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Coproducing universal primary education in a context of social exclusion : households, community organisations and state administration in a district of Karnataka, India

Thesis

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the challenge of achieving the goal of universal primary education in a context that is characterised by wide-ranging disparities in the education prospects of different social groups. An overall history of state failure to provide for universal education, and the patterns of exclusion and deprivation that constrain the participation of large sections of Indian rural populations provide the background to recent policy efforts to address the problem of low education participation. The thesis argues that concerted effort is required on the part of households and of the state if future efforts to achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE) are to be more successful than the past. It analyses new approaches which recognise the importance of challenging inequality in access to education, the role of community organisations in the process of stimulating participation in education, and the need for the reform of the administrative apparatus of the state into a more responsive, flexible institution.

The coproduction framework facilitates the analysis of the means through which different institutional actors can co-operate in the production of goods and services. Recognition of the importance of social norms and networks that aid co-operation between different actors, and of the importance of effective governance on the part of the state in constructing positive relations between different actors are the strengths of the framework. However, the framework also has limitations. The thesis principally identifies the following: the assumption of shared orientations between users about the value of the good or service concerned, and the implicit assumption of homogeneity among service users and lack of attention paid to inequality and exclusion. Further, the thesis argues that there is insufficient empirical attention to the informal relations within which processes of implementation are embedded. Evidence of limitations is provided through application to a rural district, where the interface between state, community organisations and households in relation to primary education services is studied. Centrally, the thesis argues that the analysis of norms that perpetuate the reproduction of patterns of education exclusion is essential to identify the types of production processes and relationships that are necessary for inclusive and universal education.

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Chapter 1: The challenge of universal primary education in India

1.0. The concerns and arguments of the thesis

India's poor achievements in providing for and achieving Universal Elementary Education (UEE)[1] have renewed focus on the subject in the 1990s. Donor interest in education, innovative policies, successful education initiatives in the voluntary sector, and public advocacy on the importance of education have been responsible for this renewed interest in the means of achieving universal education. This thesis focuses on the challenges of achieving universal education in the context of a long history of low achievement in India, and in the face of evidence that patterns of exclusion operating in institutions, communities and households systematically discriminate against the education prospects of large segments of rural populations. Achieving balance between the need to universalise education and the requirements of diverse, differentiated populations constitutes the biggest challenge, and provides the backdrop to the investigation in this thesis. In particular, I investigate the potential for developing locally sensitive responses to education exclusion within the framework of universal education.

In Chapter 1, I argue that the shifts in policy towards Universal Primary Education incorporate elements which seek to overturn decades of state failure to provide adequately for the education of its children. In addition to the channelling of donor resources into the primary education sector, programmes like the District Primary Education Programme have been instrumental in changing much of state discourse in programme implementation. Community participation, shared responsibility for achievement of goals between households (parents), communities and the state, and underlying references to changes in state practices mark the new discourse of UPE. This discourse provides the frame for the questions raised in this thesis.

Within this broad story line, I investigate particularly prospects for achieving co-operation between state, households and community organisations on the road to UPE. In Chapter 2, I argue for the relevance of coproduction as an analytical frame within which different elements of the production of education services can be identified. However, I identify

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[1] UEE is a goal of national policy, which includes children aged 6-14. The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), however, focuses more narrowly on UPE or the achievement of universal education for children aged 6-10. References are made to both UPE and UEE. Primary schooling refers to the first four years of schooling in the formal education system (Grades 1-4), corresponding approximately to the age group 6-10 years. Elementary education refers to classes 1-7 (though

some of its limitations, and argue that within the literature on coproduction, the reliance on productive social capital and the polarisation of endowments and constructability gives rise to a deterministic approach to evaluating how co-operation can be achieved in the production of services.

In the course of defending this broader argument, four principal threads of argument are pursued in this thesis. First, I argue that identifying the elements of a production process which require co-operation depends on the extent to which consensus exists on the meaning and value of the good, which in turn determines the extent to which responsibilities of different actors can be identified, and agreed upon. This argument is pursued through the empirical chapters of this thesis (Chapters 4-7), assessing the constructions of value of education as well as actors' perceptions of their own, and other actors' responsibilities for UPE.

Second, the bases for constructability are likely to vary in different societies, and prospects for constructability depend on the patterns of exclusion and inclusion that exist in a given society. Thus I propose that the diagnosis of the different forms and bases of exclusion can help to identify both productive norms as well as those which reinforce patterns of exclusion. Exclusion is, however, a difficult concept to define, and in this thesis I attempt to define it by the forms that are empirically observed and researched, using school participation as the principal basis from which exclusion in its widest sense is discussed. In relation to exclusion, I attempt to identify social norms and relationships within which patterns of exclusion are reinforced, and/or challenged.

Third, I seek to go beyond an analysis of formal institutional mechanisms as a means of promoting constructability. Instead I focus on the embeddedness of state actors, such as administrators and implementors, in social relationships with users and community-based collaborators such as *panchayat* institutions. In particular I assess the extent to which institutional boundaries, personal histories and institutionally specific identities are mediated by district administrators and *panchayats* in the process of constructing their own perspectives, actions and responsibilities in relation to UPE.

A fourth theme of the thesis is a critique of the use of the conventional 'supply-demand' metaphor to discuss the challenge of UPE. In the Indian literature, the critique of the state

different states define the basis differently), combining lower primary school (LPS or grades 1-4) with higher primary school (HPS or grades 5-7).

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in relation to failures on the education achievement front has led to the dominance of a focus on the 'supply side' or the provider, as is discussed in Chapter 1. However, I argue that this metaphor is inherently unhelpful, particularly when seeking to identify means of promoting coproduction. Focusing on 'supply' and 'demand' as two different entities fails to understand the ways in which services are re-appropriated, re-defined, re-shaped through interactions with users. Coproduction necessitates viewing users as producers, and recognising their vital input into determining production processes and outcomes. This argument is also addressed in the different chapters of the thesis.

1.1. Introduction to Chapter 1

Indian education policy documents stress the need for radical changes in the management and delivery of services. Strategies are required that bring together individual household aspirations and preferences relating to education, community involvement in designing and sustaining local-level educational institutions, and the support and the commitment of state institutions in quality provision. A fundamental aspect of planning these changes lies in diagnosing the issues and constraints in relation to the role of each of these institutional arenas: households, communities and the state. The achievement of Universal Primary Education (UPE) within this framework is a central theme and provides the structure for this thesis.

There are diverse explanations for the failure to secure UPE in India. Those I address in this chapter concern a) poverty, exclusion and household investment strategies (Section 1.2); and b) state failure to provide basic education infrastructure and management inclusive of excluded populations (Section 1.3). While I draw upon a wide body of literature on the subject of education in India, here I only discuss those aspects of the failure to secure UPE that provide a relevant context for the analysis in the rest of this thesis. I then look at some of the more recent policy innovations in education and the concerns they are trying to address, particularly about socio-economic differentiation and how differentiation translates into education exclusion (Section 1.4). The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) is the latest programme innovation for achievement of UPE in India and is the focus of the research in this thesis. In investigating DPEP (in Section 1.5), I have been particularly concerned with the themes of universal provision in the context of education exclusion. My argument around these themes is summarised in Section 1.6.

1.2. Education and Exclusion in India

Despite a high level of official commitment to the achievement of the goal of universal elementary education evident in the numerous commissions and reports detailing analyses of the constraints and strategies for overcoming them, little changed in the area of education over the first four decades of post-colonial government policy. Persistent difficulty in securing schooling for all children has been exacerbated by the long-standing policy bias towards funding higher education, a feature of most post-colonial education policies in parts of Asia, Africa and elsewhere (Colclough 1993). This skewed allocation of resources has resulted in a top-heavy education system,[2] prioritising the needs of a primarily urban elite professional class ahead of a relatively illiterate or uneducated, predominantly poor and rural majority. The state-provided education system, which caters for over 80% of India's population, is particularly characterised by the lack of infrastructure and facilities, inability to secure attendance in schools despite ever-increasing enrolment rates, and a consistently poor record of educational achievement particularly in rural areas (Dreze and Sen 1995).

However, the awareness of the important links between human development and economic growth, the increased interest in and availability of donor funding of education, particularly primary education, and increasing public action around the rights of children have led to some significant shifts in Indian policy and resource availability for primary education in the 1990s. The turn-around in education policy evident since the National Policy on Education of 1986 has reversed the bias away from higher education towards primary education, made an explicit commitment to addressing social exclusion and disadvantage, and focused on community-based strategies for education planning and delivery. The challenges are now focused on reducing gender, caste and ethnicity based disparities in education and securing universal availability of quality primary education in the most educationally backward regions of the country. These changes are evident in the mass-scale District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) started in 1992 and aimed at providing universal elementary education services for children aged 6-10.[3]

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[2]The term 'education system' is used in this thesis to refer to the sum total of institutions and organisations involved in the public provision of education – for example, government departments, government. academic institutions, schools. Here in particular, it refers to the academic structuring of education into primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

The most compelling evidence for what is now considered by government agencies, international donor agencies, NGOs, and researchers as constituting "policy failure" lies in government and non-official statistics: the overall literacy rates in the country in 1991 were 64% for men and 39% for women with vast urban-rural, caste, and class disparities. Sharieff and Sudarshan (1996) further suggest that nearly half of all rural girls in the age-group 10-14 are likely to be illiterate. Enrolment rates recorded by the government have been high for the past 5-10 years, recorded recently as over 98% for all social groups (Dreze and Sen, 1995), largely as an outcome of a government enrolment drive in the face of overwhelmingly poor school attendance, particularly in rural and tribal areas. However, many researchers suggest that these statistics are unreliable for three reasons. First, statistics are often generated under conditions of coercion, where administrators are expected to achieve set targets under official government policy (Dreze and Sen 1995, Sharieff and Sudarshan 1996, Weiner 1991). Second, the over-representation of over-age groups in primary schooling distorts the statistical picture; it is impossible to tell from Gross Enrolment Rates how many children as a proportion of the relevant age-group are enrolled in any one class (Colclough 1993). Third, the focus on enrolment obscures from discussion the fact that enrolment merely records registration at school, and does not reflect the actual attendance in school of every child registered.

India's educational record is particularly marred by high discontinuation rates in the primary sector. National-level data indicate that nearly half of the children enrolled drop out by the age of 10, with a higher proportion from Scheduled Caste[4] and tribal groups (Sharieff and Sudarshan 1996). Discontinuation rates for girls are relatively higher across all social groups. These findings are supported by micro-level studies (Unni 1996, Banerji 1997). Factors contributing to poor achievement include the inadequacies of the schools themselves (absent teachers, distance to schools, poor facilities) as well as the demands made on children's time by household requirements. Weiner (1991) terms these as *push-out* and *pull-out* factors, respectively, arguing that referring to children who discontinue schooling as 'drop-outs' is misleading, as it implies that their actions are totally voluntary, thus rendering invisible the complex interplay of factors which underpin educational under-achievement in India. The impact of the high "dropout" rate is, however, extremely

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[3] The programme covers (to date) 149 districts in 14 states and is funded through a World Bank soft loan and grants from other bilateral donors, including the UK's DFID and the European Union. The Government of India and state governments also contribute funds towards the programme.

[4]'Scheduled Caste' refers to 'out of caste' groups that have been officially recognised as meriting special status under India's constitutionally approved 'reservations' or positive discrimination policy. The term *dalit* is used to refer to what are considered 'untouchable' castes. This is a term that is used by *dalit* political movements who prefer it to the softer term of '*Harijan*' coined by Mahatma Gandhi. Reservations have been made in the areas of government employment, higher education and political participation in local self-government (*Panchayati Raj*), and percentages vary by state.

significant: it "means that substantial portions of India's educational expenditures are for children who fail to have enough schooling to achieve functional literacy" (Weiner 1991:74).

Patterns of education participation in India indicate the systematic pushing and pulling out of SC and Scheduled Tribe (ST) children, in particular, from schooling, and within these groups, the further disadvantage faced by girls, as Table 1 below shows:

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Rural Children (5-14 years) by Status of School Attendance and Work by Social Groups (1993-94)

Group	Currently Attending % of total children	Drop-out % of total children	Never Attended % of total children	Total
Tribes				
Total	49.4	47.2	3.4	100
Girls	40.4	55.9	3.7	100
Dalits				
Total	55.6	40.5	3.8	100
Girls	45.9	49.9	4.2	100
Others				
Total	67.7	28.8	3.4	100
Girls	60.3	36.0	3.7	100
ALL				
Total	63.3	33.1	3.5	100
Girls	55.4	40.8	3.8	100

Source: NSS Survey, 50th Round 1993-94, New Delhi (cited in Nambissan 1999)

Nambissan (1999) argues with reference to the data in Table 1, that a large proportion of children who are out of school from *dalit* and ST households are pushed out of schooling largely by factors relating to the poor quality or non-availability of education facilities. Issues relating to the marginalisation of tribal languages and discrimination in schooling processes are also factors relating to their gradual elimination from education (ibid.; see also Dyer and Choksi, 1998). Shotton notes that the "average male literacy among the SCs and STs is so low that in general both these sections need to be treated as illiterate." (1998:16). Similarly, Majumdar notes that the education gap between 'forward' and 'backward' communities in different states creates "images of two 'alternative realities' existing within the same physical boundaries yet in two different planets in educational terms" (1999:274). Despite some areas of common problems, in many respects children from disadvantaged communities face distinct handicaps (ibid.).

The role of poverty in shaping household access to primary education, particularly in terms of the opportunity costs of children's labour, and the direct costs of sending children to school is debated in studies of education participation. Determinants of education attainment include: economic constraints (poverty, including the opportunity costs of children's time, and direct costs of children's time) (Bhatty 1998a); quality of education, including physical infrastructure; and management of schools and quality of teachers and teaching practices (op.cit.), and parental motivation (Bhatty 1998b).

Bhatty (1998a) argues that there are cases that demonstrate that there is no necessary correlation between poverty and education attainment. Countries with similar levels of poverty to India (or worse) display better literacy attainments. Within India, the state of Kerala, which has similar poverty levels to the state of Uttar Pradesh, has 90% literacy rate compared with 40.5% in the latter. The village of Kodathuchery in Tamil Nadu, dominated by the 'harijan' caste, with almost complete landlessness and 'no other employment opportunities', achieved literacy rates of 99% for men and women in 1980.

Income is thus not considered the critical variable shaping education participation, but a range of issues relating to livelihood type and other factors are. Studies reviewed in Bhatty (1998a) indicate that type of occupation rather than income level determines the opportunity costs of children's time, and children's work (particularly in age-group 5-10) is not considered to constitute a sufficient constraint to education participation (Bhatty 1998a). However, the range of findings also demonstrates that there is no fixed pattern of labour use across socio-economic and geographical context. Further evidence also indicates that family size in particular can determine the access of girls to school - where there are more children, girls may be required to stay home and care for their siblings (Khan 1993). Ideology and norms underpinning the gender division of labour can also determine the differential access of boys and girls to school. While boys' productive labour can be substituted if they choose to attend school, the gender specificity of girls' tasks means that they cannot be replaced by anyone else (ibid.).

A further argument raised is the extent to which children's work participation is a default activity, arising because of the failure of schools to absorb and retain children (Bhatty 1998a, 1998b). 'Missing' children, or those unaccounted for by statistics of child labour and education are calculated at 64 million (Bhatty 1998a: 1733). If children are not actively involved in household labour, and if children's contributions are not of productive value to their households, then why are so many children out of school? This puzzle leads

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to the investigation of school-based (or 'supply-side') factors, such as the direct costs[5] (uniforms, books, travel costs, examination fees, stationery) which can serve as a disincentive to poorer households, as well as school quality, given school availability.

Despite the policy promise of free elementary education, direct costs add up to substantial amounts that are likely to severely discriminate against poorer households (see Bhatty 1998a, Nambissan 1999). Rose (1995:4-5) notes that financial costs of education, even in a context where tuition is free, may still be high, particularly in terms of expenditure on transport, uniforms, materials and books. Resources provided by the state to counter disincentives in the form of household economic constraints, such as free midday meals, may have a positive impact on enrolment, but the availability of free textbooks and uniforms varies from state to state, depending on resource availability and efficiency of provision (Bashir et al.1993, Bashir 1994, cited in Bhatty 1998b). However, whether compensatory resources truly 'compensate' for household expenditure in terms of direct costs is still debated, across both rural and urban contexts (Babu and Hallam 1989 cited in Bhatty 1998b, Banerji 1997).

That parents lack motivation to send children to school is also disputed (The Probe Team 1999, Dreze and Sen 1995). It is argued that poor households do recognise that education offers a way out of poverty traps, particularly in terms of status, long-term inter-generational benefits and upward mobility, and greater political bargaining power, and that parents are often willing to make economic adjustments and compromises in order to help their children to benefit from education, given adequate education facilities.

An analysis of education non-participation needs to be located within a framework that recognises that many different factors could combine in different ways to reinforce or create exclusionary patterns. As Nambissan (1999) notes for India, although there is an overlap between economic poverty and social exclusion, there is no direct fit between income poverty and non-investment in education. It is therefore necessary to locate the diagnosis of education non-participation within a broader definition of processes of social exclusion and deprivation, recognising that education non-participation is both an indicator, as well as an outcome, of exclusion and deprivation. There are two specific conceptual challenges: the need to respond to diverse patterns of exclusion that can be

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[5]Fees are not included in this list as government schools are not meant to charge fees, although Mehrotra found that in three states, the schools studied charged fees "in some form" (cited in Bhatty 1998a: 1735)

constituted by any of a range of factors and their combinations, and to balance analysis of exclusion arising from individual circumstance as well as social process.

Different definitions of exclusion and deprivation capture the range of intangible as well as material factors that constitute the complex of exclusion. For example, Kabeer emphasises attention "to the more intangible forms of deprivation: social isolation, vulnerability in times of crisis ...[and]... to questions of identities and interests ... which place some groups of people at an entitlement disadvantage in relation to others" (Kabeer 1997:3-5). Deprivation is also defined more widely as related to outcomes arising from "those circumstances which prevent people developing to nearer their potential" (Joseph, cited in Robinson 1976:32). Similarly, Lewis notes that poor people react to their positions in an "effort to cope with feelings of hopelessness and despair which develop from the realisation of the improbability of achieving success in terms of the values and goals of the larger society" (Lewis cited in Robinson 1976:29). Addressing 'processes' of exclusion (Majumdar 1999) is a fundamental challenge for the achievement of universal education.

1.3. The Indian State and universal education

Weiner (1991) and Dreze and Sen (1995) argue that emphasising household-level constraints as the most critical determinants of education non-participation results in deflecting attention away from flaws in policy design or administrative response, and for perpetuating the idea that educational under-achievement is largely an outcome of the inability of the poor to comprehend the value of learning. In fact, the focus of much recent literature has been on the failure of the state to provide quality education for all (The Probe team 1999, Shotton 1998, Dreze and Sen 1995). In this section I pick up on two areas in which there is focus on state failure: policy articulation and implementation, and infrastructure and investment, and argue for a more complex reading of the underpinning reasons for state failure.

1.3.1 Policy shifts and critiques

In India, education policy is derived from three types of instrument: the five-year plans at the national level, sectoral national policy documents, and the constitution (Dyer 1999). The Constitution of India directs that "the State shall endeavour to provide within a period of 10 years from the commencement of the Constitution, free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years" (Constitution of India 1950).

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Constitutional commitment does not mean legislative commitment, and it was left to states to enact legislation making elementary education compulsory, fourteen[6] of which have done so thus far. The constitutional commitment, which aimed to achieve Universal Elementary Education (UEE) within ten years (i.e. by 1960), has been extended through subsequent policy to the year 2000.

Within the Constitutional framework, policy development of education in India has been uneven. Most educational planning was done through different commissions mandated to look into aspects of education planning and administration, and budgetary allocations have been discussed through the Five Year Plans. Only two national education policies have been formulated by the Government of India (GOI), the National Resolution on Education of 1968 (NRE 1968) and the National Policy on Education 1986 (NPE 1986). The NPE 1986 was accompanied by a Programme of Action (POA 1986) outlining the activities that needed to be undertaken to fulfil policy goals. Prior to the 1968 policy, planning for education was undertaken in the Five Year Plans, aided by the work of numerous commissions and bodies charged with drafting relevant policy recommendations.

The Kothari Commission (1964-66) that drafted the NRE 1968 emphasised certain shifts in thinking that were to mark the beginning of a discursive move away from the concern with manpower planning to a broader vision around the role of education in various aspects of nation-building. The Commission "suggested an internal transformation in education to relate it to life, the needs and aspirations of the people" but maintained a continued focus on the need for "a qualitative improvement to raise its standards and a quantitative expansion of educational facilities on the basis of manpower needs and equalization of educational opportunities" (ibid.).

The NPE 1986 was brought into existence with the then Prime Minister calling for a review of the country's educational system. In a comprehensive review of the sector, a government report *Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective* (1985), provided a critique of the functioning of the education system which made it clear that the impediments to implementation of the 1968 policy lay embedded in systemic failure and not just administrative drawbacks. This document focused on disparities of achievement by gender, caste and socio-economic class, enumeration of the infrastructure shortfalls in (particularly rural) schools, inter-regional disparities, the absorption of public expenditure

[6]These states are Karnataka, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal (GOI 1997:3).

by teachers rather than students, with the per student investment per year declining at both centre and State level; the bias towards urban higher education rather than rural elementary education; and the non-achievement of the target of educational expenditure of 6% of GDP which was specified by the Kothari Commission (GOI 1985).

The NPE 1986 emphasised four significant elements for UEE. The first one is the achievement of equality. Apart from a series of observations about the relevance of education on the cultural, political, economic and social fronts, the NPE 1986 laid special emphasis on the role of education in the removal of disparities, with the policy promising to attend "to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality so far". This led to the elaboration of concerns with and strategies for addressing inequalities faced by women; scheduled castes; scheduled tribes; inhabitants of remote or geographically dispersed areas; minorities; and the "handicapped" or physically disabled (GOI 1986).

The difficulties of balancing commitment to UEE on the one hand, with the challenge of inequality on the other hand, is evident in the document with the goals of equality-oriented interventions differing somewhat from group to group. While the link between education and women's equality is made explicitly in terms of the need for "basic change in the status of women", in the case of scheduled castes, the "central focus is...their equalisation with the non-SC population" with strategies aimed at ensuring their participation on equal terms with the rest of the communities (ibid. p.11). The task of bringing Scheduled Tribes on par with others however, includes both bringing them into the mainstream by providing schools for them, as well as catering to their distinctive socio-cultural characteristics including curricula and language tailored to their requirements particularly at the "initial stages" of education (ibid.).

The second element is the focus on community involvement and mobilisation. In 1991, a review by the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) suggested revisions to the POA 1986, in order to build on the 'wisdom of hindsight' in the wake of the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) that was started in 1991. The revised POA in 1992 notes that the TLC, a post-POA innovation, "has transformed the perception of universal adult literacy from one of hopeless dream to an achievable prospect" (GOI 1992) with its focus on mobilisation campaigns, involvement of voluntary efforts and people's participation, intense learning inputs and, in many cases, speedy achievement of functional literacy.

A third element is the emphasis on 'microplanning', which represents a move away from the earlier focus on enrolment drives to "participative planning in which the teachers and villagers would formulate family-wise and child-wise design of action to ensure that every child regularly attended school or non-formal education centre and completed at least five years of schooling or its non-formal equivalent" (GOI 1992). A fourth element is the focus on the availability of infrastructure and quality of education, in particular the need for "substantial improvement of primary schools and provision of support services" to repair the "unattractive school environment, unsatisfactory condition of buildings and insufficiency of instructional material ... (which are)... demotivating factors for children and their parents." (ibid.)

The fifth element is the overall re-design of the curricular content of primary education leading to what Tilak refers to as "the policy of 'minimizing the minimum needs'" (1990:14). The three-pronged strategy for UPE includes universal primary schooling access, non-formal schooling and adult literacy, and in each of these minimum standards have been set which provide the parameters for curriculum development as well as evaluation of learning outcomes. For example, literacy has been defined in terms of "the most basic skill of writing and reading one's own name" (ibid.), primary education standards have been set in terms of Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL),[7] and NFE curriculum is expected to correspond to MLL standards in order to support the policy goal of "facilitating lateral entry for students of the NFE stream into the formal stream" (GOI 1993:51). There is also no retention policy at the primary stage, with children being compulsorily promoted regardless of attendance and performance. While the rationale for this policy is presented as a shift of responsibility to teachers, to diagnose and remedy learning problems, rather than placing pressure on children to perform up to measured standards (GOI 1992:107), a compulsory pass policy at primary level usefully prevents the stagnation of children in particular classes, particularly those who attend irregularly, and hence facilitates the achievement of a semblance of UPE.

Despite shifts in policy language, critiques of national policy documents by academics and activists[8] focus on the rhetorical language used to state commitments (Weiner 1991), the platitudes made about education that have no bearing on concrete proposals for improvement (Dreze and Sen 1995), unreasonable and over-ambitious goals (ibid.),

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[7]MLL were introduced by the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in 1978 as an outcome of two UNICEF-assisted projects relating to curriculum development in primary education. A Minimum Learning Continuum was devised and competencies specified for measuring children's educational achievement.

confusion of objectives, inconsistencies of ends and means and specific contradictions between stated goals and resource allocation (ibid.). Dreze and Sen comment that the NPE's reiteration of the old commitment of providing free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality to all children up to age of 14 before the 21st century offers "no hint of the practical steps that would make this so-called 'resolve' a reality". Tilak (1995) criticises government for needing to enact another policy only 18 years after the first NPE, citing this as an example of myopic or short-term thinking. Further, given that none of the earlier ideas were acted upon, he comments that "the diagnosis of the problems remains largely the same over the years" (ibid.).

