspite of the benefits that he sees. He says that, *"School expense was not the reason for not going to open school but not having my certificate"* but there are others intimidated by costs and fear of failure, as mentioned earlier.

However, the open school unlike the regular school, is not very motivating. And the whole atmosphere was unlike that of school..

> *Oh that it is only a time pass (going for classes in the private tuition center for Open school) They come and say some nonsense and go off.. Don' t pay much attention there. School was better than this, we only didn't study there(....)- (Dhivya:20.4/24)*

> *.--- In open I don't take tuition, if I have a problem, I close the book itself. ? (Bhanu:22.4/24)*

A participant who was doing their graduation through correspondence courses explained the difference between regular and postal courses.

> *----If it was regular then you are regular with your studies. Here you have to sit separately and work, there a little bit of reading would be sufficient to get the picture. But if you do it alone then you are clueless, on Sunday (for the contact classes) sometimes the Sir does not come or you forget about it and don't go, in regular you also keep interest in studies, here when you take out your books, you don't feel like it.. (Kamal:4.5/6)*

What emerges from the accounts of the participants is that Open school does not provide opportunities to learn, as the main emphasis is on getting through the examination. A practice of cheating/ consulting notes called the *faras* is well placed

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amongst the students, which was seen as natural and the accepted. One of the participant mentioned that only boys cheated and that they had innovative ways for getting around the difficulty of a strict teacher (Valli:20.4/21). Some of the participants narrated how students in their class cheated in the examinations since passing was so difficult:

> ----*Wherever we had problems we would take faras   In science I had to take.*
> *(Shambhu:21.4/9)*
>
> *In open, I don't study at all. I take faras. You don't get caught. I have written 4 papers and not got caught. It is passing that matters (Bhanu:22.4/24)*

Being out of the regular educational processes made it very difficult for participants to study, pass and get a degree. Failure in *Open School* was common, as mentioned. Even though, *Open School* is portrayed as offering another chance, those who need it the most, it turns to disadvantage them further. Not having the necessary financial and academic support, they are forced to resort to unfair means in the examinations.

4.4   Curricular Issues and Classroom Processes

The foregoing discussion looked at the issues of living in the "colony", the gender differential in responses, the home environment, the school system, costs of schooling and the school system in the educational experience of participants. While being aware of choices, most felt restricted by these factors.

In this section, I present the perceptions of the participants, focussing specifically on curricular issues (language of instruction, the text, pedagogy etc) and classroom processes (teacher attitudes, interaction etc.)

4.4.1 The Language of Instruction

The community school is English medium from class I. However, participants in the community school were unhappy over their poor grasp of the medium of instruction, which constrained both their comprehension of school subjects and their ability to express themselves in school.

We could not understand what was being said in the class, language was such a problem. Those who would not understand would leave school. Just could not understand English. (Babu:21.4/17)

Students in the government school, where the medium of instruction is Hindi appeared to comprehend the language of instruction but complained about their inability to express. The following participant, who was in the Hindi medium school comprehended what was happening on the class but the lack of competence in her ability to express, led to her failure:

I was taught everything in Hindi. It is important to understand, if you can understand then you can write on your own without remembering the answer.... I did like this only .. I failed...could not write properly. -
(Rose:15.4/20)

I could not understand English, teacher would write in Hindi on top of English sentences (Devi :19.4/16)

The participants are aware of the need to have skills of comprehension and expression together in countering rote learning. A participant said:

I came into the (community) school, only one subject was Tamil, everything else was English, just did not know how to study. ---- If you know English then you can write on your own in 10th atleast. The one who does not understand English if they do not get the question that they have studied, then they have had it. It is so important. If you know the language then listen to the teacher, read the book like a story then go and write the exam. You need to know what you are writing. *(Shambhu:22.4/17)*

Another said:

They should explain English to us in Hindi. *(Babu:21.4/17)*

The problem as a participant said was also in technical English, especially as that is used in difficult subjects.

---(....)The English in economics and English in science is very difficult that is why I am not able to pass.(....) *-(Shambhu:22.4/17)*

4.4.2 The School Knowledge

The parents thought of the textbook as within the domain of school and purview of teachers. Thus, the parents appeared to accept the text as legitimate knowledge:

> *(....)But what can I say on the book being okay or not, it's a new book, the teachers must be knowing, children can't learn without teaching, she would definitely be teaching but I would not know about it, how can I say something about what I don't know. .. All children study that... that should also be studied, what else can I say?   (Aandal:19.4/10)*

When questions were posed, to the participants, on what they perceived as knowledge and what its sources were most differentiated school knowledge from "what is required for everyday living." While the former was required to 'pass' in school, the latter was said to be necessary for survival in the world and was acquired from work, job, home, school, television, one's own interest and religious institutions and so on:

> *I see TV and get to know about things, from the boys I learn a lot of things, and we talk about here and there.   (Sriram:19.4/18)*

Those who were out of school thought that school knowledge was more a credential to obtain a job rather than to perform it. Skills were understood to be attained on the job. While, knowledge gained from life situations was remembered, knowledge obtained in school was quickly forgotten:

> *I work in the clothes shop, I know lot and lots of things about . I also know how to work with motors ... I still like to paint . I take my paintings to office , they appreciate it, and my interest in it grows more and more.   (Sunil:29.4/18)*
>
> *In schools(...)the next year you realise you don't remember anything from the books. Now when you watch TV you get to know on what is and what is not. (Shambhu: 22.4/18)*
>
> *It is 4 years since I left school .. I don't even remember the schoolbooks. I don't remember anything of math, nothing of Social studies..... Nothing...nothing at all. (Babu :21.4/18)*

For those who were still in school or in the formal education system, school knowledge was not only seen as essential but also necessary for "sharpening brains" and different subjects were said to be useful for understanding life experiences:

To increase knowledge----(..)..science should be there a lot of things we find
out through it.   (Sundari:20.4/13)

To move us forward, to sharpen our brains. (Rose:15.4/13)

Its like a foundation, how can we do anything without it.   (Komala:5.5/13)

But even for them, text and teacher were not the important source of knowledge, the 'Guides' were. The Guides were question and answer books, which catered to the requirements of the examination. The language of textbook was extremely complex and students found this difficult to understand. Guides explained the matter in the text simply, and they found this easier to learn.

We study from the guides, the language is easy.. things are given more briefly.
(Kamal:4.5 /14)

The textbooks.. they were okay. We used to buy refreshers but the text was also
useful. Ma'am would say study from the text.   (Savita: 20.4/14)

Suggesting that the text books were difficult, a .participant reflecting the sentiments of others said that textbooks were for people who were already equipped to learn from it. [31]

---- The math book should be completely changed; it is only for those can
already do it. (Bhanu :22.4/18).

----.. the text is certainly better...there were children who did not study from
the guide. They were ones whose parents had studied, they would teach them
.... They do not need it but we need it.   (Dhivya:20.4/18)

While textbooks were still used in the regular school, the dependence on Guides appeared to be almost complete in the *Open* School.

In school I used to study from the guide: King's Champion.. sometimes would
look at the   textbook also.   In Open school only looking at the Guide
(Dhivya:20.4/18)

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[31] An VIII class Maths text book(Class VIII, part II) for example introduced rectilinear figures as *" All these are rectilinear figures(diagram given), since each is made up of some line segments called its sides. To be more explicit ,all these are simple closed rectilinear figures. A rectilinear figure is said to be closed if it has no free ends. Also, a rectilinear figure is said to be simple if no two sides of it intersect except at a common end point. "* (NCERT:89:304). Rose, a class VIII student read it many times but looked away in complete incomprehension. Other people who had been through with their class VIII in the locality to whom she had gone for help, also shook their heads in incomprehension.

4.4.3 Pedagogic Practices

Maths, Social Studies and Science were the subjects in which participants fared poorly. As seen earlier on eof the major problem faced by the participants stemmed from the difficulties in understanding the language of instruction in the class. The pedagogy used in the classroom also needs attention.

From the interviews, it appears that teachers largely relied on the textbooks. The most commonly used pedagogic experience, students remembered in the classroom, was that of teacher asking one of the student to read while the others listened. Students were then asked questions. The students were not encouraged to ask questions. And those who could not understand, lagged behind and were neglected Corporal punishments were also used for disciplining students.

Ma'am was fine, she spoke little, sometimes I understood and sometimes I didn't. And if you asked her she would scold. There were no special classes for those who failed or were bad in studies. And no discussions. Once we got stuck in a problem in maths, we were stuck, others would keep going ahead, nobody would come to clarify.. she also beats up students. She would say read ahead, how could we read, we were stuck with one problem. Somehow, I reached VIII. In this class also she was teaching with a lot of scolding..... she would never say,' if you don't understand ask me '. She would explain once and then started scolding. (Rose:15.4/20)

Most students resented being scolded and hit by the teacher and through other fear inducing methods but a few students didn't mind being taught by the rule of the cane.

If you are scolded, then it gets into your head (bheje mein ghus jata hai).
(Rose :15.4/19)

(....)I used to be bad in maths. When I was in 4th ; my father was very angry one day while teaching me, he took out his belt and hit me, after that I could understand maths (Babita:14.4/20)

Liking for a subject depended on how well the teacher taught. "Teaching well" merely meant that the teacher explained meant explaining what another child was reading and bad teaching meant asking questions without explaining.

SSt teacher used to teach well. One student would read, and what was important she would explain..Science was also like this. English teacher, one girl would go on reading, in VI, she explained but in VII she would not even explain, she would just ask questions. And if you don't answer she will go off.-
(Rose;15.4/20)

SSt in class VIII was nice she used to teach well.. explained it like a story.
(Sundari:20.4/20).

The main concern for the students was "understanding" in the class, as the as the most frequent problem mentioned by students was bewilderment and incomprehension. However, students felt that teachers failed to appreciate their problems and "did not come down to their level" so that they could comprehend the lessons. This meant that those who were not following what was happening in the class were left out. This was often the case with the participants. Coming down to the level of students often meant speaking simply and being bilingual or even trilingual, as language of teaching constituted a major problem. A teacher sympathetic to the student's problem said:

----some teachers they think, "I'll not come down to their level , if they understand or not its not my problem." What benefit will they get?... They get disinterested .. so boring .. we can't understand . Depends upon teacher, some may come down.   -(B Uma:24.4/6)

Poor curricular transaction not only developed a dislike for the subject but also led to failure in grasping basic concepts. One of the student, who failed in Maths in class X, explained her main problem was that she could not do "plus, minus" (Dhivya:20.4/6). Her inability to understand addition and subtraction led to failure several years down the line.

