Teacher Motivation in India

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This paper is based on a recent study on teacher motivation in India, which is part of an international research project on this topic covering 12 countries in South Asia and Africa. The project coordinator is Dr. Paul Bennell, Senior Partner, Knowledge and Skills for Development, Brighton, UK. It was funded by the United Kingdom Department For International Development (DFID) as part of its support for policies, programmes and projects to promote international development.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TEACHER MOTIVATION IN INDIA

I INTRODUCTION:

Reviewing the progress in the elementary education sector on 21 February 2005, the Prime Minister of India said that he was pained to note that "only 47 out of 100 children enrolled in class I reach class VIII, putting the drop out rate at 52.79 per cent." This, he said was "unacceptably high" and attributed the high dropout rate to "lack of adequate facilities, large scale absenteeism of teachers and inadequate supervision by local authorities" (The Hindu, New Delhi Print Edition, 22 February 2005). This is not the first time that teachers and local authorities have been blamed for India poor performance in elementary education[1]; civil society organisations and the media have highlighted the issue of accountability for over twenty years. Yet, it is only in the last three to four years that political leaders and administrators have begun to openly admitted that motivation and accountability among teachers and local administrators is a big problem and that while data on enrolment is impressive most children leave primary school without learning the basic skills of reading and writing.

The roots of the problem of lack of accountability and poor motivation among teachers and local administrators lie in the peculiar trajectory taken by the education system. In the early 1950s, education was a privilege of the few who could afford it. With democratisation, education became universally accessible and more and more children started enrolling in schools. The 1960s witnessed a sharp increase in the number of schools – government and private. This was also a period when the relatively well to do moved their children out of government schools and the perception gained ground that regular government primary schools were 'schools for the poor'.

Right through the 1980s and the 1990s, the government focussed all energies on getting children into schools through social mobilisation and enrolment drives. Data on enrolment became the principle tool for monitoring progress and teachers were expected to show annual increase in enrolment. If we look at government statistics through the 1980s and 1990s, nearly all states reported a Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of over 100. The all-India figure for 1991 was 102.74, with boys accounting for 116.61 and girls 88.09. This was also a period when the government introduced the no-detention policy in order to prevent children from dropping out. Teachers were expected to retain children in school and promote them from one grade to the next. Effectively, this implied that the system ignored what happened inside a classroom and whether children were learning. Teachers and the administration got away with enrolment figures and data on the percentage of children who cleared terminal examinations. Growing political polarisation, based on religious and ethnic identities too left its mark on education. State governments began to appoint aspirants on the basis of their community and caste identities.

The education also system got more differentiated through the decade of the 1990s - public, aided and private; formal and alternative; permanent and transitional; and the pedestrian schools coexisting with institutions of excellence. From being respected and revered members of the community, teachers moved into roles of disempowered government functionaries relegated to the bottom few layers of the administrative hierarchy. Even as the pay scales of formal schoolteachers improved significantly, their accountability towards children and their parents went down. The pressure for universalisation on the one hand and a resource crunch on the other cleared the way for a new genre of teachers, who have since come to be known as *parateachers*, contract teachers, volunteer teachers and/or *gurujis*. The professional status of the teacher gradually eroded not only for the community of stakeholders but also in the eyes of the teachers themselves generating a sense of resigned cynicism in all sections of society.

[1] Elementary education includes primary (classes 1 to 5) and upper primary or middle school (classes 6 to 8).

The government schools continue to provide poor quality education and the media and social leaders continue to blame the teacher. The very survival of teaching as a profession is in question as the social status of the teacher continues to erode. India faces a crisis of confidence with respect to teachers (and practically all government workers and service providers) and teacher motivation is, indeed, a national issue.

II THIS STUDY:

This study is based on review of government data, policy documents and published material on India and interviews with stakeholders in the state of Rajasthan and rapid survey in ten schools of Tonk District of Rajasthan. This report therefore draws upon national trends and explores them in the context of Rajasthan.

The district chosen for the in-depth study is fairly representative of Rajasthan – with educational indicators comparable to the state average – as evident in the tables 1.1 to 1.5. The distribution of different kinds of schools in Tonk district is given in Table 1.6. The qualitative study involved detailed interviews with 18 stakeholders (administrators, teacher union leaders, teacher educators, NGOs, researchers and members of professional bodies), 33 teachers in the 10 schools and focus group discussions with teachers in all the schools. In addition 12 teachers who were not interviewed in detail were requested to fill up the questionnaire.

A representative group of 10 government primary and upper primary (6 rural and 4 urban) schools were visited in Tonk District of Rajasthan. Each school was visited for one day in the months of December 2004 and January 2005. As formal permission had to be sought to interview teachers and look at school records, all the schools were informed of the study. Forewarned all teachers were present in the school during the study period. While we assured the teachers that their identities would not be revealed, they said that superior officials were already aware of the schools selected for the study and therefore protecting identities had little meaning.

Table 1: Profile of schools visited

School category: (n= 10)	Rural	Urban
Primary	2	2
Upper primary	4	2
Number of children		
Below 50	0	0
50 to 100	1	0
Above 100	2	1
Above 150	3	3
Schools by number of teachers		
Two or less	1	0
Two to five	4	2
Above five	1	2
Schools by infrastructure		
With *pucca* building	6	4
With boundary wall	5	3
With drinking water	5	3
With common toilet	4	3
With girls' toilet	4	2
Teachers interviewed (n=33)	Male	Female
Rural	12	6
Urban	9	6
Teachers not interviewed, But questionnaire filled		

(n=12)		
Rural	2	0
Urban	9	1

We interviewed the head teachers and up to four teachers in all the ten schoolsl. As seven of the ten schools had less than five teachers, we interviewed all the teachers present during the day of visit. The teachers also participated in a semi structured group discussion where they were requested to arrive at a consensus on a question. The questions discussed in the group discussions were the same as those in the teacher questionnaire. Stakeholders were interviewed with a view to understand their perceptions of the determinants of teacher motivation and job satisfaction in primary schools.

All the respondents were asked similar questions about the factors that determine the overall motivation levels of teachers, their job satisfaction and measures that could be taken to improve motivation levels. All the questions were translated into Hindi and (with the exception of a few stakeholder interviews) interviews and discussions were conducted in Hindi.

The literature review covered all the important policy documents of the Government of India and Government of Rajasthan, government commissioned survey reports and data, research studies (published and unpublished) on primary education and evaluation and reviews commissioned by donor agencies. A list of documents is given in the annexed bibliography.

III THE PRIMARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Constitution of India (1950) designated elementary education as the responsibility of state governments and not that of the central government in New Delhi. The 42nd amendment in 1976, however, shifted education to the concurrent list – thereby entailing responsibilities for both state and national institutions. Policy level decisions on standards for hiring teachers, recruitment and training are, therefore, defused. But even though state governments draft their own policies, they operate within the broad framework outlined by the central government.

Table 2: The Policy Framework 1951 to 2004

Period	Policy framework	Strategies
1951-68	Constitution of India	'The state shall endeavour to provide, within a period of 10 years from the commencement of this Constitution, free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years.' (Article 45, Directive Principles of State Policy, The Constitution of India, 1950) Expansion of the formal schooling system; with state governments shouldering the responsibility for primary education. 1964: Education Commission Report prescribing minimum standards for recruitment of teachers – 10 years of general education and minimum two years of training – diploma or degree in education.
1968-86	National Policy on Education, 1968	1973: Establishment of the National Council for Teacher Education 1976: Education was shifted to the Concurrent List. Both the central government (GOI) and the state governments were equally responsible for promoting and managing education. 1980s: Non-formal education introduced to supplement formal schooling, increasing thereby central investment in primary schooling.
1986-92	National Policy on Education, 1986	Operation Blackboard (1987): Strive for at least two teachers in all primary schools with the Government of India footing the

		wage bills of the additional teacher in single-teacher schools, providing minimum basic infrastructure and educational equipment in every school. Scheme wound up in 2001. DIET, 1988: A pre-service, as well as an in-service, training institution in every district. Objective - provide technical support to district educational administration to improve the quality of education through training of teachers. 1987 onwards: Creation of autonomous quasi-government bodies outside the formal administrative structure for implementation of Education for All projects, namely: Rajasthan Shiksha Karmi Project, 1987 Bihar Education Project, 1991 Rajasthan Lok Jumbish, 1992 UP Basic Education Project, 1992
1992 to 2002	National Policy on Education, 1986 revised in 1992	District Primary Education Project (DPEP), 1993 (to channel for all substantial external assistance to primary education) Decentralisation is emphasised as a major policy thrust. 1997 onwards: Several state governments introduced 'contract teachers' or 'parateachers' appointed by local bodies (panchayats) or during specific education projects without adhering to the qualification norms drafted by earlier policies. It needs to be noted that this was done outside the GOI policy framework and legitimised as a "project strategy". 2001: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan – an umbrella programme for elementary education in India. Transitional schools provided for in the scheme, legitimising, thereby, contract teachers and para-teachers.
2003 onwards	86th Constitutional Amendment, 2003	2003: Free and compulsory education made a fundamental right for all children in the age group 6-14 years and included in Part III (Fundamental Rights) of the Constitution of India; Article 21 A, Right to Education, states that "The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.

The Department of Elementary Education and Literacy (DOEEL) Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) is responsible for national policy formulation and planning. The DOEEL is divided into 10 units; each headed by a joint secretary. The units formulate plans for elementary, secondary, post-secondary and adult education. The ministry and the DOEEL collaborate with national and state institutions in carrying out their functions. The Planning Commission and the state planning departments are responsible for drafting the Annual Five-year Plans. The Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE) is the chief advisory body on all educational matters. It is chaired by the minister of HRD and includes state ministers of education and leading experts in the field. At the state level, state departments or secretariats of education support state ministries of education, which are accountable to the chief minister.

Policies that aim at access and achievement are of little consequence without a supportive administrative and management structure. In most states, the district is an important unit of administration and the district educational officer is responsible to the state department for implementing and supervising elementary education. In addition, block education officers serve as inspectors and supervisors. More recently, block resource centres (BRCs) and cluster resource centres (CRCs) were set up in 1994 under the aegis of DPEP to provide academic support to teachers.

Responsibilities for education are shared not only between national and state bodies, but also state and intermediate bodies. The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments (1993) delegated the responsibility

for primary education to locally elected bodies at the district, block, and village levels (see table 3). Hence, local bodies have become important players in managing basic education. The system of concurrent responsibilities is complex and the potential overlap in authority poses a challenge to efficient administration.

Table 3: Management System for Primary Education by levels

Level	Political	Administrative	Technical
Central	Government of India	Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development	NCERT, NIEPA and NCTE
State (Rajasthan)	State Ministry of Education	Directorate of Public Instruction, State Elementary Education Directorate State SSA Society (Rajasthan Council for Primary Education)	SCERT, SIEMAT
District	Zilla Parishad	District Education Office District SSA Society	DIET
Block	Panchayat Samiti	Block Elementary Education Office School Inspectorate	BRC and CRC
Village level	Gram Panchayat Sarpanch	Head master or Head teacher Village Education Committee	Teachers

Different types of schools in the formal system

The schooling system is not homogenous in India. Government schools are run by the central or state governments or by local bodies. Different types of schools cater to a widely different clientele.

Government Schools

The Government of India, state governments, local self-government institutions (panchayats) in rural areas and municipal bodies in urban areas run government schools. Overall, the relative share of various types of management in schools is 46 per cent (central and state), 38 per cent local bodies and 16 per cent private (aided and unaided). These shares vary from one state to the other. The last 15 years have witnessed the creation of different kinds of government schools, namely:

- **Formal schools** – primary, upper-primary, high and secondary schools run by state governments or by private trusts and corporate bodies;
- **Transitional schools** – Education Guarantee Scheme Schools (Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh), Rajiv Gandhi Pathashala (Rajasthan), Shishu Shiksha Kendras (West Bengal) managed by local bodies or by state governments;
- **Bridge Courses** (residential and non residential) – short-term schools for older, out-of-school children to reach age-specific grade / class;
- **Alternative Schools –** six-hour and four-hour schools, mobile schools
- **Ashram Shalas** – residential formal schools for tribal children financed by the Ministry for Tribal Welfare;
- **Residential Schools** – for disadvantaged groups like the Scheduled Castes, financed by the ministry concerned for the welfare of disadvantaged communities;

Teachers in Government Schools

Different norms and rules govern teachers in the various kinds of government schools mentioned above.

- **Regular teachers** are full-time, permanent employees of the government. They are governed by strict entry and qualification norms (1to 12 years of general education and minimum two years of diploma or degree in education). They are covered by a range of welfare benefits and get a pension after retirement. They can be promoted from a teacher to a head teacher and even a supervisor/administrator/teacher trainer.
- **Parateachers or contract teachers** are appointed on a contract basis by the local body (panchayat or municipal body). Eligibility requirements differ from one state to the other. They are not

entitled to any welfare or pension benefits. They are not eligible for promotion and are appointed for a specific school. Parateachers in West Bengal are women above the age of 40 – those technically not eligible for formal government employment.