An example of policy rhetoric and doublespeak can be found in the following. The revised POA goes to lengths in discussing the importance of co-operation between states and the Centre, and emphasises the importance of flexibility in planning to 'help the implementing agencies in tailoring the POA, 1992 to suit their contexts and emerging scenarios' (ibid.)". However, under the guise of flexibility, the revised POA also enters a caveat that dilutes the commitment to achieving universal education within the timeframe specified: "ultim(ately), resources and management would define implementation ... Phasing has, therefore, to be left somewhat flexible so that the pace of implementation can match the mobilisation of resources" (ibid.).

Flaws in the development or articulation of policy are not found in the education sector alone. Guhan notes that the style of the plan documents is "documentational" in nature, rather than agenda-setting, resulting in a whole body of literature devoted to addressing "policy continuities, contradictions, slippages and graduation in the language of the plans apart, of course, from issues relating to promises *vis-à-vis* performance" (1985:257). Guhan notes that the common charges levelled against most policies formulated by Indian planners include: a weak connection between policy and instruments for realising policy; retention of administrative discretion to a large degree which is often used to dilute or defeat policy goals; the employment of a relatively small set of instruments for a large number of objectives which are often not capable of consistent pursuit of goals; and internal and sectoral interface inconsistencies (Guhan 1985:259).

A further reason why national policy documents tend to be relatively inconsistent is because of the focus on schemes and projects, "where ... the main plank of social policy

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[8] See also Krishna Kumar (1998a, 1998b) and Shotton (1998) for commentary on Indian education policy.

has been to generate or rejuvenate programmes" (Guhan 1985:261). All experimentation and innovation in education has been done through schemes, piloted in particular areas and districts. Even decentralised educational management and planning is sought to be attempted through "new schemes or experimental projects" (Govt. of India 1993), rather than through a systematic review of the functioning of the system as a whole. Important areas of intervention are managed through separately created central missions (as in the case of the National Literacy Mission and its TLCs for adult literacy) or schemes (as in Operation Black Board (OBB) for equipment, buildings and teacher's salaries in existing schools). The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) which is discussed later in *this chapter is also implemented through a parallel project structure though carved out* within the Department of Public Instruction at state and sub-state level.

The focus on schemes such as Non-Formal Education (NFE), and OBB is particularly symptomatic of a style of governance that responds to particular priorities as they emerge[9]. While schemes do appear to offer the possibilities for targeting resources at particularly backward areas, in reality they have been ad hoc, started at different times with responsibility dispersed among several agencies under the control of different actors. The limitations of focusing exclusively on programmes are summarised by Guhan (1985:257) who argues that "much depends upon how the programme has been plugged into policy in its adequacy, design and implementation". Further, narrowing the scope of implementation by channelling the efforts of administrators into separate streams dilutes efforts, replicates monitoring activities and requirements, prevents coordination and "represent(s) an over-simple response to a particular -often rather narrow - aspect of the problem of educational backwardness" (Dreze and Sen 1995:124). The implications of the 'programme' approach in the social sectors in particular is problematic, especially where they "have to depend for their realisation on the adequacy, coordination and integrated pursuit of several programmes that cut across various sectors of activity" (Guhan, op.cit). *The difficulties of coordination in line-hierarchy dominated bureaucratic institutions*, especially in the context of spatial distances and communication infrastructure drawbacks, clearly results in poorly managed education services.

1.3.2 Education infrastructure and investment

Evidence of education failure lies in the inadequate provision of schooling facilities in many parts of the country. It is estimated that 20% of all rural children have no access to

schools at all, and many rural schools function either without buildings, or in very basic conditions, without toilets and water connections. Over 62% of government primary schools have only one or two teachers per school, usually catering to a minimum of four classes or grades; in schools where there are adequate teachers appointed, teacher absenteeism is not an uncommon phenomenon. Further, Dreze and Sen note the alarming decline in the absolute numbers of teachers in primary and upper-primary schools between 1991-92 and 1992-93 (1995:123).

The lack of infrastructure is recorded in a Department of Education review of 1985, which noted that "The schools themselves are often unsatisfactory: 40 percent of the schools have no *pacca* (brick or cement) buildings; 9 percent have no buildings at all; 40 percent have no blackboards; 60 percent have no drinking water; 70 percent have no library facilities; 53 percent are without playgrounds; 89 percent lack toilet facilities; 35 percent of the schools have only a single teacher to teach three or four different classes; "many schools remain without any teacher for varying periods of time and some teachers are not above sub-contracting teaching work to others who are not qualified" (cited in Weiner 1991:92).

The lack of adequate education infrastructure has been attributed to several different factors. The most compelling evidence lies in the lack of resources made available to primary education: up until the late 1990s, budgetary allocations made for education have never exceeded 3.5% of GNP, at their highest. India ranked 82nd out of 116 countries in terms of the proportion of public expenditure on education to GNP (UNDP Human Development Report 1994, cited in Ramachandran et al. 1997:40) and 68th out of 89 countries in terms of the share of education in public expenditure (ibid.). Tilak notes that a long-term perspective plan for education has not been attempted in India largely because of financial constraints (1995:2). Although "concentration on financial aspects does not mean that the problems of Indian education lie squarely in finances and can be satisfactorily resolved if financial solvency is attained" (ibid. p.3), education finance is critical because of the backlog in provision of school buildings and minimum infrastructure for schools to function regularly (Tilak 1997).

Despite international research suggesting that "school-effects" have a great impact on the retention and achievement of children in primary schools (Banerji 1997, World Bank 1997a, World Bank 1995, Tilak 1997), inputs into the schooling system like teacher

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[9] See Dyer (1993, 1996) for a detailed discussion on Operation Blackboard.

learning material and learning equipment for children receive negligible amounts. 98% of recurrent expenditures are consumed by teachers' salaries (95%) and non-teaching staff salaries (2-3%) (Tilak 1997), which continue to be the largest drain on resources in elementary education, and the commitment to universal expansion will continue to absorb resource allocations. Teacher-student ratios continue to be in the area of 1:58 (Dreze and Sen 1995), well over the desired policy goal of 1:40 (NPE 1986), and thus the need for more teachers is an ever-pressing financial concern.

Resources to elementary education have fluctuated since the 1960s, and have mirrored changing global and national trends in thinking on education, with a notable decline in the 1970s reflecting "(t)he global disenchantment with education, partly attributable to growing educated unemployment on the empirical scene" (Tilak 1997:2239). The mid-1980s, argues Tilak, saw the emphasis on the importance of human resources (as opposed to human capital) and thus a resurgence of faith in education investment. However, he cautions that despite systematic efforts to increase allocations in the 1990s, economic reforms set in through structural adjustment have also affected the public allocations to education, and the rate of growth of public financing of education has not reached the levels of the 1950s (ibid.).

Despite efforts to reverse insufficient allocations evident in the substantial increase in education expenditure since independence (according to Tilak a 450-fold increase in absolute terms), additional requirements at the national level for the achievement of universal education still remain daunting. To keep pace with increases in population, about 360,000 additional Lower Primary Schools (LPS) and Higher Primary Schools (HPS) are required. 2.5 million LPS classrooms, and 1.3 million HPS classrooms are required, and a staggering 2.2 million teachers for LPS alone (Jhingran 1999). A GOI (1997) report notes that an additional Rs. 40000 crore (US$ 400 billion) would be required over the Ninth Plan Period alone to ensure that the infrastructure required for UEE is in place. Rapid population growth, increase in student numbers and escalation in prices has meant that the impressive growth in recent times has translated into only very modest increases in real terms of expenditure per student.

The need for a new financial regime in education has been a long-standing demand of scholars and activists (Dreze and Sen 1995, Ramachandran et al. 1997, Tilak 1997). Prioritising investment in human capital in the context of low resource availability, and with competing claims on resources in the context of a pluralist democracy compel, in the

absence of a well-defined social welfare function, procedural 'rationality' in governance and decision-making over resource allocation (Basu 1995). Tilak, the most prolific writer on education finance in India, notes that despite the use of language of "investment" in education policy documents, expenditure on education is classified in the national income accounts as consumption expenditure and social service expenditure. In practice, resources are allocated on 'residual' or 'ad hoc' basis (1990:23). In addition, the low investment of resources has also limited the potential for innovative planning. Political compulsions place education low on the scale of national and state priorities for investment. Basu uncovers what she refers to as the 'rules of thumb' that are used by the Indian government to determine annual budgets. She identifies i) committed or obligatory expenditure on defence, subsidies, salaries, interest payments; ii) trade-off between annual plan size and the tolerable level of deficit; iii) greater allocation of annual plan funds to higher revenue generating sectors; and iv) allocation of funds to new projects that are potential vote-catchers (1995:137). On each of these counts, education fails the test.

A further explanation for planning failure in education is suggested in the difficulties of promoting coordination between States and the Centre. Economic and social planning is a concurrent subject for which the states and the centre share responsibility, but in practice centre-state relationships are skewed in favour of central power, owing to the structure of fiscal federalism, where the "most potent and buoyant sources of revenues" lie with central government (Chakraborty 1998:351). States are dependent on central loans and grants to support their plan outlays, and thus depend on the centre for resources to fund their programmes, resulting in 'unintended fiscal centralization' (Roy 1998:364) with "...the Centre being the dispenser of monetary and fiscal bounty and the states queuing up for benediction' (Mitra 1975, cited in Roy ibid.).[10]

Overcoming this legacy of investment, infrastructure and policy limitations poses a clear set of challenges to the achievement of UPE, where the state has to play a leading role. However, confusions in policy approach to the achievement of universal education continue to impede prospects for realising change at the field level, as the next section argues.

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[10] See Mozoomdar 1996 for a discussion on the political fall-outs and implications for planning of fiscal centralisation.

1.4. Universalisation and Equality: the policy challenge

The challenge of achieving universal education lies most fundamentally in the achievement of parity in education opportunities for diverse groups living in diverse contexts. Several questions can be identified within this broader challenge. For example, does universalisation necessitate standardisation in service provision? On the other hand, can universalisation be achieved *without* local planning to take into account local level diversity? For all its focus on disparity and the importance of achieving uniformity, the NPE 1986 presents proposals that fundamentally distinguish between categories of children, with no overall stated goal of addressing the reasons why some children (that is, poor children) are denied opportunities that children from better-off households are in a position to enjoy. Poverty and economic opportunity figure nowhere in the NPE in the discussion of the importance of education. In this section, I focus on two different routes to achieving universal education, non-formal education on the one hand, and universalising compulsory education on the other, which have implications for the kind of services and delivery mechanisms that can respond to this challenge. Two threads run through the discussion: what is the view of the Indian state implicit in the policy arguments? And what are the broader implications for service provision if the approach is to persuade rather than compel participation?

1.4.1 Non-Formal Education

The proposal for achieving UEE through the expansion of Non-Formal Education (NFE) is seen as symptomatic of the state's creation of "second-track educational facilities" (Dreze and Sen 1995:124), distinguishing between categories of its population. NFE is a scheme first begun in 1979 in nine particularly educationally backward states[11] with the aim of addressing the huge problem of dropouts and non-enrolled children. The idea in NFE was to develop a parallel track of schooling, which would provide education for working children, and simultaneously providing a short cut to the achievement of universal education. A report prepared by the Working Group on Universalisation of Elementary Education appointed by the Ministry of Education in 1977, elaborated on the clientele for NFE schools: "Children of the weaker sections like the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, those in hilly areas, tribal areas, urban slums and other economically backward rural areas" who are "helping the family in a number of ways and the school time does not suit them." (GOI 1977:11-12, cited in Weiner 1991:99). The plan is to start children in this category

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off in the NFE schools and then ease them into the formal school system "at some appropriate stage" (ibid.). A second category of children targeted by the NFE scheme were girls aged 6-14 "who are not attracted by the existing programme of education being offered by the formal elementary school" who "may generally not be interested in joining the formal school at any stage" and "thus...would need an additional programme tailored *to suit their requirements as housewives, mothers and citizens*" (ibid. - emphasis added). Finally, the third category identified were children employed as labour in factories and workshops for whom the need for education "may be focused around literacy, numeracy and citizenship training." (ibid.).

Critiques of NFE focused on two critical aspects of the proposal (Weiner 1991, Dreze and Sen 1995). First, NFE was considered to be inegalitarian. Children who worked out of economic necessity, displayed no inclination or ability to attend school, or were pushed out of the schooling system on account of prevailing social norms (i.e. girls) were to be provided with a parallel schooling system with no guarantee of quality or equality of treatment. Further, there was no discussion of the importance of addressing the exploitation of children's labour in the informal sector.

Second, there were financial and management concerns. Many states had not provided funds to match the central grants as they were meant to, budgetary provisions were insufficient, teachers were not properly trained, many of the centres were not functioning, and there was no monitoring of the program (Weiner 1991:100). The fact that NFE was meant to be a "flexible" program that was built around the needs of local children demanded a system that was equipped to respond flexibly at local level, identifying NGO support wherever possible, developing criteria for management and implementation, and monitoring the educational progress of children. There was no evidence that such a system was in place, or could ever be put in place given uneven NGO presence, and a non-flexible administrative system. Developing a parallel track of education when the main track - formal schooling - itself was under-funded, not universally available and strapped by shortages of staff and equipment made very little financial and management sense.

The NPE 1986 and its subsequent refinements have continued to place emphasis on the centrality of NFE to the strategies for achieving UPE, although not perhaps as blatantly unconcerned about the issue of children's labour as is evident in the extracts from 1977

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[11]See Weiner 1991:99 for list of states.

quoted above. While the NPE 1986 says little about the rationale for NFE, it makes a far more concerted attempt to discuss the role of NFE in supplementing and "being fully coordinated" with formal schooling. The revision of the NFE scheme after NPE 1986 visualised "a child-centred and environment-oriented system to meet the diverse educational needs of the comparatively deprived geographical areas and socio-economic sections of society; it also seeks to provide for organisational flexibility, relevance of curriculum, diversity in learning activities to relate them to the learners' needs and decentralised management" (GOI 1993:51). However, the discussion on formal schooling makes no attempt to define what formal schooling is, or whether it is meant to be the *opposite* of the definition of non-formal schooling, so carefully laid out above. Despite discussing NFE as an intrinsic component of the UEE strategy, NFE is still envisaged as a separate project, or set of projects, with "each project having 100 NFE centres" (ibid.).

The role of NFE in a universal education system is fundamentally disputed but raises important questions about whether a strategy for universal education should persuade, or compel parents to send children to school. Offering a track of schooling that accommodates the needs of parents to send their children to work can be seen as legitimising the work of children, rather than their right to education (Dreze and Sen 1995). On the other hand, it is argued that the 'non-formal sector leads where it makes people aware of their exploitation and oppression, increases their bargaining power in the labour market, improves their economic competitiveness and brings home ... the advantages of access to education" (Shotton 1998:22). Using NFE as a bridge to enable children to make the transition from the world of work to the world of school can be seen as a compromise strategy. However, the important requirement for UEE remains the need to assess the extent to which participation can be secured through enforcement of compulsory education legislation, necessary to prevent fluctuations in attendance and dropouts. Here again the dilemma of choosing between persuasion and compulsion become apparent.

1.4.2 Compulsion and the Right to Education

The recent 1997 proposal for making elementary education a fundamental right views compulsion as a possible strategy for UEE. The view of 'compulsion' as an optional strategy, as apparent in government policy, is not one shared by many (Weiner 1991, Ramachandran et al. 1997). The latter define compulsory education as an inextricable or non-negotiable component of UEE:

Universal education requires that school education be made
compulsory. Compulsory school education, in turn, requires
systematic programmes of public action; a commitment to
mobilise the necessary financial resources; and the will to
make the socio-political changes necessary for free public
access to primary schools
(Ramachandran et al. 1997:39)

This view contrasts sharply with the vague nature of recommendations made by the state.
A high-level committee in January 1997 recommended the amendment of the Constitution
(83rd), to make Elementary Education a fundamental right. Significantly, the committee
also recommended that this be accompanied by the inclusion of the "Fundamental Duty of
every citizen who is a parent to provide opportunities for elementary education to all
children up to 14 years of age" (ibid. p. vii). At the time of writing, the proposal to make
education a fundamental right is still pending.

Apart from attempting to balance responsibilities between the state and parents, the
Committee recommended that rather than enact legislation at the central level on
compulsory education, states should enact new laws or update existing legislation making
education compulsory within a framework provided by the Central Government, as their
existing laws were deemed insufficient for the purposes required (ibid. p.17).

Thus the proposal suggests that all the comprehensive changes being made to education
policy strategies, planning and management as laid out in the NPE 1986 and subsequent
policy statements will be eventually translated into legislated commitment at the state
level, within the overall framework of a Constitutionally-guaranteed fundamental right.
Therefore, policy commitments relating to the norms for school buildings and equipment,
teachers and supportive inputs for UEE will possibly be made justiciable commitments at
the State level. This is a staggering proposal in the context of a history of policy
ambivalence and non-achievement of stated goals.

The enforcement of compulsion of enrolment and attendance in school is the path chosen
by many countries in the process of achieving universal education (Weiner 1991).
However, discussions on compulsion in India are both vague, as well as contradictory.
First, the Committee's recommendation is that states should provide for "permissive
compulsion" which would enable them to enforce the law "selectively in a phased manner"
(ibid.). "Permissive compulsion" is an odd concept in the context of making education

compulsory in the light of UEE. How can education be made universal if only some areas are to be brought under compulsory education law, that too at the discretion of state and local area bodies, and if some categories of children are to be exempted? The internal tension in this concept lies in the fact that while it provides a universal framework for education within which states will have to act, the "permissive" aspect of it provides loopholes that will enable states to avoid their commitments. Further, given the subtle backtracking within the Committee's recommendations, it is not clear how different this proposal is from earlier attempts to make education compulsory in state legislature.

Second, although the Committee notes that the "compulsion contemplated ... is a compulsion on the state rather than on parents", thus "advocating a consensual approach to motivate parents and children." (p. 5), states are recommended to identify grounds on which exemption from compulsory attendance may be granted, and asked to identify the minimum and maximum punishment for defaulting parents. This particular recommendation contradicts the definition of compulsory education noted above and this contradiction can also be read as representing the view that the state is helpless in the face of the embedded socio-economic factors that cause parents to use their children for labour, rather than in a position to intervene effectively in the interests of children (Weiner 1991).

Third, Weiner (1991) notes that existing state compulsory education laws all qualify the provision for compulsion with the words "may" and "shall", providing state level officials with the discretion over whether to apply the law, or not. In other words, state legislation is an "...enabling legislation that permits local authorities to make education compulsory, but does not compel them." (1991:56). Safeguards are built into the state legal provisions so that, while elaborating on the range of mechanisms that can be used to deal with non-enrolment or non-attendance, the law does not get over-zealously and inappropriately applied in areas with low enrolment and attendance. Such safeguards include the provision that two-thirds of those present, or one-half of the local authorities should approve the proposal, with the state government then providing final authority (ibid.). Weiner observes that "there are no enforcement authorities, no provisions for the compulsory registration of names and birthdates of children, no enumeration registers, no procedures for issuing notices to parents and guardians whose children are not attending school, and no penalties for failing to send children to school" (ibid.). Chances of this changing are unlikely given that the central framework is in itself contradictory.

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Further, the overly narrow focus on a regime of penalties that may be imposed appears untenable in the face of the far-from-complete agenda of investment, infrastructure and service provision with which it is still confronted. The implications of making elementary education a justiciable fundamental right require thinking through the legal implications of such a proposal. As Deshpande asks: "Would this mean that government can punish the guardians of a child for not sending him or her to school? ... Conversely, can a guardian sue the authorities for not providing school facilities in the child's neighbourhood?" (1997:2382).

The proposed Constitutional amendment is also likely to fail if adequate mechanisms for implementation of compulsory education are not put in place. The onus of levying penalties has been placed on district and sub-district *panchayat* bodies without any discussion on why or how it is in the interest of these bodies to levy penalties on community members. This also appears to be in conflict with the earlier quoted observation that the objective of policy is to "motivate" parents using a "consensual" approach, with the onus borne by the state rather than parents.

Apart from the internal contradictions of this proposal, I argue that there is a fundamental tension between advocacy of UPE as a policy, wherein, on the one hand, concepts of equality, standardisation (in terms of one type of school), and universal participation are advocated, and management concerns on the other, which need to address *how* such a policy line may be implemented in contexts of diversity of household economic strategy and ability to invest in education, and divided communities. Management concerns relating to enforcing compulsion need to be addressed. Discussing compulsion as a policy strategy without any concrete discussions of what this would mean to households who may not, contrary to the implicit assumptions in much of the literature, be willing to send their children to school even if easily accessible, provides insufficient grounds to assess realistic prospects for progress.

It is arguable whether UEE can be achieved on the basis of a policy approach that accepts categories of exemption from the promise of a single system of UEE, or on the basis of one that welcomes or embraces diversity. The tension is between on the one hand, short-term accommodation of the diverse preferences of different households who claim inability to send children to school, by allowing for a parallel track, and on the other, compelling attendance in one form of school. The danger with the latter is likely to be that failure to compel may result in significant populations of children having no form of schooling at all,

rather than even a second-track service that provides for basic education. Universal education thus faces a challenge in terms of choice, either of which path demands sensitivity, and active effort on the part of states and community bodies involved in enforcing UPE.

1.5. The District Primary Education Programme: a new model?

Coherent policy guidelines are necessary for making the best use of resources invested. Many of the threads in policy discussed above, such as the foci on inequality, community participation, local planning and flexible, responsive administration have been pulled together in the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) as is discussed below.

Launched in 1992, the framework for the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) is located firmly within the parameters of the NPE. Reconstruction of the primary education system is being attempted to meet the following specific aims:

- reduction of differences in enrolment, drop-out and learning achievement to less than 5% (presumably across all parameters of "difference" – e.g. gender, caste, tribal)
- reduction of overall primary drop-out rates for all students to less than 10%
- to provide access to all children to primary education - formal, or if not, non-formal
- to ensure capacity-building of education institutions[12]

The districts within which DPEP is being implemented have been selected based on two specific criteria - where female literacy is less than the national average, and where TLCs have successfully generated demand for education. Baseline studies were carried out in all the districts that met these criteria and the data generated was planned as a basis on which to identify the education needs of the district.

DPEP "aims to restructure primary education, so as to enhance enrolment, retention, achievement and school effectiveness, [and] was created to reach out to the goals set out in the NPE and implement the strategy of decentralised planning, disaggregated target-setting of the Programme of Action 1992."[13] These aims are different from the culture of quantitative target-setting that administrators were required to meet in the context of

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[12]Department of Education, Govt. of India (1995) "DPEP- Progress Overview" (New Delhi)

[13] Department of Education, Govt. of India (1992) "Empowering the Girl Child Through Education: DPEP strategies to address gender disparities in education" (New Delhi)

delivering family planning resources, but provide more a framework of goals articulated to provide implementors with a direction, and indicators for evaluating progress. The provision of a clear framework of goals reiterated in every document of the programme is possibly one indicator or parameter of innovation.

While the careful planning that characterised DPEP is a departure from the conventional planning of programmes, the focus on the district represents renewal of strategy and development approach. DPEP is explicitly district-based, and ties up with the overall thrusts of the programme in favour of local-level planning and collaboration with community institutions in order to stimulate participation and to create the conditions for education demand. These, too, constitute a measure of innovation, as DPEP provides for the creation of several levels of interface between government and community, in the form of Village Education Committees (VEC), Mother-Teacher Councils and Parent Teacher Associations. While many of these measures are not new in terms of policy rhetoric - in fact, the programme documents specify that these bodies need to be empowered rather than created - the DPEP-local government collaboration envisaged in the programme could provide the context for these interface bodies to work successfully.

1.5.1 DPEP and the prospects for achieving UPE: key parameters for investigation

DPEP provides four significant parameters of innovation. These include:
- focus on the most excluded, particularly on reducing disparities of caste and gender
- reworking of relationships between bureaucratic organisations and community organisations
- legitimisation and institutionalisation of an alternative approach to education planning
- restructuring of planning systems, reversing top-down planning hierarchies and instituting new information flows

These four areas merit investigation within the overall concern on how universal education can be achieved while respecting the diversity of exclusionary patterns. First, the focus on inequality raises the question of how exclusion is analysed and then responded to. How can excluded households be 'won over' to primary education, given economic and social constraints to participation? What kinds of processes can address the diverse reasons why a large segment of rural households do not invest in education?

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Second, the shift to micro-level planning and reversals in planning hierarchy means a necessary shift towards reversing the structures of implementing organisations. This involves respecting the preferences and priorities that arise through local planning processes, or at the least, creating spaces for discussion of the diverse preferences and priorities that emerge. How communities, however defined, can and do act around education on the one hand, and how they are expected by the state to work towards UPE, on the other, requires investigation. Literature from India emphasises the difficulty of stimulating collective action (Wade 1994, Saxena 1994), arguing that specific conditions are required for collective action to prosper. Failing that, it is argued the internal hierarchies of village communities prevent participatory and representative processes of collective action from emerging (Saxena 1994).

The third is the ways in which information flows are structured through the implementing organisation, and how accountability mechanisms are designed. In the case of DPEP, it will depend to a great extent on the 'real' space provided to the district and state-level programme structures to respond flexibly to the changing needs and the general dynamics of the communities with which they work.