The disadvantaged student often find themselves tongue tied in the classroom. When asked whether they participated in the class most said they did not:

Never. When the teacher would ask I would sit quietly, in the last bench...could not understand what was happening in the class... then she would scold.. We would then walk out of the class.   (Sriram:19.4/18)

(....)There never used to be anything that required participation. Questions were not asked in the class.. they would take tests. (Dhivya:20.4/19)

Never! In class, there wasn't anything to participate in. (Komala5.5/15)

Many of the male participants had been the back-benchers. They were poor performers and received less attention from teachers. The students spoke of teachers not even looking at the last benches (Lekha:20.4/7), questions not being answered(Bhanu:22.3/20) and even notebooks not being checked of the poor performers (Shambhu:22.4/21), teacher making them sit in places where they could not be seen. The situation in the government school was worse than the community school as some of the teachers would get away by not teaching at all.

Thus, inspite of the participants being critically aware of the world around them, the pedagogic methods used in their classrooms never looked at them as anything more than empty receptacles, discounting their possible participation in knowledge production.

4.4.4 Extra-curricular activities

What are the extra-curricular activities that schools offer students to develop their interests and talents. According to a participant, (Sundari:20.4/5), there were hardly any extra-curricular activities in school. The Annual day celebrations were held but here also only a few students participated:

Music, dance there are no such classes in school...On annual day such programmes are prepared.

Never! In class, there wasn't anything to participate in. Only dance programme used to be there for annual day, I didn't participate in that.

(Komala:5.5/15)

Poor participation of children from disadvantaged backgrounds in the annual day was explained away as "disinterest in activities that takes away time from their studies." Teachers at some level approved of this behaviour as necessary for change.

----(...) we have inter-school and intra-school competitions. We have to coax them. (Aarti K:24.4/10)

I must say students like studies than music and dance.... Now a days even a bellboy also has to be 12th class pass So children also take interest in studies otherwise there will be no change. (Vasanti G :24.4/10)

I think they should have more time in classroom activity because that is not available in the home background. The syllabus also has to be covered. (Hari Saini:24.4/9)

In contrast to the perceptions of the teachers, the interviews with the participants did not suggest that they were disinterested in extra-curricular activities. In fact the few students from the colony who made it a point to participate were those who had the support and encouragement from their family.

In everything, I used to take part in quiz, race.... Because father had once told me, that it does not matter if you win or not but you must participate. (Babita:14.4/10)

There was this brother who is an artist he was making a Ganesh (picture of Hindu God), I copied what he was doing and he said it was good, that was it.. after that my interest increased. (Sunil :29.4/10)

The participants also showed no preoccupation with studies, they primarily did not participate in competitions as they expected an earlier training in music, dance and drama. Such competitions only tested their existing abilities. Thus, these programmes and competitions provide opportunities to students with the cultural capital to display it. Thus, competitions made the "colony children" diffident. Even when latent talent was identified the inputs necessary to develop it was beyond tehir reach. A participant narrates her experience of a singing competition:

I used to very fond of singing and when I sang in the competition (classical music)...I didn't know classical music, I only knew light music. In my class everybody would sing classical. And they were also looking at the classical fellows. The Iyer girls would be the ones at it. They all used to learn that. Those people had harmoniums, violins, they were all so right but my voice was appreciated.(..) The Tamil teacher said you sing very well, you should try hard for it(...)She also gave me an address and said(..), they will also reduce the fees.(...) But in all these things we are left behind- financially. Inspite of having talent we are left behind. It used to cost Rs 500.pm. to learn.   - (Lekha:20.4/15)

Thus, costs come in the way of developing an interest or developing skills in "extracurricular activities". When these activities are not part of the school curriculum children from the colony, do not get a chance to learn or develop their skills in them either.

(...) My sister learnt Bharatnatyam at home, When it came to Arangetram it comes to Rs 1 lakh or something and she stopped there. Otherwise she was good at that and would have gone ahead in it. (...) Grandfather also was very interested in it. He used to give Rs 200 at that time for it. For 2 years he only taught her. Then financial problems came and it stopped there. -

(Valli:20.4/15)

Sunil(22.4/18), who dropped out of school and has been working for 5 years talked about his futile attempts to train himself in fine arts.

Even at the place where I am working, they want me to study. I make good art, they said they would put half the money and if I put half the money . They gave me an address, I went to Triveni Kala Sangam. 2 lakh rupees they said. Even if they put, the half(of the fees) I would not be able to put my half.

Interestingly, several boys from the "colonies" were active in sports within school and students who performed well were given sporadic training. However, like everything else, this also was not a well-organised activity according to the participants. And the competitions were the start and end of all physical training sessions.

I was good in sports, mostly cricket, and running, used to go to stadium for practice. However, they did not take me for competitions. Now the teacher also does not do anything. There were things lying around in the school but we were not given the things, it was locked up and kept. (Karthik: 5.5/19)

4.5 Teacher Attitudes and Interaction

In the last section, while looking at curricular transactions it was clear that curriculum is influenced by the way teacher interacts with the students, their attitudes and perceptions and so on. Students gave meanings to teacher's behaviour in the classroom and their approach to education often depended on this interpretation of teacher's behaviour and attitudes. In this section, I discuss the participants' perception of teacher attitudes and nature of interaction in the classroom.

Commitment of teachers

The teacher's attitude and their interaction with students influence the latter 's educational experience and their performance in the school. The participants recalled

teachers, who looked at their job like social work, they were said not only to have high motivation but also kept up the motivation and morale of the students.

According to the participants, the teachers commitment to their profession may not always be able to make the disadvantaged student excel or even score reasonably well, but by their efforts they were able to create an interest in education and instil in them confidence and courage to pursue studies. Such teachers were identified as role models by students.

> *We should have been taught the way the teacher in 6th standard did, she would catch hold of us in PT period(free period) and teach us English. She was not even an English teacher, she was a geography teacher. She would never leave a single class. (Shambhu: 22.4/9)*
>
> *Some teachers looked at it(teaching) like social work. They would tell us that you get so much facility here.(...) They would tell us how to seek help from outside... the English teacher had studied in US . She still used to teach those who were in poverty.. She could have taught elsewhere (...) ---- the tuition sir would teach us all night(...). He used to remain very busy but he used to teach us for 150p.m.He had taken it like a challenge., when it was realised that none of us (Arundhatiyar youth from L Block)had managed to clear(class X exam). His words had a lot of strength. L got 42, S got 45. Not much marks but we had worked very hard. (Lekha:20.4/18)*

But there were also a large section of teachers who were unable to respond to the demands and needs of the disadvantaged students. The teacher's social background and student's life experience was very different. The class divide was conspicuous and the teachers referred to their pupils background, in poor light. Their expectations from the children was also very low.

> *Some teachers would say, even after staying in Shakurpur they are studying so well.....A lot of teachers used to say this to us..... (Savita :20.4/17)*
>
> *Teachers would ask , which area are you from, Shakurpur, .. baap re.. those who used to be from here earlier were quite discouraged .. Shakurpur .. the children from here will never be able to make it...When I was in 8th this area was such that that children would not be studying from here.. useless.. taking*

the name of Shakupur faces would be made about what background these children had. (Valli:20.4/19).

In the community school, apart from the class differences, there existed a conspicuous caste divide which more or less overlapped with the class divide. The teachers perceived of the children as "colony" children and often negatively. Students perceived a definite divide between the themselves(the colony people), with the teachers(well to do Brahmins) and sensed bias towards them:

And even if somebody had hit another child, it was said that the Sshakurpur child has done it. A brahamin's child might have hit but it was thought that these kids have done it. We used to get caught. (Valli:20.4/19).

....Partial, Iyer teachers like Iyer students. They used to like good students....(Lekha:20.4/18)

She would explain well to girls and boys from her caste.. She was Iyer----I remember when I was in 7th one ma'am had asked me to get her a glass of water. Another ma'm, she was the Tamil teacher said, you take water from their hands?.. At that point I felt nothing... did not pay much attention... but I still remember it. The Iyers would keep the Iyers in front and teach them. And even if you don't do anything, they would turn you out of the class. The boys also would say the teacher is like this or that and leave the class.,   -(Bhanu:22.4/20)

Apart from caste biases, teachers had distorted views of poor, resettlement colony children, as mentioned earlier. Students felt their skin colour also determined the teacher's perception towards them:

The black ones were thought of as "haramis" They would pay attention to fair ones,..The Iyers. The dark ones were sent to the back. Some teachers would do it. Sometimes principal also. In school, colony people were thought of as 'haramis', sometimes even teachers would think like this.. There are many in this colony who study but they thought we didn't study(....)   (Kartik5.5/23,6)

The teacher-student relationship was loaded with power for the former. An attempt to give students a chance to air their grievance was not taken kindly Lekha(20.4/18) bitterly recollected the pain of having complained against a partial act of a teacher to the principal. But the backlash to it was so severe that she was not only

neglected in the class but also harassed with repeatedly scolded by all the teachers till she finally had to leave school and take admission elsewhere:

> (....)After that day no teacher would talk to me properly. All the friends of that teacher, maths teacher, bio teacher they would treat me badly and scold me severely for small mistakes(....). I never felt like going to school. (Lekha:20.4/18)

Becoming good students

The teachers attitudes and the perceptions of teachers by participants often made the disadvantaged pupil modify their behaviour to conform or reject school expectations. But it appeared teachers paid more attention to pupils from the well off sections in society and the participants felt unhappy and neglected:

> (....)Sometimes we used to "feel" a lot.. 'you don't study', 'go sit at the back'.... In stead of explaining to us they would say "don't talk about it...." They would not say , "child study". They would say you have got less marks. Your background is like this.. didn't feel like sitting in the class ... if you are told its okay but if you are compared then it feels very bad.... In 11th -12th it didn't happen, in 9th and10th used to feel a lot like this. Used to feel like leaving school a lot. ma'am used to neglect us a lot.... Before 10th we were also neglected a lot..... (Valli:20.4/19)

Participants felt that by portraying themselves as good students they could escape teacher prejudices. When participants were asked what a good child meant, they said it meant a quiet child who did not disturb the class.