- **Guest teachers** are local resource personnel called upon by a school to teach as a stopgap arrangement. There are no norms for such appointments.
- **Instructors** are appointed to conduct classes in bridge courses and some alternative schools. In the absence of specified norms and these appointments are essentially ad hoc and on a fixed term contract.

Private Schools

Unlike government schools, private individuals or institutions set up and run private schools. These can be aided or unaided.

Private aided schools: Private individuals or trusts establish private aided schools. They are recognised and funded by the government and teachers are paid according to state government norms. All teachers in private aided schools are "formal teachers". Consequently, they must conform to specified qualification norms.

Private unaided schools: These schools are owned and funded privately with no state support. For purposes of recognition, they have to ensure adequate pupil-teacher ratio, conform to certain qualifications regarding recruitment of principal and teachers and assure their financial viability. However, all management decisions are taken by the school, including recruitment procedures and teacher salaries. They frame their own admission rules and fee structure for students. The tuition fee may vary from Rs.30 to Rs.3000 to 4000 per month depending on who is accessing the school and where.

As distinct from government schools, studies reveal that private unaided schools are largely urban based and enrol more boys and upper-caste students. The sixth All India Education Survey (NCERT, 1993) revealed that 38 per cent of the growth in enrolment of boys was in private unaided schools as against 8 per cent for that of girls. There is a similar bias in the enrolment of children from the backward castes as well as those in rural areas.

The system prevalent in Rajasthan mirrors the national norm, namely:

- Secondary Schools where Grade I (Graduate or Post graduate with teacher training degree) teachers are appointed
- Upper Primary School where Grade II teachers (Graduate with teacher training degree) are appointed
- Primary School where Grade III teachers (12 years of general education and diploma in teacher education)
- Shiksha Karmi School – where parateachers known as Shiksha Karmi are appointed.
- Rajiv Gandhi Pathashala (primary) – where contact teachers are appointed with a minimum of 12 years of general education.
- Alternative School (primary) where instructors are appointed for a specified duration
    - 6-hour school
    - 4-hour school
    - Bridge Courses
- Madrasas (Muslim community schools, primary level)
- Residential camps for out-of-school children to get back to the formal stream (government and NGO)

IV RECENT TRENDS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION:

It is generally believed that the decade of the 1990s was significant for education in India. But recent education statistics tell a mixed story. According to official figures, the Gross Enrolment Rate at the primary level is 95.7 per cent (85.9 for girls) (Table 2.1 and Graph 2.1). The number of primary schools in the country has increased over four times from 0.23 million (1950–51) to 0.93 million (1998–99) and enrolment in the primary cycle has gone up six fold from 19.2 million in 1951 to 113.8 million in 2001. At the upper primary stage, the increase in enrolment in the last 20 years is by a factor of 13 for all children and 32 for girls (GOI, SES 2001). Since 1994 the number of primary schools have shot up and 1,33,230 schools were added across the country (DISE Data 2003-04, NIEPA, 2005[2]). Most importantly, government expenditure in elementary education went up from Rs. 644.6 million in 1951-52 to Rs. 2395.6 million in 1960-61, Rs. 38842 million in 1980-81, Rs. 196158.5 million in 1990-91 and Rs. 778476.6 million in 2000-01. Equally significant is that the percentage of education expenditure to GDP went up from 0.64% in 1951-52 to 1.48% in 1960-61, to 3.84 in 1990-91 and 4.11% in 2000-01. (Table 2.3)

Enrolment in the primary stage (age group 6-11) went up from 97.4 million in 1991 to 113.8 million in 2001 with the percentage of girls increasing from 41.48 per cent in 1991 to 43.76 in 2001.Progress at the upper primary and high school stage has not been as impressive. Enrolment in these two stages increased from 34 million and 19.1 million in 1991 to 42.8 and 27.6 million respectively. The proportion of girls went up from 36.76 to 40.89% in upper primary and from 32.98 to 38.77 % in high school (Table 2.2). There is no guarantee that every child who is enrolled actually continues in school for five years. The dropout rate during the primary level is estimated at 40.7 %, in the upper primary level at 53.7% and 69% per cent children entering class 1 drop out before the cohort reaches class 12. (Table 2.4)

Comparative figures for Rajasthan reveal that enrolment has gone up significantly. Enrolment for classes 1 to 5 went up by 19.69% between 1986-93 and 55.09% between 1992-2003 (Table 1.2). This spectacular improvement may be a product of enrolment campaigns organised over the last 15 years as also an indicator of changing social values and aspirations of parents. It is noteworthy that the rise has been particularly steep in rural areas and among girls (Table 2.5). The disturbing trend, however, is that the rate of increase in the number of schools and teachers has not kept pace with the increase in enrolment (Table 1.2). This has led to overcrowded schools and classes, higher student-teacher ratios, increased burden on the teacher and worsening working conditions, escalating dropout rates at the primary level, especially among rural girls. Given that almost 40% of the children enrolled in class 1 drop out before they reach class 5, the pressure on upper primary schools and secondary schools is far less (Table 2.4 gives the all-India dropout rate). It may be even higher in Rajasthan). Ironically, the rate of increase in the number of schools at the upper-primary (127% between 1993-2003) and higher secondary (142.11% between 1993-2003) far exceed the rate of increase of schools at the primary level – which at -1.19%, is in the negative. Administrators argue that while the number of formal primary schools has decreased, the number of Rajiv Gandhi Pathashalas (RGP) (Table 1.3 and 1.5) has gone up substantially. The number of RGPs stands at 21,306 in 2004 – employing an equal number of parateachers. It is noteworthy that all RGPs are single-teacher schools being run from single rooms. (Table 1.5)

Despite the rapid increase, latest estimates (2004) reveal that while the Gross Enrolment Rate at the primary level is 84.18 % the Net Enrolment Rate is as low as 69.34%. This controversial figure was calculated using the projections from the age-specific population data collected in 2001 Census of India. It is now estimated that the number of out-of-school (including children who are formally enrolled but not attending school) children in the 6-11 age group could be 40.21 million (30.66%) with Uttar Pradesh accounting for 6.72 million children and Bihar for 4.74 million children. The figure for

[2] The 2005 DISE data (for the academic year 2003-04) is based on the power point presentation made by Dr. Arun Mehta on 28th January 2005. It may be noted that only district report cards were released. National and state level aggregates were not formally released. Therefore, this data may be treated as provisional.

Andhra Pradesh is 3.3 million (8.24%), Madhya Pradesh 2.74 million (6.82%) and Rajasthan 3.53 million (8.82%)[3]. (Source: Dr. Arun Mehta, presentation on DISE Data 2003-04, NIEPA 2005)

Equally significant is that 15% (95,588) of all primary schools are single classroom schools, with rural schools accounting for 95% of single classroom schools. Only 71% of primary schools in the country have an all-weather (pucca) building. The percentage of single-teacher schools is also noteworthy – 17.51% (1,11,635) of schools have only one teacher. In Rajasthan ninety-six per cent of single-teacher schools are located in rural areas and 39% (20,311) primary schools have only one teacher. Seven per cent of all schools have enrolment of less than 25 students. Ninetyfive per cent of these low-enrolment schools are in rural areas. (Source: Dr. Arun Mehta, presentation on DISE Data 2003-04, NIEPA 2005)

The number of teachers has steadily increased from 16,16,000 in 1990 to 18,96,000 in 2001 at the primary level and from 10,73,000 in 1990 to 13,26,000 in 2001 at the upper-primary level. Out of this 2,59,099 are parateachers (or contract teachers) with primary schools accounting for 67.94% of parateachers in the country as a whole. (Source: Dr. Arun Mehta, presentation on DISE Data 2003-04, NIEPA 2005)

Simultaneously, newspapers across the country report a huge backlog in teachers' appointments. Rajasthan alone needs 36,708 more teachers at the upper primary level and 49,710 at the primary level. Of these, 33,264 posts have been notified for selection by the public service commission (Siyaram Ram Sharma, Trade Union Leader, January 2005). The new appointees will be regular teachers, and not parateachers. As of 30 September, 2002, there were 19,939 male and 4,027 female parateachers in the primary schools of Rajasthan. Of these, there were 1,525 male and 4,574 female parateachers in upper primary schools (Dr. Arun Mehta, 2003). Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have decided to stop recruitment of regular teachers. Instead, they plan that all future appointees are contract teachers or parateachers (appointed for a fixed term of 1 to 3 years on a fixed consolidated salary that is almost $1/3^{rd}$ to $1/6^{th}$ of the pay of regular teachers).

With the rapid expansion of the school system since 1994 (when the DPEP was launched) and making universal elementary education a fundamental right in 2003, the government is under immense pressure to ensure universal access for all children in the age group of 6 to 14. Since state governments shoulder the primary fiscal responsibility for primary education, absenteeism and low accountability of teachers is also perceived as a major problem across the country. Given the precarious fiscal situation of most states, the trend has been to do away with regular teachers and hire contract teachers instead.

The areas of concern in primary education do not pertain only to low enrolment, retention and learning but also why certain children do not go to school. Several studies have cited teacher inertia, absenteeism and poor infrastructure in schools, irrelevant curricula and a de-motivating environment as keys reasons (Dreze and Gazdar 1996, PROBE 1999). The studies also reveal a close link between low family income/poverty and schooling (or the lack of it). Clearly, the economic dimension cannot be ignored. Parents have to incur a cost in sending children to school and despite claims to the contrary, education is not free even in government-run primary schools. Families spend as much as Rs 350 per child annually on uniforms, stationary and transport. This amount goes up if the child needs extra tuition. This, by no means, is a small amount for poor families. (PROBE, 1999 and NCAER 1994, Deepa Shankar 2003).

Several recent studies (World Bank 1996, Vimala Ramachandran 2003 and 2004) show that poverty has an impact on (a) enrolment of children, (b) their attendance/regularity, (c) retention in school, and (d) on how much they learn. They are more likely to drop out and their aspirations about life are likely

[3] The number of out-of-schools children in the 6-14 age group (classes 1 to 8) is 37.54 million – 3.49 million in AP, 5.82 million in Bihar, 3.12 million in MP, 3.43 million in Rajasthan and 10.78 million in UP. (Source: DISE Data 2003-04, NIEPA 2005)

to remain low due to the uncertainty about their ability to continue with schooling. Often, dropouts have to work, within the household or outside, and this is rarely conducive to schooling. Alongside incentives such as free textbooks, bags and uniforms, recent evidence shows that provision of a hot mid-day meal exerts a positive influence.

V TEACHERS - AN OVERVIEW

The 1964 National Education Commission report, penned by eminent educationist Dr. D S Kothari, comprehensively addressed most aspects of teacher management, motivation and performance. The report noted:

1. "There should be no teacher at the primary stage who has not completed the secondary school course and does not have two years of training;
2. It is necessary to improve promotional prospects in order to attract and retain talent;
3. Qualified and trained teachers in primary schools should be considered for promotion as headmasters and inspectors of schools;
4. Salaries should be reviewed every five years and dearness allowances (linked to the cost of living index) should be the same as other government servants at the same salary;
5. The government must establish a welfare fund;
6. Retirement benefits, based on the principles of uniformity and parity, must be provided along with a high rate of interest on provident fund of teachers;
7. Minimum facilities required for efficient work must be provided (no details) – residential accommodation in rural areas;
8. Teachers in tribal areas should be given special allowances, residential accommodation and provision for education of their children in residential schools;
9. National awards;
10. Remove the isolation of teacher training from ground situations."

This report has been the reference point for all subsequent work on teachers in India. The 1986 National Policy on Education (NPE) and the supporting document - Programme of Action of 1992 - tried to reframe some of the main provisions of the landmark 1964 report.

The NPE 1986 devotes a section on "The Teacher":

> "The status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of a society; it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers. The government and the community should endeavour to create conditions that will help motivate and inspire teachers on constructive and creative lines. Teachers should have the freedom to innovate, and to devise appropriate methods of communication and activities relevant to the needs, capabilities and concerns of the community.
>
> The methods of recruiting teachers will be reorganised to ensure merit, objectivity and conformity with spatial and functional requirements. The pay and service conditions of teachers have to be commensurate with their social and professional responsibilities and with the need to attract talent to the profession. Efforts will be made to reach the desirable objective of uniform emoluments, service conditions and grievance-removal mechanisms for teachers throughout the country. Guidelines will be formulated to ensure objectivity in the posting and transfers of teachers. Systems for teachers' evaluation – open, participative and data based – will be created and reasonable opportunities of promotion to higher grades provided. Norms of accountability will be laid down with incentives for good performance and disincentives for non-performance. Teachers will continue to play a crucial role in the formulation and implementation of educational programmes." (National Policy on Education 1986 (with modification undertaken in 1992), MHRD, GOI, 1992, part IX, pages 43-44)

While reiterating the fundamentals of the 1964 report, the Programme of Action of 1992 stressed four important issues:

1. Pay and service conditions of teachers have to be commensurate with their social and professional responsibilities and with the need to attract talent to the profession;
2. Teachers' association must play a significant role in upholding professional integrity, enhancing the dignity of the teacher and curbing professional misconduct;
3. Teachers' education is a continuous process and the pre-service and in-service components are inseparable. To this end, DIETs must be established to organise pre-service and in-service training. As DIETs are established, sub-standard institutions will be phased out. Secondary Teachers' Training Colleges will be upgraded to complement the SCERTs.
4. The NCTE will be mandated to accredit institutions for teachers' education and provide guidance regarding curricula and methods.