Fourth, legitimisation of the alternative approach to educational planning demands the reorientation of the mainstream towards the goals and processes of the alternative approach. DPEP is located more centrally within the mainstream of the education department. In the DPEP districts, programme features are not intended to replace or substitute existing education programmes but are meant to be additional components. DPEP is envisaged as strengthening existing education efforts, not replacing them, and this is reflected in the scale of funding that it receives. The funding provided by external agencies to DPEP is unprecedented in the history of education in India, with the World Bank alone providing soft loans totalling US$ 980.2 million.[14] Education planners and officials consistently emphasise that DPEP is an "additionality", meant to provide resources to enhance education strategies in districts with low achievement records. For example, schools are constructed using DPEP funds only in areas that need them. However, in keeping with the spirit of the NPE 1986, DPEP, which emphasises the importance of qualitative interventions and not just the provision of infrastructure as the role of government, expenditure on building construction is limited to 24% of the state DPEP budgets.

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[14] Figures provided on the World Bank web-site, www.worldbank.org, updated September 1999.

The difficulty of treating DPEP as an 'additionality', however, is that it provides a completely different focus to education efforts in rural areas, and envisages changes in the normal routines of the education department, through an "overhaul of planning and management structures". This, and the focus on the "most disprivileged and socially excluded groups", point to a direction of radical change in the efforts of education departments. At present, with the quantum of external funding and political support it receives, DPEP certainly wields enormous influence over the officials and institutions of the education departments at the state and district levels. Referring to the programme as an "additionality" could put out a message that its approach does not need to be institutionalised, which could constrain the sustainability of the innovation. Conversely, the unique position of the programme - its location within the main bureaucratic framework and yet the autonomy provided to the programme in its separate structure - could give it the authority and capacity to shape administrative innovation with great impact. Investigating its approach to mainstreaming innovation thus provides another parameter for investigation.

1.6. The structure of the thesis

The challenge to UPE lies in finding mechanisms that overcome constraints in state and household investment in education. The concept of investment emphasised here goes beyond physical capital, encompassing the human and social capital required to create the organisational and cultural changes necessary for UPE. I argue that despite the history of policy failure in India, efforts underway to shift policy and management practices represent new opportunities for bringing households, community organisations and the state and administration together in the achievement of UPE. DPEP in particular offers new opportunities to strengthen the relationship between these different actors through co-operation in the process of producing education. Investigation of the relationships between these actors and prospects for co-operation between them thus are the topic of focus for this thesis.

Assessing prospects for multi-actor co-operation through a micro-lens is essential yet challenging, as it demands bringing the weight of understanding of each of these institutional sites into the study of the interface between them. A framework that accounts for the ways in which different actors can collaborate is necessary, and hence in Chapter 2,

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I evaluate the applicability of the coproduction framework (Evans 1996a and 1996b) to the challenge of UPE. Debates around the management of Common Property Resources such as water and irrigation have grappled with the best ways to harness collective action and co-operation among social actors in the production of goods. How this framework can be applied to the challenge of managing delivery of a good with mixed private good and public good characteristics is the particular concern of this thesis.

Chapter 3 lays out the methodological framework and methods used to investigate coproduction in a northern district of Karnataka. Chapter 4 focuses on the relationship between exclusion, livelihoods and life-worlds, and school participation through the perspectives of households in two villages of a northern district in the state of Karnataka. I view the construction of processes of exclusion through the lens of parents rather than children, as I work on the assumption that parents are critical decision-makers relating to children's well-being, though I also acknowledge the agency of children in the chapter.

Chapter 5 addresses the interface between policy and users in this district, through the views and actions of administrators responsible for implementing the innovative UPE-oriented approach of DPEP.

Chapter 6 presents the first of two synergy cases, where I focus on the interaction between state and community in promoting UPE. In this chapter, I analyse the role of community organisations such as the Village Education Committee formed under DPEP in the context of prior histories of village-level organisation around education issues. In particular I contrast the efforts of state-led community participation with those of community-led collective action in a few villages of the district.

Chapter 7 presents the second synergy case, where I assess the role of *panchayats* in relation to the state and the promotion of UPE. I argue that different levels of the local government system construct for themselves different agendas in relation to UPE based on the context of their relationships within the district and within the overall context of centralised development efforts.

Chapter 8 concludes. The analysis within the thesis takes place at two parallel levels – one, focusing on policy issues relating to UPE, and the second, focusing on the applicability and strengths and limitations of coproduction framework. Conclusions at both these levels are drawn in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Coproduction, social exclusion and primary education: framework for an inquiry

2.0. Introduction

Addressing the relative strengths and weaknesses of state and civic organisations and building on their complementarity in public services provision are central components of discussions on welfare reform in the advanced capitalist countries. These discussions are mirrored in the developing world, with the growth of the civic sector, particularly NGOs, bringing debates on multi-actor involvement in services and their provision onto centre-stage (Robinson and White 1997). This trend can also be seen generally as a shifting 'development paradigm', moving "...from an almost exclusive focus on physical capital towards a people-centred approach to sustainable development, emphasising the social dimensions of development, in particular the role of human and social capital" (Morris 1998:3). How different institutional actors can build relationships that facilitate co-operation in the process of delivering education services in a manner that is inclusive of excluded groups is a central concern of the thesis.

Chapter 1 has outlined the delineation of responsibilities of different actors in the search for means to attain the ends of Universal Primary Education (UPE) as suggested in Indian policy. In order to explore the best means of achieving or facilitating inter-institutional collaboration in pursuit of Universal Primary Education, this chapter assesses the extent to which the idea of "coproduction" provides a sufficiently coherent framework[15] within which interactions between different actors engaged in production can be analysed with the view to strengthening our understanding of how a policy goal may be achieved. Coproduction is defined by Ostrom as "the process through which inputs used to produce a good or service are contributed by individuals who are not "in" the same organization" (1996:1073). Buried within this definition are a number of ideas, concepts and assumptions, which this chapter unpacks and discusses.

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[15]I use the term 'framework' to suggest a body of ideas committed to a particular outcome or set of outcomes (in this case, 'synergy'), although this is not meant to characterise coproduction as a fixed theory. This is particularly so because the chapter draws upon a set of articles that do not present themselves as a unified exposition on coproduction but rather as a set of explorations on a common theme (synergy). Evans himself discourages viewing coproduction as a unified exposition in his introduction to the special section on coproduction and synergy published in World Development (1996): "...it would still be a serious mistake to short-circuit the analysis [presented in the chapters] by focusing too much on crosscutting generalizations." Each of the articles in this edited section offers "its own analytical frame to be considered" (1996a:1036).

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Coproduction is a useful framework for exploring the prospects and problems of multi-actor collaboration in the achievement of Universal Primary Education in India for several reasons: i) it is explicitly concerned with the possibilities for the effective production of goods or services that have public relevance with the aim of enhancing human well-being; ii) it focuses specifically on the involvement of multiple actors in the production of goods and services, discarding the traditional public administration focus on single producers; iii) it articulates the need to bridge divides between analyses of different institutional actors (the state, communities, the market), attempting particularly to escape "the conceptual trap arising from overly rigid disciplinary walls surrounding the study of human institutions" (Ostrom 1996:1073); iv) it explicitly argues against centralisation of service production, and implicitly lends itself to discussing decentralised delivery with its model of polycentric political systems; v) it makes the case for looking at service delivery as "production" and not "provision", arguing against the implicit citizen passivity in the latter (where the citizen is a "client"), and for a more proactive view of citizen or public action that is suggested in the former; vi) it builds on a view of the importance of "social capital" or the stocks of trust and collaboration that inhere in the informal networks and norms that bind communities of people together, thus recognising that communities (however defined) are a primary site of human interaction in development; and vii) it retains a central focus on the role of the state, which facilitates its application to public policy and delivery of public services. Applied to the Indian education case, it provides possibilities for exploring the relationships between households, village communities, formal structures of local government, and district bureaucracy, recognising the agency of actors in each of these institutional sites in shaping what is produced. Section 2.1 provides a brief background to the main features of coproduction theory.

Several theoretical challenges may be posed to the framework of coproduction that are suggested from the review of education failure in Chapter 1. First, education as a good or service has distinctive characteristics. Does the coproduction framework take into account the distinctive characteristics of different goods and services when discussing processes of production, and the relationships between coproducers? The diverse meanings that are attached to education by different actors range from the discursive to the political and to the material, shaped simultaneously at the level of the individual and the global, and others in between. As Brown et al. (1997) note, education's role in society has undergone several critical shifts in the post-war, post-colonial global order, and its value[16] has been shaped by

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[16] In this thesis, I follow the definition of 'value' offered by Kabeer. Kabeer defines 'value' in terms of its distinction from 'taste', both being forms of 'preference' in the sense of being non-imposed. She argues that the former are higher order

a range of influences as diverse as economic nationalism, cultural politics, changes in the organisational basis of state and society, as well as struggles for justice and equality. From the point of view of service delivery, the 'shape' of the resource is also a critical determinant of the kinds of relationships that are required to manage delivery, particularly from the standpoint of equity of distribution and allocation. Thus a starting-point for assessing the applicability of the coproduction framework to the challenge of UPE is an examination of the type of good that is to be produced, and Section 2.2 sets out to do this.

A second challenge is posed by the evidence, presented in Chapter 1, that social exclusion remains a significant constraint to the achievement of UPE in India. What are the prospects for co-operation between the state, households and communities in providing education services and promoting universal participation in a context of complex social and economic differentiation? Can the coproduction framework be used to evaluate prospects for co-operation in contexts where exclusion from schooling is underpinned by deeply internalised norms and values that support inequality and differentiation between people on the basis of gender, caste and class?

Section 2.3 explores the theoretical space within the coproduction framework for considering social exclusion and its impact on prospects for achieving UPE. In particular, I examine the focus of the coproduction framework on the prospects for "constructing" positive outcomes in contexts marked by poor endowments of co-operation and trust, and explore the extent to which a 'constructability' hypothesis is able to address complex social differentiation. Further, 'constructability' is premised on the recognition of the existence of social capital, defined as the norms and networks based on trust in a society that facilitate co-operation between individuals for the achievement of common goals (Putnam 1993). A broader argument of this chapter is that the focus on formal institutional development with the aim of facilitating 'synergy' limits the analytical space for considering diverse forms and bases for social relationships, and relies on a very narrow conception of 'social capital'.

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preferences which are "more enduring, embodying as they do the norms of a society or the ethical values of the individual', while the latter are described as "highly personal to the individual, a product of their whim or passion" Kabeer, forthcoming). The word 'value' is used in this thesis in the former sense, as the arguments are concerned with locating ascriptions of value, whether associated with an individual, state or organisation within a wider normative framework. This definition holds for the rest of the chapters in the thesis.

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Finally, Section 2.4 summarises the main arguments of this chapter, particularly from the point of view of the generalisability of the findings of the case-studies to the Indian context and policy goal of producing universal education.

2.1. The engagement of state and society in coproduction

In his introduction to the selection of papers[17] illuminating strategies for spanning the public-private divide in development, Peter Evans notes that attention paid to macroeconomic results in contemporary development strategies has contributed little to "understanding the microinstitutional foundations on which they depend" (1996a:1033). These foundations refer to the broader institutional bases of improved human welfare underpinned by the "importance of informal norms and networks that make people collectively productive" (ibid.). For Evans, the reintroduction of interest in the state and community into development planning provides a distinct challenge to the belief in the hegemony of the market in 1970s and 1980s, which were dominated by the belief in the 'rational choice' of agents both as individual and institutional actors to the exclusion of other explanatory frameworks. The turning-point, argues Evans, came with the challenge of understanding the East Asian economic miracle, when it became clear that the high growth levels of the 1980s could not be attributed to the force of the market, but that the state in Korea, Taiwan and Japan had played a central role in facilitating economic growth (op.cit.).

Although the state and the community are two institutional sites whose value in contributing to development is being recognised again in influential policy circles,[18] Evans notes that they are still treated by some theorists as adversarial institutions rather than partners. The over-activity of one is seen to limit the agency of the other, leading to a '"zero-sum" relation between state-sponsored activities and social capital in which government involvement leads to atrophy of informal networks, diminishing social capital' (ibid. p.1034).[19] However, the rising tide of theorists[20] endorsing the view that "synergy"[21]

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[17]The collection includes papers by Evans (1996a and 1996b), Lam, Ostrom, Heller, Burawoy and Fox (all 1996).

[18]See, for instance, the World Bank's World Development Report of 1997 'The State in a Changing World'.

[19]This is not to suggest that tensions between state and civic organisations are merely the creation of theorists. Of the many types of relationships that can obtain between states and civic organisations within their boundaries, adversarial relationships are not uncommon (Robinson and White 1997:32).

[20]Not just the contributors to the World Development (1996) collection, but also Tendler and Freedheim (1994) and Wade (1992) make this argument. Robinson and White (1997) take the discussions on synergy and coproduction further in their review of the role of civic organisations in synergy.

[21] Defined as the mutual support that state organisations and civic engagement can provide each other (Evans 1996a).

is essential for effective development, indicates that enhancing inter-institutional collaboration is not considered impossible, and examples of its achievement, though rare, are not entirely absent. Although Evans is careful to point out that state-civic engagements are not meant to exclude markets from discussions of development,[22] the primary concern in the coproduction framework is the synergy between state organisations and civic groups, and the study of the "impact of state-society synergy, or its absence, on several different kinds of outcomes" and the conditions under which synergy does or does not take place. Evans is also careful to point out that the authors in the World Development (1996) collection "certainly don't take synergy for granted, but they do explore the conditions under which it can become a reality" (ibid. p.1034).

Different forms of collaboration between states and civic organisations are likely to build on different types of relationship between the two - most are in fact highly selective in the aspects of public policy processes that are shared, and are not necessarily egalitarian or built on mutual trust. Robinson and White (1997) develop a typology of the kinds of relationships that can be found within state-society partnerships, which facilitates the identification of the types of collaboration possible, or extant, between states and civil society. They identify three elements within the broader umbrella of service 'provision': determination (decision-making), financing, and production (supply of services). They argue that the 'ideal type' of joint state-society partnership happens only when there is co-determination, co-financing and co-production, although they recognise that in practice it is rare to find all three forms of joint action. Ostrom's example of successful coproduction of condominial water systems in Brazil (1996) however refers to the achievement of all three: communities are involved in design, financing and contribute their labour and time to the management of the water systems. Thus Ostrom's definition of coproduction, like Robinson and White's use of the term 'coprovision', does not distinguish between determination, financing and production as three distinct elements, but views them as parts of a necessary whole. In most cases, however, as Robinson and White's typology shows, collaboration takes place in some aspects rather than others, and is based on distinct imbalances of power and authority (1997:26-28).

Different organisational forms and means of facilitating partnership with the achievement of 'synergy' in mind also differ in the extent to which the importance of norms and networks is emphasised. Evans (1996a, 1996b) distinguishes the model of coproduction as

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[22]Synergy resulting from effective state-civic interactions is also essential for marking effective transitions to market-oriented economies, as Evans notes, citing the example of China in Burawoy's paper (1996).

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developed by Ostrom from the model of complementarity developed in Lam's study (1996) of successful irrigation management in Taiwan. In the latter, the distinctions between formal institutions of the state, and formal users' organisations at the local level are upheld based on an understanding of the limitations of each, and their comparative advantages. Hence state organisations restrict themselves to providing complementary goods and maintain a distance from the activities of the local organisation in the management of day-to-day delivery operations. The 'hands-off' relationship between state and user groups presents "a very different vision of synergy than the one suggested by an 'embeddedness' vision"[23] (Evans 1996a:1036) as in Ostrom's case of condominial water systems in urban Brazil, and Tendler and Freedheim's (1994) case-study of primary health care services, also in Brazil.

In contrast to complementarity, the model of coproduction demands that the public-private divide be blurred through the consideration of the norms and networks that facilitate inter-institutional arrangement. The recognition that all institutional actors are embedded in social relations makes for a definition of coproduction that "implies that public and private actors are enmeshed together in the process of production", where synergy is "produced by the intimate entanglement of public agents and engaged citizens." (Evans 1996a:1036). Thus synergy requires both complementarity, and the recognition of partnership as embedded in social relationships that transcend institutional boundaries (Evans 1996b). The recognition that institutional or public-private boundaries are permeable (ibid. p.1120) allows for the uncovering of underlying social norms and networks, making it impossible to obey the analytical separation required in the conventional public-private division, and revealing the fundamental challenge for coordination:

> The fact that the world is made up of different social agents, operating with different purposes and objectives, forming overlapping systems of existence but with definite (though often porous) boundaries between them, implies that a total *reconciliation* of the calculations such agents might make is impossible.
> (Frances et al. 1991:4, emphasis in original)

In such situations the existence of social capital is considered essential for cross-institutional coordination towards common goals. Evans expresses the basic underlying idea of the coproduction framework in simple terms: "if people can't trust each other or

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[23]Granovetter (1992) defines 'embeddedness' as the importance of concrete personal relations and networks of relations in generating trust, in establishing expectations and in creating and enforcing norms.

work together, then improving the material conditions of life is an uphill battle" (1996a:1034). Trust is the most commonly identified antecedent of co-operation (Harriss 2000, Frances et al. 1991:15, Putnam 1993:171), a "complexity-reducing social norm" (Furlong 1996:i) the need for which arises in situations where there is a risk that others may behave opportunistically (Lorenz 1991:185). Most conceptualisations of trust view it as having a fundamentally economic rationale (Morriss 1998, Furlong 1996). Given the difficulties of accessing all the information required to make decisions, individuals have to rely on networks of trust to obtain the information they require, which creates incentives for co-operation. Thus trust and co-operation are fundamentally inter-linked.

Drawing on the concept of social capital enables students of institutional and organisational functioning to widen the base of analysis, from a narrower focus on incentives and organisational structure, to the location of human behaviour within the wider environment of networks and social relationships (Wade 1992). The recognition that social capital inheres in society, within organisations of the state, and in the interrelationship between the two, presents three challenges for achievement of coproduction: harnessing social capital 'outside' government in the form of effective organisations of citizens and their commitment to full participation in the project process; team work or harnessing social capital within government; and effective coordination between public and civic organisations (Ostrom 1996:1075). This chapter is primarily concerned with assessing the relevance of coproduction to the challenge of UPE in India. However, I argue, the first step is to clarify the nature of the resource or service that is to be produced.

2.2. The nature of the service to be produced

There is an implicit assumption in the literature on coproduction that the value of what is to be produced is relatively clear among user groups. Fleeting references are made to the importance of process (Ostrom 1996), and Evans (1996b) notes that 'shared orientations' are fundamental to the success of collaborative ventures. However, I argue that the development of 'shared orientations' is shaped by social structure, and that the relationships between people and services produced are mediated by structures of social differentiation. Values are not likely to differ just between different categories of services (say irrigation in contrast to education), but even one type of service is likely to have different meanings attached to it by people located at different points of a given socio-

economic structure. This argument has particular relevance to education, the value of which has a wide range of meanings associated with it. In this section I critically review ideas around service production as developed specifically in the case-studies of irrigation (Lam 1996), condominial water systems (Ostrom 1996) and education (Ostrom 1996), with the view to elaborating on this argument.

The coproduction framework refutes two ideas traditionally associated with the production of public services - that economies of scale associated with construction of major infrastructures require production in the public sector, and that the role of the state is essential because of the technical expertise and legal rights over private property that are required (Ostrom 1996:1074). Relationships developed between individuals around production are considered to be the most significant variable affecting the efficiency of even the most technical inputs (Lam 1996:1039). Ostrom takes the conventional view of production - "the transformation of a set of inputs into outputs" (1996:1079) - and reworks it to fit situations where all the inputs are not in the control of a production principal. Where inputs of both citizens and public agencies are important, then decisions about who produces what are determined partially by the comparative advantages that obtain in relation to both costs and motivation. However, even when the production function for a particular service is definable, the management of processes still remains a distinct challenge (ibid.).

Services for the provision of non-private goods, such as common-pool resources (CPR), like water, and mixed goods such as health and education which have both public and private good characteristics, face the challenge of coproduction most acutely: how to get individual users to establish relationships of co-operation in the production of the services? In the case of CPR, the interests of individuals and collectivities are mutual, although the temptation of individuals to free-ride has to be curbed. With mixed goods such as health and education, despite the public goods aspects that demand collective action and co-operation, the private returns are thought likely to dominate individual decision-making, and individuals are likely to under-invest in and under-consume such goods. Individual perceptions regarding the value to them of investing in these goods are also likely to vary, and be shaped by multiple factors, not purely economic ones. This may explain why the production 'technology' for services in the education and health sectors is hard to define (Ostrom 1996:1080).

In this section I seek to argue that prior to the discussion of 'who produces what?', there needs to be an analysis of 'what is it that is to be produced?'. Underlying this is an argument I consider essential for the discussion of coproduction - *unless the diverse reasons why, and ways in which individuals grant value to services are understood, their participation in coproduction cannot be meaningfully elicited*. More specifically, I argue that socio-economic and institutional embeddedness influences perceptions of different actors about the nature of the service that is to be produced in terms of its value and the goals of service production. This proposition is explored through application to a mixed good, education, the focus of the first sub-section (2.2.1). The second sub-section (2.2.2) assesses the way in which the coproduction framework is developed in relation to two sectoral case-studies of irrigation and education (Lam and Ostrom, respectively) and the extent to which it accounts for the difficulties in development of 'shared orientation' in the context of different types of goods.

2.2.1. The value of education: social returns, private returns and individual life-worlds

In economic theory education is classified as a mixed good, because it is a private good with considerable positive externalities[24] or spill-over effects. The economic consequences of the 'mixedness' of education provide a strong case for the state's involvement in production, as the externalities result in under-consumption of the good by consumers, since some of the benefits are not captured by them, thus generating market failures. In education there are conflicting preferences between individuals and the state owing to the widespread externalities its provision generates, and at the same time, the kinds of costs generated for individuals who invest in it. Stimulating appropriate levels of investment of both states and households is a central challenge of policy. However, I argue that the conventional conceptual and methodological approach to investment in education has been entrenched in a narrowly economistic view of the kinds of returns, and the ways in which they accrue to individuals and the state, which has particular consequences for the content of policy that is aimed at achieving UPE.

The idea of education as investment is rooted in human capital theory which emerged in the 1960s (Brown et al. 1997), and the appeal of which lay in the simultaneous emphasis on the importance of, and returns to, investments in education for both individuals and

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[24]Externalities are economic consequences not captured by price or market mechanisms. Externalities arise when the actions of one person or firm hurt or benefit others without that person or firm paying or receiving compensation (World Bank 1997:26). This idea is used to look at spillover benefits (positive externalities) that arise from investment in a private good.

states/societies. Woodhall defines human capital as referring to "the fact that human beings invest in themselves, by means of education, training, or other activities, which raises their future income by increasing their lifetime earnings" (1987: 219). Like physical capital, investments in human beings (through skills development via training and education) are seen to bring returns to that lifelong 'capital' for individuals, and contribute to economic growth. Education, like health, is seen as a long-term investment, where individuals sacrifice short-term enjoyments for long-term pecuniary and non-pecuniary benefits (Blaug 1987). Colclough (1982) notes that the influence of human capital theory spread based on the example of the USA, which experienced high levels of growth in the first half of this century.

Despite continuing controversy about the exact effects of education on productivity, and the methods used to measure these effects,[25] the cost-benefit approach[26] to measuring the value of investing in education is based on the assumption that "it is possible to measure profitability of investment in human capital using the same techniques of cost-benefit analysis and investment appraisal that have been traditionally applied to physical capital" (Woodhall 1997). Below I discuss some of the conceptual and methodological difficulties linked to quantifying ideas of 'investment' and 'benefit' in education.

2.2.1.1 Conceptual and methodological difficulties of calculating investment levels in education

Calculating appropriate levels of investment in education production is complex because the diverse range of outputs are only partially measurable, and impact on social structures in different ways. Investment in education raises the challenge of distinguishing between the production of services and "the produced changes in the characteristics of people" (Culyer 1980). The judgement about the amount to be produced is linked to the evaluation of the amount required *to effect transformations*,[27] which in turn is linked to judgements of what is desirable.

Culyer (1980) identifies two further characteristic features of mixed goods: a) the factor of time preference, or the lack of 'fit' between individuals' income flows in any period and

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[25]For a review of the discussions on the links between education and productivity, see Blaug (1987).

[26]Woodhall defines rates of return analysis thus: "The profitability, or rate of return on investment, is a measure of the expected yield of the investment, in terms of the future benefits, or income stream generated by the capital, compared with the cost of acquiring the capital asset" (1997:220)

[27] Transformations are a fundamental consequence of education, including changes in levels of skill, knowledge, attitudes, status, and personal confidence, through increases in political awareness, access to information, better health and many other benefits.

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their preferred consumption, which means that they may choose to save or dissave money on the basis of their preferences which are in turn shaped by the values placed upon present and future costs and benefits to them; and b) the factor of uncertainty which places a barrier between individuals and the consumption of social policy goods, placing a premium on information in the context of the lack of perfect knowledge about both the present and the future, knowledge which is also costly to acquire.

These complexities are, however, not easily captured in conventional cost-benefit analysis frameworks, which distinguish returns to investment in terms of water-tight categories of private (accruing to the individual) and social (accruing to the wider society) returns. The difficulty of measuring the effects of education lie in the lack of "systematic *evidence* (as opposed to assertion)" about the exact effects of various elements of an education system on participants and outputs, and "the absence of a measure of the elusive 'output' of educational institutions ...[which] has seriously hampered research into the efficiency of production" (Culyer 1980:234). This has resulted in reliance on Rates of Return to Education (RORE) analysis to evaluate the worth of education to individuals and society as a basis for policy investment decisions, on the basis of economic efficiency.