> He is a good child.. a quiet child , does not do anything. Nobody would know what I was doing , once in 12th the teacher asked who is this new boy in the class!. I would sit quietly (Kamal:4.5/8)

> Nice child, keeps quiet (Savita: 20.4/13)

Some students, especially the girls, had a different definition of a "good "student. They said they did everything within their means to gain the most from school. They coaxed the teachers to give them time and impressed on them their keenness to study

The main matter is we also were after the teachers. Ma'am please take us through this. They would also think what difference does it make if we take out some time. The English teacher infact said if you went books you could ask from us. She had infact said , after 12th if you want to do some course tell us about it....Those teachers were strict that is all. I never had(trouble with teachers) any such thing in my class.... Science teacher would pay attention thinking, she comes from this area and still she tries so hard., all the teachers would find out from her, everyone would pay attention. I never had a problem. (Savita:20.4/17)

Teachers response to you depends upon if you are a good student or a bad student. You have to be good infront of the teacher. In front of ma'am you have to be good so that you can pass. (Rose:15.4/19 ,6)

A teacher corroborated,

If they're enthusiastic then we are ready to help them . Giving them more exercises.. but if they don't come to us .. we also don't go to them....we are also busy. (DeepaL:24.4/6)

Some participants refused to accept the teacher's authority as final and refused to put up the "good act" in front of them. They were neither 'bad' nor 'good' and did nothing to draw attention themselves, thus getting marginalised in school.

A good student   studies, listens to the teacher, they pretend to be good infront of the teacher so that the teacher passes them. I was "Neither good nor very bad, never got beaten up much" (jyada acha bhi nahi, jyada kharab bhi nahi, mar bahut nahin padti thi). Ma'am would say you have a lot of friend's study and get marks. They never used to say I was good student. I never used to do anything that would make them call me good.. I used to ignore them and would talk. I felt angry seeing other children. They will go and sit in front. I am ok whichever way I am, careless or careful in my studies. I don't want to be like other children as ma'am wants me to be. (Devi:19.4/9)

Image of the poor learner

Excepting a few, participants were quite definite about the poor image that teachers had of them and the manner in which they acted on these perceptions, which

were often distorted. They thought teachers perceived them as disinterested in studies and expected that they would fail:

> *Teachers got tired of telling again and again .. they used to think ..This one does not know anything even when I studied.* (Sriram:19.4/9, 18)
>
> *I was quiet in school, I would not do a thing, sit quietly, would not go anywhere...the teacher would teach us.---- But if you did not study they would leave you saying it is your wish, nobody would ask. Teachers would also think it would be good if they failed. We would also think it is good she is not asking anything. Teacher thought, what to ask this fellow, he anyway does not know anything So she would never ask. Those who had to study would study -* *(Shambhu:22.4/9.)*

The participants were often silent and tongue tied in the class. They felt they did not know how to speak in the class unlike other "non- colony" students with teachers.

> *I never used to speak a thing in the class, I would sit at the back and even when asked would say nothing. Never had the habit of saying in the class from the beginning. Others(non- colony children) studied like we did but they would speak when asked and speak well to others. I never used to speak . and only when it was required I would open my mouth. 1 never participated in anything else in school, would just sit in class .. study that is it.(....)(Kamal4.5/14)*

Silence in the classroom thus meant both chosen silence as referred in the perception of a good child at other times it was the silence of withdrawal.

Bitterness, boredom and vandalism

Silence and non-participation often led to boredom and student responses in this situation were to cut classes, fight with one another and at time svandalism.While some claimed that they broke furniture for 'fun' , other clearly were venting their anger at a system that was not understanding them.

> *When bored we would cut class and go and play cricket. There was some hooliganism, just before school closed for vacation, the furniture would be broken up, just for fun ... after two months who would know who did it.. I never did it during school time only before school vacations did it for fun; all the boys do it. (Karthik:5.5/22)*

The boys particularly would often get into fights with other boys in the class and often felt teachers misunderstood them and turned their bitterness against school property. This was however not approved by other participants (*Sundari: 20.4/21, Kamal:4.5/21*)

> *Boys would break the blackboard, windows, when things could not be understood in the class and we would get scolding for nothing. When the boys went out, this is what they did. No I did not do it. Once the boys were angry with the guard, the boys in anger broke the windows. (...)(Sriram:19.4/22)*

> *Used to feel angry with school, would be angry at teachers.. We used to damage the fans.. Everything. Teachers would speak to us rudely, you are like this, and you are like that, what we would not do would also be accrued to us. You are this and that. The other kids when they would bother us and we would trouble them back, they would go and howl to the teacher and complain about us The teacher would then come to scold us and say we were bad children even when we tried hard to prove that we were good kids(Bhanu22.4/22)*

Peer Relation

Interestingly despite complains of biases by teachers none of the participants thought their classmates were biased against them:

> *Classmates were never casteist. They infact would scold us on why are you speaking like this in friendship.. there was this Iyer friend of mine , in her house she was told, don't eat at their house but she never used to agree to any of that instead she would only eat with me my food. Her parents would object but she would not care. (Valli:20.4/21)*

> *In school, never felt discriminated because there are so many like me and in college, its just that I am not very rich, I am from the middle class and all other are from rich families (Komala:5.5/21)*

4.6 Changing Dynamics of the Community School

The common link between the students, teachers and management in the community school was the language, Tamil, which all of them spoke. However, in terms of the students background, the difference between students, teachers and a

section of the students was substantial. The school has seen a coming together of students from different class backgrounds(from the bureaucrat's child to the child of the domestic help)seated together in a single classroom. This does give the students here a unique experience.

In recent years there have been significant changes in the social composition of the community school as a result of the 'rich flight'. The flight began with well off sections of the upper caste and class of the community enrolling their children in private schools alongside the large enrolment of children from poorer, dalit children from the "colony". The school has also started drawing people from the poorer and lower middle class sections of other language communities. The teachers, several of whom are former students of the school are also uneasy about the changes in the social composition. A teacher explains:

> *Earlier all were from educated families, this has now reduced. People are not putting their children in this school if they can, they are going towards' public' schools.. there are more from poorer families....Had the well off remained here, the school would have improved.. admission is open to all being a government aided school.(....)..(Kamalkshi,24.4/7)*

The change in composition of the students is reflected in school bodies where a relatively large number of members belong to Dalit communities who reside in JJ colonies. The management committee, which was earlier dominated by upper-caste groups, has been taken over by other caste groups because of sheer numbers. School bodies are thus witnessing an assertion by Dalits.[32]

Significant changes have happened as a result of this assertion. For instance, the change in the medium of instruction to English from Class 1,mentioned earlier, is said to have been done keeping in mind the needs of the disadvantaged children. This is a major change considering that the school is a community school set up to promote Tamil culture and language. The decision was taken in view of the fact that poor children, did not have any supplementary educational inputs in their home situations. They faced immense difficulty when class instructions were shifted to English in class VI. The students who had well educated parents and came with the cultural capital had

---

[32] The last election to the management ended in a court case over a dispute over the post. (PTA member:28.4/18,19,20)

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no difficulty in picking up the language and making it the language of communication in school. However, children from disadvantaged backgrounds were unable to cope with the language leading to failure. The difficulty faced by the students in finding jobs even when they left school because they did not understand English was a factor that led to this decision.

For a few years an experiment was tried, where remedial education tuition was organised for students in the localities where most of the disadvantaged children came from. Some students benefited from this scheme. Teachers from the school along with private tutors were hired at Rs 500 a month. However, this was criticised as pandering to the vote bank by Management committee members. Inadequate finances, poor co-ordination and supervision and the mounting criticism led to the winding up of the project.(PTA membe28.4/18, Komala:5.5/2, Shambhu:22.4/13).

What the assertion of dalit in the management has done is to bring school closer to the disadvantaged parents and increase their influence. Parents from the community are able to approach the elected members for help easily when they face some trouble with school. Parents claim that now they are able to admit their children in two of the best branches of the school, if they wish. Earlier, these branches were by unwritten rules out of bounds for them as their children never excelled in academics, one of the main demands of these branches. This has meant some exceptionally skilled teachers have became accessible for the disadvantaged students.(Raman:4.5/16, Valli :4.5/16). A parent who has been in the Parent Teacher's Association felt that teachers must be recruited from these "colonies". The disadvantaged children would then receive greater attention and accountability would also be higher.

> *(...)there must be teacher from here..(...), if jobs were got then it would be good for other children atleast.---- ....They are the masters and do the teaching, it would have been different had we had someone from amongst us who was teaching, but they are always them , even if our people have studied they are the teachers.. whatever we have to say they do the teaching. Our children will always stand at the back , they should be brought to the front. They don't scold them now, if they were they would have studied. Right or wrong they would be left to themselves, that is why they are not successful. If teachers were to come from amongst us, they would keep them in the front, they would see the work of*

our chidlren, we can't see ...don't even know if it is right or wrong (....)from L block there is no one ..not even a peon...how will the children study here. Selvan(5.5/14,15,16)

4.7 Educational and Occupational Aspiration

School leaving certificate is the most aspired object for all the participants who had dropped out. It was seen as a ticket to good life, good job and good money.

Doing 10th , then 12th .. good job... good life..   *(Sriram:19.4/11)*

I will do 10th ..will have to do.. 12th also .. graduation . If I do a course I will get a better job (....) Life will be made.. good job ..good money. (Babu(21.4/11)

But in school , most participants did not remember having any aspirations and said they studied for fear of failure and not because of any ambitions.

When I was in school never thought of anything   –(Devi:19.4/10)

When I was in school, I just wanted to pass 5th. It was only in art that I felt like doing something and becoming something. In rest it was the fear that if I did not study then I would fail and because of fear I would study. I never used to think that I have to study Science to become a doctor, I have to study math. (Sunil:29.4/10)

A few who started with high aspirations found their ambitions systematically downgraded as it was beyond their financial imagination. One girl participant who finished school and filled up for Hotel Management realised that even through a government institute, the expenses were much too high for them to bear. Other also mentioned costs tempering their dreams.

A parent said :

---we did enquire about engineering but it was very expensive 4-5 lakhs... (....), we can't do all that.   – (Raman:4.5/8.)

The same parent now aspires for the minimal for the children.

Don't know what they are upto.. we just hope they will get some small job and not labour around like us. I load the ship.. its very tiring. Study and even a small job will do.