There was no ambiguity in the 1986 policy document or the 1992 Programme of Action regarding the importance of ensuring minimum standards as well as upholding the professional status of the teacher in the country. In reality, however, we have moved some distance from the policy framework and are today struggling to ensure the survival of teachers as a professional cadre. The emergence of parateachers in several states of India poses a challenge in elementary education.

The post-NPE (1986), in particular the post-Jomtien (1990) period, saw the introduction of several basic education projects – many of them with donor assistance. These projects tried to look for quick management solutions to the endemic problem of teacher shortage in a situation of fiscal crisis and also where accountability of teachers was a big issue. Separate management systems put in place to ensure that the funds meant for education projects were not used for other purposes. Among these were:

- Rajasthan Shiksha Karmi Project, 1987 (financed by Sida till 1998 and DFID, India till 2004)
- Bihar Education Project in, 1990 with support of UNICEF (later subsumed under DPEP)
- Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project (1991) with World Bank (later subsumed into DPEP)
- Rajasthan Lok Jumbish, 1992 (Sida-supported till 1998 and DFID till 2004)
- District Primary Education Project (DPEP), a multi-donor consortium since 1994

These projects were managed through autonomous quasi-government organisations (known as Societies). The idea of locally recruited teachers, albeit with lower educational qualifications and/or training, was adopted to address the problem of paucity of teachers in remote and difficult rural areas. It is important to note that this "solution" was perceived as being transitional.

The big shift came in 1997 with the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) in Madhya Pradesh designed to address the issue of access. The idea behind the EGS was simple. The programme guaranteed a school within 90 days of receiving a written request from a panchayat. The community, represented by the panchayat, was expected to provide space (building, tent, hut etc) and also identify local people who could be interviewed for appointment as teachers. These teachers were paid a fixed salary and appointed for a year. The term was, subsequently, increased to three years. The panchayat formally appointed these "contract teachers" and also terminated their services for non-satisfactory performance. Encouraged by the initial successes, especially with respect to teacher availability on-site, the state government declared formal schoolteachers as a "dying cadre" and announced that all future appointments of teachers would only be on a contract basis. Several state governments adopted the EGS model. Rajasthan, for example, introduced Rajiv Gandhi Pathashala in 1998. West Bengal set up Shishu Shiksha Kendra, also in 1998. The Government of India legitimised this model through a central scheme for the establishment of "transitional schools". These new types of schools have now become an integral part of the Education for All (EFA) scheme – or the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) – introduced in 2001.

Box 1: A cautionary note on data:

We have used three sources of data / information:

1. Select Educational Statistics (SES) of Government of India (1990 to 2001)
2. All India Educational Survey, NCERT – 1993 (data published in 1998) and 2003 (provisional state-wise data available on website).
3. District Information System on Education (DISE) data compiled by the National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) – pertaining to the DPEP from 1994 to 2002 and subsequently pertaining to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2003 and 2004).

The total number of teachers by school type is available up to 2001. But given the time lag in the compilation of educational statistics by the Government of India and the NCERT, comparable data for subsequent years is not readily accessible. Recent DISE data compiled by NIEPA is for 462 out of 486 districts in the country, while SES and NCERT data is for all districts, including urban areas. Equally significant is that the categorisation of Government of India statistics and the DISE data is different. While the former gives the number of teachers by classes (classes 1-5, classes 6-8 and classes 9-12), the DISE data categorises teachers by school type.

Compilation of data on teacher attrition was discontinued in SES after 1988. This data is, however, available for 1986 and 1993 (NCERT). DISE data does not compile this information. There is no information on teacher attrition due to HIV and AIDS.

Distribution of teacher by educational qualifications and training is also not comparable over the years – mainly because GOI data is available only up to 2001 and subsequent information comes from DISE.

All-India information on teacher vacancies, normally available with block education officers (BEOs) and district education officers (DEOs), is also absent. State-wise information has not been compiled and year-wise details are only available in budget papers tabled in legislative assemblies.

The other big issue is that different data sources, across different periods (pre-1994 and post- 1994), use different categories for classification. Some data sets, for instance, use primary, upper-primary and higher secondary corresponding to classes 1-5, 6-8 and 9-12 (SES, GOI). DISE data, on the other hand, uses categories such as primary, primary with upper-primary, primary with upper primary and high school, upper primary, upper primary with high school and so on. Different tables use different terms for the same category within the same data source. For example, primary is also called junior basic schools and upper primary also referred to as senior basic schools in the SES of the GOI. The problem here is that primary school in some states refers to classes 1-4 and classes 1-5 in some others. It is, therefore, difficult to make any meaningful comparisons between data sources.

VI TEACHER PROFILE & ASSOCIATED CHARACTERISTICS

Teachers constitute the single largest group of educated and professionally qualified workers in India. Their number has steadily increased from 538,000 (primary), 86,000 (upper primary) and 127,000 (high and higher secondary) in 1951 to 1896,000 (primary), 1326,000 (upper primary) and 1761,000 (high and higher secondary) in 2001 (Table 3.1). As of September 2004, there were 3,680,000 teachers (primary and upper primary) of which 259,099 were parateachers and contract teachers[4]. In 1991, teachers accounted for 11.8 per cent of all government employees.

[4] Most government documents use the words parateachers and contract teachers interchangeably. This is because the word parateachers essentially refers to teachers who are locally recruited for a specific school and for a specific period (on contract). In some cases entry-level educational requirements are relaxed in order to find a person who is ready to work in a rural or remote area. However, in the last five years several state governments have even started recruiting teachers on contract in regular schools in all locations.

The annual growth rate for teachers averaged 2.8% for primary and 6.3% for upper primary between 1951 and 1992 (World Bank, 1997). It was pegged at 8.75% for primary and 12.73% for upper primary between 1986 and 1993. The figure was 14.62% for higher secondary between 1986 and 1993; and 17.3% for primary, 40.01 per cent for upper primary and 20.09% for higher secondary between 1993 and 2003 (NCERT, 1998 and 2004). The national averages mask wide regional and state-wise differences.

Across India, men outnumber women at all levels. But there are significant regional differences as evident in Tables 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4. The percentage of women teachers is 71.64% in Kerala and only 19.19% in Bihar. The general level of socio-economic development and the status of women can partially explain inter-state variations. Till recently, the non-availability of trained women and social practices that prevent women from seeking employment were cited as plausible reasons for low percentage of women teachers in the North Indian states. However, the proportion of women teachers in private schools is higher at close to 50%. It may be noted that an overwhelming proportion of private aided and unaided schools are located in urban areas, where social restrictions on women are far less and mobility as well as access better. The difference is visible also in the percentage of women teachers in urban areas where they make up for 55% of the total as against only 23.5% in the rural areas. (Table 3.4)

The social composition of the teaching community is compiled only in the periodic All India Educational Surveys. The last three surveys were done in 1986, 1993 and 2003. While the 2003 survey is complete and provisional state-wise tables are available, the NCERT has yet to release a comprehensive report. As a result, the latest information available on the social composition is that from the 1993 survey. One in every 11 teachers belonged to the Scheduled Castes (SCs – a socially disadvantaged group, also known as 'untouchables' before 1951) in 1993. The percentage of SC teachers was 10.34% in rural areas and 6.14 per cent in urban areas in 1993 and they comprised 22% of all new appointments made between 1994 and 2003. (The proportion of SCs in the population is 16.2, Census of India 2001).

Equally significant is that the percentage of teachers (all teachers, including parateachers and contract teachers) from indigenous tribes, or the Scheduled Tribes (STs), was only 5.74% in 1993 though they constituted 22% of all new appointments made between 1994 and 2003. This sharp increase in the percentage of tribal teachers could be attributed to an exponential increase in the number of schools (formal as well as alternative schools) in rural and tribal areas. It is, indeed, noteworthy that a significant proportion of parateachers and contract teachers belong to SC and ST communities. (The proportion of STs in the population is 8.2%, Census of India 2001).

The social composition of teachers stands in sharp contrast to the social composition of children enrolling in government schools. Even though the exact figures are not available, it is now officially accepted that a majority of children attending government schools are from very poor families – mainly from socially disadvantaged sections and SC and ST communities. The most compelling evidence was thrown up in reviews and research studies done under the aegis of the DPEP (Yash Agarwal 2000, Vimala Ramachandran 2004). The classroom itself has become very complex with children from extremely poor families and first-generation school-goers accounting for an overwhelming majority of students. The social hiatus between the teachers and the children is wide in government schools (which cater to the very poor). Social attitudes and community prejudices play an important role in determining the ability and willingness of teachers to reach out to the children and teach them with empathy and love. (PROBE 1999, Mazumdar 2001, Ramachandran et al 2004)

Teacher-pupil ratios vary both across the country and different categories of schools. Again, it is not clear whether the TRPs are calculated according to the number of teachers actually present in the system or the number of sanctioned posts. If we take the total enrolment at a given level and divide it by the number of appointed teachers mentioned in the same group of government statistics, the ratio of

teachers to the total number of students is as high as 1:60 at the primary level. However, the government's calculation (using data in sanctioned posts) of teacher-pupil ratio is around 1:40.

Educational, social and economic profile of teachers

> *"The primary schoolteacher is doing more difficult work than the middle or secondary level schoolteacher. The primary teacher has to start from zero, whereas the secondary teacher gets 'ready students'; they just have to complete the course. It is unfortunate that the primary schoolteacher does more work, and receives less pay. Quite apart from this salary, the teacher is called a Grade III teacher. The definition by itself is lowly. The allocation of power is faulty. The person who builds the foundation is called 'grade three'. This is an insulting way of grading a person. It creates dissatisfaction and is the cause of de-motivation too."*
> (A former teacher and NGO worker in Rajasthan)

Teachers in primary schools are expected to have completed 10 to 12 years of general education and acquired either a diploma or a degree in education. A two-year training programme was introduced in the 1950s and separate non-university teachers' training establishments were set up for this purpose CABE, a statutory body that approves education policy and norms for the appointment of teachers), and the NCTE, another apex body established in 1973 that makes norms for teachers' education, have stipulated that 12 years of general education plus two years of professional training are mandatory for appointing primary schoolteachers.

- Primary teacher (grade III in Rajasthan): 12 years of general education and STC training (2 years)- qualified to teach classes 1 to 5
- Senior teacher (grade II in Rajasthan): 12 years of schooling, Bachelor's degree (BA, B.Com or B. Sc) and three years of Bachelor's in Education (B.Ed) – qualified to teach classes 6 to 8
- Lecturer (grade I in Rajasthan): 12 years of schooling, Bachelor's degree and postgraduate qualification (MA, M.Com, M.Sc) and three years Bachelor's in Education (B. Ed) – qualified to teach classes 9 to 12

The educational profile of teachers (Tables 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7) reveals that an overwhelming majority of teachers at all levels are formally trained and meet the basic minimum qualifications. It is, indeed, ironic that the educational qualifications of parateachers and contract teachers are slightly better than those of regular teachers. Overall, 85.43% of primary, 89.19% of upper primary and 91.03% of secondary teachers are trained.

All the teachers in the schools we surveyed were Grade III. They were qualified with a B. Ed or diploma in education (BSTC) or had a diploma in physical education (C Ped). They had participated in several in-service training programmes (Table 4.13). Many were also studying to upgrade their qualifications (Table 4.14). Only one out of the 45 teachers was new to the profession. The majority had been teachers for more than five years (Table 4.16). Twenty-nine of the 45 teachers were teaching in the current school for one to five years and eleven teachers were in the current schools for five to ten years (Table 4.15).

There is also no significant gender or social class difference in the level of education and access to training. It must, however, be noted that national averages hide extreme regional and sub-regional diversities in gender as well as social class issues with respect to teacher education.

Clearly, educational level and training of teachers are not central issues in India. Many in-service teachers' training programmes were introduced in 1994 under the aegis of the DPEP. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme of the Government of India provides central funds for ongoing in-service training of teachers. While data on the number of training programmes conducted is available, there is little information on programme quality and impact.

The financial status of all the teachers was fairly good and they could be categorised as middle-class professionals. Nearly all the teachers were happy with their salaries and their mean household expenditure was less than their salary as a schoolteacher (Table 3.8). Barring three teachers who said their salary was not good, most others said that it was good or very good. Most of the female teachers came from homes where at least one other adult was also a salaried employee. But the case was somewhat different with male teachers. Many of them said that they were single-wage earners. Nearly all the male teachers admitted to having other sources of income gave no details during the formal interview session. The landed teachers admitted to having agricultural land, but those engaged in other forms of employment – tuition classes, small business – declined to talk about it. The overall impression was that teachers were not unhappy with their salaries and that many male teachers had alternative sources of income. It is important to note that the salaries of teachers went up significantly in 1995 and again in 1999 when the 5th Pay Commission salaries were implemented (Tables 3.9 and 3.10), the salaries of teachers in Rajasthan are comparable with other government employees with similar educational qualifications (Table 3.11). All the teachers said that their salary is sufficient to meet regular household expenditure but is not adequate for out of the ordinary expenditure like higher education of children and marriages.