Private returns are framed in the RORE framework principally in market-based terms. The calculation of the private rates of return is based on comparing the privately incurred costs of attending a particular programme - direct and opportunity costs (expected income foregone) - with the private benefits (difference between the post-tax earnings stream associated with graduates at this level of education and the similar stream that could be expected by the individual if the programmes were not undertaken) (Colclough 1982). Similarly, social returns in RORE analysis focus narrowly on aggregate financial returns at the national level to investment in education.[28]

The market-based logic of ROREs has, however, been criticised because it overlooks returns that are non-economic and not always quantifiable. For example, in addition to economic benefits (increased income), benefits such as improved health, nutritional status, access to public information, enhanced status are recognised as vital private and public benefits. However, these are not accounted for in the market-based calculations of returns (Colclough 1993, Bennell 1996). Similarly, the externalities which are considered to

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[28]Calculated on the following basis - in addition to private costs, all public expenditures or subsidies associated with the length of education in question, with the exception of student grants, and taking pre-tax earnings differentials as a measure of benefits (Colclough 1982).

accrue to society at large include both market and non-market benefits: enhancement of productivity, both agricultural and industrial, which stimulates overall social and economic development and growth, and provides income gains to others (Colclough 1993, Culyer 1980); and, decline in fertility particularly as an outcome of women's education[29] (Jejeebhoy 1995, King and Hill 1993, Khan 1993) and thus giving rise to important intergenerational effects (Heyneman 1980), both economic (Culyer 1980) and non-economic.[30] Other 'atmospheric' effects include the encouragement of socially responsible behaviour, the encouragement of political stability through a more informed electorate and better educated political leaders, transmission and nurturing of a cultural heritage, widening of intellectual and cultural horizons to enhance the value of leisure time, and the encouragement of research and invention (Culyer 1980, Colclough 1982). Douglas further notes that the benefits "accruing to each educated person are multiplied by increased opportunities of educated discourse" (1987:23).

RORE analysis influenced the increase in donor investment in education,[31] particularly the reversal away from funding higher education towards primary education (Bennell 1996). The global findings from RORE analysis, carried out over diverse time periods indicate the following: a) ROREs at all levels exceed the aggregate social opportunity cost of capital; b) ROREs in developing countries are higher than in developed countries (because of relative scarcities of capital in the former compared with the latter), although the pattern of ROREs remains stable as countries develop with only relatively minor declines in ROREs; c) private and social ROREs are highest for primary education followed by secondary education; and d) private ROREs to higher education are usually considerably higher than corresponding social ROREs (ibid.).

Critiques of RORE focus on both methods and concepts. Based on a review of the ROREs analysed for sub-Saharan Africa, Bennell (1996) lists numerous methodological biases in the calculation of ROREs that give rise to an upward bias in returns. Bennell (ibid.) noted that not only were the findings of individual studies of individual countries aggregated without taking into account their different methodologies, but also there were serious

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[29]Fertility reductions are believed to occur through (a) delays in the age of marriage of girls reducing the reproductive years (b) lowering demand for children through awareness of possible improvements in quality of life (c) better knowledge of and access to contraception (Colclough 1982).

[30] Particularly important for female education and removal of gender-based disparities at all levels of social life (and applicable to other axes of inequality).

[31]For example, the World Bank did not invest in any primary schooling during the 1960s, and then in the 70s-80s crept up from 5% to 14% of all education loans (Colclough 1993). Colclough notes that the reasons for donor reluctance to invest in primary education was threefold: provision was considered a domestic matter, economic benefits seemed to be intangible and gained only over the long-term, and it was thought not to generate foreign exchange in any direct sense (ibid. p.24)..

limitations to the data collected. Income returns to education in the form of wages paid were calculated for the formal sector, which is very small relative to the informal sector. Thus the wages on the basis of which returns were calculated were not typical of wages for the vast majority of educated youth who were absorbed into the informal sector. Further, data were drawn from the non-competitive public sector which tends to dominate the formal economies of the region, so conclusions relating to productivity did not necessarily hold. Bennell (ibid.) also found that several variables that would have explained non-education based effects on income (such as socio-economic background, dropouts, and unemployment rates) were omitted from several of the studies, and were variably included in others. Other problems intrinsic to the RORE approach related to the inability to take into account externally generated changes in the structure of the labour market, and the impact that economic dynamics would have on the demand for labour with different levels of education and vice-versa, thus leading to a changing education-earnings relationship.

There are numerous conceptual problems too identified with ROREs. First, there is a distinct upward bias in calculations of returns to primary education, because of significant omissions in the calculation (Bennell 1996). Opportunity costs of children's labour are calculated as nil for primary education thus not taking into account children's roles as unpaid household and farm labour, a feature of most developing economies (ibid.). Second, quality of education, a significant non-economic determinant or variable shaping participation, the acquisition of credentials, and the productivity effect of education, is also not factored into the schooling-economic benefits equation. Most fundamentally, however, the narrow definition of 'returns' gives rise to distortions in analysis of why it is households do or do not invest in education, particularly in countries where participation in education is not enforced through compulsory education legislation and policies. As Colclough notes, the persistent puzzle of education systems in many developing countries is that "[a]lthough some of the related externalities do accrue as subsequent benefits to the individual, many households appear unaware of this" (1993:36).

Externalities, like public goods, while essential to society, are often invisible or not experienced by individuals who invest in education,[32] thus creating a disincentive to individuals for whom the costs of investment do not generate the full benefits of education that can be individually captured. In contexts where private economic returns are not always guaranteed, ROREs may have little relevance to the investment decisions of

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[32]Particularly where state provision of infrastructure, health care, contraception and information on services is poor, externalities created by investment are unlikely to be clear to potential users of education services.

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households, and not be of particular use to states beyond making a strong case for investment in education. It is suggested that for poorer households (like poorer countries), relative scarcities of capital are likely to result in higher returns (Bennell 1996). However returns to individuals do not accrue independently of their socio-economic location within a society. For example, the social underpinnings of labour market structures determine how social disadvantage is reproduced within the job market, as Kabeer and Humphrey (1993) demonstrate in relation to gender discrimination. The impact of social class on shaping education outcomes and hence investment strategies cannot be underestimated. Bourdieu's (1986) exposition of the differential reproduction of social and cultural capital formation in economically unequally endowed families helps illustrate the difficulties of understanding how individuals or households construct priorities and preferences in response to competing investment demands, as elaborated later. Decisions to invest in education can be driven as much by aspirations in relation to social mobility and status,[33] and the need to cope with the wider environment such as gaining access to information.

The challenges to the 'common cause' (Mackintosh 1995a) between states and citizens/households in UPE arise from the different attributes or characteristics associated with education, and the conflicts that arise when there are conflicting priorities and preferences that emerge as a consequence. A continuum of interests in relation to education can be identified. Education is a private good, which has implications for private investment decisions, and has some qualities of a public good, which impinges on state investment decisions. Because the inputs of education, such as school buildings, materials and teachers, also are common pool resources,[34] providing incentives to members of a wider collectivity to co-operate in order to maintain the quality of these inputs. However, because schools place boundaries on physical space, they can become congested or over-crowded, and for a given number of teachers, the benefits of the teacher's attention will reduce for every extra child added to a class. Thus aspects of school maintenance at community-level give rise to incentives for exclusion and monopoly, and also for co-operation.

Different actors may place their investment strategies at different points on the continuum of interests ranging from the private to the public. As noted, households may place their

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[33]In India, education has been used by lower castes as a means of fighting caste-based discrimination as Velaskar (1998) demonstrates in the case of *dalits* in Maharashtra.

[34]Common pool resources (as distinguished from common property resources) are "public goods with finite, or subtractive benefits...[and] are therefore potentially subject to congestion, depletion or degradation: use which is pushed beyond the limits of sustainable yield" (Wade 1994:183).

strategies anywhere along this continuum. Public policy in India has increasingly inclined towards valuing the public good characteristics of education. This is in keeping with the international shift towards recognition of the social value of education, which began in the second half of this century (Brown et al. 1997), and has resulted in education being viewed in policy primarily as a public good. This has led to the view of education as a resource which has public benefits exceeding the returns to individuals, and where the wider social returns demand universal coverage of education as investment in society and development. As a basic human resource contributing to individual and social well-being, education is considered the right of every individual, and the state is thus placed with the responsibility to address inequality and deprivation by focusing on the expansion of education, health care, social security, and land reform (Dreze and Sen 1995:92). This entails the shift from viewing education as an instrumental tool of development, growth and nation-building, dominant for most of this century (Brown et al. 1997), to one that privileges its intrinsic value as a process of learning and socialisation.[35] Thus, in relation to service production, the analysis of varying priorities needs to extend to include the state as an actor with interests relating to the public goods aspects of education.

The policy focus on the community[36] as an institutional site mediating the achievement of policy goals on education also requires some clarification. It is not clear what roles communities are expected to play in relation to education production. Are communities aggregates of private interests in relation to education or do they serve as conduits linking individual interests with the public good? The private goods aspects of education can create incentives for exclusion at the level of the community. This is because credentials are the only property rights that are generated and their value is higher in situations of scarcity,[37] as they constitute a critical basis of competition for employment. Thus constraining the participation of traditionally excluded groups (for example, low caste groups) from education can be an effective means of exerting control of dominant groups over economic and political resources. As Brown argues, "The rules of exclusion are not based upon the specific attributes of individuals but the generalised attributes of social collectivities" (1995:737). Ensuring that communities work collectively for education

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[35] Sen's distinction between human capital (agency of human beings through skill and knowledge as well as effort in augmenting production possibilities) and human capability ("the ability of human beings to lead lives they have reason to value and to enhance the substantive choices they have") (1997:1959) helps to capture these shifts. While arguing that these two perspectives are distinct, Sen argues that "the broader human-capability perspective" allows for a recognition of both types of enhancement to human life, although both place "humanity at the center of attention" (ibid.).

[36] Policy documents in India (and elsewhere) use 'community' as a social category in extremely unspecified ways. In Chapter 5, I address some of the definitional problems and define my own use of the term 'community' in this thesis.

[37] This argument applies to situations in which 'merit' is the basis of selection – of course, in non-merit based contexts, social networks matter.

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would require addressing the incentives for exclusion that arise from different characteristics of education.

In concluding this sub-section, I argue that reconciling all these expectations arising from education investment is not a simple task, either in theory or practice, and assuming that there is consensus among coproducers in education is likely to obscure the extent to which conflict and incentives for non-co-operation are embedded in education production systems. This argument rejects the narrowly economic view of private returns, but at the same time seeks to retain a focus on what drives private investment in education without assuming that household investment decisions that exclude education are irrational.

I further argue that narrowly economic frameworks of analysing investment patterns and decisions in education are not sufficient bases from which to correct systemic problems in the provision of UEE. The measurement of social returns is based on a very narrow definition of 'returns', basically through measuring the level of taxes that are expected to increase as individual incomes rise through the benefits of education. The expansion of the narrow focus on 'returns' to education is necessary to identify ways in which households make decisions about education, and how they may be encouraged, in the absence of state coercion, to participate in social policy goods provision for both individual as well as social benefit.

The 'mixedness' of education gives rise to difficulties in ascertaining the distribution of responsibility for different aspects of production in a multi-actor framework. In order to find 'common cause' in education investment and production, there has to be greater consensus and hence co-operation between 'provider' and 'provided-for'. Thus, frameworks that polarise providers and users, supply and demand are analytically inadequate. The 'provision and utilisation' model is based on a narrow supply-demand concept (Dreze and Gazdar 1996) which suggests that education behaviour can be analysed using assumptions of market-based exchanges. Bhatty (1998a) provides a four-pronged critique of the supply-demand concept used in education: she argues that the analogy with the standard demand-supply framework is misleading in several respects, including the fact that a) quality is a critical variable, which means that education cannot be treated as a single homogeneous product; b) in the absence of pricing mechanisms, given government subsidy and free education and unlimited capacity, there is "no single supply-demand equilibrium" and "no well-defined price to bring demand in line with supply" - thus, excess demand results in decline in quality of supply; c) social dimensions are ignored in a narrow

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supply-demand framework; and d) the fact that decisions are made by one set of people (parents) on behalf of others (the children) places education outside the focus of standard demand-supply analysis. The evocation of a price mechanism also brings with it the possible suggestion that preferences are revealed directly via established mechanisms, whereas they may indeed be revealed in oblique ways.

2.2.2 The coproduction framework and the challenge of producing diverse policy goods

In the case of mixed goods like education the challenge is not just to find ways of stimulating collective co-operation in relation to apparent collective interests, but to acknowledge and overcome conflicts over appropriate investment levels. However, the coproduction framework is more concerned with the role of formal institutions in public service delivery, and the ways in which these formal institutions can be made to work together more effectively. Thus the starting-point for the analysis of coproduction[38] is the analysis of prospects for co-operation, and assessment of the kinds of institutional mechanisms that facilitate co-operation between different institutional actors. I argue, first, that this assumes shared orientations and consensus among the different actors about the value of what is to be produced. Such an assumption restricts the analysis of reasons why there may be low levels of investment in a service on the part of different actors, particularly at the household and community levels, to a very narrow range of possible explanations. This argument is made particularly in relation to Ostrom's (1996) discussion of the conditions under which education is successfully produced, or not, in Nigeria. Relatedly, I argue that despite the possible existence of conflicting investment incentives operating at the individual, household, community and state levels, there is an implicit focus in Ostrom's case-study on the role of the community in relation to the public goods aspect of education, based on the implicit view that private and public incentives will be in harmony.

Second, the construction of positive outcomes is premised on technicist descriptions of the relationships between individuals and production processes that predominate in the analysis in the case-studies despite references to the importance of analysing 'embeddedness'. This does not allow for a view of individual users as in any way embedded in wider social relationships. Reviewing Lam's (1996) case of successful complementarity between state and farmers in the production of irrigation services in rural

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[38] In this section I focus on the work of Ostrom (1996) and Lam (1996) as they are the only two authors in the collection who focus on the production of public services.

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Taiwan, I argue that a deterministic focus on the description of 'what works' in the absence of any reference to wider social relationships and norms among users limits the project of understanding what it is about a given resource that facilitates co-operation, and what types of social relations facilitate coproduction. Further, this sub-section also argues for the importance of distinguishing between different types of service/good.

The principal concern of Ostrom's case-study[39] of education production in four villages of Nigeria is to demonstrate the importance of responsiveness on the part of public officials to customers and citizens in the process of service delivery. At the outset she notes that "the actions of public officials at the heads of the state agencies and national governments discourage effective participation of citizens" (1996:1076) and the Nigerian case is set up explicitly to illustrate this point. She observes that in the regions studied there was an uneven policy history in the funding and provision of primary education, with missionary schools being taken over by the government in the 1970s. Subsequent commitments to Universal Education and decentralised provision were deeply affected by macro-economic crises and the cutbacks engendered as a result of the austerity measures induced by structural adjustment programmes. This uneven history resulted in constant changes in policy decisions around the establishment or abolition of school fees, irregularities in teachers' pay, and poor infrastructure development. Government control over schools also meant the end of an era where village schools were more locally managed, either by missionary or philanthropic organisations. Local Government Authorities (LGAs) responsible at the local level for administration were characterised by top-down decision-making, were inefficient, and distant (in a social sense) from the villages they were meant to serve, features common to all four LGAs that the fieldwork included.

Catalysts of change were however found at the village-level although there were differences in the functioning of schools, with two villages in western and eastern Nigeria demonstrating a high level of commitment to school development, which translated into high participation rates, and above-average examination results. Two villages visited in central Nigeria, however, demonstrated the opposite - poor commitment to school development, despite relative economic prosperity. These schools were poorly maintained, there were higher rates of dropout, and students were withdrawn from school when their labour was required. These discrepancies were manifest in a context where the

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[39]Ostrom's case-study of education draws on fieldwork carried out in one period in 1991 which consisted of visits to schools and health clinics in four Local Government Authorities, talking to parents and students and studying official records (p.1076).

administrative and policy circumstances were common to all villages, which indicated to Ostrom that explanations for them were to be found at the level of the villages. Commitments to local development were clearly to be found in two of the villages, but not in the other two.

What catalyses coproduction or participation in service production? Despite huge barriers placed on education participation through the inefficiencies of state functioning, the two villages with positive education outcomes struggled against the odds and succeeded through sheer persistence. Ostrom notes that a critical difference is that the two villages with positive outcomes had both had missionary schools that were taken over by the government, and the ones with poor outcomes had state-provided schools. However, Ostrom does little with this quite striking difference. It is not clear from her arguments whether the fact that village involvement was encouraged during the time of missionary schools made a key difference in developing the school, and whether this tradition endured despite subsequent changes in school management. Ostrom's failure to develop this observation makes it unclear whether she considers the development of norms of co-operation during that time to be significant factors in enabling community participation.

Ostrom concludes by noting that "only the most determined citizens will persist in coproductive activities" in the face of low or no encouragement or effort from public agencies and officials. However, she does not elaborate on what underpins the determination of the members of the two 'coproductive' villages. An attempt at explanation is made in her statement that, in the two poor outcome villages, 'parents did not value education highly' (p.1078). Despite the enormity of its implications for all aspects of education production, this statement is not substantiated, defended or explored in any detail. If users do not have "value" for the service or good considered, then surely constraints to co-operation rest at a very fundamental level, and efforts at coproduction have to begin with stimulating perceptions of value, and ascertaining why low value is placed on education. How would 'value' be understood or measured, and what differences in the two sets of villages could explain why there was value for education in one set and not in another? For example, it is striking that she does not consider the impact of different livelihoods and children's involvement in economic activities as a possible explanatory factor in the Nigerian case, although she does observe in passing that children are withdrawn from school for labour use. Thus, labour and economic issues are subordinated to participation in coproduction, and possible complexities in investment decision-making are subsumed under the rather broad category of "value". These

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questions are particularly important because she notes that in all of the villages "it was possible to mobilize citizen effort for community affairs and the coproduction of goods and services" (p.1076), which makes the lack of mobilisation around education, in particular, in the poor outcome villages particularly glaring.

The critique of the limitations of Ostrom's education case, particularly in the light of the last sub-section, are however intended less to pick out the limitations of her argument and more to make the point that in Ostrom's overall approach there is a bias towards analysis of institutional constraints operating at the level of public agencies, without developing analysis of the factors that inhibit the actions of citizens, or users of the service. Her case-study of primary education is also weak because it pays little attention to the particular characteristics of education, and applies the synergy and coproduction rationales in much the same way as she does to her case of successful coproduction of condominial water systems in Brazil. There is little reference to context, and no reflection on how co-operation may be motivated by shared values or interests between diverse users. I argue however that this is precisely the problem of using deterministic approaches to analyse public service production, an argument I continue to develop in the following sections of this chapter. Instead, an understanding of the different expectations and values that users derive from the resource to be produced should be the first step that informs the shape of the production function as well as the design of the processes that put the production process into effect.

Part of these limitations are explained by the emphasis on constructive outcomes in these case-studies, concerned as they are with focusing on the role that formal institutions can play in making public delivery systems more effective, and reinforcing the point made in Ostrom's conclusions to the case of "successful" coproduction (condominial water systems), that "[m]aking these systems work effectively over the long run requires as much change in the attitude and operational routines of public agencies as it requires input from residents in all phases of the project". Lam's case-study of irrigation service production is motivated by three concerns: to reflect on "how government agencies can be designed to perform effectively, and complement citizens' efforts in broader institutional settings" (p.1040); to reflect on the ways in which "rules work together to allow individuals to realize their productive potential" (p.1040); and to highlight the replicability of different institutional mechanisms in efforts at "institutional reforms in other public sector contexts" (p.1051). The embeddedness of actors in socio-economic contexts is a secondary concern,

and is not used to reflect on how rules are formed and implemented, but to an extent as the backdrop against which institutional reform is attempted.

Common-pool resources are likely to face a greater challenge in terms of fostering co-operation among groups of users than in terms of fostering mutual value for the resources per se. Cleaver's study of communal water resource management in Zimbabwe argues against the assumption that the only solution to problems of collective action in relation to CPR lies in finding the right incentives. This assumption, she argues, results in the "abstraction of the individual from a lifeworld" (1997:1), and a conceptualisation of institutions primarily as organisations dominated by the 'formal manifestations of collective action; contracts, committees and meetings" (ibid.). Such a focus also leads to (or is a result of) a very specific and narrow definition of 'productivity', which excludes focus on reproductive uses of resources, and hence the activities of women, the primary reproducers within households (ibid.).[40] Different purposes, different relationships and different values are likely to influence the user-resource relationships, and Cleaver pleads for a unified, and not compartmentalised view of the reproductive and productive requirements that underpin household labour and resource organisation.

As Lam's case-study is of irrigation for farming purposes rather than household purposes, the value of discussing or taking into account household dynamics may not appear obvious. However, as Cleaver notes, 'individual participation in the activities of collective action may be mediated by household dynamics" (ibid. p.8), and hence dynamics arising from the lifeworlds of individuals need to be incorporated into any analytical framework concerned with the engagement of individuals with institutions in processes of development. There is no reflection of the lifeworlds[41] of farmers in Lam's study, nor of the residents in Ostrom's study, and on how they may shape the relationship between users and officials.

Preferences are not the only aspect of the relationship between users to the service being produced that are likely to be shaped by the dynamics of social relationships. If there are

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[40]For instance, the preferences of women users of water vary from those of men for three simple reasons: their use for the water is different, their relationship to the resource is shaped by their general workloads in the division of labour, and the conditions under which they can physically gain the access of water are likely to vary with use and be influenced by their relationships with other users (Cleaver 1997).

[41] The word 'lifeworlds' is used widely through this thesis and requires definition. Many of the authors cited in the thesis use the term lifeworlds too, but I follow Long's definition: "It simultaneously implies both action and meaning. ... It is actor observed rather than observer defined. Everyday life is experienced as an ordered reality, shared with others ... This "order" appears both in the ways in which people manage their social relationships and in how they problematize their situations." (1989b:247).

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constraints to the participation of any members of the user groups concerned, that is not reflected in the discussions in either case-study. Many of the features of Ostrom's condominial water supply case-study that are indicators of successful coproduction rely on participation: the involvement of local citizens at every stage of planning, the facilitation of citizen decision-making "in a process of negotiation among neighbours and with project personnel", increasing the responsiveness of public agencies to customers (Ostrom 1996:1075). She concludes that the processes of negotiation necessitated by the involvement of users at all levels of design can alter the issues that are raised - or, the 'shape of the production function" (p.1081).

However, although she also notes that the process of getting neighbours to negotiate and agree on their commitments to design, implementation and maintenance is not simple, and frequently time-consuming, little is mentioned of the kinds of differences that may have emerged, or the kinds of compromises and trade-offs that may have been effected and what those may say about 'social capital', and networks of relations between neighbours that facilitated co-operation. Cleaver makes the further point that informal networks based on reciprocity and wedded to the principle of conflict avoidance often play a very strong part in shaping people's relationship to collective resources and to each other, often overlooked in formal processes of participation that are institutionalised within programmes. If incentives are necessary to stimulate participation, then primary considerations should include how socio-economic status, spatial location, and changing livelihood priorities over time and by season, affect the resources available to members' of households to participate in decision-making processes (Cleaver 1997:18).

In conclusion, I make three arguments in relation to the way in which the coproduction cases address the challenge of production of diverse goods. First, these case-studies reflect little on the social relations in which the actors in coproduction are embedded, and implicitly assume a homogeneous population in terms of socio-economic position. Further, if co-operation, as Putnam argues, "is founded on a very lively sense of the mutual value to the participants of such cooperation" (1993:168), then analysis of the extent to which there is mutual value is an essential starting-point.

Second, although there is some reflection on the differences between different types of goods and services, the implications for the production processes relating to different services are not explored. While Lam bases his arguments on a definition of the types of relations to which a CPR like irrigation gives rise (p.1041), in Ostrom's cases, no attention

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is paid to the fact that condominial water systems and education are different types of goods, and the extent to which the questions asked of the relationships between coproducers and the good are likely to vary and hence necessitate perhaps different analytical approaches. Fostering co-operation around a mixed good is likely to be significantly different from processes associated with CPR or pure public goods. Again, her concern with differences between different types of services and goods lies in the technological specifications of production functions, rather than the basic analytical approach that is required to set the context for production.

Third, the emphasis on constructing rule-based relationships between users and state agencies gives rise in both authors' work to a focus on formal rules and structures at the expense of understanding the ways in which informal relations and rules can mediate the functioning of formal institutions. Although Ostrom acknowledges that "[d]esigning institutional arrangements that help induce successful coproductive strategies is far more daunting than demonstrating their theoretical existence" (p.1080), her exposition on the conditions for coproduction identify only formal, institutional mechanisms.[42] This, I will argue in the rest of the thesis, is a fundamental limitation of coproduction theory, as it overestimates the ease with which rules can be enforced, and services can be designed to meet the diverse needs and preferences of differentiated populations. As sub-section 2.2.1 argues, education gives rise to conflicts over its private and public goods aspects, and hence, unless relations between users and the goods or service in question are analysed, specifying the relations of production between different actors, and identifying the basis for co-operation will be difficult.

2.3. Social endowment or constructable good? Social capital in theory and development practice

The last section points out that despite the theoretical interest of the coproduction framework in the embeddedness of inter-institutional interaction in relations, norms and networks based on trust, the case-studies discussed actually spend little time on exploring the basis of interaction between agents, and more on the institutional mechanisms for designing coproduction (Ostrom) and the rules that are likely to aid the regulation of CPR (Lam). I attribute this disjunction between theoretical interest and empirical presentation to the explicit concern of the coproduction framework with finding new forms of

[42]She identifies contracts, legal options, institutional incentives and technologies that foster "complementary production possibilities" (p.1082).