Others narrated how the friends, peers and relatives brought them to do a reality check

Earlier I thought I would become an IAS officer, I will become a collector ..many people told me you will waste(time).. It is very difficult to become (an IAS officer) ... In school wanted to take up science but friends told me it was tough.   (Valli:20.4/9)

A mother describes the process of gradual erosion of aspirations as a process of facing reality

---- Many people don't find jobs even after being educated. They keep running around for jobs, they manage to find some small time jobs in offices but there are many who don't find jobs also . Many children are roaming around here without jobs, hanging around the house. Not all educated are finding jobs.... When they don't find they become what .. courier(boys).., then they don't find anything and are ready to become labourer also ... (Vanaja: 4.5/15)

Repeated failures also downgrades the aspirations of the students till they reconcile to the jobs of peons, or if they find being ordered around unbearable then look for some *haath ka kaam.*

Wanted to be police at that time, that requires a lot of studies, 12th then learn to become police. Now I don't want to study. (Karthik:5.5/10)

The boys seemed to agree that they were not going to get jobs that they sought even after studying. This made them aspire for even less. They talked about discouraging each other and teasing each other by saying that "You are not going to be a gentleman" by studying hard.*(Babu:21.4/13).*But this is also probably a realisation that there aren't many jobs waiting for them and that they would have to take up low rung jobs in any case. Most of the boys were anyway working in different private companies as peons. In families, not finding jobs with out contacts was discussed, were common subject of conversations (Mala:4.5/14, Selvan:5.5/20)

Many of them recognised that even for getting the jobs that their illiterate or primary school educated parents held they had to do class X or XII. The highest aspiration was that of becoming a clerk. A government job was desired as it was believed to lend stability and steady income. One of the participant, referred earlier, claimed that that even though he has studied till class X he would not mind digging drains provided it was in the government. (Bhanu:22.4/12). For the girls, becoming independent was important and the nature of jobs did not matter so much. A girl

participant said she would not mind becoming a domestic help inspite of the stress of the work as it meant becoming independent.

> .----*If I have to do domestic work and do sweeping and cleaning, I will do it. But nobody wants to do it. Hearing scolding, listening to irritated voices and not even being paid properly. Its also tiring. But its important to be independent.* —*(Rose:15.4/9)*

The only participant nurturing ambitions of senior positions in government is a girl student who is finishing her graduation. She is keen on becoming an IAS officer. This girl pointed out how every house has a television here even if people cut down their expenses. Television exercised tremendous influence on the aspirations of young girls and boys and determined their role models. She claimed her own role model was a character from a television play. Her mother also wanted her to become an IAS officer after watching Kiran Bedi on television and a serial called *Chitti*.

The higher the education, the higher the educational aspirations. Those pursuing graduation looked for the jobs of clerks and some even assignments as teachers. Most of them however, aspired for a job in a private office which was well equipped, had well dressed colleagues and who spoke in English with each other. Those who left school after failing class X, wanted to set up their own business after completing class X and XII through open school examinations. These participants mentioned about their dislike for doing jobs on instruction like a peon though they were not averse to it for a short while but aimed for other work including manual skilled labour or *haath ka kam* where they would have greater freedom. However, there were participants in the same age group, who were not averse to any job, provided they had a job in the government. This included digging ditches and other such unskilled manual labour.

Even though participants were aware of hierarchy in jobs they did not think of any job as lowly. One boy who has finished school and is currently pursuing graduation through correspondence commented.

> *(....) There is no job which is useless.. everything requires effort(mehenat)..(inaudible) ..(on an inquiry on what he would not like to do).* —*(Johnson:4.5/9)*

4.8 Education and the world of work

The world of work

The participatory mapping indicated that the jobs taken up by the drop-outs in the colony varied according to their education and gender. Amongst the youth upto 30 years of age those who dropped out of school at the middle level or earlier started their working life cleaning cars. Amongst the new migrants, several persons were engaged in such work. But those who managed to reach until class X and failed in the secondary school examination became office boys, peons, attendants and courier boys. A few of them joined factories and shops. There were others who had found jobs as loaders in the airport with different Airlines. This work paid a better salary but was difficult to come by and the youth who had managed to get the work relied on social contact with those already working in the airport. Few persons were working in NGOs, in the lowest rungs. Amongst the youth upto 30, unlike the earlier generation no one was in government jobs. Most girls who dropped out of school did household work and waited till the time they were married. A few of them worked in small shops/boutiques. Girls who had dropped out in the middle school and earlier joined their mothers as domestic help.

Of the respondents amongst the girls who had discontinued their studies, one was a domestic help, another had a toddler and looked after her marital household, another participant was at home but not looking for employment. Amongst the boys, two worked in shops as assistants, one in a fashion garments showroom and the other with automobile packers, two were office boys and two were unemployed. The girl in domestic work earned Rs150-200 a month while the boys who worked in the shops and offices earned between 1500 and 3000 but for varying hours of work. (see table 4.4)

However the participants did not take up employment immediately after leaving school, most of the male participants and particularly those who left school after failing in class X tried taking their exams again .

Participants gained information about possible employment opportunities from friends and relatives. Those who had successfully completed class X registered themselves at the Employment Exchange. Boys were heavily dependent on

information on job opportunities from the peer group about apprenticeship possibilities and openings in various companies, shops and factories.

One participant, Babu, pointed out that the job that he was holding was just a 'time pass' and was hoping for better options. While most felt similarly, Sunil, felt otherwise. He worked in a clothes shop and got Rs3000 did not think of his work as too bad and felt that if he persisted in the job he would be able to improve his job prospects. He had discontinued school after class VI and had got this job with recommendation from a relative and felt that he may not be able to get a better job with his current skills and qualification.

Table 4.4
Occupational profile of participants who have discontinued education**

Participant	Level of education	Gap between school and first job	Number of years worked	Current occupation	Nature of jobs after dropping out
Devi	VI pass	1 month	2 years	Domestic help	Shoe lace Factory help Domestic work
Babita*	VIII pass	5 months	3 years	Child Care	Child Care
Dhivya	IX pass	-	-	At home	-
Sunil	VI pass	6 months	5-6 years	Clothes shop assistant	Shop assistant in clothes shop, cleaning cars, assistant to a motor mechanic, selling toys.
Sriram	IX pass	1 year at home	1 month	Peon with a builder	First job
Babu	IX pass	2 years	3 years	Office Boy	In several companies, as office boy.
Shambhu	IX pass	1 year	8 years	Unemployed	Irregular work ,as courier / office boy
Bhanu	IX pass	1 year	3-4 years	Packing automobiles in Factory	Nestle repairing machines, Courier boy, unemployed

**Includes only participants who have dropped out, those continuing education not included.*
* Married*

Rethinking Education

The nature of jobs held by the participants often provoked them into rethinking about education. This often meant acknowledging that school degrees mattered in the job market. They hated the jobs as office boys, packers and domestic servants wherein they were expected to follow orders. But this was seen as a consequence of their poor education:

> *Wherever you go they ask you for it(class X certificate). I am not educated, I know can get the job of a peon only. Feel very strange.. Get water.. Do this.. I get very angry... what to do have not studied either. (Shambhu:22.4/14)*
>
> *I now regret not having studied.. I have worked in several places. If I had studied a bit then it would have been good.(....). (Bhanu:22.4/14)*
>
> *----Only if you do it until 10th. Better jobs yes. Doing work in homes, people shout.. don't give holidays... office work would have been nice When I go to work in the houses, they were not giving Sunday holiday for me to go to church. I left the job.. factories are also bad because of men. – (Devi:19.4/13,16)*

There was an increasing realisation that permanent jobs were just not available so they continued labouring in dead end jobs, and waiting for better option.. Their parents some of whom were in government jobs spoke of it:

> *There are no jobs anywhere. .. the people in high posts place their own people, we are left over we get no jobs, our child is jobless. (Selvan :5.5/9)*
>
> *(...)Have you seen any poor person getting a job? Forget my child how many other children, who have studied, are sitting idle. (Parvati:5.5/9)*
>
> *It is just that they are a little better than me ...not illiterate like me . Nobody has a job both girls are at home after marriage in their in-laws place. They are also not sending her to work.. better stay at home.. anyway what studies have they done.11th -12th! Who gets a job with that. Those who get it, get it , most don't , some lucky ones manage. – (Mala:4.5/9)*

The participants felt that knowledge of English was essential, if they were to look for jobs outside the government sector.

> *From govt. schools, so many boys do graduation in Hindi, but it has no value. You will get a job only if know English.. Here in public schools*

children speak English at 7ᵗʰ and 8ᵗʰ.. here graduates can't speak... the jobs are in private , there you need English, In government you can do with Hindi. We get petty jobs in private. (Shambhu :22.4/17)

Absence of white collar office jobs has meant that other options are being sought and adjustments made with it. This has often meant taking up *'haath ka kaam'* or skilled manual labour, with the dream of setting up their own enterprise that they hoped would bring in better income regularly and greater respect.. There is hence a desire to acquire new skills, vocational courses are perceived to facilitate entry into such work. However, the actual act of setting up an enterprise no one has done.

I am working in a clothes shop .. I know about clothes. I have also worked with a motor mechanic... will do my business. Will get money from somewhere. Uncle says learn some haath ka kaam(skilled labour), then you can do your own thing and not do naukari(service as an employee). He said he would teach me by asking somebody to do it. The advantage will be nobody will scream and shout about this and that. If I don't get a naukari its okay. Now I get Rs 100 a day, then I will be able to make 200 -300 a day.. −(Sunil:29.4/11)

After taking loan will work with automobiles.. Mechanic ..repairing kind of work. In July, I will do ITI. Then I will open shop after that. I anyway want to do until 12ᵗʰ that would be good. I didn't take up anything as yet even though I left school in 1996 because I know that the kind of jobs that would be available to me I would not be able to do. Not being educated they would ask me to get water. I would get angry. I will only do automobile work. There you would get 2000, here you would get 3000 if you work hard and the things are yours. For export related work the qualification are 12ᵗʰ, I will do it later. You need to have friends to help for getting good jobs. − (Shambhu: 22.4/11)

There were other participants, who had reconciled to doing whatever they came across after exposure to *haath ka kaam* and the difficulty associated with it. The following comment by a participant who failed in 10ᵗʰ and now in an automobile repair and parts shop indicates:

I want to finish 10ᵗʰ, 12ᵗʰ then correspondence.. Then some work in an office.. Any kind of job... be it digging drains.. Whatever, the salary should be okay, government,..I am only concerned about doing some work... Oh the BA.?

> *Those who have done BA they are also roaming around here, whatever work you get take it. You cannot get a job even with education, without education also you are not getting a job.* — *(Bhanu:22.4/12)*

Inspite of having middle and secondary schooling the participants realised that for the kind of jobs that they aspired they were considerably less educated. This is largely because of educational inflation and credentialisation of even lower rung jobs. Hence, they require higher qualifications today than two decades ago. For instance commercial helpers(loaders) earlier were illiterate but now have atleast middle school education. The boys who are now approaching to be loaders are class X fail but joining as contract workers and employed at a much lower salary.[33]

Parents are still hopeful that education will increase the choices/options and open to their children finding or creating employment. They feel that with the absence of business and other family occupations that their children can fall back on, the only asset that they would have is education.(Velayuthan:4.5/13). There is also a realisation that even for small jobs schooling is required and if they wanted to avoid jobs that demanded manual labour then there was no choice apart from education(Raman:4.5/13) In the absence of education the chances of their children taking up physical labour for a wage is not completely ruled out by parents(Mala:4.5/6).Even mothers who were illiterate understood from experience that social mobility was possible only by completing senior secondary school, going to college and doing the courses.