Table 4: Surveyed teachers on pay and standard of living

	My pay as a teacher					My standard of living				
N=42	All	Rural		Urban		All	Rural		Urban	
		Male	Female	Male	Female		Male	Female	Male	Female
Very Poor	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Poor	3	0	0	3	0	2	0	1	1	0
Just OK	8	1	1	5	1	14	3	1	7	3
Good	24	11	3	5	5	23	10	2	8	3
Excellent	8	2	1	5	0	6	1	2	2	1

Source: Survey data

Pay and non-salary benefits

> *"Teachers' salaries in India are comparable with public sector employees with similar qualifications. Furthermore, at 3.6 times the average per capita income, salaries of primary schoolteachers in India are better than those in middle-income countries as Chile, Costa Rica and Thailand, although worse than other low-income countries such as Kenya, Malawi and Zambia" (Lockheed and Verspoor 1991, quoted in World Bank 1997, page 152)*

Entry-level salaries of schoolteachers are comparable with those of other professionals with the same educational qualifications (Table 3.11). Since 1997 (when the Fifth Pay Commission revised the salaries of government employees across the country), salaries of government teachers have become extremely attractive. While nearly all the teachers we met during the course of the study appreciated this increase, we found better salaries alone were not enough to enhance motivational levels.

The entry-level salary and allowances of a primary school teacher at 2001 value in 2003 is Rs. 90996 per annum, while the GDP per capita for India for the same period is US $ 462 at 2001 value in 2003 (HDR, 2003). This implies that the salary of a primary school teacher is 4.59 times the per capita GDP of the country.

The maximum salary of a trained teacher after 20 years of service may be nearly four times the entry-level salary. The government also provides fixed non-salary benefits like actual medical reimbursement, advances/loans for houses, retirement benefits (provident fund and/or pension on retirement @ 50% of the last pay drawn + dearness allowances as declared by the government from time to time). Automatically, teachers move from one pay scale to the next after nine, 18 and 27 years of "satisfactory service" as indicated in the table below.

Table 5: Basic Pay-scales of Schoolteachers, Rajasthan 2004 (in Rs.)

	Grade I	Grade II	Grade III
Entry grade	6500-10,500, per year increment of 200	5500-9000, per year increment of 175	4500-7000, per year increment of 125
10 years later: Senior Scale	7500-12,000, per year increment of 250	6500-10,5000, per year increment of 200	5000-8000, per year increment of 150
20 years later: Selection Scale	No automatic increase	7500-12,000, per year increment of 250	5500-9000, per year increment of 175

Source: Education Department Notifications, Government of Rajasthan (compiled in 2004)

The gross pay includes basic pay plus dearness allowance announced from time to time based on cost of living index + house rent allowance + city compensatory allowances for urban teachers. In addition, teachers are eligible for gratuity of 25% of the monthly salary for every six months of service up to a maximum of Rs. 3,50,000/- or 33 months of salary. Women teachers are eligible for four months of maternity leave on full pay – for two living children (implying that a woman can claim maternity leave three times, if she loses a child). Women are also eligible for six weeks' leave with full pay in case of a spontaneous or induced abortion, on production of medical papers endorsed by a government-certified hospital.

In addition to the regular vacations, teachers are also eligible for 15 days of privilege leave per calendar year and 15 days of casual leave. Leave benefits can be accumulated up to a maximum of 300 days. In case a teacher does not utilise the accumulated leave, he/she can encash them on retirement. Teachers are also eligible for interest-free advance for festivals and low-interest loans for house building, conveyance and food grain advance. Tuition fee is waved for children of schoolteachers if they are studying in government schools.

Incentives and awards

One of the ironies of the Indian education system is that there is practically no incentive for performers. Teachers move up the ladder according to seniority. The government had introduced a range of awards for teachers in 1950. Discussions with teachers and stakeholders revealed that selection for awards now rarely depended on performance on the ground and was more a function of a teacher's ability to lobby with the decision-makers. They also informed us that the award system had become highly politicised in the last 15 years and the situation had gone from bad to worse.

In-service training, academic support and supervision

In 1986, less than 6 per cent of primary school teachers went through in-service training. It was reported that "on average, teachers in low literacy districts have received fewer than 20 days of in-service training since their appointment as teacher, or about one day a year. In some states, many teachers have received no in-service training – 38 per cent in Assam and 26 per cent in Madhya Pradesh, for example" (World Bank 1997, page 147). However, the proportion of trained teachers has gone above 90 per cent in DPEP districts, almost all the teachers we interviewed in Rajasthan had gone through several training programmes – at least one each year in the last three years. All but one teacher said that they had the adequate knowledge and skill to do their job.

Table 6: Teachers on knowledge and skills

Teachers in this school have the knowledge and skills to do their jobs well	All	RURAL		URBAN	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Strongly disagree	1	0	0	1	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0
Not sure	3	1	0	2	0
Agree	40	13	6	14	7
Strongly Agree	1	0	0	1	0

Source: Survey Data

Responding to the need for academic support and in-service training requirements across the country, the Government of India mooted the creation of DIETs in all districts of the country (About 425 were proposed in 1988). These institutes were expected to provide ongoing in-service training to all primary and upper primary teachers, with the NCERT and SCERTs providing professional (academic) and logistical support.

Launched in 1994, the DPEP created two more layers of academic and training support for teachers. The block resource centres (BRC) and cluster resource centres (CRC) were created in DPEP districts to provide continuous and on-site academic support to teachers. The argument was that the quality of education depended on the academic skills and motivation of teachers and creation of accessible resource groups and centres would help break the isolation of primary schoolteachers and also provide them with some support structure.

Further, a number of innovative programmes were introduced to support teachers were started. The Joyful Learning and Teachers' Empowerment Programmes funded and initiated by UNICEF in 1992 covering Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. A number of educational institutions and NGOs working in the area of primary education were also invited to conduct training programmes.

Recent research, however, highlight the ineffectiveness of these programmes in improving the quality of teaching and enhancing the learning levels of children across the country. Suffice it to say that formal qualifications and training have limited impact on what is happening inside the school. The ability of teachers to function effectively and retain their motivation to teach is determined by a host of other factors.

> *"There is no well managed system for supervision and manpower is inadequate. One person is handling more than 100 schools. More than 50% of BEO and SDI (school inspector)) level posts are lying vacant. Supervision here does not happen even once a month. They are only collecting data from the schools. The kinds of people who come to these posts are have worked in secondary schools and most of them are middle aged. They are not given proper management training because a proper system to do so doesn't exist. No clerical help from the Panchayat Samiti is forthcoming. Record maintenance etc is a big problem. Use of computers is minimal. Mostly, they are used a typing machines and not used for either compiling or maintaining data. This is not used as a MIS system for planning or supervision."*
> (A former teacher who is now an educational administrator)

Most interviews indicated that while school inspectors (in this case the BEO or the BRC resource persons) visit the school regularly (Table 7 below), there is little "supervision" of what happens inside the school. Teachers said till about 20 years ago there was some kind of face-to-face interaction between the school and inspectors. Now, mere collection of data on enrolment and promotion of children passes of as supervision. If and when inspectors visit schools, their attention is focussed on attendance registers, checking accounts of mid-day-meals and other related records such as school grants and maintenance. There was no schedule of monthly or bimonthly visits and VIPs only visited schools on the main road or near the city.

Table 7 School inspectors regularly visit this school

	All	RURAL		URBAN	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Strongly disagree	2	0	0	2	0
Disagree	15	5	1	6	3
Not sure	11	3	2	4	2
Agree	17	6	3	6	2
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Survey data

Resource persons from the BRCs and CRCs, who are expected to provide on-site academic support, regularly went to schools but their support was cosmetic. They came, talked to the teachers, had a cup of tea and, sometimes, collected records. Such visits could neither be called supervision nor academic support, the teachers said.

Most teachers felt that the opportunities (within the system) for upgrading professional qualifications were poor and opportunities for in-service training just average. Discussions revealed that while teachers have attended training programmes and other workshops they do not always view these as opportunities to upgrade their skills. Interestingly many of them were currently studying to upgrade their qualifications (outside the formal in-service training set up). Some of them were studying to upgrade their diploma in teacher education to a degree and some others were doing correspondence courses for a graduate programme.

Table 8: Teachers on in-service training and education

	Opportunities for in service training					**Opportunities to upgrade professional qualifications**				
	All	Rural		Urban		All	Rural		Urban	
		Male	Female	Male	Female		Male	Female	Male	Female
Very Poor	7	1	0	4	1	13	2	3	4	4
Poor	18	7	2	6	3	20	10	2	6	2
Just OK	13	4	1	5	3	4	1	0	3	0
Good	8	2	3	3	0	3	1	1	5	1
Excellent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Survey data

Working conditions

A high proportion of primary schools (47 per cent in Rajasthan and 56 per cent in India as a whole) function in single-room or two-room structures with very few amenities. Most of the schools are situated in rural areas. These schools have either one or two teachers, do not have a boundary wall or usable toilets and sometimes not even functioning blackboards. (Table 3.12)

Latest (provisional) data, released in January 2005, reveal that most rural schools and a majority of urban schools managed by municipalities have very poor infrastructure. As of 30 September, 2004 it was observed that 35,566 schools – accounting for 3.82 per cent of all elementary schools in India – did not even have a building. Only 69 per cent had all weather or concrete buildings. Only 60% of primary school buildings were in good condition. While 27% needed major or minor repairs, 13% required major (structural) repairs. Only 18.48 % of primary schools had a boundary wall, 44.53% had a playground, 14.57% had electricity and 76.24% access to safe drinking water. The percentage of single classroom schools was as high as 15% (16% rural and 9% urban). About 13% of the schools, accounting for 6.62% of enrolled children, were single-teacher schools. Almost 96% of single-teacher schools were in rural areas. Only 85% had two or more teachers. (Source: Dr. Arun Mehta, Presentation of 2004 DISE data, NIEPA January 2005).

Compared to upper primary and secondary schools, the situation in primary schools is far worse. Any claims to quality education require, then, that each class and section have a separate room. This means that primary schools should have, at least, five rooms. According to the data on facilities in the schools of Rajasthan (Table 3.12), 75% had either one or two teachers, 62% functioned out of one or two rooms and 17% of the schools did not have blackboards. Twenty nine per cent schools had common toilets and only 7% had electricity.

The figures clearly demonstrate that the government has not been able to meet the basic learning requirements at the primary stage nor implemented its own programmes like Operation Blackboard

and infrastructure-related components of the DPEP. Regardless of the number of training programmes and pedagogy-related interventions, the ability of teachers to retain children in school is constrained by overall infrastructure and facilities. Poor working conditions (read poor infrastructure) is a big issue. This is particularly marked if we have to assess physical infrastructure against the stipulated norms of the education system. (Table 3.12 and 3.13)

One unintended fallout of rapid expansion in primary schools is the sharp increase in the demand for teachers. Given the poor fiscal situation of most state governments and in view of the pressure on the governments to reduce expenditure, thousands of sanctioned posts remain vacant (Table 3.18). Teachers argued that working conditions are not only related to the building but have a lot to do with teacher-pupil ratios. They pointed out that the number of single and two-teacher schools are higher in rural areas than urban areas of Tonk district (Table 1.4)). Enrolment in rural schools also far exceeds urban schools (Table 2.5). It is, therefore, ironic that there are fewer teachers in rural areas that have much higher enrolment leading to high higher teacher-pupil ratios. They said that working conditions in rural schools were much worse than their counterparts in urban schools and they had to deal with more students in lesser physical space. Equally, there were parateachers and part-time teachers (who may be qualified but are not trained) in rural schools (Table 3.14). The dice is thus loaded against rural schools and those teaching there. Teachers – para and regular – in rural areas were keenly aware of the glaring rural-urban differences, which ultimately affected their motivation levels.

Yet, we moved from discussing the situation in the district to their own specific situation, only ten of the fortytwo teachers interviewed said that the working conditions were poor, eleven said it was just average and twentyfour said it was good or excellent! Equally twentyeight of the teachers admitted that the working environment was adequate. On probing this issue in more detail with teachers, it came out that the teachers do not have high expectations, so far as infrastructure is concerned. They complained about lack of space or furniture – but accepted the situation as given. Not a single teacher talked about the absence of a library or teaching-learning materials as affecting the working environment. Though women teachers were concerned about availability and maintenance of toilets, male teachers were unconcerned, commenting: “What can you expect in a government school?”

Table 9: Working conditions and environment

The working environment in this school	**All**	**RURAL**		**URBAN**	
		Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
Very Poor	2	0	0	2	0
Poor	8	0	1	5	2
Just OK	11	4	2	4	1
Good	18	7	3	4	4
Excellent	6	3	0	3	0
Working conditions in our school is adequate					
Strongly disagree	2	1	0	1	0
Disagree	12	1	1	7	3
Not sure	3	0	1	2	0
Agree	26	11	4	8	3
Strongly Agree	2	1	0	0	1

Source: Survey data

Attrition of schoolteachers

Administrators and retired teachers told us that the attrition rate was moderate. An overwhelming proportion of teachers continued in the profession. But the information on attrition is not compiled and collated at the national level on a regular basis but only collected in the periodic All India Educational Survey. The data for 1986 and 1993 is given in Table 3.15. The NCERT is yet to compile the data collected in the seventh educational survey of 2003.