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organisation that facilitate co-operation between different institutional agents in development, within the wider aim of assessing prospects for constructing new and positive outcomes in development. While acknowledging the importance of endowments of social capital within a society, the coproduction framework is far more concerned with demonstrating that social capital is 'constructable' even in the face of poor endowments of the same.

This section argues that the constructability hypothesis (the argument that imaginative organisational arrangements can produce synergy over time) exposes some of the limitations of the coproduction framework as developed in application to the thesis' concern: the achievement of universal primary education in India through multi-actor collaboration. The central issue within this discussion is the definition of social capital, a concept developed by social theorists,[43] and its application to the development sector. I argue here that the concept of social capital as applied to development is used to highlight positive elements of trust while underplaying the extent to which conflict and exclusion are also aspects of social structures that need to be factored into analysis of prospects for coproduction, and ultimately, synergy. I refer to this usage of social capital interchangeably as 'applied' or 'productive' social capital, drawing on Bourdieu's discussion of social capital to distinguish key aspects and limitations of the former. Sub-section 2.3.1 presents the main features of applied social capital and its limitations. Sub-section 2.3.2 argues for a diagnostic framework rather than the determinism that is implied within applied social capital from the perspective of processes that lead to and reinforce social exclusion. While the constructability hypothesis is not rejected, given that the focus of this thesis itself is on achievement of a policy goal, this section argues that constructability and endowments should not be treated as oppositional, but that analysing the latter is essential for identification of the means for achieving the former.

2.3.1 Applied Social Capital, networks and the basis of trust in social relations.

"The most basic issue" in studying the origins of synergistic relationships, argues Evans, "is the question of endowments versus constructability" (1996b:1124). The endowments versus constructability argument draws critically on the work of Robert Putnam (1988) whose seminal work on social capital and the implications of trust and social networks for civic action in Italy forms the theoretical basis for the applied social capital literature.

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[43] Putnam attributes the earliest use of the term in its present form to Jane Jacobs in The Death and Life of Great American Cities (New York: Random House, 1961)

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Putnam recognises the public good aspects of social capital, defined as "features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (1993:167), and is concerned with how its production can be encouraged. How personal trust can evolve into social or collective trust is a central concern of his work. Drawing on a comparison of North and South Italy, Putnam concludes the following: a) that vertical networks cannot sustain co-operation and trust, therefore societies that are hierarchical and socially differentiated are likely to foster low levels of social capital; b) stocks of social capital are cumulative and self-reinforcing, and result in 'virtuous circles' being formed; conversely, where there is low civic co-operation arising from low stocks of social capital, then the 'vicious cycles' are self-reinforcing. Where vicious cycles are in play, he argues that individuals are more content to cope with the consequences (patron-clientism, hierarchy, relative lawlessness) than to exert individual effort to find ways out of the vicious cycle; and c) that "[s]ocial context and history profoundly condition the effectiveness of institutions" (p.182).

Evans, on the other hand, favours a constructability hypothesis over an endowments view (that socio-cultural endowments are givens) primarily because it is more optimistic, preferring to hypothesise that "[s]ynergy becomes a latent possibility in most contexts, waiting to be brought to life by the institutional entrepreneurship" (ibid.). Thus the constraint facing synergy lies more with the public institutions that have failed to awaken the spirit of co-operation that is buried within communities (p.1125). Based on the cases in his edited collection, he argues that "prior endowments of social capital are not the key constraining factor", but the challenges lie in overcoming "the difficulties involved in "scaling up" micro-level social capital to generate solidary ties and social action on a scale that is politically and economically efficacious"[44] (ibid.).

It is the pessimism of Putnam's conclusions that Evans (1996b) challenges with his optimistic constructability hypothesis. Putnam views social capital, like other forms of conventional capital, as an accumulative resource - 'them as has, gets' (1993:169). For Evans, the social world and its structures are far more malleable than is acknowledged in the work of Putnam. He argues:

> "...social structures depend on people's perceptions of
> themselves and their neighbours and ... these perceptions are
> malleable. Social identities are constructed and

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[44] Although Evans provides no specific definition of "social capital", he draws upon the work of other writers, particularly Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1993).

reconstructed on a regular basis and can be reconstructed in
ways that enhance prospects for synergy"

(Evans 1996b:1129)

Given malleable social structures, incorporating specific 'soft' technologies of change built on the participation of civic organisations into all aspects of public service provision can also help overcome constraints arising from low social capital, or low incentives to co-operate. Evans' optimism rests on the cases of success that he cites, all achieved against the background of low trust and little evidence of social co-operation, and on the confidence he has that "contexts are not immutable" (p.1129).

The argument that development is based on historically and culturally dependent endowments of social capital defines the boundaries between the constructability/ endowments argument. While Evans tends towards the optimistic constructability hypothesis, Putnam veers towards the endowments argument, cautioning that "[b]uilding social capital will not be easy, but it is the key to making democracy work" (p.185). Acknowledging that institutional change is a very slow process, he emphasises the relevance of history and historical processes in determining prospects for constructability. Central to both sides of the endowments/constructability equation, however, is the belief in the importance of productive social capital, in the form of informal networks and norms of trust and reciprocity, in sustaining co-operation.

2.3.1.1 The conditions of co-operation: social capital, networks and trust

Productive social capital refers to the networks based on norms of trust and reciprocity through which co-operation, facilitated by the exchange of information and the reliability of enforcement (through modeling, socialisation and sanctions), can be achieved. Applied to the production of public services and goods across institutions, social capital is viewed as creating an externality, sharing with public goods the fundamental problem of underinvestment, which necessitates its production "as a by-product of other social activities" (Putnam 1993:170). Applied social capital is emphasised as a means of guaranteeing the generation of trust and the discouragement of malfeasance, through the enforcement of sanctions based on the "embeddedness" of agreements "within a larger structure of personal relations and social networks" (Putnam 1993:172). Putnam is concerned with the conditions under which collective action is fostered, and argues that a fundamental condition for co-operation is that participants should share a mutual sense of

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value for co-operation, and the norm of 'generalized reciprocity'. Like Coleman, upon whose work he draws heavily, he emphasises the importance of norms and sanctions in fostering this sense of value, because through social networks, trust becomes "transitive and spread" (1993: 169).

For Coleman, social capital is a resource that is defined by its function. His generic definition refers to a variety of entities which "consist of some aspect of social structures, and ... facilitate certain actions of actors ... within the structure" as constituting social capital (1988:81). Social capital is thus understood to be facilitative and productive, a property of the structure of relations between and among actors. Four functions of social capital (or the productive aspects of social relationships) which further the aims and interests of people are: a) the provision of information channels that facilitate action; b) the existence of mutual expectations based on trust and obligations which enables people to draw upon their 'credit' in times of need; c) the production of norms which support productivity in collective action such as "the norm that one should forgo self-interest and act in the interests of the collectivity" (p.87), backed up by sanctions if these norms are not upheld; and d) the promotion of inter-generational transfers of human capital within families, in particular, where parents spend time and effort to transfer their own learning to their children. Furthermore, he argues that social capital is essential for the creation of human capital; without it human capital is meaningless.[45]

The expansion of social capital as the basis for co-operation in the production of public services necessitates finding forms or 'ways of organising' which are based on 'networks',[46] rather than markets[47] or the hierarchies of conventional bureaucratic/public administration systems. Wherever co-operation or coordination[48] is desirable (in order to avoid problems of free-riding that are associated with collectivities in relation to common property resources), or inevitable (as in situations where the actions of one agent or agency influence or depend on others' actions), the importance of studying social networks becomes relevant. Networks are also valuable where the exchange of knowledge or socialisation are important for the achievement of corporate goals (Ouchi 1991). Thus the

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[45]For instance, Coleman views social capital as essential to children's development, especially in terms of the human capital possessed by parents: "But this human capital may be irrelevant to outcomes for children if parents are not an important part of their children's lives, if their human capital is employed exclusively at work or elsewhere outside the home" (1988:88).

[46] In the literature on network analysis, networks are understood to be based on "cooperation and trust" which enables them to "coordinate through less formal, more egalitarian and cooperative means" (Thompson 1991:171).

[47]The 'ideal' market in economics has "no room for bargaining, negotiation or mutual adjustment" because the "claims of allocative efficiency" upon which it rests "involves large numbers of price-taking anonymous buyers and sellers supplied with perfect information" (Lorenz 1991:183).

application of learning from the building and sustaining of networks in social life to inter-institutional collaboration in the public services arena is a central concern of the coproduction framework.

Generalisations about networks, how they are formed, whom they include, and how they work, are also hard to develop.[49] Different networks are characterised or identified by different social relationships (Knoke and Kuklinski 1991).[50] References to social networks in the coproduction literature draw on an 'ideal type', derived from the contrast between the assumed 'flat' organisational structure of networks and the vertical structure of hierarchical bureaucracies, which suggests that networks are "informal relationships between *essentially equal social agents and agencies*" (Frances et al. 1991:14, emphasis added). However, networks are often exclusive, with their own systems of rewards and punishment (ibid.), and can be "primarily "vertical," linking unequal agents in asymmetric relations of hierarchy and dependence" (Putnam 1993:173). Further, different forms of networks exist for different purposes, and trust is produced within networks in different ways.[51]

Fundamental to the success of networks in facilitating the achievement of corporate goals are incentives for co-operation. The 'rational economic man' is considered to have little incentive to co-operate owing to the primacy of the pursuit of self-interest. A significant body of literature considers prospects for co-operation towards corporate goals to be dim (Olson 1965). The problems of failure of collective action are most commonly discussed in relation to Hardin's 'tragedy of the commons' dilemma, where low incentives for collective action in relation to the use of common property resources are considered to lead to the probable exploitation or over-use of these resources by individuals who choose to act as free-riders in order to protect their self-interest (Brown and Jackson 1986). Putnam notes that in the absence of trust, it is rational for individuals to default (1993:164). With co-operation becoming an irrational action under these circumstances - no one can trust that the other parties will not be freeriders - collective interests and long-term individual interests are likely to suffer, unless an external agency serves as a neutral enforcer of

[48]Defined by Frances et al. (1991:1) as "bringing into a relationship otherwise disparate activities or events".

[49] The adaptation of the study of networks to development is a relatively recent phenomenon. Informal networks are most commonly discussed in relation to either the industrial sector (Lorenz 1991, Frances et al. 1991) or to the ascribed networks that sustain marginalised groups such as women (Werbner 1991). They are less developed in discussions on the management of public services.

[50] The concept of 'relations' is central to the understanding of the behaviour of any actor who "... typically participates in a social system involving many other actors, who are significant reference points in one another's' decisions. The nature of the relationships a given actor has with other system members thus may affect that focal actor's perceptions, beliefs and actions." (Knoke and Kuklinski 1991:173).

individual commitments (Mackintosh 1995). External agencies are also not exempt from the politics of self-interest. For instance, the literature on the 'new economics of organisation' argues that bureaucratic agents form networks that allow them to maximise their own self-interest within an overall organisational hierarchy that minimises the possibilities for co-operation, thus co-operating to further very narrow self-interests (Wade 1992:51). The implication is that networks can be subverted to fulfil individual interests such as corruption, rather than the pursuance of common goals.

Challenges to the pessimistic scenario presented in the 'tragedy of the commons' argument are commonly mounted, and are important components of productive social capital arguments. Collective failure can, and often does, affect individual interests, albeit in the medium to long term, thus providing individuals with incentives to co-operate (Mackintosh 1995). Further, the 'tragedy of the commons' scenario "underpredicts" voluntary co-operation and the extent to which social norms and networks exist between people, thus leading invariably to exchanges of information and bases for co-operation. Relatedly, it overlooks the possibility that non-economic incentives for collaboration may also facilitate co-operation (Cleaver 1997).

The critique of the pessimistic view of collective action in relation to public goods is rooted in a wider debate on how to theorise and understand motivations for human behaviour in different situations. Conclusions about self-interested behaviour have less to do with the analysis of networks and more to do with the underlying hypotheses about the nature of human behaviour. Often, as in the case of the 'self-interested' bureaucrat above, they rest on a very narrow conception of the foundations of human motivation, in rational choice theory, based on what Granovetter terms an 'undersocialized conception of man' (1992:53-54). Granovetter attributes this to the particular trajectory of the utilitarian tradition of economic theory, and the attempts to grapple with the question of the origins of different kinds of exchanges.[52] The theoretical challenge, therefore, is to understand human behaviour as a complex of economic and social motivations, and to see how that can translate into forms of collective action that either compensates for state and market failure, or complements the activities of state and market.

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[51] For instance, Harriss (2000) identifies three ways in which trust is produced: process-based trust (tied to past exchange), ascribed trust, based on characteristics such as family background, ethnicity, gender; and institutional based trust, "tied to formal societal structures" such as formal rules.

[52] For instance - did markets emerge because of the predisposition of human nature to progress on the basis of exchange, or did the separation of economic institutions from the family in the course of modernisation cause a break with the tradition of socially embedded human behaviour? (Granovetter 1992:53-54).

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Self-interest can be viewed as a primary engine of co-operation, for whatever purposes, without suggesting that individuals are incapable of working together for collective goals. Bourdieu argues that the reduction of the idea of exchange based on self-interest to the mercantile world 'which is objectively and subjectively oriented toward the maximisation of profit', relegating the non-material world to the realm of 'disinterestedness', is a 'historical invention of capitalism', i.e. a deliberate approach to promote a view of interests as materially driven (1986:46). He further argues that individuals invest in networks of relationships with the conscious or unconscious aim of "establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term" (1986:52). If that can be assumed, then the focus in studying social networks for the purposes of public service provision, should be on what interests drive the formation, and most importantly, the *maintenance* of social networks, and under what conditions co-operation aimed at a 'common good' thrives.

A theory of social capital to be applied to the production of services thus requires clear definitions of social capital relevant to different contexts, and clear understandings of different kinds of networks, different relationships of trust and the norms on which they are based. Given the difficulty of specifying social capital[53] beyond its broadest contours, one of the ways attempted is to insist on its measurability: "the measurement challenge is to turn anecdotes about social networks into quantified data" (Rose, cited in Morris 1998:4). Morris' (1998) review of usages (or attempted definitions) of social capital provides a summary of different indicators that authors use while trying to capture social capital. The indicators (or definitional elements) that are offered as measurements of social capital within a given society include, among others: 'cultural conditions' including 'changes in attitudes, practices and knowledge' and 'the importance of informal learning' (Putterman 1995, cited in Morriss 1998:4); indices of civic community (membership of associations, readership of newspapers), institutional performance (performance of regional governments) and citizen satisfaction with government performance (Helliwell and Putnam 1995, cited in Morris 1998:5); the extent of trust in informal networks and how they help coping strategies in transitional economies (Rose 1996:5, cited in ibid.); the extent of trust and the strength and norms of civic co-operation (Knack and Keefer 1996, cited in ibid.).

Methodologies to measure the indicators above are flawed in a way that illuminates the problem of grappling with intangible and norm-based concepts such as trust, and hence are

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[53] Morris notes that the 'definition and measurement of social capital remain two issues which are yet to be resolved in the literature; there is a problem of mapping the concept of social capital into an operational measure' (1998:4).

worth a brief consideration. For example, Knack and Keefer measured trust on the basis of samples drawn from a large database,[54] measuring people's attitudes to five questions that were based on assessing dishonesty ('keeping money you have found', 'avoiding a fare on public transport', 'claiming benefits when you are not entitled to') and extent of civic mindedness ('failing to report damage you have done accidentally to parked vehicle', 'cheating on taxes if you have the chance') - all scenarios in which an individual's actions were likely to affect others (cited in Morris 1998). These questions in themselves may be fair indicators of trust, but the problem arises in interpreting results. Measuring attitudes can only help provide partial indicators - a more holistic picture emerges only when attitudes and actual behaviours arising from them are studied together. What people say and what they do does not necessarily coincide, and attitudes cannot be the basis of concluding about the extent of social capital available in a given social group. Studying the forms that social capital takes, in the actual behaviours, and relationships people have with one another would involve studying the detail of interactions, and not relying merely on evidence of the number of associations that exist, or the attitudes that people hold about the quality of civic life.

Further, it is presumably the content of associations (and here again, the focus is narrowly on formal networks) and of newspapers that provide the clue of the kind of 'social capital' that inheres in a society, not just the number of them. For instance, is there a distinction between associations and clubs that come together with the explicit aims of furthering co-operation and widening networks, and those that already exist within a given community and have membership criteria that exclude sections of the population? Furthermore, associations can foster authoritarianism if representation of the group is taken over by one or few members (Bourdieu 1986:53). Putnam, whose arguments regarding the role of civic associations in influencing the volume of social capital in a society has been highly influential, insists that associations or "networks of civic engagement" as he calls them, facilitate "intense horizontal interaction" (1993:173) and foster communication and norms of reciprocity, reduce transaction costs, and importantly, "embody past success at collaboration" (p.174), thus laying the grounds for accumulating further trust for future collaboration. Further, he argues that networks of civic engagement provide greater chances of cutting across social divisions. However, it can also be argued that membership in formal associations does not account for the totality of individuals' interactions with the

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[54] Of thousands of respondents from 29 countries to the World Values Survey.

social world, and thus again, provides only a partial view of social capital.[55] This reinforces the importance of distinguishing between different associations and networks particularly on the basis of their aims and organisational forms.[56] It further highlights the importance of not conflating informal networks with formal associations in relation to arguments about social capital. While Putnam himself acknowledges that "[n]ot all associations of the like-minded are committed to democratic goals nor organized in an egalitarian fashion" (1993:221), he persists in using associations and newspaper readership as indicators of civic engagement, which, as Putzel comments "are poor substitutes for this comprehensive vision of civic engagement" (1997:944).

Critiques of applied social capital have been comprehensively made primarily on the basis of the tautological nature of some of the premises (Harriss and de Renzio 1997, Putzel 1997, Robinson and White 1997). First, there is a tendency to circularity in argument - on the one hand, it is argued that the development of norms and networks for co-operation are inculcated and sustained by modeling and socialisation (Putnam 1993), while on the other, norms and networks can be argued to be necessary *for* socialisation (Ouchi 1991). Another example is provided by Harriss (2000) who points out the circularity in Putnam's definition of social capital - on the one hand, social capital is "based in 'norms of generalized reciprocity' and 'networks of civic engagement'", but on the other, these are also cited as features of social capital.

Second, there is a conflict between, on the one hand, identifying social capital purely by its public good aspect[57] (Coleman 1988, Putnam 1993), and, on the other, recognising that it "can be a force for anti-social conspiracy as much as socially-oriented cooperation" (Robinson and White 1997:34). Third, Putnam veers between recognising the merit of strong interpersonal ties in fostering civic engagement on the one hand, and on the other, arguing that such ties foster co-operation only within defined groups whereas 'weak' ties created by membership in associations are more likely to promote co-operation across social cleavages (Harriss and De Renzio 1997:924).

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[55]For instance, there is the rather famous example of Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma bomber, who was a member of a bowling club (Levi, cited in Putzel 1997)

[56]Putnam includes co-operatives, and leisure-based associations like choral societies and sports clubs all under the umbrella of horizontal networks, although they are likely to have different goals and structures.

[57] Both Harriss and De Renzio (1997), and Putzel (1997) differentiate between Coleman's and Putnam's meanings of 'public goods', arguing that Coleman is principally talking about the benefits to *individuals* (see Coleman 1988: 92-93), while Putnam aggregates this to talk about macro-level, or society-level benefit. Putzel characterises the latter's meaning as '*for the public good*' (p.941, emphasis in original).

Apart from definitional inconsistencies, an array of criticisms are levelled against the apparent pessimism of Putnam's conclusion that societies with low stocks of social capital are condemned to a vicious cycle in which they settle for negative forms of social existence because the costs to individuals of changing the norms are too high. Harriss (2000) objects to the 'cultural determinism' implicit in 'them that has, gets' (Putnam, quoted earlier) despite Putnam's qualifications.[58] Robinson and White also term this determinism the "Putnam paradox" on the grounds that it suggests a downward spiral for localities that do not have social capital and are, therefore, deemed to need it most (1997:35). In other words, Putnam's social capital arguments give rise to self-fulfilling prophecies.

Alternative formulations are suggested by other authors, which facilitate bridging over these contradictory elements of the applied social capital literature. For instance, Harriss and De Renzio suggest viewing social capital as being constituted by different forms: family and kinship connections; wider social networks or 'associational life'; cross-sectional linkages or 'networks of networks'; political capital (the norms and networks that shape the relations between civil society and the state); institutional and policy framework; social norms and values (1997:933). Viewing these as constituent elements of social capital will enable the construction of a far more detailed picture of endowments of social capital, and can give rise to discussions of the prospects for constructability, and the shape of design of interventions that seek to achieve synergy.

To these arguments, well developed in the literature reviewed above, I add five more, continuing from the arguments made in the last section. First, there is still a need to explicitly specify the goal of synergy that is intended. There are a variety of intended outcomes implicit within the work on applied social capital, ranging from democracy in Putnam's work to the regulation of use of CPR in Lam, to the goal (unspecified in Ostrom) of universal education. While each of these goals may be oriented towards a wider objective of achieving well-being, how they are to be achieved will have to be specified concurrent with recognition of the possibility of diverse meanings and values associated with the goal concerned. Further, outcomes expected also help to define the indicators used to measure social capital - for instance, the emphasis on democracy in Putnam's work also explains why the spread of newspapers is considered by some authors to constitute an indicator of social capital.

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[58]See Harriss and De Renzio 1997, and Putzel 1997 for critiques of Putnam's empirical conclusions drawn from the USA and Italy.

Second, while it is acceptable to propose that stocks of trust can facilitate co-operation and synergy (Robinson and White 1997:35), not taking into account possible contradictions in the influence exerted by social networks on individual agents prevents our understanding of the ways in which priorities for co-operation are established, and how they may change over time. If the mutual value of co-operation between people in a network or group is critical for collective outcomes, then we need to understand what trade-offs are involved in the decision to co-operate, given the fairly universal acceptance that co-operation for collective gain is not a 'natural' state, but the result of a conscious choice made on the basis of perception of gain, howsoever defined. Harriss and De Renzio further point out that, as individuals 'inside' a network are likely to gain most from shared norms of trust, "the condition about non-excludability of benefits does not necessarily hold", thus belying the view that social capital has public good characteristics (1997:926).

Third, there is a problematic reduction of complex and dynamic social processes or features into relatively simplified analytical variables. Evans (1996b) acknowledges that the case-studies of synergy do not problematise the role of politics or take possible conflicts of interests into account. However, these factors are presented more as determining the 'conditions' for synergy, than recognising that they are a part of continuously reconstituting social relationships, networks and norms. Preconditions or 'key structural variables' implicitly considered important are also drawn out by Robinson and White (1997): degree of social cohesion[59] within a given society and the degree of democratic governance.[60] Similarly, the properties of government institutions, "hard-to-change" features of social structures like the degree of inequality, kinds of political regime, are all cited as factors that influence the creation of synergy (Evans 1996b), rather than as possible outcomes and/or, somewhat tautologically, constituents of social capital. This suggests that either embedded social relations or environmental/institutional factors are treated as residual, depending on what different writers would choose to privilege as the critical engine, rather than unifying them into an analytical framework that would help illuminate particular contexts.

Fourth, critiques of the endowments approach as articulated by Putnam hinge on his nostalgic 'communitarian' bias (Putzel 1997) - the tendency to "pose civil society against

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[59]Social cohesion in turn depends on "the amount of structural inequality and the intensity of social conflicts, both horizontal and vertical" (Robinson and White 1997:33).

[60]Including "the nature of the political regime and, in particular, the legal framework governing the activities of the voluntary sector, respect for civil and political rights, and the overall transparency and accountability of governmental and political institutions" (Robinson and White 1997:34).

the state" (Harriss and De Renzio 1997:934) - which overlooks the inequality that is inherent in civil society (Walzer 1999). This bias suggests a causal linearity that presupposes that high endowments of social capital are necessary for effective governance (1997:934), when, in fact, the opposite relationship is recognised in Tendler and Freedheim (1994), and the synergy case-studies. As Putzel notes, critiques of Putnam foster one conclusion, supported by the synergy case-studies: "a strong state and strong civil society must go together" (1997:947). The communitarian bias is underpinned by the view that the Third World state is incapable of serving the public interest because it is dominated by inefficient, rent-seeking agents. Thus prescriptions for reform advocated involve cutting back the state and relying more on the networks and norms of civic society that facilitate co-operation.[61] However, Tendler and Freedheim argue against this cynical view -"much of the advice about public sector reform is therefore derived from a lopsided understanding of developing-country performance" (1994:1771). Institutional incentives and rules, according to Lam, are the key to ensuring effective state action, not the cutting back of the state as neo-liberal pro-market advocates suggest in response to evidence of 'state failure'.

The constructability hypothesis is favoured by many commentators (Harriss 2000, Harriss and De Renzio 1997, Putzel 1997, Robinson and White 1997), including Ostrom who argues that the foundations of new institutions for enhancing co-operation can even build upon the 'extensive common knowledge' that individuals hold about their social situations and the incentives that constrain co-operation (cited in Harriss and De Renzio 1997:924). However, I argue that the coproduction framework, while emphasising constructability, tends to harbour a 'statist' bias based on a very formal conception of the state. Despite the importance given to understanding the norms and networks that sustain co-operation in society and inter-institutional collaboration, case studies of successful collaboration emphasise the central role of the state. Relying on local organisations, it is argued, is in itself insufficient, as they may not have the capacity to perform complex tasks which government agencies are better equipped to handle, and indeed, are established to handle. With the exception of Tendler and Freedheim's (1994) case-study of highly transformative primary health care reform in Ceara, a poor region in north-eastern Brazil, which focuses on the development of networks between officials and users, the other synergy case-studies, as already argued, focus exclusively on formal mechanisms.