Yet,those who had finished school and now pursuing graduation through correspondence felt disappointed, under-qualified and incapable of finding jobs even though they were some of the highest qualified in the colony.

> *When we go out, then, we find out what we are. But we can't say a thing at home. We just think they are atleast happy about our doing graduation* — *(Savita:20.4/13)*

> *When we see TV and newspapers and see that this one has done that and that one has done something else, we feel a lot ....* —*(Lekha:20.4/13)*

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[33] The 'commercial help' who is a permanent employee gets Rs 11,000 apprx., the contract worker gets 3500 but it was irregular. Kali(19.4/11) who had failed class X and worked as a loader for two years said, "I have never seen 3500 together, when I worked there."

> *Parents think they have done 12ᵗʰ, they have done graduation but we know.–*
> *(Valli:20.4/13)*

Education was however, valued for more than the job. It was associated with status and respect which only earning money did not bestow, Bhanu comments:

> *... I feel that all these people managed to study and we did not mange. Atleast people would say that, oh he has studied until this level and not say he is a10th fail.. Everywhere you get to hear of being a 10ᵗʰ fail.. Sister says that for the last three years you have been a 10th fail.* *(Bhanu:22.4/ 12)*
>
> *I do not know, "without education a man and women can't do anything", those who have studied they only get respect.* *–(Dhivya:20.4/16)*

Education was thus was felt neccesary for status as well as for upward social mobility and ensuring that they remained in the position that atleast their parents reached so that there would be no downward mobility. Higher education and new job oriented courses and knowledge of English was perceived as important for finding work in the changing employment scenario.

Reservations in Education and Employment

The policy of positive discrimination in the Indian Constitution, giving benefits to historically disprivileged groups entitles the Arundhatiyar/Chakliar persons to avail reservation for education and employment. However, very few persons are availing it for educational purposes. The awareness about these benefits are also limited. In the government school the benefits that parents were aware only of the availability of school uniforms and tuition fee waiver. But the procedure was considered too cumbersome for benefits which were too small[34]. In the community school, tuition fee waiver made no difference as this was only a small component of the fees and all students including SC students availing bus facility had to pay for transport charges separately. All students were expected to pay subscription fees. As mentioned earlier transport and subscription formed the major portion of the fees.

Thus, poorest amongst the dalit households could not afford to send their children to the community school and had to rely on the government school. It was only after the participants finished school or discontinued education that they

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[34] The tuition fees came to Rs 12 per month.

remembered coming across references of benefits for SC students. Post-matric scholarship was eligible only by handful of students as most students from here failed to clear class X. And, even those who had finished secondary and senior secondary schooling had not heard of post-matric scholarship and had never received any scholarship of any kind. This inspite of the fact that many of them found the post school phase financially burdensome. Infact for many of the students in the colony even giving competitive exams was a costly affair and government courses in the absence of scholarships difficult to undergo because of incidental expenses. A participant narrated:

> *I wanted to do Hotel Management, I had filled up for that, I also got selected for it..it was through the govt., it would have happened through minimum expenses. First we spent Rs 700 for the form, they had written we can send you anywhere, Calcutta, Bombay and for the interview you had to stay in a hotel for two days. Before that it was written, it is through the government, you have to fill Rs10,000... travel expenses for moving back and forth.... Hotel expenses.. forget it(....)   – (Valli:20.4/9)*

Another participant noted that they were ignorant about how reservations could help them.

> *I had filled up for DIET but could not get through.... Actually we have no knowledge of how to take advantage of reservations. (Savita:20.4/12)*

The reservations in employment have benefited the parents of most participants. Though in the lowest rungs of the government jobs, the stability and permanence of their occupation and incomes changed amongst many other things the education that they were able to give to their children. With the steady income from the government jobs, they were able to send their children to the English medium community school. For the youth however, the benefits of reservation was still a dream. They had however heard that loans were available for SC youth who had secondary school certificate for starting their own enterprise. This prompted some of them to give class X exam again through National Open School.

The feeling that reservation was essential if they were to have educational mobility is reflected in the following girl participant's comment. She benefited from reservation by getting admission to a full time graduation course in a Delhi University

college. The particpant was surprised to find that her classmates resented it. This despite the fact that she was the only girl from her area and community, who had managed to reach an elite college in her generation.

> *I got reservations in getting admission here to college. 10% waiver. I think they are necessary for people like us. There are many who want to do regular(graduation through a full time course in a college) but can't because of lack of money, they can't manage tuition, parents are not educated to teach children they cannot go out for tuition because there is no money. Reservations are good. A girl in my class told me, it should be abolished in my face. I didn't say anything. She has always been in America. She doesn't know about me and how we study. (Komala:5.5/13)*

The system

The participants knew what it takes to achieve success yet they felt that few of them actually acquired the inputs becoming successful. And, the general feeling was that there is something wrong with the system of education. However they were not always point out what was the obstacle. Success they felt went only to the odd one amongst them while as a practise it eluded them.

> *There would always be those odd ones who would make it, those who were not interested in playing about and would study hard. But they are only one or two. The large number here in colony fail....*   *–(Shambhu:22.4/9)*

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored the educational experience of Arundhatiyar youth in a working class settlement in Delhi and their perceptions on factors of educational inequality. An ethnographic approach was adopted to gain insights on the experience of education by disadvantaged youth, hence discussion were also held with their parents and some of the teachers.

The perceptions of the youth on issues of living in a colony, gender specific subculture, costs of schooling, school system, home environment, language of instruction in school, text that they study, the activities within school, the pedagogic practises in the school, perception on teacher, peer relation and dynamics of the community school that they attended has been discussed. The educational and

occupational aspirations and their experiences in the world of work as well and the sense of unease about the system amongst the participants was explored in the chapter.

The findings indicates that the perceptions of the youth on education and educational inequality is to a large extent dependent on the structural factors of educational inequality even though curricular and everyday school processes mediate the experience. The educational constraint begins to operate from the very place of residence, the 'colony', which particularly for the boys held a lot of distraction. A stark difference in the response towards education is visible between boys and girls , depending on the gender socialisation. The educational choices, however are limited and reduced within a narrow segment by the costs of schooling though people are very aware of the hierarchy in school status. Thus, even though family culture plays a role in a positive outlook towards education, what it often underlies is the ability of the home environment to bear the costs of schooling. Participants perceived failure as an integral part of the school experience and even alternate system like Open School hardly offered an educational chance even as it offered the chance for getting the degree.

The language of instruction within school seemed to determine a school's position in the hierarchy of 'perceived quality' yet it was associated with its own problems. The community school children, who read in English had difficulties of comprehension as well as expression while the Hindi medium government school participants could comprehend classroom teaching but had difficulty with expression affecting their understanding of school subjects. The school knowledge was thought essential, primarily by those who were still continuing with education through formal measures. But even amongst them the textbook is rarely used and the parallel industry of 'guides' simplified the school textbooks for the youth. The existing pedagogic practises of the schools denied the possibility of the youth from ever becoming participants in knowledge production within classroom. Participation was low even outside the classroom in extra-curricular activities. Teacher attitudes also appeared to determine the enthusiasm towards school education and the participants recalled having to battle prejudices. Interestingly, the classmates are perceived as friendly and non-biased.

The community school has been undergoing tremendous change, following the 'rich flight' from the school, leading to growing assertion of poorer disadvantaged parents.

The educational aspirations of the participants are tempered by their exposure to 'reality' but it is also a product of their educational levels. The 'drop-outs' from school often entered the world of work in the lower rungs and in dead-end jobs waiting for better opportunities. There was an understanding that jobs were difficult to get and that they had to study higher and longer to get what their parents have achieved.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have looked at how educational inequality is conceptualised both theoretically and in everyday perceptions. By educational inequality, I refer not to the difference that exists between human beings because of variations in human capacities and aptitudes but the differences that arise from the existence of social inequality. Therefore, the first part of the research involved looking at how different sociological theories have conceptualised educational inequality, while critically examining at their larger understanding of education. The second part looked at how the disadvantaged perceive their own situation.

Theoretical Framework

An overview of theory indicates that conceptualisation of educational inequality is determined both by ideological as well as philosophical positions. Questions have at one level been about 'value-free' and normative positions and at another between foundationalism and anti-foundationalism. Methodologically, the question has been whether macro-quantitative studies or micro-qualitative studies indicate educational inequality better. Four pathways of sociological analysis have been examined within study

Educational inequality for the structural functionalist is an outcome of 'dysfunction' and inefficiency in society which is said to originate from poor co-ordination between the social structures and institutions, thus preventing it from becoming meritocratic. Within the domain of liberal ideology, the structural functionalists state that the meritocratic system is possible through reforms and equal educational opportunities.

The Structural Marxists/ Reproductionist/ Correspondence Theorists on the other hand postulate that educational inequality of disadvantaged groups is an outcome of capitalistic society, which requires the reproduction of not only capitalistic production relations but also social relations to sustain it. This is said to be achieved through the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA), of which school is said to be one of the most important (Althusser: 1971). They emphasise that educational inequality is best understood by looking at the educational attainments and by checking whether

correspondence exists between economic relations and educational relations. Change is said to be possible only with changes in 'production relations'. Several critics have called this economic determinism.

The over emphasis on social structures by the functionalists and economic relations by the reproductionists has meant that methodologically these studies are macro-positivistic in nature. Hence they draw on the same data but arrive at different conclusions based on ideological and normative positions.

The new-sociologists and the interpretativists on the other hand, looked for data in school, curriculum and classroom processes. Methodologically they took up smaller studies and paid more attention to the subject's perception, emphasising on qualitative information. The new sociologists also began to pave the path against foundationalism by questioning objective reality and universal truth. Educational inequality at the curricular level, they felt, was related to the selection and classification of knowledge of powerful groups while declaring the knowledge of the powerless as invalid. And within classroom processes, it was said to originate in the definition of ability.

A stream amongst the Marxists, who did not agree with the economic determinism of reproductionists, argued that even though larger economic constraints were binding, several institutions especially in the superstructure had relative autonomy. Education was considered as having relative autonomy within the constraints set by economic relations. The neo-marxists or the resistance theorists, as they came to be known, saw educational inequality in terms of educational attainment like the reproductionists. However, they mapped a more complex picture of educational inequality as they acknowledged that the pupils and teachers had the agency to accept, subvert, or reject school. The outcomes may not be different but the site of struggle was the school and classroom. While the interpretativists stressed 'value-free' research and methodological refinement, the resistance theorists analysed the class basis of knowledge and school interactions to see the patterns of inequality.