Incidentally, the impact of HIV and AIDS is not yet evident in teacher attrition. The rate of attrition due to death is moderate. Discussions with stakeholders in Rajasthan revealed that the health profile of teachers was comparable with other educated, middle-class communities in the state.

Para-teachers, contract teachers and part-time teachers

> *"Engagement of teachers on a contract basis as opposed to employment on permanent tenures, particularly in government schools, is a recent phenomenon. The term 'para-teachers' is a generic term applied to characterise all teachers appointed on a contract basis - often under varying service conditions in terms of emoluments and qualification requirements. Some documents also refer to them as 'contract teachers'[5]. In fact, official documents of state governments refer to them in vernacular terms such as 'shiksha karmi', 'shiksha mitra', 'shiksha sahayak', 'guruji' and so on depending on the particular scheme under which teachers are being employed. In one sense, there is no clarity on who a para-teacher is or under what kind of contract do teachers get engaged if not on permanent tenures. With different state governments adopting a variety of procedures, it is difficult to draw generalisations on the situation. In fact, the subject has not yet attracted adequate attention of professional researchers. This is probably due to the perception that it is only a passing phase in the development of the system and would soon disappear.*
>
> *The first major reference to the issue can be found in the recommendations of the National Committee of State Education Ministers, which was set up to recommend the approach to be adopted for achieving UEE in a mission mode. Referring to the problem of teacher shortage, interestingly the committee chose not to go into the problem of vacancies not filled by state governments, even though at that point of time - taking all the states together - there were several thousands of vacant posts of primary school teachers. Instead, the committee pointed out: "Lack of community control over teachers, teacher absenteeism and low teacher motivation are often cited as reasons for not recruiting new teachers but for only concentrating on reducing wastage and internal inefficiency of the educational system. Even after making allowances for enrolment in private unaided and unregistered private schools, teacher shortage is very significant. It is on this account that the recruitment of para-teachers has to be considered a priority if all vacancies have to be filled in the shortest period of time. The issue of teacher/para-teacher recruitment has to be addressed by all states as the long-term implications are for the states."[6]"* Dr. R Govinda and Y Josephine, NIEPA, 2004

Different categories of teachers have emerged in the last 15 years. In 1984, Himachal Pradesh introduced the Himachal Pradesh Volunteer Teachers' Scheme to provide additional support to rural single-teacher schools and create employment opportunities for educated youth in rural areas. Any young person with 10 years of schooling (matriculation) was eligible to be appointed as a volunteer teacher. This minimum qualification was relaxed to eight years for people in remote mountainous areas and women. The scheme was discontinued in 1991. But a 90-day condensed training programme was offered to those with basic educational qualifications after which they were formally appointed as Junior Basic Teachers.

Rajasthan introduced the Shiksha Karmi (educational worker) project in 1987. Rural schools in remote and inaccessible areas were converted into 'Shiksha Karmi Schools'. Local youth, who had completed eight years of schooling were selected and put through an intensive training programme. They were then appointed as Shiksha Karmis and paid an 'honorarium' of Rs1800/- per month (US $ 42 in current exchange rate).

[5] The two terms, 'contract teachers' and 'para-teachers' have been used interchangeably though not all contract teachers are necessarily parateachers in the sense of para-professionals.

[6] Government of India, Report of the National Committee of State Education Ministers under the Chairmanship of the Minister of Human Resource Development to Develop the Structure and Outlines of Implementing Universal Elementary Education in a Mission Mode, MHRD, New Delhi, July 1999, (22-23)

Text table 5: Objectives of Deploying Para-teachers in Regular Schools

State	Objective of deploying para-teachers
Andhra Pradesh	UEE; imparting quality education; mobilising community participation; assisting existing teachers in school management; and addressing adverse teacher-pupil ratio
Gujarat	To address the problem of teacher shortage in primary schools; improve enrolment & retention; and better the quality of classroom transaction
Himachal Pradesh	Ensuring access in remote villages; to address the problem of teacher shortage; to improve the standard of education; to counter teacher absenteeism; to provide opportunity for unemployed youth
Madhya Pradesh	To address the problem of teacher shortage due to unfilled vacancies
Maharashtra	To provide teachers against vacancies accruing due to retirement; and provide teachers for additional enrolment
Rajasthan	To solve the problem of teacher absenteeism in schools located in remote areas; to bring qualitative improvement in primary education; and ensuring 100% enrolment of boys and girls in the age group 6-14
Uttar Pradesh	To provide a second teacher in single-teacher schools; and an additional teacher in schools with adverse pupil-teacher ratio

Source: R Govinda and Y Josephine, 2004

Madhya Pradesh took the concept of locally appointed teachers to scale and introduced the Educational Guarantee Scheme (MPEGS) where teachers, or *guriji* as they were called, were appointed by the panchayat for a year. This was revised to three years in 2004. The MP EGS Guruji was also paid an 'honorarium' of Rs1000/- per month in 1997, which was subsequently raised to Rs2500/- (US $ 58 at current prices). In 2002, the MP government decided to extend the concept of community-based contract teacher – now known as *Samvida Shikshak* – to upper primary as well as secondary levels. There are now three grades of contract teachers. Those at the primary level are paid Rs2500, at upper primary level Rs3500 and contract teachers at the higher secondary level get Rs4500 per month.

Rajasthan followed the example set by Madhya Pradesh and introduced contract teachers at all levels. West Bengal modified the MP model and introduced yet another category of parateachers. These were women above the age of 40 years with at least 12 years of formal education. They are appointed by the panchayat and are paid an honorarium of Rs1000/- per month (US $ 24 at current exchange rate).

Text table 6: Recruitment and Service Conditions

State	Honorarium Per Month	Appointing Agency	Duration of Contract
Andhra Pradesh	Rs. 1000/-	School Committee	10 months in a year
Gujarat	Rs. 2500/-	District Education Committee	2 years; to be absorbed after 3 years if vacancy exists; to be absorbed after 5 years irrespective of vacancy, provided there is no adverse performance report
Himachal Pradesh	Rs. 2500/-	District Primary Education Officer	1 year; can be extended after evaluation of performance and approval by the Director of Primary Education
Madhya Pradesh	Grade I (Secondary) Rs. 4500/-; Grade II (Upper Primary) Rs. 3500/-; and Grade III	Block Panchayat (local self-government) for primary level; District Panchayat for others	1 year; renewable up to 3 years if there are no adverse performance reports; to be made permanent after 3 years.

	(Primary) Rs. 2500/-		
Maharashtra	Rs. 3000/- (proportionate) honorarium to be paid on the basis of working days other than school holidays.	Chief Executive Officer of the Zila Parishad (district local self-government)	June-April (10 months) every year, renewable for three years based on performance
Rajasthan	Rs. 1800/- including Rs. 500/- for Prehar Pathashala (night school) which is mandatory	Shiksha Karmi (Project) Board	Appointment reviewed every year and made permanent after 8 years
Uttar Pradesh	Rs. 2250/-	Village Education Committee of the Gram Panchayat (village self-government)	Annual contract for 10 months from 1st July to 31st May

Source: Dayaram (2002) cited in R Govinda and Y Josephine, 2004

There are 2,59,099 para-teachers and contract teachers in India. Of these, 65% are men and 35% women. Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh account for an overwhelming proportion of para-teachers and contract teachers (Table 3.17).

Para-teachers and contract teachers are used interchangeably. If one were to go by the latest EMIS data, the educational levels of 'para-teachers' is comparable (in some states, even better) to those of the formal teachers - with 82.2 per cent men and 79.62 per cent women having studied up to or beyond secondary school (Table 3.16). However, most of them did not have the required diploma or degree in teacher education. MP, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan no longer use the word para-teachers and call them 'contract teachers'. They are paid about 1/6th of the salary of a regular teacher for a term of one to three years. Contract teachers are not entitled to any non-salary benefits like provident fund, leave, medical insurance or reimbursement and insurance cover.

VI TEACHER ABSENCE

Absenteeism and actual time spent in the school and in teaching-learning activities, have of late become highly emotive and controversial issues. A range of quantitative and qualitative studies done in the last 10 years (PROBE 1999, Jha and Jhingran 2002, Ramachandran, et al 2002 and 2004, Anuradha De, et al 2001, Manabi Majumdar 2001) reveal a distressing picture of the learning achievements of children. Most children in government schools in rural and urban areas complete five years of education without learning to read and write! While examination results show that nearly 90% of the children in class 5 are declared "promoted", teachers admit that these results do not mean anything. For example, children with 18% marks were also promoted in Rajasthan. Evidently, the no-detention policy of the Government of India has been interpreted in a way that allows all children to be promoted automatically – till they take public examinations at the upper primary level. This is evident in the guidelines of the Government of Rajasthan:

> *"Each child appearing for the class 1 and 2 examinations will be promoted to the next class regardless of her/his performance in examinations, provided the concerned child has attended school for at least 50% of the working days. The headmaster has the authority to exempt children who do not meet these criteria. The children who do not appear or cannot clear the annual examination will be promoted and will be given a supplementary examination in July. If*

the child cannot pass the supplementary examination, he/she will be enrolled for remedial education. Children will be examined in Language, Mathematics and Environmental Studies. For other subjects, three grades will be given – excellent, good and average." (Compilation of rules and regulation pertaining to education by Lalit Kishore, Unique Traders, Jaipur 2004)

The poor academic performance of children in government schools has been making headlines and has become a highly contentious issue. The government insists that most children successfully complete primary education but independent commentators argue that children go through school without learning anything and teachers get away without teaching much. Public debates on the quality of education have invariably led to the question of how teachers can be made accountable and what the government should do to ensure that teachers actually attend school, and teach children.

The government has, apparently, collected data on teacher absenteeism but neither has it been compiled nor made public for over two decades. Interviews with officials invariably turned quite spirited when teacher absenteeism was discussed. They agree that while teacher absenteeism is an issue, it is not possible to compile accurate information. They point out that there are four kinds of "absence":

i. Officially present, but away on government duty – related to education and/or tasks unconnected with education;
ii. Officially present, but not in the class or in school – typically teachers come in the morning, mark their attendance and leave on personal work / chores;
iii. Teacher absents herself/himself without information – but routinely leaves an application behind just in case a senior official visits the school. Researchers confirm they have seen a bunch of leave letters without a date in the attendance register;
iv. The school itself is unofficially shut due to a local festival, extreme weather, agricultural activity (harvest, planting etc).

Other stakeholders (NGO leaders, researchers) add a fifth dimension. Teachers come to school but do not teach. They are busy filling registers, reading newspapers, knitting or mending, conducting their business on mobile phones and so on. The Public Report on Basic Education (PROBE, 1999) convincingly showed that one-third of the head teachers were absent and, any way, little teaching happened in schools even when teachers were present. Classroom observations made in three states revealed that each group of children was taught for around 25 minutes a day! (Ramachandran et al, 2004)

A recent study commissioned by the World Bank and done by Harvard University (Michael Kremer et al, 2004) compiled information of teacher absenteeism in India after surprise visits to 3,750 schools across India. The study revealed that 25% of teachers in government schools were absent from the school premises, with the absence rate varying from 15% in Maharashtra to 42% in Jharkhand (Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3). The study also revealed "the more powerful (male teachers, older teachers, more educated teachers and head teachers) are more likely to be absent. Having attended a training programme does not reduce a teacher's probability of absence. Being in schools where teachers are not paid regularly is not associated with higher absence… Schools with better quality infrastructure have lower absence, and the existence of multi-grade teaching in a school is associated with greater teacher absence…" (Kremer et al, 2004)

The study reveals that absence rates are influenced by:

1. Power – gender, age, years of service and status of a head teacher. Male teachers were found to be 1.5 to 2% more likely to be absent than women teachers;
2. Distance from home to school – longer commuting time led to higher absence;
3. The quality of the head teacher;
4. Multi-grade schools – where one or two teachers manage children of two or more classes in the same room;
5. Poor infrastructure – no building/very poor quality building, no amenities;
6. Schools away from paved road and not easily accessible;

7. Where PTAs have met at least once in the last three months (the mere presence of a PTA did not make much difference, its effectiveness did);
8. Level of economic development in the state (richer states have lower absence rates as against poorer states which record high rates of absence)
9. School management – the absence rate and level of teaching activity in private aided schools were pegged at 20% and 58% respectively. In comparison, absence and level of teaching activity in government schools were 24.8% and 44.8% respectively.)
10. Operative mid-day meal revealed lower absence rates. (This issue is explored in detail in the Rajasthan case study)

The study argues that while the absence of the following conditions or facilities may be cited as reasons for poor motivation, their presence does not guarantee motivation.

1. High pay scales;
2. Regularity of pay;
3. Having attended an in-service training programme;
4. Existence of PTA or other community-school forums.
5. Teachers belong to the same area as the location of the school.
6. Teachers are from the same community.
7. Non-teaching duties and responsibilities (teachers cite some duties – especially as electoral officials – as enhancing their status in the eyes of the community and also giving them access to political leaders.)