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[61] For instance, Wade notes that interest of economists in synergy stems from the view that "organizational change, offering the prospect of improved performance without much accompanying capital expenditure, becomes an increasingly attractive route to explore; other options are running out." (1992: 54).

Fifth, I argue that productive social capital offers limited possibilities for the analysis of social and economic differentiation. Levi (1996, cited in Harriss and De Renzio 1997) has noted this point more generally. Although Evans acknowledges that inequality and differentiation are factors constraining social capital (1996b), they need to be woven into the understanding of social capital, not seen as factors extraneous to it. Ostrom and Lam's case studies barely touch on the way in which differences of gender, ethnicity, age or race may affect the relations within the user populations they discuss, or affect the negotiation processes that they argue are the foundation of coproductive activity. More broadly, however, it can be argued that working within a frame that lays heavy emphasis on the possession of stocks of social capital will result in making deterministic arguments, using these stocks as the fundamental variable. Given definitional weaknesses in the social capital literature, and the difficulties inherent in specifying, measuring and comprehending what social norms mean to people in different cultural contexts, deterministic arguments are unhelpful.

2.3.2 From determinism to diagnosis: social capital, exclusion and coproduction

It is one of the contentions of this thesis that if lessons are to be learned about building development interventions that enhance co-operation, a more 'diagnostic' approach is required, that may help to blend an endowments analysis with an evaluation of the prospects for constructability. In this sub-section I draw on the work of Bourdieu to suggest a broader framework that enables moving from an analysis of endowments towards a constructability hypothesis. I argue that to emphasise constructability over endowments in a way that polarises these two arguments is dangerous as it underestimates the importance and relevance of endowments of social capital (conceived, as argued, in broader terms than that of Putnam's narrowly 'democracy' oriented perspective). In particular, I contend that the concept of social capital is most usefully applied to analysis of how individuals relate with the wider social world, and less usefully to a very deterministic understanding of collective action as an aggregate of the engagement of individuals with formal institutions.

In this sub-section I argue that focusing on the achievement of inclusion in relation to participation (both in terms of the inputs and outputs) in the production of different public services is essential where *universal* coverage or benefit is the goal, as in the case of education. Thus a challenge for coproduction lies within the extent to which it allows for the analysis of exclusion. A diagnostic model based on social capital would seek to

understand the social bases of exclusion and inclusion, power relations and scope for co-operation. This, I argue, is essential even to study possibilities for synergy between state and civil society, as it grounds the analysis of these institutional sites in a 'real world' understanding of their functioning, rather than on a formal model.

Mackintosh's development of the concept of a 'social settlement' between states and citizens captures the co-operative and conflictual elements of the relationship in a manner that allows for the consideration of cross-institutional identities and networks, and mutual influences in the development of 'meaning' and behaviour:

> "Outside periods of acute turmoil or generalised and active repression, one can understand the relationship between the economic and social activities of the government and the state, and the experiences of citizens, as representing some kind of 'social settlement'. The state builds its behaviour on the social structure of society, reproducing within public services, for example, many of the inequalities of the private sector. It also builds assumptions about *proper* private social relations."
>
> (1997:3, emphasis in original)

The idea of 'social settlements' highlights an important aspect of cross-institutional analysis: it enables moving beyond the idea that public management can be reduced to the study of activities with the argument that "the very concept of public management trails clouds of associations about proper behaviour in the public sphere" (Mackintosh 1997:5). Thus, "representations matter" (ibid.). There is a resounding silence in the synergy case-studies in the matter of discussing the normative aspects of the engagement between public institutions and citizens, and an implicit belief that social capital can 'obey' the formal rules that are deemed necessary for enforcing co-operation. In effect, it may be more realistic to view the public sector 'as a (sparring) partner among other social actors in fighting over, revising and reworking settlements over time' (Mackintosh 1997:6). To reiterate Mackintosh's point: it is not just 'how' things are to be done (activities) that are the subject of reworkings of the settlement, but also 'what' is to be done (values, representations and meanings).

The operation of norms that determine patterns of exclusion and inclusion within settlements have considerable implications for the achievement of the corporate goals of well-being and the 'common good'. Here, a pause is required to clarify what is meant by exclusion. Exclusion, like social capital, is the subject of intense debate especially around

the question of whether, or not, it is a concept that re-bottles old wine and presents it as new (O'Brien et al. 1997).[62] In their review of the concept, O'Brien et al. note that the term, which originated in France in debates about social assistance for the worst-off, is used in different ways: to refer to the 'rupture of social bonds', the monopolisation of resources by some groups at the expense of others, or discrimination (1997:4). The importance of the term 'exclusion' is that it captures the idea that deprivation is not merely an outcome of low income but also an outcome of social processes (though there is considerable overlap) that has specific outcomes, such as being denied "access to goods and services associated with citizenship" (Mackintosh 1997:1). O'Brien et al. provide examples of the 'multi-dimensional' nature of disadvantage in different settings, ranging from concerns with social cohesion in France, to recurrent patterns of entry and exit from income-based poverty in Britain, to the physical exclusion of groups such as children from formal institutions. Psycho-social factors such as the impact of not being able to conform to conventional social patterns, such as food habits, or the impact of stress arising from material insecurity or work-related stress were also found to affect the health of poor households in Britain.

Tracing the causes of deprivation or disadvantage may facilitate a multi-institutional diagnosis of issues of concern, rather than imposing deterministic expectations of what is required from a society or a community in order that it overcomes problems of collective failure. Hence exclusion comes close to the concerns discussed earlier in this chapter, with the connotations of being 'shut out' pertinent in relation to the arguments about membership-based formal associations and networks. Different forms of exclusion can also be analysed as multi-institutional phenomena, where the actions of different institutions (public and private) can be seen to contribute to patterns of exclusion in a society.[63] Exclusion also lends itself to historical analysis, and enables an analysis of the impact of historical events on contemporary ones.

Can the concept of social capital be used to illuminate processes of exclusion and inclusion within social settlements? I argue that the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1986) on different forms of capital and exchange provides analytical tools that facilitate a comprehensive understanding of context within the arena of production of services. I focus on four inter-

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[62]The fact that exclusion is used by authors to refer both to broad outcomes and specific ones is both advantageous and disadvantageous - it lends itself to a variety of contexts (a positive feature), but can also be vague and unspecified in its meaning (a negative feature).

[63]Kabeer and Subrahmanian (1999) demonstrate how different forms of gender disadvantage can be imposed by bureaucratic organisations through the ways in which they structure their interventions. This also supports Mackintosh's views on the role of public institutions in supporting certain representations of what is appropriate public behaviour.

linked elements of his theory of forms of capital, which I consider to be analytically useful for the project of merging analysis of endowments with prospects for constructability.

Different forms of capital and the individual-external world interaction

The idea of 'capital' as a set of endowments which individuals carry and use in different types of exchange, is proposed in social theory. As argued earlier, the concept of social capital embodies an explicit rejection of narrowly materialist explanations of human behaviour, and favours understanding interests as they apply to human decision-making in all spheres. Explicitly (Bourdieu 1986 and Coleman 1988), and implicitly (Putnam 1993), the work on social capital rejects purely functionalist explanations of the working of the material world, and attempts to fuse understandings of rational action with motivation and agency arising from the non-material, social world.

Bourdieu (1986) goes further in arguing against the material/non-material distinction, regarding economic, social and cultural capital as collectively constituting the social world: "...the structure of the distribution of different types and subtypes of capital at a given moment in time represents the immanent structure of the social world" (p.46). His particular theoretical project is to argue for the recognition that 'the most material types of capital - those which are economic in the restricted sense - can present themselves in the immaterial form of cultural capital or social capital and vice versa" (ibid.). Thus Bourdieu's aim is to restore to the social world of 'accumulated history', the analysis of all exchanges, including mercantile exchanges:

> It is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory.
>
> (Bourdieu 1986:46)

In contrast to applied social capital theory which focuses on how social capital can be used for the collective or public good, Bourdieu makes the analytical point that social capital is drawn upon by individuals as a means of functioning in the social world. He defines social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (p.51). That is, membership in a group provides each member with "a

'credential'" a form of credit that can be drawn upon with the backing of collectively owned capital (ibid.).

Interests, reproduction and networks

By restoring the centrality of 'interests' to the individual's engagement with the social world, Bourdieu views the accumulation of social capital as "the product of an endless effort at institution, ... in order to produce and reproduce lasting, useful relationships that can secure material or symbolic profits" (p.52). Individuals thus invest in social networks through developing institutional rites, which ensure that even ascribed networks (such as those based on genealogy or kin) are reproduced to be of use. Thus with networks based on kin, exchanges are controlled in order to ensure as far as possible that new members fit within the definition of the group, although the introduction of new members (i.e. through marriage in a family) may expose the group to "redefinition, alteration, adulteration" (ibid.). However, the process through which different groups constitute their rites, the location of their gatherings, and their practices, can reinforce the homogeneity of the group and facilitate the reproduction of its identity.

Bourdieu's working of the idea of capital in relation to economic, social and cultural exchanges incorporates three important elements or processes: accumulation, reproduction (and hence a focus on history), and the attribution of value. He makes the important point that stocks of social capital are likely to be distributed variably across groups in society, in a process that is historically constructed because of the tendency of individuals and groups to reproduce their networks and their cultural values. This point is particularly demonstrated in his development of the concept of 'cultural capital', where he describes the process through which attributes, knowledge, traits (like accents, pronunciation) are accumulated and internalised by individuals.

Endowments and inequality

Inequalities in distributions of capital and resources are central to Bourdieu's ideas. He argues that both social and cultural capital, like economic capital, are products of investment of time and energy, and therefore, the means of gaining access to these resources will be determined by "the form of the distribution of the means of appropriating the accumulated and objectively available resources" (p.49). The given distribution of all types of capital at any particular time will pre-determine the extent of appropriation that an

agent will be able to achieve of a given resource, as the dice would be loaded in favour of "capital and its reproduction" thus favouring those better-endowed (ibid.). Endowments of cultural capital determine capacities of individuals to accumulate greater capital to further themselves, and would mean that in many cases, in the absence of the social and economic means required for doing so, individuals merely reproduce the capital already available to them.

In Bourdieu's argument, prior endowments of capital would also determine the pace or volume of expansion of capital - if families were strongly endowed with cultural capital, the process of accumulation of other capital could be made faster and easier,[64] or if economic capital was available, time required for accumulating cultural capital could be invested through the purchase of labour to enable, for example, mothers to devote time to children's education. Conversely, accumulation of social and cultural capital, which requires investments of time and energy, may be harder if economic endeavours occupied much of an individual's time and labour. As Bourdieu notes, "...the profitability of this labour of accumulating and maintaining social capital rises in proportion to the size of the capital" (p.52). Hence, distributions of different forms of capital can shape the process of accumulation in ways that prevent or facilitate the advancement of individuals' interests in the social world. The volume of accumulation of social capital would depend on not just the number of networks that an individual can mobilise, but also the volume of economic, social and cultural capital possessed by each member of each network (p.51). Thus Bourdieu's definition of social capital while focused on social networks, acquires greater breadth of meaning because of the way in which he links it to other forms of capital.[65]

Forms of capital and power

Fundamentally, Bourdieu's exposition of different forms of capital and their transmission in the social world rests on the recognition of power and its operation:

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[64] This argument can also be interpreted as a version of Putnam's 'them as has, gets', although I consider Bourdieu's development of the concept of social capital sociologically more sophisticated.

[65] Bourdieu argues convincingly that despite the distinctions between different forms of capital, their properties are convertible into each other. For instance, although cultural capital, the product of time, cannot be instantaneously transmitted from one agent to another, yet it is convertible into economic exchanges (such as learning into education credentials into the labour market) and into social capital (individual properties are often acquired through membership of social groups e.g. pronunciation, cultural affiliations, inheritance of knowledge). However, convertibility is also determined by time lags - some forms of capital (cultural and social) generate benefits as a product of time invested, and hence are not immediately convertible. Thus forms of capital vary in their 'reproducibility' (p.54), among other differences.

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Because the question of the arbitrariness of appropriation arises most sharply in the process of transmission - particularly at the time of succession, a critical moment for all power - every reproduction strategy is at the same time a legitimation strategy aimed at consecrating both an exclusive appropriation and its reproduction.

(1986, p.55)

The work of Putnam (1993) and Coleman (1988) on social capital, by contrast, dwells little, if at all, on the role of power in determining endowments of capital in a given context. Coleman takes no account of the dynamic of reproduction within the process of transferring capital, and unlike Bourdieu, pays little attention to the identity base and the mechanisms of exclusion through which social capital is often reproduced. A fundamental argument that can be applied from Bourdieu's work to Coleman's views on social capital is that not all social agents will have equal time or energy to invest in accumulating capital, which in turn would have impacts on their prospects for fulfilling particular ambitions.

Building on Bourdieu's theory of social capital, processes of exclusion and inclusion through the reproduction of different forms of capital do result in differential endowments of capital, and hence are likely to shape the relationships of individuals with different institutions and agencies in relation to the production of public services and goods. Bourdieu's reflections on the role of identity and reproduction in the processes of capital accumulation are considered in this thesis fundamental to understanding the conditions under which people are likely to co-operate. It brings to the centre the issue that people's capacities and interests are likely to be shaped by their sense of identity, and that these intangible aspects need to be placed centrally in the consideration of processes of co-operation and trust formation.

2.4. Chapter summary: Is the coproduction framework inclusive of exclusion?

A fundamental challenge in achieving UPE in a context of social and economic differentiation such as India is to find ways of facilitating co-operation between three critical institutional sites: the state, communities and households. In the first section of this chapter I have argued that the coproduction framework applied to the production of goods and services has the following limitations: a) it implicitly assumes homogeneity among service users and the 'community' and 'shared orientations' between users about what is to be produced; and b) it reflects little on the implications that different types of goods and

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services have on production processes, and on the implications of the different goals for synergy to which these differences give rise.

A second and fundamental criticism relates to the use of the concept of 'social capital' in a purely productive sense, and the simplification of social processes inherent in the quest for examples of 'constructability'. Although the authors of the synergy case-studies point out that certain pre-conditions are required,[66] or that aspects like inequality and differentiation are relevant to prospects for constructability, it is the argument here that such 'disclaimers' or caveats are insufficient to address some of the fundamental conceptual drawbacks of the framework.[67] Factors such as inequality and differentiation require a central place in the analysis of endowments and constructability. Applied social capital has been defined as a subset of the totality of norms and networks extant in any society, which I argue is insufficient when applied across contexts. Identifying this limitation is essential because the synergy case-studies are interested in prospects for replicability and cross-context learning.

However, pointing out the shortcomings of coproduction as a framework through questioning its principal assumptions – the dependence on the concept of productive social capital, and the emphasis on constructability at the expense of analysis of endowments – has not been the only aim of this chapter. A more important aim is to see how some of the unexplained variables in the story of education production can be examined in greater detail, and how a closer examination in a field context could help to extend or amend coproduction theory. Many of the central principles of coproduction reflect legitimate concerns relating to 'better' development approaches but are simplistically presented. Using an under-developed case like that of Ostrom's Nigerian education study does not aid the process of clarifying or supporting coproduction theory.

A feature of coproduction theory is that it operates simultaneously at two levels. At one level it is a theoretical framework that argues in favour of interdisciplinary research, and ascribes the dominance of single-institution approaches (states or markets?) to the existence of "a conceptual trap arising from overly rigid disciplinary walls surrounding the

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[66] Other preconditions: that institutional actors such as bureaucratic agents will be fully motivated, and willing to work for the public good. Apart from Tendler and Freedheim (1994) and Wade (1992), there is little focus in synergy case studies on precisely how motivation can be stimulated.

[67] Harriss and De Renzio (1997) make a similar point in relation to the World Bank's use of 'social capital' in one of its papers on the same topic. They note that social capital is used in relation to radically different agendas, as a result of which there is a diverse range of indicators and contradictions as argued above. This, they argue, gives rise to a 'conservative-populist' use of the idea which promises answers "attractive to both the neoliberal right - still sceptical about the role of the state - and those committed to ideas about participation and grassroots empowerment" (1997:932).

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study of human institutions" as Ostrom argues (1996:1073). Evans notes that the idea of "embedded" synergy is often anathema to public administration purists, and to the "market-based logic" of development. Is the underestimated potential for synergy thus merely a function of academic blinkers that have prevented its recognition? The suggestion here is that the problem lies within the research environment, with approaches and methodology, rather than in the 'real world'.

This contrasts somewhat with the second level at which coproduction theory functions, as an ardent advocate of *itself*, as an "approach" or a "methodology" that is derived from the learning of lessons from "successful" interventions. However, success and failure are defined in very specific narrow terms that merely reinforce the importance of team production. Success and failure are presented in terms of evidence of the existence of complementarity in the actions of collaborating institutions, and particularly in the achievements of pre-ordained outcomes, such as Lam's 'tangible economic consequences'. Even the token attention paid to "failure", as in Ostrom's observations on primary education in Nigeria, leads hastily to the conclusion that coproduction is the essential variable, although other explanatory possibilities for the lack of success are not explored in any detail whatsoever.

This thesis argues the case for looking at the intertwined nature of production and social capital, through a recognition a) that patterns of exclusion and inclusion related to public services are a fundamental starting point for coproduction; b) that expectations about the value of what is to be produced will be shaped by different kinds of social relations that exist between people; and c) that motivation towards collaboration will be influenced by the different positions citizens assume or occupy in their social relationships with each other.

Chapter 3: Investigating coproduction: research questions, methods and the field work area

3.0. The fieldwork area

The fieldwork was located in a northern district of Karnataka state. Karnataka state was selected because of several factors, primarily its above-average attainment in education and literacy in respect of the national average, which is combined, however, with pockets of educational backwardness particularly in the northern districts. Karnataka is listed as one of seven states reflecting a medium level of development, based on its achievements in health, education, and standard of living (Gulati and Janssen 1997). On the other hand, literacy rates for SC, ST and women are lower than the state average in conformity with the national picture. A further concern is the high levels of recorded child labour, with Karnataka ranking fifth of all states and Union Territories in the country (Gulati and Janssen 1997). Further, my own work in the area of education had resulted in a visit to the fieldwork district in early 1996 as part of a Government of India mission. My brief contact with administrators at that time had encouraged me to select the district for fieldwork, as I felt that interviews with administrators would be facilitated by our earlier acquaintance.

Understanding poor achievement in the context of relatively progressive development provides an interesting puzzle within which research can be located. Hence the selection of the fieldwork district, which has low education achievement, particularly in respect of female literacy. According to the Census of 1991 (Government of India), the total literacy rate of this district was lower than 30%, and average female literacy was below 19%, well below both Karnataka state averages (56% literacy, 44% female literacy), and national averages (52% literacy, and 39% female literacy). Gulati and Janssen attribute the low achievement in this district (and neighbouring districts which share similar characteristics) to, among other factors, "poor income levels and inadequate education facilities combined with the remoteness of hamlets" (1997:25). In addition to low education achievement, this district, along with three other districts that form the northern Gulbarga division, has had a) a low rate of fertility decline (Total Fertility Rate or TFR 4.6), relative to the rest of the state (TFR lower than 4) (Bhat and Xavier 1999); b) high rates of early marriage for girls (mean age at marriage of seventeen years); c) very low per capita income; d) a high (above 70%) participation rate of women in agricultural wage work; and e) a higher percentage of SC and ST populations relative to the overall rural population.

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Not only are the district's education achievements significantly lower than state and national averages, but it also has one of the lowest enrolment rates combined with the highest dropout rate for girls in secondary school in the state. Disparities also persist in the level of infrastructure development in the district, with the lowest ratio of hospital beds to population (43 per 100,000 population) (Gulati and Janssen 1997:100). The selection of this district was aided by the fact that there were two externally funded education programmes in the district, the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) started in 1994-1995, and *Mahila Samakhya*, started in 1992-93. I was interested to study the implementation of innovative education programmes in the context of the statistically recorded backwardness of the district, in order to see what challenges exist in trying to improve participation in education through building partnership between administrators, village institutions (community) and households.

Research was focused on two villages in two blocks or *talukas* (sub-district administrative units) of the district, with different literacy rates. One of the blocks (B2) had one of the lowest literacy rates (under 25%) and the lowest female literacy rates in the district (less than 15%). In the other block (B1), literacy rates were much higher than B2 as well as the district average. B1 was also selected because of the coverage of *Mahila Samakhya*, a programme of the Department of Education that focused on women's empowerment, and is discussed in greater detail later in the thesis. The distance between the two block headquarters was 280 kms.

3.0.1 Geography and Livelihoods

The District Gazette of 1970 provides an evocative description of the topography of the district:

> ... large expanses of treeless plains, black soil with a bare hillock here or a boulder there and some lower belts following the main rivers.

Despite being bordered by the Tungabhadra and the Krishna rivers, only 18% of farmers in the district have assured water supply through canals, tanks, wells, borewells and other sources. 82% are rain-dependent, rendering the district drought-prone. The district, like its neighbouring districts located at the south-eastern base of the Deccan Plateau, has climactic variations relating to soil types. For instance black alluvial soil land or *karinadu*

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is the most fertile soil with which richness and agricultural prosperity are associated (Vasavi 1999). More profitable crops such as sorghum, cotton, wheat and oilseeds are grown on this land, between October and February. Red or dry sandy soil is cultivated predominantly in June to September starting with the onset of the monsoon, as this soil type is not moisture retentive. Crops such as millet, maize, pulses, groundnut and chillies are grown on this land (ibid.). Seasons are clearly distinguished between soil types and climactic conditions, and variations in soil type are found even *within* villages. Summer (April - May) is the fallow period for unirrigated land, and migration is at its peak for landless and dry land cultivators.

The uncertainty of sufficient rain and the risk of low rainfall wiping out crops compound the difficulties of the fallow period. As Vasavi (1999:70) notes for villages in neighbouring Bijapur district, which shares many of the geographical and historical features of the district, poverty is a widespread experience:

> "...for landless agriculturists, the slack season spells a long period of unemployment or sporadic employment, making it difficult to meet the requirements of daily sustenance. .... Hunger is thus a recurring threat that a large proportion of ... village residents face. As the people reiterate 'there is no enemy like the stomach', as hunger humbles the proud, and makes the already poor, destitute."

Employment opportunities are limited, with only 41 small industries. The cotton textile industry is the only major industry but there are only 130 textile firms in this district with a population of 2.3 million (according to the 1991 census). 4.5% of the district's farmers can be classified as large farmers owning 18% of the land, 20% are marginal and small cultivators owning 20% of the land, and 75.5% are medium farmers owning 62% of the land (DPEP Appraisal document, n.d.).

Confidentiality of the respondents has been secured in this thesis through keeping the name of the district, the blocks and the villages anonymous, and through the development of codes, which have enabled me to eliminate references to interviewees by name. The blocks and villages are referred to as B1 and B2, and V1 and V2 respectively (V1 in B1, and V2 in B2); and the descriptions of the various administrators and their roles are generalised in order to protect the information they provided freely.

Subsequent to the fieldwork, which was carried out between December 1996 and August 1997, the district was further divided into two separate districts in 1998.[68] The information at the time of writing was that the DPEP office in the district would continue to look after both districts, albeit with expanded staff. B1 and B2, however, were to belong to two different districts. However, these changes have little bearing on the findings discussed in the thesis.

3.1. Methodology and methods for investigating coproduction

In expanding on the methodology developed in this thesis, I draw heavily on Long (1989a, 1989b) and Arce (1989) whose work on the social interfaces in rural development encounters provide an extremely useful starting-point and frame for investigating multi-actor coproduction. Interface analysis is also useful because it enables a diagnostic approach as opposed to the determinism underpinning coproduction, as argued in Chapter 2. Long (1989a: 1-2) defines a social interface as:

> ... a critical point of intersection or linkage between different social systems, fields or levels of social order where structural discontinuities, based upon differences of normative value and social interest, are most likely to be found.

The interface is hence an arena constructed out of the encounter between different actors, which cannot be studied by focusing on each actor separately. 'Interface' analysis, like the coproduction framework, is interested in the micro institutional foundations of macro-structures, recognising that "[a]ll social reality, then, is micro-experience; but there are temporal, numerical, and spatial aggregations of these experiences which constitute a macro-level of analysis" (Collins, cited in Long 1989b:228), with the caveat that unintended consequences of social actions are also likely to impact upon macro-structures (Long, ibid.).

There are four principal reasons why Long's social interface methodology is considered useful for the project of investigating multi-actor coproduction. First, it explicitly rejects linear readings of the links between policy, implementation and outcomes. Instead, the 'policy as process' (Mackintosh 1992, Wuyts 1992) approach facilitates a more complex reading of development processes as involving "the continuous reinterpretation or

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[68] The sub-division of districts takes place to make governance more manageable.

transformation of policy, both at the point of manufacture and at the "frontline" by those responsible for its implementation" (Long 1989a: 3). Elaborating on this within the specific context of agriculture, Arce refers to the distinction within the overall "institutional social configuration" between "a model of the government, that is, on the one hand, a representation of an interrelated set of concepts or notions that explains and administers the supply and delivery of agricultural services to the producers and, on the other hand, the individual action of those persons responsible for the implementation of such a model" (1989:24). This approach facilitates a reading of development processes on the ground within the framework of policy, the implementing organisations and their rules, and the dynamic of social relationships between different actors. Thus, it supports the kind of approach that this thesis seeks in understanding the production of education services in the context of the policy goal of UPE, education administration, and households.