For the post modernists, educational inequality is the marginalisation of the discourse of the disadvantaged groups. They present classroom and school interactions as sites of power struggle. They however pose education itself as an act of power and rarely prescribe any change apart from generation of a counter discourse.

Hence, we find theoretical streams referring to educational inequality at three levels: structural, curricular and in everyday school processes. Theoretically, the need for looking at the meanings people attribute to their actions, behaviour and interaction stems from the interpretative framework. And attempts to seek the meanings that people give to factors of educational inequality (even if it is identified from all theoretical frameworks) should therefore come under the interpretative perspective, atleast methodologically. However, the emphasis in the dissertation is also to look at the perspective of the disadvantaged with the assumption that they perceive their situation and interests in different ways compared to what the advantaged or the privileged perceive. Element of conflict is central to this study and it is placed in the background of larger social and economic inequities. This is because material life defines the boundaries within which ideas and goals operate and the position different groups hold in the production relations determines its view points. Thus the perspective of the disadvantaged can be said to be more incisive and liberating than elite perspectives since it holds current social arrangements critically. However, being exploratory in nature, the objective is not to prove a hypothesis but to develop insights on the subject.

This study is in the micro tradition of the conflict theory and ethnographic approach has been adopted as it views family, community, tradition, class, ethnicity and gender to understand perspective to education.

Studies and literature on the everyday life experience of schooling is scanty and that of disadvantaged children still less. The existing literature shows that disadvantaged pupils have often perceived biases in teachers' attitudes towards them. Teachers have been reported to be ignorant of the conditions of their pupils lives and are often impatient with the poorer disadvantaged children. They are either hostile or patronising towards the children and generally have low expectations from them. Very few have been noted to be encouraging and understanding. The pupil's own attitude to learning in school is said to be affected by cliques and group subculture. Working class subculture of the boys encourages them to reject school while working class girls seem to respond differently.

Perspective of the Disadvantaged

In the literature survey, I found a major gap in the research on education of the dalit working class in urban situation. I did find several reproductionist studies explaining the perpetuation of social and economic inequality in India but there are hardly any studies that document the perceptions and responses of the disadvantaged. The conflict between the aspirations of the disadvantaged for social and occupational mobility with the reality of reproduction is a largely unexplored area. Enough studies have also not been done on curricular and everyday school processes to explain how educational inequality is perpetuated or resisted within these spheres. Also, the feeble and sketchy understanding of the meanings that people attribute to educational inequality is primarily because of the dearth in ethnographic work on the educational lives of the urban poor. Hence, undertaking fieldwork was essential to address some questions that emerged from the research.

I conducted an exploratory study in a working class settlement, in Shakurpur, Delhi. Large sections of the working class in Delhi's poor settlements are dalits, hence it was decided to look at the perspective of a dalit community. The scope of the research did not allow taking up a comparative study, hence I chose only one of the communities in the area, the Arundhatiyars. The participant families are migrants from Tamil Nadu and the respondents were youth between 13 and 23 years with atleast middle schooling. Qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and participatory mapping.

I will briefly present the findings from the study as a discussion in the backdrop of existing literature. The emerging questions and hypothesis also indicates the possibility for future research.

The review of literature indicates that economic deprivation and financial difficulties constitutes the most important structural factor of educational inequality (Muralidharan:1997, PROBE:1999, Chitnis:1981). In this study, I did find a similar pattern with monetary difficulties constraining educational choices. The schools that are perceived to be qualitatively better are not affordable to several families. And the expenses associated with tuition, extra-curricular training inputs are burdensome and unsustainable. The post-school options are also severely limited as courses that can give them employable skills are beyond their means. And those who hope to get a

secondary school certificate through the Open School find that the costs are considerable given that their chances of failing to get through is very high. Yet the costs are not the single most significant factor. New migrants and the tenants cite costs of schooling as well as the opportunity cost as significant factors in discontinuation of education. However, for the people who have been settled in the locality for the last 20-30 years, monetary issues are not felt to be the only reason for discontinuation of studies. Thus, within the same settlement there are people who are more vulnerable to increasing costs of education. But what is very clear is that costs of education push the people in the area to limit educational choices to within a segment meant for the poor. For instance, the elite English medium, public schools are clearly unavailable for the children in the locality. Poorly equipped, second grade and sometimes unrecognised English medium schools are available till the primary stage for parents who can afford to send their children to these teaching shops. In the post primary stage, either the children would be sent to government schools or government aided schools (called the community school in the study). The choice of school in the middle level is clearly dependent on 'other fees' and incidental costs like transport and subscription charges.

Government jobs are seen to give security of income thus giving the parents even in the lowest rungs of the government machinery, the narrow choice of making a decision between the aided (community school) and the government school. Those in casual jobs or with irregular family incomes hardly have any choice other than the government school.

In the study, I found that there is no clear sense of class-consciousness. Participants call themselves poor when talking of available educational options, but on the basis of family values they call themselves middle class. No one thinks of himself or herself as working class, infact this category does not exist in their vocabulary in any of the languages that they use. Similarly, inspite of being a predominantly dalit *basti* no one refers to themselves as dalit. They identify themselves as Scheduled Caste. The lack of a working class consciousness however did not imply identification with the middle classes or the elite, who were called the *kothiwala*. The urban spatial division between the residential areas of the rich, the professional class and the working class-poor seems to create its own identity. This identity as a 'colony' resident was very strong. I have not investigated the causes for this identity formation.

as it was out of the scope of this research. However educationally for the participants, being a colony resident is associated with poor educational attainments and opportunities. In the community school, teachers were also said to discriminate against them based on their residential area. Talib (1998) refers to the biases and prejudices of teachers in a slum school. But unlike the slum school, the community school has a heterogeneous section of students and is 8-10 kilometres away and yet the participants recollect being identified as the "children from Shakurpur". They remember being neglected and discouraged by the teachers and school authority. The discussion with teachers indicates that they look at the potential of the child from the occupations of their parents. Thus, class is a factor in teachers' assessments. Amongst the participants the feelings of discrimination is associated with the nature of work that their parents did, the caste that they come from, which is then reflected in perceptions such as the ' Shakurpur child'. Hence, issues of caste and class were manifested in the 'colony' resident's identity.

The colony's layout is not designed to make it educationally vibrant, there are no free spaces for any kind of extra -curricular activity. Parks have been encroached upon, there were no libraries and study centres. There is a general dearth of information and scarcity of educated people to guide the youth on academic choices. Girls mention about their restricted mobility to school, tuition centres and college because of unwanted male attention. The restricted mobility and differences in gender socialisation lead to markedly different responses to education by boys and girls.

While criticising Willis' *Learning to Labour*, which overlooks the gender differential, Fuller(1983) mentions the differences in responses of working class boys and girls to education by pointing out the case of Caribbean and South-Asian girls in England. Tomlinson(1983) in a study of 8 black working and middle class girls also found their responses substantially different from those of the boys. I also found a similar pattern, where girls accept school knowledge as essential for success in life in contrast with the absolute rejection of school culture and knowledge by boys. However, instead of seeing patterns of differences in responses, I have tried to look at how they explained the differences. It was found from the participant responses that boys have greater freedom and unquestioned mobility, which keeps them involved in neighbourhood activities and distracted from studies. The mobility of boys gives them

a greater exposure to the world outside the house, which makes them cynical and alienated from the education that they are getting. They are exposed to the gaps between education and employment and at the same time are attracted to the quick cash yielding jobs which can fuel their expenses on films, clothes and body-building.

Girls on the other hand have less freedom and choice of activities, which results in their emergence of the different perceptions, attitudes and responses to education. They accepted their limited mobility with resentment but as part of 'middle class' existence. But they respond to education more positively and are excited about school. Their self esteem is connected to their performance in school and they aspire for education primarily to fulfil their future roles as wives and mothers. Education is perceived to be useful both for a 'good marriage' and for surviving a broken marriage. The boys on the other hand appear to have different value systems and criteria of success, which is not dependent on education.

Teachers in the community school claim that home background and family culture determine the performance of students. However, I found that 'home background' is a broad term, indicating that parents pay the costs of schooling, brace children with tuition, have time to meet teachers and encourage children to study. Most of it is associated with the jobs and leisure of families, thus blaming poorer parents in casual jobs for no fault of theirs. Also, conducive family culture towards education is only one amongst the several influences on the child around the house - the others are locality, peer network and differences in gender norms. Hence educational motivation and family culture actually play a limited role.

In *Letter to a Teacher* by 8 boys of the School of Barbiana (1969), failure is depicted as the biggest cause of disinterest in studies and schools are seen to actively abet the failure of the children of peasants and factory workers. A similar perception strongly exists amongst the participants in my study. They recollect how their school life centred around examinations and failure. Some participants recall that they had no aspirations in school and had only hoped that they would not fail. But secondary school examinations make sure that for many children class X becomes the last year in school and discontinuation of education is primarily because of failure.

The reasons attributed for failure include disinterest in studies, unfriendly schools and teachers, monetary problems, shyness at being older than rest of the class

following repeated failure, family problems and the area of their residence. Examinations are seen as a trap laid out by school with some of the participants even suspecting that school would have liked them to fail. In this backdrop cheating is seen as a necessity and an act of subversion for getting the prized secondary school certificate which was expected to give good jobs, decent money and good life. Those who repeatedly failed in the regular school system or left it for some other reason then look at Open school as another chance.

Open school system is popularly understood to be another opportunity for getting the school certificate but since it is geared to examinations, even the pretension of learning is discarded. Participants who had opted for it say that they cheated in the examinations. The Open school system relies on self-motivation of the learner and in the face of severe educational constraints does not generate interest in students opting for it. This is also because many of them have low self esteem as learners following repeated failure in the regular schools. Hence, a system which is flexible, open and which could have provided another educational chance ends up disadvantaging them further in the larger web of structural constraints.

Politically the issue of language is steeped in controversy. The language riots of Tamil Nadu in 1965 are associated with the enforcement of Hindi. At another instance, we find that the English language is associated with status and social mobility across the country. Historically the elite have been taught in English medium schools (Sen:2002) while the vernacular schools have been for the masses. Phule (1991) sang paeans for English as a language that could liberate 'shudras'. This is also associated with a willingness to study in English medium schools at great cost (PROBE: 1999). In the course of my study, also, I found that English medium schools were perceived to be qualitatively better than the Hindi or Tamil medium schools. Most participants feel that they could get better jobs with the knowledge of English language. They feel that half their trouble with incomprehension and inhibited expression in class and examination is because of poor understanding of English. The community school was changed to English medium from class I, keeping in mind the interests of the disadvantaged children. However, the problems associated with language of instruction continue. The participants mention serious problems in understanding classroom teaching. They also had problems of expression. Thus

starting English early to compensate for deprived home environment means the students are learning in a completely alien language leading to incomprehension. Starting it late means that students without the cultural capital found it difficult to pick up the language. However the situation in the Hindi medium schools is not better either as the participant youth claimed they could comprehend but had problems of expression. The students thus responded with rote learning to get through examinations and since school textbooks are also written in dense prose the participants claimed they learnt primarily from *Guides,* which are said to be simple and brief and adequate for passing examinations.