Stakeholders and teachers interviewed in Rajasthan said that teacher motivation and absence is a manifestation of a troubled education system influenced by an equally troubled political climate. Larger governance issues are predominantly linked to the issue of motivation of all government workers, including teachers. Teachers cannot be singled out for poor motivation, corruption or absence.

> *"Absence or unpunctuality is a complex problem. Everyone is affected by it. Those who have to travel long distances suffer all the time. They are always on the lookout for another job. Others become careless when they see this. They wonder why they alone should be the caretakers of education. The learning of children is affected and teachers are not able to complete the syllabus. Completing it becomes such a race to that it becomes irrelevant as to whether the child understands the subject or not. How can we think of new educational methods or of improvements in such an environment?*
> (A former teacher who is now a teacher educator)

Teachers and administrators insisted that absence was not a big problem in Rajasthan. They were quite critical of the recent World Bank-supported study (Kremer et al), which found 23.7% of the teachers absent during unannounced visits (Table 4.1). The present study was conducted just before and during the state-wise panchayat elections when senior political leaders and administrators were on the move. As a result not one teacher was found to be "absent" without permission during two unannounced visits on 24 January and 5 February, 2005 (Table 4.4).

Table 10: On punctuality and absenteeism

	Teachers at this school come to work on time					**Teacher absenteeism is not a problem at this school**				
	All	RURAL		URBAN		All	RURAL		URBAN	
		Male	Female	Male	Female		Male	Female	Male	Female
Strongly disagree	1	0	0	0	1	3	2	0	1	0
Disagree	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	2	1
Not sure	14	4	3	4	3	3	2	0	1	0
Agree	29	10	3	13	3	34	10	5	14	5
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	1

Source: Survey data

However, we heard about and in a few cases also noticed three kinds of unofficial absence:

i. Teachers leave an undated leave letter in the attendance register. As we entered one school we saw a teachers scribble a date on the application. Given that our first round of field visits were done after informing the district administration, we also noticed that the teachers were ready and waiting for us in eight of the ten schools;
ii. Teachers come to school, mark the attendance of children, give them some work and go away for a few hours to attend to other "duties";
iii. Teachers come to school and leave for the day on "official duty". Since, the fieldwork was being conducted during the panchayat elections and at the time when electoral rolls were being revised several teachers were either away on official work or in school but performing non-teaching duties.

We could not, however, get a realistic assessment of the non-teaching duties of teachers. While teachers talked about the kind of work that they are asked to do, they could not give us the exact dates/hours in the last month or since the commencement of the current academic year in July 2004. Duties were often allocated to a school but, some times, the district administration also handpicked a particular teacher. The list of non-teaching duties of teachers in the current academic year is as follows:

i. Pulse polio immunisation drive – approximately five days every two months;
ii. Revision of electoral rolls for the national general election in 2004 – about 20 days. This duty is "in-site" and the electorate is expected to come to the school for registration;
iii. Work connected with the general election – polling booths are located in schools and teachers function as returning officers;
iv. Revision of electoral rolls prior to panchayat elections;
v. Panchayat elections;
vi. Participation in the "one-window" camp of the government to enable the rural poor to avail of welfare schemes and services – approximately three days.
vii. Family planning targets – teachers expected to motivate couples with two or more children to adopt either female sterilisation or male (no scalpel) vasectomy. This involves meeting people after school hours.

The head teachers did not have much to say about teacher absence per say, but admitted that a strong head teacher can make a big difference. A punctual and regular head teacher sets an example and if the head teacher is negligent then the teachers absent themselves without any notice or permission. Almost all the head teachers talked at length about non-teaching duties allocated to schools and how it affected availability of teachers in the classroom.

In short, the issue of teacher absence is linked to teacher motivation. Head teachers and stakeholders admit that motivated and "energetic" teachers do not absent themselves without compelling reasons but a teacher who is dispirited and disillusioned with her/his work is constantly looking for opportunities to stay away from school.

VII JOB SATISFACTION AND MOTIVATION

The issue of job satisfaction and motivation is explored from different dimensions. This section start with the reasons for choosing and whether teachers are happy with their vocation, followed by teacher's voices on why they are satisfied or not satisfied. It then explores what head teachers have to say about the motivation levels of teachers and the challenges they face in sustaining motivation levels among the teachers in their respective schools. We conclude by exploring what could be done to motivate teachers and the role of the head teachers, the government and the larger community.

This section essentially draws upon the rapid survey done in Tonk district of Rajasthan.

Reasons for choosing teaching as a career:

"*I wanted to become a Physical Training Instructor (PTI). Since jobs are difficult to get, I applied for the post of grade III teacher also. I got both the jobs but the call letter for PTI came late. So I decided to become a teacher (family pressure was also there).*" (A teacher)

"I was selected for the job of a patwari (village level revenue official who maintains records and collects revenue). During training, I was told by the trainer that society always sees a patwari as a corrupt person even though he may be honest. I did not want the label of a corrupt person so I left the training half way. Those days a teacher was viewed with great respect in the community so I changed my profession." (A teacher)

"I did not want to work but after I got married, my husband was posted in a remote place where I did not have much to do. So, I applied for the job. I did a B. Ed and my marks were good. I had good contacts as my father was well connected. I got this job by luck. I am enjoying it as the salary is good. I can buy things for myself and for the house and have lot of spare time in my hands. It is also non-transferable (outside the district). It is the best profession for women – I can strike a balance between family and job. I do not have much tension from the HM and enjoy a good understanding with my colleagues." (A teacher)

Detailed interviews and focus group discussion revealed that some teachers chose the career on the rebound when they could not pursue their preferred career choice. A few teachers made a conscious choice because of the inherent "nobility" of the profession or inspiration from parents or a teacher. However, there is a significant difference between men and women. Women seemed to have picked the profession for different reasons, namely: respectability, security and less work, "can also manage my home and house". Women teachers talked about how this was the preferred choice of their parents or husband. Some of them took it on because they had nothing else to do, even though their first choice might have been to be a homemaker. The responses of women reflect in gender relations in society – with women citing different reasons for choosing the profession. Teachers pointed out that given the dismal employment situation in the state and the steep increase in the salary of schoolteachers, a number of rural youth were attracted to the profession. Few male teachers admitted that this profession was demanding and left them no time to pursue supplementary vocations. Some male teachers also saw teaching as a stopgap arrangement while preparing for civil service examinations (including entry into the police force, secretarial services, revenue services etc.).

Job satisfaction

"Job satisfaction and morale are highly inter-related. To my mind, job satisfaction and morale require a certain basic seriousness about what one is doing. Thereafter, the level of satisfaction or morale may decrease due to prevailing work conditions or other factors. But, government schoolteachers lack this basic seriousness. There is a lot of dissatisfaction and frustration among them but it does not generate any action. Surprisingly, they do not seem interested enough to do anything about it. The blanket perception, therefore, is that the teachers are not satisfied. But when interventions are designed for them and opportunities provided, one group responds enthusiastically (say about 70%). The remaining 30% still respond cynically."
(An eminent educationist working in Rajasthan)

"If the family or community considers teaching a noble profession, the teacher will naturally be more motivated. When someone does their job well, their status in society increases. Till recently, villagers had respect for teachers. Though rich people have also reached the villages, the respect given to officers and the moneyed class is a surface phenomenon. They are driven by fear or sycophancy. The teacher is more respected and in a deeper way. I can give you a very good example: Kalyanpura village is in Chaksu block. Girls here were hardly sent to school. Their numbers were minimal. We started Pehchan Shala. The teacher appointed identified all the girls

herself. She built a rapport with the community. Everyone was full of praise for her work. The villagers themselves organised her salary. She had to leave when she got married. A huge party was thrown for her and that day was called Balika Utsav (festival for girls). About 700 girls from all the nearby Pehchan Shalas participated. The villagers organised everything themselves. The function cost almost Rs 20,000!"
(An NGO leader working with teachers and with schools in Rajasthan)

Discussion with teachers revealed that most of them had not really thought about their vocation as a teacher. Their immediate response was, consequently, superficial: "*all is well"* and "*we are satisfied"*. However, this initial response was invariably contradicted as dialogue with them proceeded to deeper levels. In fact, the responses began to come from the heart when the investigators shut their notebooks and the discussions became less formal but more serious.

This is an important issue for researchers. There is little point in asking people to respond to a series of questions without providing space for serious reflection. There was a mismatch between:

- Responses to multiple-choice questions and more in-depth exploration of issues through discussions;
- "Formal responses" in the personal statements and the detailed open-ended responses;
- Casual conversations with teachers before /after the interview and during the formal interviews.

Voices of teachers

"I do what is expected of me. I do have the desire to do new things, but time and opportunity do not come my way."
"I will be happier if I get an opportunity to teach classes 6, 7 and 8. Our school is a primary school - that is my problem."
"I am not satisfied - because my home and parents live 35 km away and I am not able to look after them."
"I am happy because children can read, do math and understand definitions."
"We have to work hard with children but we do not get a positive response – the staff is inadequate, so lot of time is spent on disciplining. We do not have enough rooms and so, we have to teach outside. I teach math, a subject that cannot be taught in the compound where children are looking elsewhere. Besides, there is this policy to not beat children. So, the teacher is helpless and there is a pressure on us to show results."

Not even one teacher said that the level of job satisfaction was poor or very poor and twenty-eight out of the forty-five teachers said it was good (Table 11). This response was not in sync with the rest of the interview when they talked about their work as a teacher and their own expectations. Only eight out of the 45 teachers said they wanted a transfer (Table 5.1) even though the transfer rate was quite high. As we were preparing for the fieldwork in October, the government transferred 20,000 teachers in one go! This led to a series of protests, which turned violent in some districts. Discussions with trade union leaders revealed that transfers and posting were big business in Rajasthan. Intensive lobbying followed bulk transfers and it was rumoured that political middlemen demanded Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 25,000 to cancel the transfer or ensure a good posting. In subsequent informal chats, teachers also testified that they had to lobby to remain in the school and told us the extent of corruption in transfers and postings.

Table 11: My level of job satisfaction over the last five years

	All	RURAL		URBAN	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Very Poor	0	0	0	0	0
Poor	0	0	0	0	0
Just OK	9	4	1	3	1

Good	28	10	4	10	4
Excellent	8	0	1	5	2

Source: Survey data

Teachers cited a few reasons for being "satisfied". They spoke about examination results and their ability to help children memorise or learn the expected lesson or master a skill (maths). On the other hand, those who were dissatisfied invariably referred to their physical work environment and pressures of the job (including behaviour of superiors and colleagues). When asked to grade (as A B and C) their work environment, they invariably graded the physical and not so much the overall work environment.

The analysis of teachers' responses threw up five reasons for dissatisfaction:
(a) High teacher-pupil ratio
(b) Infrastructure problems
(c) Erratic disbursement of salaries
(d) 'Forced' to teach children of poor communities and specific social groups who are 'dirty' (reflecting the class bias and social gap between the children and teachers)
(e) Irregular attendance of children (because of migration or work-related reasons) and illiterate parents, which adds to the work of the teacher.

They also complained about non-teaching duties and how they had been given family planning targets, asked to manage women's self-help groups, distribute drought relief and identify beneficiaries for a range of government welfare programmes for the poor. What seemed to irk them most was walking around the village and visiting the houses of the very poor – the "*lower caste people who are dirty*".

Another interesting disconnect among teachers visible was between "satisfaction with our job" and "satisfaction with life". Teachers in India are government servants with assured lifetime tenure, pension benefits and medical and other benefits (Table 3.9). Nearly all the teachers in the district said they were satisfied with their job. But life – well, that was another story. The implications of this contradiction are serious. Teachers seemed to have distanced their personal life from their professional life as a teacher. Teaching was just another job, something they to do for a living. So, even if they complained or were dissatisfied in their profession, they continued with it. They, however, wished that the physical working conditions were better - some of them admitted that they would spend longer hours in school if they had a desk and a chair, a proper room, some storage space, access to clean drinking water and a toilet (for women).

We asked them if they saw any significant changes in the last 10 to 15 years. The overwhelming response was they were happier today because of three positive reasons:

a. The pay scales went up in 1998-99
b. School infrastructure was improved (school buildings). Most schools have *pucca* (cement and concrete) buildings
c. The community has become aware and is, therefore, sending children to school. Teachers do not have to work very hard to enrol children.

Teachers also talked about four negative trends:

a. Increase in pressure to provide all kinds of data – household survey, disabled children, out of school children and immunisation-related information. Constant pressure to provide different kinds information (toilets, water, crops, cattle);
b. Unclear role with respect to mid-day-meal – maintaining stock, organising the cooking, organising distribution and related work;
c. Increase in non-teaching duties of teachers;
d. Enormous increase in the number of in-service training programmes and the growing divergence between ground situation and the content of training. Some teachers are pulled out for long stretches and this increases the load on the teachers left behind

Motivation

"We have five teachers in our school. One of them is a dakia, who responds to enquiries that come from above and dispatches data / information to the district or block office. The other is a halwai, who manages the mid-day meal. The third one is perpetually on training and the fourth is a clerk who has to maintain accounts and pay salaries. Who, then, is left to manage five classes and teach around 200 children?"
(A teacher)

The dissonance between what they ticked in the questionnaires and structured interview schedules and what they said during informal interactions was marked when teacher motivation was discussed. We did not notice any significant difference between teachers in rural and urban schools or between men and women.