Second, interface analysis facilitates an investigation of 'differential responses' (ibid.) in the intervention process, which may help explain how an intervention, via the actions of implementors and administrators, can have different outcomes with different groups within a given social field. This approach helps to construct an understanding of patterns of exclusion, and how they are reinforced, challenged or transformed, both through local-level processes as well as "so-called "external" " (ibid.) processes. It thus facilitates recognition of the role played by policy and implementing agencies as well as intra-community and intra-household dynamics in shaping patterns of exclusion from, and inclusion in, education.

Third, the interface approach allows for a simultaneous consideration of actors' 'life-worlds' as well as the structures within which actions of different actors takes place. Thus the agency of actors is given theoretical importance without a retreat to methodological individualism, through the insistence that focusing on individuals' decision-making "does not commit us to explaining [the actor's] actions simply by reference to [the actor's] own imputed dispositions and beliefs" (Long 1989b: 226). This is ensured through taking an account "of the influence of the various sets of social relationships in which [the actor] is embedded" (ibid.). The coproduction framework demands such an approach because of its emphasis on the recognition of the "embeddedness" of the social actor, and on the importance of social networks, a point also emphasised by Long (1989b). Despite differences between individual life-worlds, "actors are nonetheless able to develop bridges between their life-worlds" (1989a: 6), and are able to use their "inherent capacity...to process knowledge and to learn from experience" (ibid.). Thus, when applied to

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development intervention, local actors use their agency to reshape interventions through their interpretations and strategies.

In Chapter 5, I analyse the extent to which administrators' use their discretion to make judgements on the implementation of policy. I view their decisions as "culturally-constructed entities that go beyond administrative State-society explanations" (Arce 1989:25). Individual biographies are not merely individual "idiosyncrasies" but are constituted equally by "patterns of socialization and professionalization" (Long 1989b: 239), and I argue that adminstrators' discussions on issues that arise in their interaction with village communities is based on a mixture of individual biography as well as their professional identity.

Fourth, the interface approach is by definition concerned with "discontinuities in social life" (Long 1989b: 232) and the intersections of conflicting life-worlds. Thus it makes space for the consideration of "negotiations, exchanges and opposing strategies" (ibid.). I concur with Arce who argues that although different transactions take place within wider structural contexts of differential power and endowments, these should be seen as "an essential expression of interaction involving discontinuities in values and interests", rather than as transactions that conform to "some tendency towards organic solidarity in society" (1989:49). This is in no sense a rejection of the analysis of unequal endowments of power and the unequal distributions to which it gives rise. Rather, it is recognition of the importance of agency, within an understanding of the differing ranges of choice and freedom available to every actor. It is also a useful way of curtailing over-active impulses on the part of the researcher to impose views of what is 'just' or 'fair' in a context where the constructions of those terms may have different meanings. This is particularly important in research that touches on the lives and well being of children as will be discussed a little further below. The main point is that respecting 'agency' means respecting 'voice' (Kabeer 1997), and in this thesis primacy is given to both as means of understanding constructions of different life-worlds.

Like Arce, whose work focuses on actor perspectives on social change, and the ways in which development intervention are mediated by producer-bureaucrat relations in irrigation in rural Mexico, the methodology used in this thesis reflects an interest in bringing together "the different voices, images, meanings and social forms that animate the social practice of development projects" (1989:17). Long refers to this theoretical approach as positing "'a **knowing, active** subject" who problematizes situations, processes

information and strategizes in dealings with others" (1989b: 222, emphasis in original). Thus in chapter 4, I seek to understand the constructions of the meaning and value of education to users in a predominantly rural district, within the context of the interface with education services delivered within the policy goal of UPE. In Chapter 5, administrators' perspectives on UPE and exclusion facilitate a contrast between user's perceptions and "the mental constructs" (ibid.) of administrators.

3.1.1 Research methods

Interface analysis at best provides a snapshot of encounters at a particular time, located, as in Arce's work within biographies and local histories, wherein the researcher is also a participant bringing in her own methods of providing order in the presentation of what are often 'unruly' interchanges. However, such snapshots are invaluable for providing insight into the factors that give rise to different kinds of dynamics at a particular time. Snapshots tell a story of 'endowments' and provide a context for the analysis of statistical outcomes, such as those that tell the story of education failure in India.

Interface studies are also defined by their commitment to empirical detail. Arce argues for the "reflexive consideration of empirically observed social realities" rather than the construction of abstract theoretical models to investigate "social change from the perspective of people" (1989:11). I used interviews, observations, case studies and statistical surveys to build my picture of encounters between different actors over the content and processes of education. This choice of diverse methods was also necessitated by the focus on diverse actors in diverse institutional contexts in a discrete geographical area. Using diverse methods enabled me to use a wider lens in studying multi-actor processes within a specific policy context.[69]

The use of semi-structured interviews has the advantage of enabling stories to emerge from the perspectives and priorities of those interviewed. The process of fieldwork (see Appendix 3 for fieldwork time-line), where the stories did not surface until I had spent time in building my own informal networks of trust with interviewees, ensured that the narratives were selected by interviewees in a manner that facilitated their own reconstruction of events and processes. The selectivity of the narratives to which I was allowed access provides by itself the framing discourse of the arguments in the chapters.

However, this selectivity was balanced out through the observation of different phenomena and the discussion of these phenomena with the actors concerned. Chapter 5 in particular contains a few examples of observed events and their discussion through processes of reconstruction. Of course hindsight provides its own logic, and the attempt, therefore, is less to generalise from these different narratives than to understand the events through the eyes and voices of different actors.

Privileging actors' "descriptive knowledge concerning the constitution of phenomena" (Arce 1989:18) enables the emergence of local perspectives and local criteria for what is important or relevant. Further, what Arce calls "collective cognition", through the process of which "knowledge becomes objective" (ibid. p.23), also suggests a process whereby the researcher is a facilitator of the cognitive assemblage of multi-actor narratives. Examples of this are provided in Chapter 6, where histories of schooling are reconstructed through narratives and discussions with different actors. However, despite locating my narrative-oriented research approach within this broader theoretical framework of interface analysis, there are still interpretative struggles that I have attempted to address through discussion, rather than deflection, at relevant points.

The research methods used are specific to the different chapters, as diverse actors have necessitated using diverse methods. As noted earlier, my intention was more to explore different kinds of endowments of social capital (particularly in the context of exclusion) than to draw firm conclusions about the nature of endowments of social capital in the given social groups discussed. In this process, four principal methods were used:

a) **Household Survey** in two villages investigating education participation (the details of which I outline in Chapter 4).

b) **Semi-structured interviews** with parents, and members of Village Education Committees and *Gram Panchayats* in two villages; *Zilla Panchayat* and *Taluka Panchayat* members, district and sub-district education administrators; headmasters of three villages schools. The purpose of using semi-structured interviews was to elicit from interviewees the priorities they accorded to the types of education related stories in the village. In addition I carried out two group interviews, one with women, and one with children of the

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[69] Dreze and Gazdar (1996) provide an extremely interesting study of the lack of public action in relation to education in Uttar Pradesh. However, while their paper presents a fascinating analysis at the level of a state, and some districts, it does not map out in detail relations at community and household level on issues relating to education

7th grade in V-2. These were both experimental, in that I wanted to see whether discussing education investment issues in a larger group as opposed to individual interviews would either give rise to different responses, or discourses on the importance of education. However, I did not continue with this method. I found that in both cases, the types of discussion did not go beyond those I was already engaged in with individual women and men, although were useful in providing insights into women's life-worlds in general, and were an important source of background information. As noted earlier in this chapter, working with children would have necessitated using a different range of methods and interpretative skills, and I had decided to focus on parents. However, I tried a group discussion to see how the process would evolve.

Interviews were carried out in Kannada, Hindi and English. Translation from Kannada into Hindi was carried out through an interpreter, although I was able to follow most of the responses, and translation of interview scripts in Kannada were professionally commissioned. Annex 2 sets out the key parameters used in the interviews. Appendix 3 provides a time-line of the fieldwork carried out.

c) **Field-based observations** of village level education processes and district administration. This involved two residential stays in V-2 (a total of seven weeks) and in V-1 (a total of seven weeks). In addition I spent five days in a tribal hamlet (*Tanda* N) neighbouring V-2. Four days were also spent with a local NGO in B-2, and a total of 9 weeks in the district headquarters. Visits were also made during the village stays to the respective block headquarters. In addition I made field visits to other villages with district administrators during my time in the district headquarters and to a village in B-2 to attend a microplanning exercise. Observations were recorded through the maintenance of a daily diary.

d) **Case studies** of specific events have also been developed out of the interviews, based on the preoccupations of actors and prominent events taking place at the time of fieldwork. Some of these were elaborated through follow-up and discussion with different actors involved.

As noted above, essential to discussions of 'coproduction' is the breaking down of divisions between 'supply' and 'demand' and recognising the mutual shaping of these two categories through the interactions of different actors at the interface. Therefore, a comparison of two villages and the quality of the supply in the context of patterns of

education participation offered an interesting starting point for investigating social capital as understood through the links between community involvement in education and outcomes in education. Chapters 4 and 6 in particular develop the comparison while Chapters 5 and 7 provide a wider institutional context.

3.1.2 Some reflections on the research process

There are several reflections that illuminate the kinds of methodological tussles encountered in the course of this work. The first is on the process of drawing comparisons between two villages. Chapter 4 consists of a quantitative data based comparison, which is relatively straightforward. However the purpose of the quantitative survey in this thesis is primarily to provide a basis for elaborating on the life-worlds of members of two villages, to compile a picture of the reasons for exclusion. Hence the discussions of the qualitative data in Chapter 4 reflect a tapering off of the comparative analysis at mid-point, and a broadening out into wider discussions of education exclusion. Chapter 6, however, picks up the comparative analysis, as I attempt to uncover some of the broader village-based issues that may explain differences between the two villages. It is at this point that the complexities of research as process began to surface. It is impossible to replicate relationships in one village, in another, different village. It is also impossible, or at least extremely challenging, to recreate the depth of insight culled through interviews in one village, in another. However, differences in research process in different villages add to the comparative story, and enable a widening of insights and approaches. This was my experience in the two villages, which is discussed in the course of Chapters 4-7.

Second, I wish to reflect on the process of carrying out research on education, in particular. Reflexivity is particularly necessitated by the fact that I was an outsider in the villages I studied, a fact not just relevant to their reception of me, but also to my experience of doing research, and my personal journeys. Some of the theoretical concerns relating to the production of education discussed in Chapter 2, were paralleled in my engagement with people on the topic of education. Conventionally, the interrelationship between the outside 'researcher' and the 'researched' reverses the roles of agency and passivity associated respectively, in conventional approaches, with the 'provider' and 'provided-for' - where the researcher assumes a 'neutral' posture and grants complete agency and autonomy of identity to the subjects of the research. However, that the researcher carries markers of identity in terms of class, autonomy and power, and the impact this has on the research process and findings generated are also well-recorded (see Chambers 1993, Abbott 1995).

In the case of education, I was made completely aware of the power and status granted by my education status, characterised by my speed of writing notes, my familiarity with technology (my tape-recorder and microphone), and my freedom of mobility associated with my confident interaction in an area in which I could not speak the local language. The paraphernalia of my research fascinated school children and teachers alike - the books, the tapes, the pens, and the torch for night-time reading. This was combined with a real sense of curiosity about my 'strange' working habits - staying up till late with the 7th grade boys who were studying in the school veranda for their board examinations, and writing my notes.

Doing research on education reinforces in the eyes of many villages, the importance of education as espoused by the state and government officials and the sloganeering content of many education campaigns such as the Total Literacy Campaign. My research thus unwittingly had an advocacy effect, with many parents assuming I would chastise them for not sending their children to school. This had an effect on the kinds of categories of analysis suggested by parents while discussing reasons underpinning children's non-participation in school, as discussed in Chapter 4. The advocacy effect was one that was totally unintended - I went into the research with no particularly strong views on universal education, given my own view that one of the strong effects of education is to enable differentiation between people on the basis of credentials. In other words, I carried no bias against the people interviewed on account of their lack of education, although I recognised that education conferred status and power and hence was the right and entitlement of every individual interviewed. But to use that to judge the decisions of households - and I recognised the agency behind the decisions of the excluded and included - was never my intention. The related irony, of course, was that the purpose of the research was to earn myself a further credential. As Kabeer (2000) argues, there is a need for a theory of choice that does not attach objective value to any set of choices, which is necessary if we are to understand what underpins choices that appear to be contrary to well-being but are defended by the individuals concerned.

I consider it particularly important to state this position for one critical reason. The universalistic position implies that any position that argues for (or arrives at) a more nuanced reading of the relationship between education and the lifeworlds of individuals in diverse groups is 'relativist' and discriminates against the rights and entitlements of individuals, particularly those of children. While this is an acceptable political position, its infusion into a research agenda is likely to prevent the emergence of understandings from

the perspectives of the researched. Hence it was important for me to be aware of my own views in order to approach the research with a fresh clear perspective.

Finally, there is a significant silence in this thesis - that of teachers. I did meet and have discussions with several teachers, but after careful consideration, I have omitted their perspectives. This may seem quite a significant omission in the light of the fact that they are often subjects of many of the events and issues discussed in the thesis, particularly in terms of critiques of their roles and behaviour. I am aware that to exclude them is also to exclude the opportunity to hear about interactions in a multi-actor environment from their perspective. Their omission is related to a wider silence in the thesis on issues relating to the quality of education provided in these villages. I do not consider myself equipped to comment on schooling processes and their pedagogical content, and as teachers enter the coproduction framework in the context of the learning processes that take place in schools, they became a casualty of this wider silence.

However, teachers are also a critical interface between schools and parents, and in the context of the dominance of first-generation learners in both villages, their role in shaping education participation cannot be under-emphasised. Here, their exclusion from the story-line of the thesis is prompted by the difficulties in the fieldwork area of gaining access to teachers. Teachers are in the spotlight with all the new policy and programme innovations underway, as will be discussed in later chapters, and in V-2, teachers were wary of talking in any depth to me. In V-1, as will also be discussed, teachers were submerged in conflicts among themselves as well as with other actors in the village, and hence interviews with them yielded little apart from complaints. Taking all these factors into consideration, I decided to omit their voices from the analysis.

Chapter 4: Work and school in a context of economic uncertainty and social risk: children's education in two villages

4.0. Introduction

Households are a key site of decision-making in relation to education production, and as Chapter 2 argues, assessing the potential for coproduction of education from the point of view of households (or service users) is an essential starting-point for analysing the prospects of achieving UPE in India. This chapter explores household-level constructions of the value of education in two villages in a drought-prone district. Narratives that reveal thought-worlds are best reviewed in the context of material or real practices, and hence, interviews with parents on their decision-making processes in relation to education are analysed in the context of household surveys carried out in the two villages, which provide information on the education participation of different households by caste, livelihood, and parental education. Survey data is also used to chart education participation patterns in terms of school attendance by age-grade cohort, and children's work as reported by parents.

The main arguments of this chapter are that a) education participation is shaped by socio-economic position, both caste and class, and the value associated with education, in turn, is strongly associated with the ways in which different households construct their aspirations in the context of apparently finite possibilities; b) household education decisions are embedded in livelihoods and occupational strategies, and the aspirations and household management practices to which the latter give rise; and c) there is diversity in household-level education investment even between villages situated in one district. Differences in the two villages studied give rise to different outcomes in relation to education participation, which points to the complexities of social differentiation in agricultural contexts.

The arguments of this chapter are also located within three wider questions. First, I use the data in the chapter to reflect on the nature and character of exclusion in relation to education. Why do some children go to school and not others? On what basis are they excluded from schooling?

Second, I assess how households perceive responsibilities for the achievement of UPE. The goal of UPE implies that children should not be constrained in any way from

participating in school, particularly grades 1 to 4. Understanding the context for parental responsibility demands attention to both school-side factors (the quality of schooling) as well as household and community-based factors (the commitment and support to ensure that all children are educated equally). However, factors such as that of children's participation in rural economies, performance of household chores, and social constructions of childhood that view puberty as a signifier of social maturity (Nieuwenhuys 1994) for girls, and economic responsibility for boys, intervene on the household-side, preventing universal participation, or at least severely curtailing possibilities for the achievement of UPE. The most politically controversial set of factors pertains to the operation of the world of economic responsibility for children, where children's involvement in household production and reproduction is considered either unacceptable (Blanchet 1996, Weiner 1991), or an outcome of real economic constraints, and hence, inevitable (Nieuwenhuys 1994).[70] This has led to the sharp polarisation in policy and research views of the worlds of work and schooling for children, leading to the dominant view that the former has to be eliminated in order for the latter to be achieved satisfactorily (Weiner 1991, The Probe Team 1999).

This chapter argues that rather than pose worlds of work and schooling as polarised choices, it is important to see both worlds as part of a dynamic whole, given rise to by sets of life circumstances that shape parental world views. This chapter goes beyond the argument that a clearer picture of children's work is necessary (Bhatty 1998a, Nieuwenhuys 1994), to ask how parents view prospects and opportunities for their children and to what extent trans-generational experiences of the world shape aspirations and opportunity. In particular, the discussion seeks to blur the lines drawn between economic compulsions and social aspiration in order to see the extent to which they mutually shape and reinforce each other. The aim is not to discount the possibility of UPE but to broaden understanding of the range of factors that may underpin parental decision-making on education, and to embed this understanding in the world of parental discourse and practices around children's education.

Third, I argue that there is a need to blur the supply-demand distinction that is commonly used to discuss policy issues relating to different stakeholders (i.e. supply = the state; demand = households). Drawing on extensive evidence across states that drop-out rates are highest in grades 1 and 2, in conjunction with the evidence that children age 6-9 are

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[70]For instance, Nieuwenhuys (1994) notes that many children in Kerala, where her research is focused, work in order to pay for their notebooks, pencils and other little extras that they needed for school.

seldom involved in productive work[71] (Jejeebhoy and Kulkarni 1989, Kanbargi and Kulkarni 1991, Maharatna 1996, Ramachandran 1990, Srivastava 1997, Majumdar 1997, Jabbi and Rajyalakshmi 1997, all cited in Bhatty 1998a), Bhatty argues that non-participation in education is a result of supply-side failure (Bhatty 1998a). I explore this proposition in relation to the two villages studied, where different education outcomes arise despite differential quality of schooling, and reinforce through empirical findings the theoretical argument made in Chapter 2 that the supply-demand metaphor confuses rather than clarifies the relationships between states and households in achieving UPE. Rather, I argue that education patterns are outcomes of a complex interplay of both 'supply' and 'demand' type factors.

Section 4.1 provides a background to educational facilities in the two villages, against which the quantitative data presented in Section 4.2 is analysed. Section 4.3 uses narratives of parents to examine, through qualitative data, how the value of education is shaped in the context of economic uncertainty. A deliberate choice has been made not to merge the quantitative and qualitative data sections, because the purpose of the quantitative data is to provide the informational context for parents' narratives, rather than to imply that the latter explains the former in a literal or linear way.

4.1. The context of 'supply': educational facilities in the two villages

In this section I present the background to the schooling facilities available in both villages, as a necessary context for the discussion on education participation. Both villages had Higher Primary Schools (HPS) running from grades 1-7. V-2's school had first started in the 1950s, and from modest beginnings in one room had expanded over the years into a HPS in its current structure in the early 1980s. V-1's school had similarly been developed since the 1950s, and its present buildings had been constructed in 1967-8. Chapter 6 discusses the history of school development in the two villages in greater detail.

The two schools were, however, qualitatively different. In the case of V-2, the school buildings were in good repair and used by children. There were 5 classrooms and residential facilities for one teacher. The school was built on the main road near the entrance to the village, and had a large playground with a low boundary wall built around

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[71] This evidence is also used to argue that participation in school is highest for primary levels and decline subsequently. Of course, another explanation is that the supply of primary schools is highest with declines in the provision of facilities for higher levels making physical access harder.

it. The school had six teachers, including the headmaster. One of the teachers had been provided by a local NGO which funded extra teachers in villages that requested extra help, paying a stipend of Rs.300 a month, considerably lower than the salaries paid to government teachers. This teacher was especially hired to cover sports and games for girls and boys. Teachers attended regularly, and this was verified by village residents and by the headmaster, and was confirmed by my observations during my periods of residence in the village.

V-1, on the other hand, had a poorly maintained school compound. There were five classrooms, but two were out of use as they were in a poor state of repair and posed a danger to students. Thus the other rooms were over-crowded. Including the headmaster, there were four teachers, one of whom was absent for long periods of time during fieldwork on account of illness (in his case, a euphemism for alcoholism), and one of the other teachers was irregular in attendance. One female teacher, who had been recruited from a neighbouring district, lived in the village. During the fieldwork period, there was a change in the position of headmaster with the erstwhile headmaster retiring and a younger headmaster taking charge in August 1997. The new headmaster had previously worked in the private sector (manufacturing), and there were indications that he was committed to changing the management style in the school. However, during the fieldwork period, it was obvious that there were many conflicts between the school and the community, as elaborated in Chapter 6.

In addition to the formal school in V-1, there was a non-formal school (NFE) run for children of Scheduled Caste (SC) families of the village, funded and run by *Mahila Samakhya* (MS), a Government Programme of the Department of Education that worked towards the empowerment of women. Although MS was an education programme, its brief was to work with the most disadvantaged women through the formation of women's collectives, in a manner that enabled the women to identify interventions within the village that they felt would be of benefit to them. In V-1, the local women's collective, based in the SC hamlet of the village, and formed in 1995, had started with a savings programme, and then decided, in June 1996, to start a non-formal education centre for their children. The idea of the NFE school, which provided two hours of school for children aged 6-14, with a maximum capacity of 25, was to enable children who were out of school to develop sufficient learning to be integrated into the formal school. A total of 23 children, 8 boys and 15 girls, were enrolled in the school. The *Mahila Samakhya* Project Office located in Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka, had provided primers and textbooks and paid for the

teacher, a local man who was educated up to the 10th grade. In addition to teaching the children, he also helped the collective with their literacy skills, and with the accounts and any other help they required for running their collective. Parents contributed a small fee (Rs.2/- per month) for the school. Classes were held in the teacher's house, between 7-9 p.m. daily, for six days a week.

Both V-1 and V-2 also had *anganwadi* (state crèches) for children aged 3-5. The Department of Women and Child Development, under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) scheme managed these crèches. The aim of the *anganwadi* is to serve as a welfare centre for children aged 3-5, through the provision of food (a healthy snack) and the maintenance of regular registers recording the health and nutrition status of the children. *Anganwadis* run from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and are managed by an educated local woman (known as the *anganwadi* worker) with a minimum qualification of 7 years of formal schooling.

Despite the potential and implicit complementarity of the formal school (for children aged above 6) and the *anganwadi* in terms of the care and welfare of children, at village-level there was a fundamental misfit. Firstly, *anganwadi* timings and school timings were not the same. The *anganwadis* were clearly not serving as centres that took the burden of care of young children away from older siblings. As the *anganwadis* closed at 1 p.m. (in some cases even 12.30 p.m.), children in school often left school to fetch their younger siblings and were then responsible for looking after them. However, efforts were underway at the time of fieldwork to dovetail *anganwadis* with the pre-school Early Child Care and Education (ECCE) initiative of DPEP, though given that they were managed by different government departments, it was not immediately apparent how successful the attempt at convergence was likely to be. Second, and significantly, in the case of both villages (and this is a common feature in many villages), the *anganwadi* and the school were situated at opposite ends of the village, and thus made the management of children of different ages within the village extremely difficult. Third, there was a limit placed on the number of children who could be admitted into the *anganwadi*,[72] given not just constraints in terms of staff (the *anganwadi* worker and her helper) but also because food stocks had to be provided in advance and managed from the Block office. This was extremely difficult in both villages, given that the attraction of the free meal placed a great demand on the

[72]The limit placed on admissions into the *anganwadi* is 90 children. The eligibility criteria are: children of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe households; children of households below the poverty line or beneficiaries of the anti-poverty programme, the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), or malnourished children (Interview with the Assistant Director, Department of Women and Child Development, fieldwork district, June 16, 1997).

service, and the children not absorbed within the *anganwadi* still constituted a constraint on older siblings' ability to attend formal school.

In V-2, the pressures on the *anganwadi* had been somewhat eased by the establishment of a new crèche (*balwadi*) for children aged 0-3 by the local NGO. This crèche was located nearer the school, and it was staffed by local women, themselves not literate, who had been trained by the NGO to provide a healthy snack for the children. The centre was built quite differently from the state *anganwadi*, with a thatched structure in consonance with local style, and with plenty of room for children to play around and move freely. The *anganwadi*, in both villages, on the other hand, was a small two-room concrete structure, with small windows. In both villages the *anganwadi* children spilled over into the play area outside, which in the high summer months would have been extremely difficult given temperatures between 38-40 degrees Celsius.

Both schools implemented the incentive scheme for encouraging attendance in school. The central government funded wheat incentive is granted to children with a monthly attendance record of 80%, and consists of 3 kg. of wheat that parents collect at the ration shop. Issues relating to all the above provide the context for the subsequent discussions in the chapter.