The new sociologists have collapsed the boundary between educational knowledge and everyday knowledge but it appears from the field study I have undertaken, that people including disadvantaged persons clearly distinguish between everyday and educational knowledge. Interestingly those who have been rejected by schools through failure, reject school knowledge and hold that school knowledge is primarily for getting the credential and the job while it was everyday knowledge that is necessary for performing it. In contrast, those in the regular educational system take school knowledge as the foundation for all knowledge and perceive it to be essential for "sharpening the brain".

School for the disadvantaged student hardly offer any interesting options other than studies, and extra curricular activities are sporadic and geared around competitions and annual day and sports day programmes. Chitnis(1981)observed that the dalit students hardly participate in extra curricular activities. However, the reason for this was not very clear. While seeking answers for the lack of participation of the disadvantaged pupil in other school activities in my study, I found that teachers and students have completely different explanations. The teachers in the community school think it is an outcome of their interest in studies. However, the participants' reluctance comes from the fact that there is not much that they could participate in as competitions test existing skills. In the absence of extra-curricular classes like music and dance in the school schedule and the high price of attaining skills through private classes they just kept away. On the other hand privileged students come with the cultural capital and training to succeed in all these competitions.

PROBE(1999) mentions that primary school teaching especially in schools for the poor in rural areas is monotonous and dull. The situation in middle and secondary school teaching in urban areas in schools for the poor does not seen to be very different. It appears from the reflections of students in both government school and the community school that the pedagogic practises compound the disadvantage that the participants had rather than reducing it. Participants narrate that the main teaching method in the classroom is restricted to one student reading and the teacher explaining parts of the text. There are hardly any discussions and other methods requiring student participation. Students in turn are disinterested, diffident and bored in the class. The backbenchers and the boys from Shakurpur remember that they used to be largely ignored in the class.

As in Talib's study(1998) there are substantial class and caste differences between the teachers and pupils. It is also reported that several teachers do not respond to their needs and look down upon the pupils. And similar to Muralidharan's findings (1997), I also found both from interviews of the teachers as well as from reflections of participants that they expect the 'colony' children to have low performance. They held poverty, low ability, low IQ, big families and family culture as reasons for poor performances from disadvantaged pupils. Bannerjee (PROBE:1999: 30) observes a difference in the teacher's explanation and parents' explanation for drop out, similarly, there appears to be a slight difference in the way participants see their own performances vis-à-vis teacher's perception. Participants hold teacher's attitudes and neglect as the reason for their poor performances and not one mentions having low IQ to be the reason for poor school performance. They appreciate teachers who are committed and encourage them. The good results that they produce are also seen as the effect of morale boosting by the teachers, since most participants acknowledge their low self-confidence. Interestingly, even the participants who hold little respect for school knowledge and reject it by missing classes expect the teachers to perform their duty.

An aspect not elaborated in most studies is the way a disadvantaged student pictures himself or herself as a pupil. The interviews indicate that most participants perceive that the teachers thought of them as poor learners and hope for their failure. They are often tongue-tied in the class. While silence is in some cases to project the

image of the "quiet child", often it is a sign of withdrawal from the class. Some of the participants, who had openly rebelled against school and rejected school knowledge, claim that they had vandalised school property both for fun as well as for getting even with school for being prejudiced to them. Most students agree that 'good' students could escape prejudice and get attention from teachers. The participants who have continued to be in the education system pursuing graduation are those who have adopted the "good pupil's" image which includes being quiet, studious and persistent in getting the teacher's attention to themselves. However, these students are no less critical of school and the education system. I also noted that the participants who did not reject school and are still in some or the other educational system are the ones who are the most articulate in their criticism.

An interesting finding, in contrast with Velaskar and Wankhede's (1990) observation is that no student spoke about classmates being prejudiced and biased. This difference could also be because they were present in large numbers in the community school.

The large presence of disadvantaged pupils in the community school is because of the change in the social composition of the school. The influx of poorer students has been parallel with rich flight from the school very similar to the 'white flight' from desegregated schools in America that has been commented upon earlier. In the community school it has given the poorer parents a greater say in the running of the school and policy changes to suit their interest. However, the teachers feel that the school quality has gone down with the rich flight while the parents and participants perceive that it has given them a chance to have access to better educational facilities.

Students join the job market upon failure, especially if they are boys. Many boys infact hurtled towards low ranked occupations like Willis' lads (1976) rushed towards factory gates. Disillusionment was quick and the attempts to clear class X through Open school often began with the disappointments at work.

Occupations vary according to educational levels and gender. There is a dearth of information on occupational options and information about jobs and is usually gained from friends. Aspirations are systematically downgraded over time even amongst those who nurse ambitions. The tempering to reality happens through an engagement with costs, friends, relatives, failures and exposure to a tight jobs market. Since failure

begins in school most youth in the colony start with low aspirations in the first place. Nevertheless, educational qualifications and occupational aspirations are related, though everyone appears to prefer a government job, as they have seen their parents economic mobility associated with it. This is similar to Chitnis's study (1981) wherein she observes that dalits students' aspiration showed "stickiness" to government jobs. However, with the increasing realisation that government and permanent jobs are difficult to achieve, the boys notably have begun to test the possibility of finding self-employment through skilled manual labour. But there are no role models and most are planning to set out for the first time. In the changed condition of scarcity of jobs, which is a constant subject of discussion, knowledge of English is considered essential for private sector jobs.

An interesting finding is that inspite of participants being aware of the hierarchy of jobs they did not rule out doing any job. But this is also associated with awareness of reproduction process of education. It was found in the course of the study that educational inflation has meant credentialsiation of low rung jobs, and higher and higher qualifications are required for the same jobs. Thus aspirations for the prized secondary and senior secondary certificate is not for getting better jobs than their parents but for getting atleast the same kinds of job. Hence, the disadvantaged are having to study higher and higher to remain where they are and to prevent skidding down a path of downward mobility.

Participants find benefits available from positive discrimination at school level too small and the procedures very cumbersome for availing it. Many of them do not manage to clear secondary school to avail benefits of post-matric scholarships. Parents of the participants had benefited from reservation in the lowest rungs of the government job but the youth inspite of studying more than their parents are trapped by educational inequality.

The participants from their own educational and occupational experience know what it takes to achieve success but feel that too few of them are even getting close to it and think that there is something wrong with the educational system.

Through this study, several patterns of educational inequality perceived by the disadvantaged were mapped vis-à-vis theoretical positions on educational inequality.

In urban areas, the disadvantages are stark and visible, as are advantages. And, social and educational inequality is a lived experience for them, as is evident from the study.

In the study, it appears as if the youth recognise 'reproduction' but it is not as if they are passive receptacles of domination. They are reacting to the situation and conforming, adapting, rejecting and analysing it with their entire cultural inheritance. Thus, there are a few who manage to set new paths, aspirations and goals for themselves while there are several who remained where they were holding on to the dream that they would atleast be where their parents had reached.

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APPENDIX 1

Occupational and Educational Profile of Respondents' Parents

Respondent@	Father		Mother	
	Occupation	Education	Occupation	Education
Devi	Shop Assistant (Photo Studio)	Illiterate	Domestic help	Class X
Babita	Lower Division Clerk* (Rashtrapati Bhavan)	MA	Peon	Class VII
Sunil	Welder (NDMC)	Illiterate	Domestic help	Illiterate
Sriram	Gardener (DDA)	Illiterate	Housewife	Illiterate
Karthik	Head Gardener MCD	Class IX	Domestic Help	Illiterate
Dhivya	Painter (NDMC)	Class VIII	House wife	Class V
Babu	Painter (NDMC)*	Literate	Unskilled worker	Illiterate
Shambhu	Lab assistant (CPWD)	Illiterate	Domestic Help	Illiterate
Bhanu	Technician (Air India)	Class VIII	-*	Illiterate
Johnson	Loader/ Commercial Helper (Indian Airlines)	Class VII	Ex- domestic help	Illiterate
Kamal	Lower Division Clerk (RSD)	BA, regular college	Housewife	Illiterate
Savita	Electrician,	Class VI	Housewife	Class V
Lekha	Driver, (NDMC)	Class VII	Housewife	Class I
Valli	Commercial helper	Class VIII	Housewife	Illiterate
Sundari	Gardener	Illiterate	Housewife	Illiterate
Rose	Shop Assistant (Photo Studio)	Illiterate	Domestic help	Class X
Komala	Head Gardener MCD	Class IX	Domestic Help	Illiterate

* Parent Expired

@ Respondents have been given pseudonyms to protect identity

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APPENDIX 2

Details of the participants

Group	a)Boys	b)Girls	Age	G Parents
1.Drop Outs	DOB1983 Class VII Drop Out *Sunil*	DOB:1987 Class VII Drop Out *Devi*	16-20	Mother of Devi *Aandal*
	DOB 1984 X Failed *Sriram*	DOB1987 Class VIII Passed Dropped Out *Babita*		
	BOB1986 IX Failed *Karthik*			*Selvan Parvati* Parents of Karthik
2.Open School	DOB1980 Class X Failed Doing NOS *Shambhu*	DOB1985 X Failed Doing NOS *Dhivya*	18-23	
	DOB1983 X Failed Doing NOS *Babu*			*Mala* Mother of Babu
	DOB1983 X Failed Doing NOS *Bhanu*			
3.Correspondence After XII	DOB1985 BA, I Year *Kamal*	1982 BA , II Year *Lekha*	18-21	*Velayuthan Vanaja* Parents of Lekha
	DOB1985 BA, I Year *Johnson*	DOB 1984 BA II Year *Savita*		*Raman Kamakshi* Parents of Johnson
		DOB 1983 BA II Year **Valli**		
4.Continuing school (not failed)		DOB1989 Studying Class IX *Sundari*	13-16	
5.Continuing school (after failing)		DOB1989 Studying in class VIII *Rose*	13-16	
6.College Regular		DOB1983 BA III Year *Komala*	20	

DOB: Date of Birth , NOS: National Open School

APPENDIX 3

Getting access to the area and the research process

The limitation imposed by time and scope of an MPhil dissertation meant that much time could not be allotted to building rapport. A site for the study was thus sought in a place, where getting access to participants for in-depth interviews would not be difficult. Rapport with the people was essential as the methodology centred around in-depth interviews with the selected persons. Each interview expected to run into more than an hour each and it was also important to build an understanding of the selected group's social life, as the activities of the families are closely linked to the community life.