Table 12: Response of teachers on motivation

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Teachers in this school are well motivated	0	2	2	1	2	7	19	9	3	0
Qualified teachers are better motivated than unqualified teachers	1	0	4	1	8	7	16	5	3	0
Female teachers are better motivated than male teachers	10	0	17	2	3	6	2	5	0	0
Teachers at this school are increasingly de-motivated	6	2	14	8	4	0	6	3	2	0

Source: Survey data

Teachers had a nuanced understanding of motivation – almost all of them admitted that "motivation" is a dynamic feeling; it changes from time to time. They linked it to the larger environment in which they work and how this affected their sense of self-worth. Their response of the teachers can be categorised as under:

Emotional level: Teachers complained about feeling demeaned when they were sent out to collect data or for door-to-door polio campaigns. They argued that their job was not do research surveys and campaigns for the government and felt that when they had to do so it affected their social status. The government's decision to hire parateachers was a further blow to their self-worth. They felt they were no longer discharging a unique, special duty and that even untrained hands could do what they had been doing hitherto. It was clear that motivation in this case, like in others, hinged on the emotional energy of people. This very intangible dimension of motivation had been ignored in the case of teachers. Their sense of emotional well-being had been disturbed by what they felt was shabby treatment when they were made to run errands like taking letters or doing non-academic duties. Their skills and unique strengths had not been appreciated and there was no positive affirmation and encouragement.

Financial level: Non-receipt of salaries on time and, in particular, the inability of the administration to release timely travel reimbursements and other payments were cited as reasons for poor motivation. Teachers unanimously felt that timely clearance of dues could improve motivation levels. Many teachers said their motivation levels would rise if they were paid extra for performing additional duties and training, because most of them did not see the latter as opportunity for professional growth.

Physical level: Improvement in the physical facilities – the infrastructure – of schools was perceived as a factor that influenced motivation levels, but physical infrastructure though necessary was not a sufficient condition. Ensuring one room for each class would work as an instant booster, they said.

Cleanliness, transport, furniture, drinking water and toilets (for women teachers) – the list was fairly long.

Academic level: Nearly all teachers talked at length about the number of training workshops they had to attend and the poor quality of training doled out to them. They discussed the problems they faced in handling a multi-grade situation – where two to three classes had to be managed simultaneously. They explained how subject-specific training to manage multi-grade teaching situations would go a long way in enhancing motivation levels of teachers. Some teachers talked about access to better teaching-learning material (TLM).

Role of the head master / head teacher:

Prof. VV John, an eminent educationist once said, "*If you have a good head teacher, then you need not do anything. But if you do not have a good head teacher, there is nothing that you can do to turn a school around*." This observation was reflected in practically all our discussions with senior administrators. The head master (HM) or head teacher was not just the leader but also a role model. Administrators said the HM's role in maintaining discipline (regular attendance of teachers, functioning and teaching) and enhancing motivation levels was important. They admitted that the all-pervasive bureaucratic indifference or inability had rubbed off on the school system too, which had little power to do anything about a teacher who refused to teach. The ability of the HM to provide leadership was constrained by the larger system in which she/he had to function. Yet, a good HM could make a big difference. The tragedy of Rajasthan is that 4,364 posts of HMs are lying vacant and a senior teacher manages many schools. Equally, the head teachers are not given any special training or orientation besides being expected to do a number of administrative duties, including disbursing salaries and approving travel claims.

Table 13: Teachers views on headmasters / head teachers

	Strongly disagree		**Disagree**		**Not sure**		**Agree**		**Strongly Agree**	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Teachers in this school are managed well	0	1	8	4	8	2	16	6	0	0
Our head teacher regularly observes classes	0	0	4	5	1	0	27	8	0	0
Our head teacher is often away from school on private business	13	3	16	9	2	1	1	0	0	0
Our head teacher is often away from school on official duties	4	1	16	6	3	1	9	5	0	0
The head teacher of this school leads by example	0	0	4	1	9	6	19	6	0	0

Source: Survey data

The teachers did not display any negative feelings towards the head teacher of their school. Interestingly teachers did not see their head teacher or the head master as being powerful; they saw her/him as being given more responsibilities without adequate compensation – monetary or otherwise. Most of them spoke kindly about their head teacher. Most of the schools visited were managed by senior teacher who was acting as the head teacher. Almost all of them said that they had not received any training to administrative work or manage funds. The head teachers did not perceive themselves as being powerful – in fact most of them said that there is little they can do if a teacher refuses to teach! They said that they maintain discipline in the school only through the goodwill and cooperation of the teachers.

Discussions on the challenges faced by head teachers elicited a weak response. At the very outset they claimed that managing the school was not a problem, children were disciplined and teachers are

respected in the community (Table 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4). They did not talk about absenteeism of teachers or whether they took all the classes. ,However informally They admitted that learning levels were fairly low and that many children leave primary school with rudimentary literacy and numeracy skills. When we asked if ensuring children learn is a challenge, they pointed out that officially over 90 per cent of children clear the class five examinations. They appeared to be more concerned about administrative and infrastructure issues (Table 14 below).

Table 14: Head teacher assessment of the two main challenges facing their schools

	Challenge 1	Challenge 2
Rural		
1	Allocation on non teaching duties	Drinking water availability
2	Teachers coming from urban areas	Salary centre - therefore more admin work
3	Increase enrolment of children by working with the community	-
4	Challenge to take all teachers along	Language of instruction
5	No training to work as a head teacher, maintain cash book,	No transport to reach school
6	Acting HM - no authority	Handling cash was a problem and no training
Urban		
7	No building - it is working in a *Dhramshala* (a public shelter for the poor) building.	Parents are illiterate and not serious about children's education
8	Getting the building up was a challenge (construction)	Irregular attendance of children
9	Get children to school, motivate parents,	Maintain harmony among teachers without partiality
10	Lack of acceptance by older staff, politically connected and surplus teachers! Dealing with factionalism.	People take advantage as I am a woman and attitude towards women teachers negative

Most head teachers could not pinpoint 2 challenges – their responses were more nuanced, as evident in the statements reproduced:

- *Being a head master is a challenging job. Salary centres (nodal schools in each area) shoulder a lot of administrative work. Managing mid-day meal supplies is another "headache". The older teachers and those who are well connected refuse to listen to us and we cannot maintain discipline. We have to assign teachers for non-teaching jobs that are given to the school. This disrupts teaching work.*
- *As a head master, I have to enrol all children in school; motivate parents to send their children to school; build relationship with parents and community; and provide copies, books, uniforms and pencils to poor children. Else, parents come to school and ask a lot of questions. I have to maintain harmony and cooperation among teachers and be careful lest I am perceived to be partial towards a teacher. This creates problems its own problems. When a teacher goes away on leave (casual/duty leave), I have to take classes and this disturbs administrative work*
- *I was posted in this school on the demand of the village community. As a woman, I have to face a lot of difficulties. I have not received any formal training and do not know how to handle the cashbook. Men do not listen to me.*

The views of head teachers on the determinants of motivation matched those of teachers and administrators interviewed in this study. They invariably started with infrastructure and overall school environment but quickly moved on to flag the following issues:

- Reduction or rationalisation of non-teaching duties of teachers;
- Payment of salary and reimbursements on time, settlement of past arrears;
- Ensuring teachers are posted near their home, discontinuation of "punishment transfers" and political interference in transfers;

- Help teachers gain greater command on the subjects and adequate support (pedagogy as well as teaching learning material) to manage multi-grade classes;
- Social background of children enrolled in the school affects motivation. Children from very poor communities are not able to learn.

When the head teachers were asked if age, sex, educational qualifications and training makes a difference, the immediate response was that they couldn't make a general statement. Many head teachers argued that younger teachers are more energetic but the older ones may be more experienced though less enthusiastic. The men said that as there is a lot of pressure of domestic work on women teachers they take more leave. Women are also under a lot of emotional stress. One head teacher noted that women teachers often come hungry to school – either because they are fasting (a weekly religious practice among Hindu women) or because they have no time to eat. This he argued affects their performance, as they have no stamina. On the other hand women said that male teachers are more interested in local politics and other issues and take less interest in their work. Interestingly several men said that women more motivated as they interact well with children; they are also less aggressive. Almost all of them said that married teachers handle children better.

Teacher unions and teachers

Fortyfour out of the 45 teachers interviewed were members of a trade union. Male teachers attended more meetings than women – with the mean number in the last year being nine for rural male teachers and seven for urban male teachers. The corresponding figure for women is two and three respectively (Table 5.5). Trade unions in Rajasthan are affiliated to major political parties and rarely participate in any academic discussion or debate. Interviews with trade union leaders revealed that their demands were limited to pay scales, transfers and posting.

Trade union issues in the last 10 years

- *Salaries should be increased as per schedule on completion of years nine, 18 and 27 for primary school and secondary school teachers.*
- *There should be a transfer policy in place, so that the teachers don't have to cultivate politicians.*
- *Schools should have laboratories for the study of science.*
- *All schools should be run according to the same timetable. Their timings should also be determined, as in Kendriya Vidyalayas (central schools managed directly by the GOI).*
- *A female PTI should be appointed in girls' schools.*
- *Teachers should get the advantage of regular refresher courses, such that they can update their knowledge.*
- *Vacancies for teachers should be filled.*
- *Schools should not be closed down because they are uneconomical.*
- *Education should be free of political regime.*

The teachers' union had recently organised a convention to discuss the need for a transparent transfer policy. It has come up with a draft policy for the consideration of the government. The gist of its recommendations is as follows:

- Transfers to be completed between April 15 and June 30
- Teachers should be asked to send in their applications for transfer between April 15 to May 1, officials must review the reasons by May 15 and present it before the officials concerned (DEO, senior teacher and additional director)
    - Panchayat school transfers should be under DEO, Primary Education
    - The education department should issue orders after consulting DEP for inter-district transfers
    - Inter-district transfers should not be more than 10% of total transfers

  - Orders should be issued by June 7 and applications for reconsideration considered and final orders must be issued by June 30
- First appointment should be in rural areas for five years
- Transfer lists should be displayed on the board
- In case a teacher's husband/wife or dependent children are not well (list of diseases given), they should be given an urban posting
- Physically handicapped should be given a posting of their choice
- Teachers who have been in rural areas for 15 years and those who have been in rural areas without a break for 10 years should get a posting of their choice
- Middle school and senior secondary school teachers who have demonstrated 90% pass results continuously for three years should get a posting of their choice
- For transfers from middle to primary and primary to middle – permission of the education department and state government should be made necessary
- Teachers should be given three choices for inter-district transfers to rural areas
- Teachers who wish to be transferred from one rural school to another should be considered on the basis of vacancies
- Transfers from one rural school to another and one urban to another should be done only when teachers have served a minimum of two years in a given school
- Husband and wife should be posted in the same school in rural areas
- If teachers have demonstrated the achievement of SSA target for enrolment and retention, they should be considered for a posting of their choice. This category of transfers should not exceed 10%
- Transfer to place of choice two years before retirement

We were informed that the government had drafted a policy and that it would be placed before the state legislature soon. The trade union leaders had little to say about teacher motivation except that teachers were highly motivated and regular. They were not willing to admit that teacher absence was a problem.

What administrators say about teacher motivation?

> *"Teachers relax when they get a job. They feel they have achieved their goal once they get into government service. They do not want to work in rural areas – all of them want an urban posting. They lack motivation and commitment to their work"*
> *"Teachers are victims of the transfer and posting phenomenon. They have no security of tenure and are constantly haunted by the fear of being transferred. They have to acquire godfathers for protection. Once they develop these contacts and linkages, then there is not need for them to do their job seriously!"*
> *"There is no database of all teachers at the elementary level or the details on their training. They are sent for training in an ad-hoc manner. Some may attend several training programmes only to escape going to school while others may not attend even one."*
> *"The biggest problem is that we have more than required teachers in urban schools and a huge shortage in rural schools. Even if we have to ensure two teachers in each rural school, a large number of teachers would have to be shifted from urban to rural areas. This will lead to strikes and protests by the teacher's unions."*

We met two kinds of administrators. The first group was empathetic to teachers and talked about systemic issues impacting regular teaching and learning in schools. They did not see teachers as villains but cogs in a giant wheel that were but trapped in a hierarchical system rife with corruption. The second group saw teachers as work shirkers and blamed them entirely for poor quality education. The latter was unwilling to explore the systemic issues and insisted that appointing low paid contract teachers was the answer to all the problems of education. It was as though the two groups were talking about two entirely different worlds. Unfortunately, the latter worldview was more popular among

senior civil servants, with a few notable exceptions. We found greater empathy and a more nuanced understanding of the problem of teachers in the lower echelons.

What stakeholders have to say?

We interviewed a range of stakeholders – former teachers, former administrators, NGO leaders and educationists involved in research and training and so on (list annexed). Each one of them had something to say. Reproduced below are some insights:

- *If one were seriously dissatisfied about one's job, one would do something about it. Perhaps, teachers are not really engaged with their profession and their work or feel deeply enough about it.*
- *The system is such that if you do not take the initiative you cannot go wrong, but if you do then you could get into trouble.*
- *There is monotony in school teaching. A teacher can be motivated on two things – excited about the way the child's mind works or linked to the large social context in which schools function when both are absent then teachers have no reason to be motivated or excited with their vocation.*
- *Teachers are not at all committed to their profession. They treat teaching as a means/instrument to achieving something they value more– like fewer working hours, being with the family, a good salary. Teaching itself is not a commitment or a passion for a majority of teachers.*
- *Remuneration is an important factor in teacher motivation. But by itself, it does not do much. It can be said that it is necessary for teacher motivation but it is not a sufficient condition. A very low remuneration is definitely a de-motivating factor. But a higher pay does not result in increased motivation. I don't think that a system of cash benefits can increase motivation.*
- *The workload is tremendous. There are many non-teaching tasks. In the current year, teachers have been involved in educational survey (SSA survey, child tracking), pulse polio (10 days a year), two elections (state, panchayat), electoral list revision and BPL survey. Additionally, the District Collector also involves them in several district-based assignments – working with self-help groups, family planning, drought relief / food-for-work programme etc. They are also coopted in work related to the mid-day meal scheme, such as keeping records and management of the scheme.*
- *Training programmes are done with little advanced planning. Without prior schedule, they can not do the training properly.*
- *Teachers now spend less time in schools. Actual teaching time is decreasing.*
- *Teachers have now become more vocal and can articulate their aspirations with the 'right' people. They are closer to active politics, can intimidate officials citing political connections.*
- *Unlike in the past, teachers have no personal linkage with the community. They depended on the local people when there were no facilities. Now better means of transport are available. For example, a teacher comes to school on a motorcycle and leaves after the day's work is done.*

It is difficult to synthesise the observations of stakeholders. We have used their insights and experience to understand this complex issue. Again, the stakeholders, (like the administrators) we interacted with, can be divided in two broad groups. One group understood and appreciated the systemic issues that inform the question of teacher motivation. The other looks at teachers in isolation, as a cadre of self-seeking government servants who are not committed to their work.

VIII TEACHER MOTIVATION – WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

As we were preparing for a focus group discussion with teachers in Rajasthan, we realised that the word 'motivation' meant different things to different people. We casually asked the teachers if they

could tell us who a "motivated teacher" was. After thinking for a while, one of them said: *"A 'motivated' teacher comes to school every day, does what he is told and provides information the higher ups want!"* The answer put us on the mat! We probed further. Apart from the teachers in all the schools, we posed the question to administrators and stakeholders as well. Nearly all the teachers believed that daily attendance and complying with orders and requests for information were reasonable indicators of motivation. Administrators at the district level described a motivated teacher as one who was regular, did what she or he was told and was, by and large, compliant. Children were nowhere in the picture, nor were the teaching and learning processes. Learning was incidental to the mountain of data they gathered and fed into the system. Enrolment, attendance, mid-day-meal distribution and participation in training programmes and workshops – cold figures – had become the indices of education.

Administrators, at higher levels, associated motivation with:
- Low absenteeism
- Maintaining discipline
- Proper record keeping
- Collection and supply of educational data
- Utilisation of funds allocated for teaching and learning material;
- Giving exercises in the classroom and correcting them.

It was worth to noting that the notion of "quality" was linked to efficient management. As a result, obedience and predictability became pervasive values sought in the system. Actual transaction time, classroom processes and learning outcomes of children did not figure in their first response. Further investigation revealed that the percentage of children clearing the terminal examination at the primary level was also an important indicator.

For parents and community leaders, discipline in the school and regular teaching served as clinchers. A teacher who came regularly, stayed in the school for the stipulated time, did not use excessive force (beating, abusive language, shouting and punishment) and taught with interest was, for them, a motivated teacher. The ability of their children to learn to read and write and pass examinations was another important indicator.

Educationists, on the other hand, argued that a motivated teacher was one who could communicate with the children. He/she drew energy from his/her interaction with the children, was concerned about what and how much they were learning and his/her ability to attract and retain children in the school. They also believed that only a motivated teacher could build a rapport with the parents and the community and go beyond the call of duty to ensure that every single child attended regularly, even if it meant visiting their homes and persuading the parents to send their children to school.

Discussions on motivation, invariably, led to comparisons with private schools. Teachers, administrators and parents quickly pointed out that private schools attached great importance to discipline, regularity and successful results in yearly as well as public examinations (classes 5, 8, 10 and 12). Almost all the teachers we interacted with in the course of this study sent their own children to private schools. They admitted that irregular attendance of teachers was uncommon in private (aided and unaided) schools and that teachers taught for the stipulated hours/periods. But when asked why government schools were different, most could not give us any convincing answers. They ended up blaming the system where the dice is loaded against teachers in primary schools.

India is a large country. It is possible that the gap between the educationist's perception of motivation and that of teachers, administrators and the larger community may be lower in educationally advanced states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh. Yet, administrators and the general public agree that there is a definite problem with the education system as a whole. Laypersons and the media squarely blame the teachers – citing absenteeism, bad behaviour, politicisation of teachers' unions and, most importantly, lack of professional ethics. Teachers, on the other hand, argue that the system has pushed them to a point where they have to cultivate politicians to avoid frequent transfers or pay huge

bribes to get a job. Administrators, sympathetic to teachers, argue that the obsession of the system with data and targets pertaining to enrolment and retention has deflected attention from the children themselves. The more sensitive among them admit that no one is really interested in government schools that cater essentially to poor children. Poor parents and communities do not have a voice. Those who have an option and the resources to exercise it, simply send their children to private schools.

The answer to the question of poor motivation lies buried, perhaps, in the labyrinth of a complex education system. This issue was discussed at length in a recent national meeting of educationists, administrators and practitioners. What emerged is an intricate matrix of cause and effect – where one cannot really discern a clear, one-to-one linear correlation.

The key issues pertaining to the motivation of primary school teachers can be summarised as follows:

First, the education system has expanded rapidly and enrolment rates have shot up. But growth rate in the number of teachers has not kept pace with the rise in enrolment. The classroom has become very complex. Children from extremely poor families and first generation school-goers account for an overwhelming majority of new students in government schools. Most rural schools are multi-grade with one, or, at most two, teachers managing five classes. Teacher-pupil ratios are also high in such schools.

Second, the social distance between the teachers and the children is wide in government schools (which cater to the very poor). Social attitudes and community prejudices play an important role in determining the ability and willingness of teachers to empathise with children and teach them love (PROBE 1999, Mazumdar 2001, Ramachandran et al, 2004). Recent press reports (especially in the last six months) reveal cases of sexual exploitation of girls in rural as well as urban (municipal) schools. Recently (18February, 2005) a headmaster and three teachers were arrested in New Delhi for raping a 14-year-old girl and another teacher was arrested for sexual abuse of young boys. Senior police officials said teachers used abusive language when they talked to/about children from very poor or socially disadvantaged communities. It was as though they were doing a big favour by teaching children from erstwhile "untouchable" communities or very poor migrant communities from other parts of India and Bangladesh. Studies on classroom processes done under the aegis of the District Primary Education Project also revealed similar caste and community prejudices (Ramachandran (ed) 2004).

Third, teachers lack the skills to manage so much diversity in the classroom. Training programmes for teachers are designed keeping in view the situation in large urban schools where one teacher manages one class. The problems faced by teachers in multi-grade situations, where teacher-pupil ratios are high, are rarely covered in training programmes. Labels like joyful learning and child- centred learning do not mean anything to teachers who have to deal with social diversity, different levels of students and most importantly, children who are undernourished, hungry and frequently ill (Vimala Ramachandran et al, 2004b). Focus group discussion with teachers in Rajasthan revealed that teachers wanted subject-specific training for multi-grade situations. But most training programmes focus on generic skills. The mismatch between the problems faced by teachers inside the classroom and training programmes designed by administrators and teacher educators (who have very little idea of a multi-grade class) is stark.

Fourth, systemic issues dealing with corruption (payment for transfers/preventing transfers, deputations, appointments, promotions and special assignments) have vitiated the larger teaching environment in the country. Teachers say this has politicised the environment and actual teaching is rarely monitored. Building networks with patrons and supporters is more important. Teachers, who are in leadership positions in trade unions or affiliated to political parties in power, rarely attend school. Continuation in the job and/or in preferred posts depends on the teacher's ability to strike the right chord with the people in power. As a result, a highly motivated and honest teacher is one who is transferred to difficult areas. He/she is saddled with a number of non-teaching duties and made a

scapegoat when the need arises. So even though there may be no incentives for performing better, it certainly pays to build networks and cultivate godfathers.

Fifth, teachers' unions and block and district-level administrators claim they are asked to do a range of non-teaching tasks which them away from the classroom. For example, the Rajasthan Government had asked teachers to motivate couples for terminal family planning methods. This led to a series of protests by teachers in February 2005. In 2001-2003, the state government directed them to maintain the books of women's self-help groups and also monitor if loan repayments were made on time. District Magistrates rely on teachers to distribute drought or flood relief supplies, and identify beneficiaries for government welfare schemes. Discussions with teachers revealed that while the task of meeting family planning targets may be given to all the teachers, the more difficult and time-consuming non-teaching duties go to teachers seen as dedicated. Teachers with political links or the ones active in trade unions are not given additional duties.

Both the central and state governments contest this. Senior administrators in the Government of India point out that less than 5% of the teaching days are taken up by non-teaching duties. Recent DISE data collected information on non-teaching duties and the days spent therein. While state-wise data has not been made public, a recent presentation made by Dr. Arun Mehta (NIEPA, January 2005) indicates that non-teaching duties accounted for only 1.6% of working days. Teachers' unions and local administrators disagree. They argue that the government may expect teachers to do such work after school hours, but invariably the teachers spend the teaching time performing non-teaching assignments. The problem gets particularly severe during January-March when annual targets (especially, family planning) are reviewed by the district administration.

Sixth, teacher training has picked up since 1994 with almost all teachers expected to attend a range of training programmes every year. Many of these workshops are held during the academic session. Teachers are eligible for compensatory leave if they attend these workshops during vacations. This reduces teaching days. While the training programmes are intended to improve knowledge levels as well as skills – especially in child-centred teaching processes – teachers claim that these programme add little value when the overall teaching environment, the examination system and other aspects of the school remain unchanged. Nearly all the teachers interviewed in Rajasthan said training was a burden - it was neither planned well not did it cater to their needs.

Seventh, teachers and administrators are continuously embroiled in court cases to do with promotions and placements, claiming arrears due to them and disciplinary action-related issues. Administrators explain that a lot of their time is spent attending to court cases filed by teachers. Teachers argue that they have no option but to go to court for justice. Teacher cadre management is highly politicised – both administrators and ordinary teachers are caught in a web of allegations and counter allegations. This has affected recruitment of new teachers in several states.

Concluding remarks:

In course of the study, we came across teachers who loved children and were highly motivated regardless of where they were posted. These were exceptional people. It was, indeed, humbling to meet teachers who worked hard despite all odds. We came across situations where good teachers received tremendous community support that led to improvement in their teaching and overall results. The reverse was also true. There were villages that had a wonderful teacher in the past but could do little to motivate/support a new teacher who just refused to teach.

The most dismal picture was in schools with only two teachers and lots of children. Teachers could not cope with the situation and had simply given up. There were teachers who were indifferent to the children and did not really care if they learnt to read and write. They promoted children, maintained records and did what they were asked to do.

We discovered no correlation between motivation levels and teacher qualification, training, residence, gender and pay scale. However, a school with good infrastructure and connectivity could hold back more teachers for more hours. It is difficult to say whether this translates into more instruction time or higher learning levels. As discussed in the opening paragraphs of this paper, teachers said they were motivated – but their understanding of motivation is different from ours. Both teachers and administrators gave a lot importance to daily presence, compiling and sending the necessary data and maintaining discipline. They valued justice and fair play. They were ready to work with administrators and political leaders who they felt were just, and appreciated and rewarded hard work. But rapport with children, learning levels and actual classroom environment were not seen as being a part of motivation. These factors did not figure in any discussion with teachers or administrators!

Teacher motivation is a complex issue in Rajasthan, indeed across India. There is virtually no incentive for teachers who go beyond the call of duty and empower their students to learn and move on in life. On the other hand, teachers who network with political leaders and local bureaucrats manage plum postings and, if they are lucky, teachers' awards too!

Everyone – the different categories of people we spoke to – was of the opinion that 25 to 30% teachers are highly motivated and work very hard regardless of their personal circumstances. Another 30% comply with all the formal requirements – regularity, attendance, data on enrolment and retention, mid-day meal distribution and so on. These teachers have the potential but the system has worn them out. The remaining 40 to 45% can be categorised as 'indifferent'– they are just not motivated and really do not care.

Strict monitoring – by a highly motivated head master or a block/district official – can tip the scales and ensure better functioning. Given the right stimulus, teachers are known to perform well. The fundamental problem is that this stimulus is lacking. Most educated middle-class professionals – those who form the backbone of the administration and the larger community of stakeholders – have abandoned government schools. Their children study in private aided or unaided schools. They do not have a personal stake in making the system work. Therefore, they just let the system drift along while making sure the data that is fed upwards is acceptable.

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