The access to the area was facilitated by an educationist-scientist, who has been involved in more than 8 years of literacy programme in Shakurpur and who has been doing research on early Maths education. The presence of people who worked in Jodo Gyan, an organisation producing educational toys made the entry itself to one of the lanes easy, following which subsequent participants were found through mapping.

As the researcher studied in the same community school as many of the respondents, close rapport could be established and common events in the school discussed. The functional knowledge of Tamil, a language understood by all the participants also helped in making the atmosphere comfortable.

The interviews and discussions were fixed as per the convenience of the participants, starting in the late evening and running late into the night, as the people, particularly the young men worked during the day. The girls would be interviewed during the day as in the evenings they would be involved in household chores and serving and cooking the male and elder members of the family.

Interview with teachers were held in between classes and in staff-room as the school principal was open to a researcher coming and interviewing the teachers in the staff room.

Difficulties in getting access

However, it was not altogether easy, as proved by the difficulty in getting to interview the boys and the young men. They worked all day and when they came back, answering questions about school was not something that they looked forward to and went off to play cricket or hang out near the *pan* shop.

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The girls on the other hand were happy to volunteer. And being a close knit community most people had heard about the presence of a researcher amongst them. Three girls infact came to investigate and volunteered to be respondents.

Getting the boys to become respondents was a much difficult task and for reasons, I was unable to understand. I had met them earlier, they had agreed but when I would fix time for interviews, they would somehow vanish. I thought it was because they were shy of sitting down and talking to a woman researcher, so appointments were fixed in homes of their friends and relatives. Still no progress, as I would wait for the respondent for hours at the appointed places and homes only to find them later at the *pan* shop.

One evening, after one such long wait, I went upto them with great reluctance. It was not the practise for women to walk up on boys and talk to them in the community, especially when they were at the *pan* shop. One of the young men there, who had volunteered to be a respondent earlier, asked what I was actually trying to do. Then all 6 of them and a two others who were there asked questions, it appeared as if they didn't want answers.

They asked what gain it would do to the basti people. They commented that I would get a dissertation at the end of my work while they would still be stuck in the same situation. Their comment was not very surprising as the resettlement colonies, unauthorised colonies have seen several surveys, studies. Several government bodies and non governmental organisations have conducted surveys here and to facilitate responses promises also have been made, which are not necessarily kept up, thus making people cautious about the purpose of all studies.

I explained the purpose of my study. Without making dishonest claims about a grand change that a research study could make, I explained that it was essential to first see what people think about their own state before one could contemplate change. One of the person there suggested that I could give the findings to different departments and then ask people to think about it. Explanations that an MPhil or for that matter a PhD study was not designed for sending to departments and ministries was answered by laughter and discussions in Telugu, which could not be followed.

While discussing these issues, two boys joined at the pan shop. One of them was introduced as XII fail and therefore fit to be studied! And the second was

described as open "wala" and X fail. It suddenly occurred to me that the participants were reluctant to give interviews as the word had got around that I was studying dropouts and failures. By becoming a participant in my study, they thought they would be declared as a failure again and refusal to give interviews was a rejection of being labelled a failure. Clarifications were made and the study was presented as a study of the experience of people from the disadvantaged groups relating it to the issues already raised by some of them in the discussion about the colony.[1]. The new people in the meantime had moved away but the others appeared to be satisfied with the answers and the necessary rapport was built. The field study moved ahead with the participants giving time for interviews.

Another problem that came up in the study was with the word spreading about my" interviews". It probably began, when I had introduced my purpose of the study with the first few participants. I had used the English word interview along with the Hindi word *baat-cheet*. It was only after two of the "interviews", when the participants heaved a sigh of relief and confessed that "it was not as bad as they thought it would be". Upon enquiring, they informed that they thought it was going to something very formal. But the confusion that the word interview generated became clear only from an incident a few days after I started visiting the area. One of the girls, who had been contacted through another participant refused to give an "interview", as she said in Tamil to her friend, "What is the point of giving an interview, I am not going to get a job after this, will I ?"

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[1] The colony in local parlance meant the basti , squatters and resettlement localities.

APPENDIX 4

Key to Transcription

( )	Background information/ My clarification
(inaudible)	Inaudible
....	Long pause
...	pause
..	short pause
..,	phrase incomplete
,..	phrase completed then pause
(..)	phrase edited out
(...)	sentence edited out
(....)	passage edited out
----	transcription from a different discussion

APPENDIX 5

Information Sheet and Interview Guidelines

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Name

Date of Birth

House no

Caste

Language spoken at home

Class attended passed / failed

No of attempts taken in the failed class

School last attended

Schools studied in

Any other educational inputs

Mid day meals/ scholarships?

Current occupation

Gap between dropping school and first job

Nature of jobs after dropping out

Duration of stay in the settlement

Subjects failed in / performed badly in

Age at which attended school

Age at which dropped out, if dropped out

Breaks in education

Information on Family Background

Father's occupation and education

Mother's occupation and Education

Siblings occupation and Education

Spouse's education

Parents migrated to Delhi in

Highest level of education in the family

Interview Guideline

Why did they drop out from school?

What would continuing school and dropping out of school mean for them?

Why do they think so many students drop out from school?

How would they place themselves as students ? What is necessary to be a good student?

What are their friends in school doing?

When they were in school , what did they want to be? Who were their role models? How much did they want to study? (for drop outs)

What do they want to be now? What qualifications are required for that?

What aspirations do they have for their children/ others in the family?

Is there anybody in the locality who teaches/ works in the school that they study in? Has any teacher ever come to their house?

Who used to encourage/ discourage them to study? Have they ever got scholarships/ mid day meals/ uniforms/ text books from somewhere?

Have they ever performed well in school? How do they feel about not doing well in school?

How important id education for marriage?

Do they know about reservations/?What do they think , does it become easier to study/ get jobs with reservation?

What is their expectation from school?   What are the things that they would like to learn in school? What would they not like to be part of school?

What do they think is the basic purpose of school knowledge?

Does going to school help in their jobs?

Where all have they gained knowledge? What kind of knowledge is available in schools and what type of knowledge is available in jobs?

Did they participate a lot in school? Academic? Extra curricular?

Did they like/ dislike going to school? Was there anything that they like in going to school?

Were there any teachers that they liked/ dislike / why?

How did the teachers look at them?

Was there any problem in the language taught in school?

When they did not go back to school? Did the school try to retain them back?

When they got bored / disliked/ angry at school or the teachers , other students what did they do? Why do think rowdiysm takes place in school?

Since people in their school came from different backgrounds? Was it ever discussed in school by teachers/ students? Did they feel different ever in school compared to other students?

What experience of theirs has made them rethink about education?

What are the costs involved in going back to school/ open school? Do people pass? What is the value of open school ?

PARENTS INFORMATION SHEET

Name

House no

Parent of

Migrated in

Occupation

No of children in family and education

Highest education in the family costs borne for educating all children

Expenses taken up in educating all children per month

Interview Guideline

Why did their child drop out from school?

Till what levels did they want their children to study? Why?

What were the expenses of educating a child: transport, tution, textbooks, uniforms?

What did they hope school would do for their children ? Did it get fulfilled? For boys / girls

Why do they think so many children drop out from school?

What kind of students were their children in school?

Have they ever seen their children's books? How were they?

Did they ever meet the teachers of their wards? What experiences do they have of interacting with their children? Did the teachers give enough attention to their children? Were the teachers welcoming when they went to meet or did they feel diffident while meeting them?

Who were the other children in school? Who do they think succeeded in school/ And who failed ? What is required to succeed in school?

The basic purpose of school knowledge ? Does it match with their expectation from school?

What kind of sacrifices have they made/ Willing to make for their children's education?

Did they ever pursue their education after dropping out from school? Would they be willing to go in for education themselves?

Are they aware of reservations? Has reservations made school education or getting jobs easier?

Has schooling made any difference to their children? Has it changed the way others look at them?

Do they think backgrounds make any difference to education?

TEACHER INFORMATION SHEET

Name

Taught in the school from- upto

School

Subject taught

Classes taught

Interview Guideline

Do their children study in the school

Have they been a student of the same school?

Have they ever visited the homes of the students?

How is the composition of the school changing?

Why do they think so many children form this background are dropping out?

What are the problems that these children face?

How does the school try to remedy this/ How do the teachers try to remedy it?

What kind of jobs do these children move towards ?what do they encourage children to do/

What are their expectations from these students?

DTEA schools have produced some excellent results and there are very high performers in the school as well as massive drop outs? How do the teachers explain this difference and how do they cope with it?

What do they think is blocking the aspiration of these students and parents?

What are the special facilities that are available to these students/ tutions fees/...

What kind of curriculum is the best for these students? Subjects / activities?

Do they have streaming in school? Does it lead to a change in performance/ what are the advantages? Is there any difference in the

pedagogic practices adopted in each of the classes?

Since students come from different background, is it ever discussed within classroom? If it is, how is it done?

How do they handle bored/ disruptive/ disinterested students? Who are these students? Have they ever seen a pattern in these students?

Is language a problem ever in the class?

Are they aware of reservations? Has reservations made school education or getting jobs easier?.

Have they ever been to a parent teacher meeting? Have they been involved in the school management?

Has schooling made any difference to their children? Has it changed the way others look at them?

Do they think backgrounds make any difference to education?

APPENDIX 6

List of Interviews

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
(Pseudonyms Used) Interview Held April-May 2003
1. Rose
2. Devi
3. Sundari
4. Shambhu
5. Babu
6. Bhanu
7. Komala
8. Lekha
9. Savita
10. Karthik
11. Johnson
12. Kamal
13. Dhivya
14. Sunil
15. Babita
16. Valli
17. Sriram

LIST OF TEACHERS
(Pseudonyms Used) Interviews held April 2003
1. U. Aarti
2. Vasanti Ganesh
3. Hari Saini
4. K. Angela
5. L. Deepa
6. Jairaj
7. B. Uma

LIST OF PARENTS
(Pseudonyms Used) Interviews held April – May 2003
1. Raman
2. Selvan
3. Velayuthan
4. Mala
5. Aandal
6. Kamakshi
7. Vanaja
8. Parvathi

INVERVIEWS IN THE COMMUNITY
Interviews held April – May 2003
1. Kali
2. Murgesh
3. Sujata (Pseudonym)
4. M. Usha
5. Parent Teacher Association Members (Names with held on request)