4.2. Quantitative picture of education participation in two villages

In this section, I discuss findings on the nature and shape of education participation for 6-12 year olds in the two villages, with three specific aims. First, to bring to the surface the complex patterns of exclusion and inclusion that obtain in a micro-level context, a necessary prelude to the discussions on the prospects for coproducing UPE. Second, to make the argument that analytical separation of 'supply' and 'demand' in relation to discussing explanations for exclusion are inherently unhelpful to the project of coproducing UPE. Third, to provide a context for the discussion of parental constructions of the value of, and their responsibilities for, children's education.

4.2.1 Methods

In the selected villages, V-1 and V-2, household surveys were conducted to collect data relating to children's participation in schooling. These surveys were conducted in July 1997, between two school years, but collected for the just-started school year 1997-98. A

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total of 293 households were surveyed, 183 in V-1 (72% of all households), and 110 in V-2 (64% of all households). Because of the heavy patterns of migration in this area it was not possible to survey all households in the villages, particularly in V-2.[73] Annex 3 provides a detailed break-up of the fieldwork period.

These surveys were conducted door-to-door, and the following data were collected:

i) caste, ages and sex of children

ii) principal occupation/s of household;

iii) current schooling, total schooling (including drop-outs),

iv) participation in other forms of schooling (i.e. in the non-formal school in V-1, or in the NGO/state crèches as in the case of V-2)

v) regularity or irregularity of child's participation in school

vi) children's work

vii) Reasons for dropout or non-enrolment

These variables sketch out a picture of education participation by caste and occupation, and provide a basis from which to evaluate if there were variations in children's work participation by gender, caste or occupation. They also enabled the analysis of patterns of dropout by gender and age based on the reasons for dropout or non-participation cited by parents. The principal findings of the household surveys are presented below by village, organised into six categories of findings: i) education participation in formal school; ii) participation by caste and by livelihood; iii) participation by parents' education; iv) attendance of children in school; v) the extent and nature of children's work; and vi) reasons for dropout and non-enrolment of children. Reflections on the differences between the two villages are summarised at the end.

4.2.2 Education participation in the two villages

Children's participation in education was analysed according to two principal age groups: 6-9 (lower primary) and 10-12 (higher primary) based on the schooling available in the two villages. As the thesis' particular focus is the achievement of UPE or universal *primary* education, the goal of DPEP, children aged 6-9 in the two villages were the primary focus of the research and analysis. However, for the purposes of being able to project forward to

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[73] 71 households in V-1 and 62 households in V-2 were away on account of migration. However, the qualitative interviews, which were carried out earlier, include households that also migrate in the dry months. The timing of migration varies between households though the peak period is usually between April/May - August.

school participation for older children, the education prospects of children aged 10-12 were also analysed.

In terms of correlation with school grades, these age groups would refer to the following:

6-9   Grades[74] 1-4 (corresponding to Lower Primary School or LPS)

10-12   Grades 5-7 (corresponding to Higher Primary School or HPS)

Age-based cohorts are used in this chapter, rather than grade-based cohorts, as a means of assessing the extent to which children of the ages of 6-12 are in school. Many children in grades 1-7 are older, or in some cases, younger than they are meant to be for the grade concerned. This is taken up in section 4.2.5. It is also important to note that ages given by parents are likely to be approximate, as many children do not have birth certificates.

Most of the households surveyed in the two villages had children of school-going age. In V-1, 168 of the 186 households surveyed had children aged above 6, and in V-2 105 of the 110 surveyed. In V-1 there were 253 children aged 6-12 (121 boys and 132 girls), and in V-2, there were 190 children aged 6-12 (96 boys and 94 girls). These children form the subset of the analysis of education participation that follows.

The proposition that improvements in supply, particularly the quality of school give rise to better education participation rates is tested in this chapter, given that the two schools have qualitatively different schools as discussed in Section 4.1. Tables 2-4 present disaggregated data on education participation in the two villages.

Table 2: Percentage of children in formal school in age group 6-12

	V-1		V-2	
	6-9[1]	10-12[2]	6-9[a]	10-12[b]
In school	61	53	53	36
Never enrolled	38	42	36	35
Dropout	1	5	11	29
Total nos. (n=)	*163*	*115*	*90*	*75*

Participation in formal school declines between the age groups 6-9 and 10-12 in both villages, but particularly in V-2. V-1 had a higher percentage of children aged 6-12 in

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[74]The terminology for representing years of schooling in India is 'Standard' or 'Class' - but to avoid confusion, the also widely used term 'Grade' is used here. It is important to note here that there are variations in the ways in which different grades are clustered together across different states - for instance the categories of LPS and HPS may vary, and hence the structure used in this thesis is specific to Karnataka State.

school than V-2, although a marginally greater proportion of children aged 6-12 (64.5%) in V-2 had some education (children in school + dropouts) than none at all (never enrolled) compared with V-1 (60%). Explanations for the proportional decline in participation between ages 6-9 and 10-12 could be found in either the proposition that a) children drop out with progressive years of schooling for various reasons, possibly marriage for girls, and work for boys; or that b) the greater proportion of children in school in age-group 6-9 reflects a continuing rise in interest in education among parents. The crucial explanatory factor lies, however, in the increase in dropouts in age group 10-12 in both villages, but particularly in V-2. The discrepancy between the percentage of dropouts of children aged 6-9 and 10-12 in V-2 is a striking 18 percentage points, while in V-1, 4 percentage points. Given that the school in V-2 is more efficiently managed than the school in V-1, explanations for the difference in dropout rates are thus more likely to be found in household-based constraints, rather than in the 'supply-side'. Tables 3 and 4 look at participation rates in greater detail, both by age group and gender.

Table 3: Education participation in two villages in age group 6-9 by gender (%)

Village	In School		Never Enrolled		Drop Out		Total (nos.)	
	Boys*	Girls**	Boys*	Girls**	Boys*	Girls**	Boys	Girls
V-1	62	62	37	37	1	1	83	80
V-2	63	43	30	43	7	14	57	58

* as a percent of all boys aged 6-9
** as a percent of all girls aged 6-9

The gender gap in education for children aged 6-9 is absent in V-1, and high in V-2, which has a 20 percentage point gender difference in school participation, and higher rates of non-enrolment and dropout for girls than boys. In both villages, the gap increases for children aged 10-12, sharply in the case of V-1, and by a few percentage points in the case of V-2, as Table 4 shows.

Table 4: Education participation in two villages in age-group 10-12 by gender (%)

Village	In School		Never Enrolled		Drop Out		Total (nos.)	
	Boys*	Girls**	Boys*	Girls**	Boys*	Girls**	Boys	Girls
V-1	63	46	32	50	5	4	38	52
V-2	33	39	31	39	36	22	39	36

* as a percent of all boys aged 10-12
** as a percent of all girls aged 10-12

Boys in V-2 fare worse than boys in V-1, with the proportions of boys in school, never enrolled and dropout, evenly spread.

4.2.3 Caste, livelihoods and schooling

If supply is not a critical factor shaping education participation, then socio-economic factors constitute a significant source of explanation for differences in education participation rates. In this sub-section, I present data on caste, livelihoods and education participation by caste and livelihood to explore whether there are differences in the education levels across different socio-economic groups.

The interplay between caste (social) and livelihoods (economic) differentiation is considered through mapping the caste backgrounds of households with children aged 6-12 by their principal occupations. It is important to clarify here that there is no attempt in this chapter to draw conclusions about the extent, nature and shape of poverty in the two villages. In order to do so, the data would have had to include analysis of assets ownership, income and a wide range of other variables. Rather, my preference is to look at education investment more in terms of the ways in which households engaged in different occupations manage their economic survival and how their livelihoods strategies make use of children's labour contributions, and hence have an impact on their ability to educate their children. This reflects a reluctance also to conflate income poverty with education decision-making, as discussed in Chapter 1.

Castes in the two villages are divided here into six categories:

(i) Muslim (not as a caste but as a religious grouping)

(ii) Scheduled Caste (SC) representing the most socially excluded group constituting what were formally considered 'Untouchable' people

(iii) Other Backward Castes (OBC) constituted primarily by *Lingayats*

(iv) Service Castes (classified together for the purposes of this thesis as a group of traditional occupation-based caste groups such as shepherds (*Kuruba*), and service castes such as flower-sellers (*Hugar*), washermen (*Agasa*), menial servants (*Thalwar*), and carpenters (*Badiga*)

(v) Scheduled Tribes (ST) including *Nayaks*

(vi) Forward Castes (FC) (i.e. *Brahmins*).

In V-1, there is clear domination by one group (OBCs, constituted primarily by (93%) *Lingayats*), whereas in V-2, SC, ST, OBC share a roughly equivalent numerical position in the sample. This had some bearing on the extent of explicit caste-based discrimination. Caste discrimination was pervasive in both villages - 'untouchable' groups cannot drink from the same teacups as others in the village, and cannot use the same water sources. While caste stratification existed in both villages in the form of separate hamlets for Scheduled Caste populations, the impact in each village was different owing to the differential location of the hamlets.

Table 5: Caste background of households surveyed in the two villages (%)

Village	Muslim	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes	Service Castes	Other Backward Castes	Forward Castes	Total (nos.)
V-1	7	14	-	8	70	1	*183*
V-2	9	26	28	13	24	-	*110*

V-2's SC hamlet was located at the roadside near the school, while V-1's hamlet was located at the far end of the village locked in near fields and at the opposite end of the village to the school and roadside. The SC hamlet in both villages were positioned in such a way that very few village residents needed to go by it or through it for any purpose, which reinforced their isolation. In V-1, spatial distinctions were upheld by clear references to 'that side' of the village and 'this side' of the village to signify caste differences.[75] V-1 was also a local pilgrimage centre because of an old temple in its midst, and the temple was one of the foci of caste-based discrimination with an informal (though illegal) ban on 'untouchables' entering and worshipping.

Four principal occupational categories are used in this chapter: wage labour, cultivation (agricultural), Others (non-agricultural occupations), and migration. Migration is the principal occupation cited by a few households in V-2, but in both villages, households which reported migration were those households which engaged principally either in cultivating or wage labour. Tables 6 and 7 present data on occupations by caste.

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[75] This was demonstrated in a sudden verbal attack on my translator and myself by a *Lingayat* villager, who accused us of being activists from a *Dalit* (untouchable) political party residing in the village on false pretexts.

Table 6: Caste and principal occupations of households with children aged 6-12 in V-1 (%)

	Muslim	Scheduled Castes	Service Castes	Other Backward Castes	Forward Castes
Cultivation	67	9	68	80	100
Wage Labour	33	91	18	15	-
Other*	-	-	14	5	-
Migration**		(31)		(6)	
Total (n=)	*21*	*32*	*22*	*177*	*1*

*Includes shopkeeping/trade; services such as barber, laundry, cobbler; and bill collector
**Where households that migrate overlap with those that cited wage labour or agriculture as their principal occupations, the figures are presented in parentheses.

In V-1, cultivation was the predominant occupation for all caste groups except Scheduled Castes, for whom wage labour was the principal occupation. Reliance on wage labour is an indication of either relative landlessness, or ownership of dry land with no irrigation. SC and OBC households principally carried out migration, in addition to cultivation and wage labour. In V-2 however, 7 out of 40 SC households that migrated cited migration as their sole occupation as Table 7 below shows.

Table 7: Caste and Occupation of households with children aged 6-12 in V-2 (%)

	Muslim	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes	Service Castes	Other Backward Castes
Cultivation	79	17	29	38	41
Wage Labour	21	71	62	38	45
Other*	-	5	9	24	14
Migration**		7 (33)	(22)	(31)	(5)
Total (n=)	*14*	*41*	*45*	*26*	*64*

*Includes services such as cobbler, barber, laundry; local politician, and teacher.
**Where households that migrate overlap with those that cited wage labour or agriculture as their principal occupations, the figures are presented in parentheses. Where migration is cited as the principal occupation, then the figures are presented without parentheses.

In V-2, there was a greater reliance on wage labour rather than cultivation not just for SC households, but also for ST and OBC households. A higher proportion of Service Castes in V-2 than V-1 is engaged in wage labour. The greater reliance of households on wage labour, and greater proportion of households across caste groups that relied on non-agricultural occupations was also an indication of the relative lack of irrigation facilities in B-2 Block than B-1 Block (discussed in Chapter 3), and the fact that households had to engage in a wider range of occupational strategies to earn their livelihoods. The higher extent of migration in V-2 across caste groups, and particularly for SC households where it

was both principal and supplementary occupation was also testimony to the lower ability of households in this village to survive on agricultural cultivation.

There were also differences between the two villages in terms of the extent to which households undertook multiple occupational strategies as part of the overall management of their livelihoods. In V-2 45 out of all 110 households (41%) reported more than one occupation. A small number of households combined either wage labour or cultivation with other occupations such as providing services such as hairdressing, laundry and tailoring or running small businesses such as shops or food stalls. In V-1, agriculture was the dominant occupation (75%). 48 households (22% of all 183 households) reported more than one occupation or livelihood strategy, and migration in particular, was reported for 32 households along with wage labour.

Table 8: Education participation by caste for age-group 6-9 in both villages (%)*

	Muslim		SC		OBC		Service		ST	FC
	V-1	V-2	V-1	V-2	V-1	V-2	V-1	V-2	V-2	V-1
In	64	33	54	39	65	67	47	45	47	100
Never enrolled	36	67	46	39	34	19	53	45	41	-
Drop-Out	-		-	22	1	14	-	10	12	-
Total (n=)	12	9	22	26	113	38	14	15	1	27

*As a percentage of all children of that caste group

In both villages, OBC households have the highest participation in school followed by Service Caste households in V-2, and Muslim households in V-1. V-1 has a higher percentage of children in school across all caste groups relative to V-2, except amongst OBCs and Service Castes, where the proportions are almost the same. In V-2, the striking differences are in the categories of Muslims (34 percentage points behind OBC participation) and SCs (28 percentage points behind OBCs). In V-2, a large proportion of Muslim children has never been enrolled, and dropouts constitute a significant proportion of out-of-school children among the SCs. In V-1, the only group that has more children out of school than in school is the group of Service Castes.

Table 9: Education participation by caste for age group 10-12 in both villages (%)*

	Muslim		SC		OBC		Service		ST	FC
	V-1	V-2	V-1	V-2	V-1	V-2	V-1	V-2	V-2	V-1
In	33	100	14	50	51	31	43	45	32	100
Never Enrolled	67	-	86	8	32	28	43	33	58	-
Dropout	-	-	-	42	17	41	14	22	10	-
Total (n=)	*9*	*5*	*10*	*15*	*64*	*26*	*6*	*11*	*1*	*18*

*As a percentage of all children of that caste group

The reduction with age of education participation across all caste groups in V-1 is in keeping with the national figures (Dreze and Sen 1995). In V-2, however, two groups, Muslims and SC households, have a higher proportion of children aged 10-12 than 6-9 in school. Tables 10 and 11 present data on education participation by occupational group in both villages, by age group.

Table 10: Education participation by occupation for children aged 6-9 (%)

	Wage Labour		Cultivation		Other*		Migration**	
	V-1	V-2	V-1	V-2	V-1	V-2	V-1	V-2
In School	61	51	62	57	58	57	(55)	(25)
Never Enrolled	39	35	37	35	42	43	(45)	(75)
Dropout	-	14	1	8	-	-	-	-
Total (n=)	*46*	*49*	*105*	*51*	*12*	*7*	*9*	*8*

*Others (non-agricultural occupations) includes trade and shopkeeping; services such as postman, barber, laundry; teacher and bill-collector.

** Households that migrate overlap with those that cited wage labour or agriculture as their principal occupations, and hence the figures are presented in parentheses.

Dropouts are higher in V-2 than V-1 particularly for wage labour and cultivating households. A possible explanation for this difference between the two villages could lie in the greater efficiency in ensuring enrolment in grade 1 in V-2, thus explaining the lower proportion of never-enrolled children in V-2 relative to V-1.

Table 11: Education Participation by occupation for children aged 10-12 (%)

	Wage Labour		Cultivation		Other*		Migration**	
	V-1	V-2	V-1	V-2	V-1	V-2	V-1	V-2
In School	46	25	54	44	100	83	50	-
Never Enrolled	54	41	40	36	-	-	50	50
Dropout	-	34	6	20	-	17	-	50
Total (n=)	*24*	*32*	*63*	*25*	*3*	*6*	*10*	*2*

*Others (non-agricultural occupations) includes services (such as postman, barber, laundry, cobbler); and alms collection.

** Households that migrate overlap with those that cited wage labour or agriculture as their principal occupations, and hence the figures are presented in parentheses.

4.2.4 Schooling and parent's education

It is often argued that parents' education has a positive impact on the education of children (Unni 1996). Can differences in participation between the two villages be explained in terms of differences in the number of educated parents in both villages?[76] Statistics are presented here from the point of view both of the number of children who had educated parents, as well as the number of educated parents who had children in or out of school. Given the lack of avenues for literacy and learning outside of formal schools, particularly before the TLCs of the 1990s,[77] it is assumed that parents with no formal education are not literate.

Table 12 provides a summary of the data on children with educated fathers and mothers for the age group 6-12 in both villages.

Table 12: Percentage of children aged 6-12 in school with educated parents (by sex)

	Boys[1]				Girls[2]			
Village	Educated fathers	Educated mothers	Neither	Total (nos.)	Educated fathers	Educated mothers	Neither	Total (nos.)
V-1	28 (21)	4 (3)	69 (52)	75	33 (24)	4 (3)	66 (48)	73
V-2	35 (17)	10 (5)	61 (30)	49	26 (10)	13 (5)	61 (24)	39

[1]as a percentage of total boys aged 6-12 in formal school (Total nos. in each category in brackets)
[2]as a percentage of total girls aged 6-12 in formal school (total nos. in each category in brackets)

A very small percentage of children in both villages have educated parents of either sex, (although V-2 has a slightly higher proportion than V-1) which indicates that in both villages, a high percentage of children in school are first-generation learners. It is interesting in the context of the higher proportion of children in school in V-1, that children in school are less likely to have educated parents, than children in V-2. This also suggests that parents' education is a positive, but not crucial determinant of children's education prospects as Tables 13 and 14 explore further. It is also striking that in V-2 girls with mothers who are educated and fathers who are educated form two mutually exclusive

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[76] Although parents in both villages had different levels of formal education, I do not disaggregate parents' education by level, although there is of course a possibility that higher levels of education for parents can have a greater influence on children's participation. I choose to use parents' education as an aggregate variable because the overall numbers of educated parents in both villages is not high.

[77]Evaluations of TLCs indicate that their impact on adult literacy has not been significant.

groups, which indicates that in this sample (of girls in school) mothers who are educated are not married to educated men, and vice-versa. This appears to be an implausible finding, but given that the sample of educated women is so small (5), can be accounted for as an unusual or unique finding. The mothers in this sample are educated up to grade 4 in four cases, and grade 5 in one case, which says little about quality of education gained. Further, it is possible for parents of a generation where schooling was less widely available than it is today, that mothers may have lived in villages with more accessible schooling. Hence this is a finding with no generalisable value.

Table 13: Educated parents and children's education participation (6-12) (%)

	Educated Fathers		Educated Mothers		Both	
	V-1	V-2	V-1	V-2	V-1	V-2
In School	66	55	67	67	75	60
Never Enrolled	31	21	11	27	25	40
Dropout	3	24	22	6	-	-
Total (n=)	68	51	9	15	4	5

Table 14: School participation of children with neither parent educated (6-12) (%)

	V-1	V-2
In School	55	42
Never Enrolled	43	42
Dropout	2	16
Total (n=)	177	130

In both villages, parents' education is not strongly associated with children's participation in school. While educated parents (single, or both) have a higher proportion of children in school, compared with non-educated parents, they also have a considerable proportion of children out of school, both never enrolled and dropout.

4.2.5 Children's attendance at school

Participation rates in both villages are well short of universal, but by themselves do not tell the full story of education. Is the education of children a one-time decision made by all parents (regardless of socio-economic position) to choose schooling over the labour contributions of their children? It is difficult to measure children's work given seasonal fluctuations and the fungible nature of many of the tasks children carry out in the household, in family enterprises and on family land, and hence inferences about school participation cannot be drawn from assessing the nature or quantum of children's work, or vice-versa. However, the regularity of children's attendance in school is an important

indicator of education participation, a pointer to the extent to which participation of schooling can translate into qualitative education outcomes.

Standard sources of data on children's attendance are a) data from parents; and b) school records. Both these are unreliable for different reasons. Reliable data on regularity[78] of attendance was hard to collect in the door-to-door surveys. Few parents were willing to answer that question, and just laughed or looked away when asked if their children attended regularly. This was particularly the case for formal school participation.[79] For children aged 6-12, there were only 3 cases reported (i.e. 3% of children in school) in V-2 of irregular attendance, and in V-1, 33 (20% of children in school).

School records were both hard to access as well as possibly unreliable. Headmasters of both schools were reluctant to give over their school record books for any length of time that would facilitate independent data collection. They insisted on being present, which meant that it was never possible to spend any length of time on the attendance registers as both headmasters lived away from their schools, and had excuses to leave as soon as the school day was over. I was also reluctant to disrupt school hours by interviewing staff at school for the purposes of the research, owing to my sensitivity to the fact that one of the reasons for poor school quality were the frequent disruptions on account of external visitors arriving (government, donors, outside research and/or evaluation teams), the frequency of whose visits had increased tremendously since DPEP had been launched in the district.

The unreliability of school records lies in the fact that school attendance records are also the basis upon which the wheat incentives are disbursed to school children. Teachers often complained of pressures placed on them by parents to doctor attendance records so that even irregular children got the wheat from the incentive scheme. It can also be speculated that headmasters have a further incentive to overestimate children's attendance in order to keep up the school's reputation - from the brief look through the schoolbooks, attendance levels seemed fairly high. Stray stories narrated by parents also indicated the unreliability of school records - one mother said that her son had stopped receiving the wheat incentive when he was removed from grade 4, and placed in the year below, as per the wishes of his parents who worried that he was not coping with his studies. The school records had not

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[78] 'Regularity' of attendance is hard to define, and here I revert to the policy norm of 80% attendance, which is the basis of the wheat incentive discussed in section 4.1.

been adjusted to accommodate this change, as a result of which he was marked absent in grade 4 and denied the wheat incentive although his attendance in grade 3 was regular. While it was not possible to verify this story, there were sufficient indications that school data were not reliable.

Many children in grades 1-7 are older than they 'should' be, in terms of the age-grade structure discussed in sub-section 4.2.1. Here I analyse the number of children who are not in the right grade for their age, as a way of assessing the extent to which children go to school when enrolled and then attend sufficiently regularly to enable progress through the school system-

15 children in V-1 and 9 children in V-2 attending grades 1-7 were outside the age group 6-12. In V-1, the age range of children enrolled in grades 1-7 was from 6 to 16, and in V-2, 5-15. Most of the out-of-cohort children were within the 6-12 age-bracket but were not in the right grade for their age. In both villages the numbers of children who were out of their age-grade cohort by more than one-year was moderately high (about 1/3rd in V-1 and about 1/4th in V-2), as presented in Table 15.

Table 15: Children out of age-grade 'cohort' for grades 1-7 in both villages (%)

Village	Total out of cohort*	Overage by 1 year**	Overage > 1 year**	Underage**	Total (nos.)
V-1	78	62	32	6	*190*
V-2	59	60	26	14	*96*

*as a percent of all children in grades 1-7
**as a percent of all children out of age-grade 'cohort'

A higher proportion of the children in grades 1-7 in V-1 relative to V-2 are either older or younger than they ought to be if they enrolled in grade 1 at the age of six and stayed in school. These figures are disaggregated by gender in Table 16 below.

Table 16: Children out of age-grade cohort in both villages by gender (%)

Village	Total out of cohort*		Overage = 1 year**		Overage > 1 year**		Underage**		Total
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
V-1	78	78	69	55	26	39	5	6	*190*
V-2	53	65	55	65	29	23	16	12	*96*

*as a percent of all children in grades 1-7
**as a percent of all children out of age-grade cohort

[79]In contrast to pre-school children's attendance in the *anganwadi/*crèche, where parents were more forthcoming with reports on their children's regular attendance.

Proportionately more children are out of cohort in V-1, particularly by over one year, which points to greater fluctuation in school attendance in V-1 than in V-2. In V-2, more girls are out of cohort by one year than V-1, indicating erratic attendance or late enrolment, and generally lost years of schooling. There are relatively more under-age children in school in V-2, which may indicate that younger siblings are taken by older siblings to school because the *anganwadi* is located at the opposite end of the village to the formal school. Since V-1's *anganwadi* is located very near the formal school, it may be more convenient for younger children to be left there while older siblings attend formal school. Findings related to the care of younger siblings are further developed in the next sub-section, where data on children in the villages aged 0-5 is presented and discussed in relation to the work patterns of children aged 6-12.

Although age-grade cohorts are a useful device in ascertaining the number of children who enrol late or lose years of schooling owing to irregular attendance or temporary dropout and hence remain in school as over-age students, some caution must be used in interpreting these findings. In particular, the data cannot be interpreted too strictly. Children over-age by a year in a particular grade may just have been enrolled late owing to an oversight by parents or teachers, who judge children's age by the approximate height of the child in the absence of birth-certificates. However, in both villages, the number of children over-age by more than one year in school is fairly high, and hence some credence can be given to these figures in illuminating the rate of irregularity and temporary dropout. Further, when added to the data on never-enrolled children in both villages, it is clear that there is a high rate of fluidity and fluctuation in school attendance and participation.

4.2.6 Children's work

The reconstruction of children's work can be done through multiple avenues. As with data on regularity of attendance, data on children's work was difficult to collect through surveys. Many parents declined to answer that question, either shrugged their shoulders or laughed when asked what work their children contributed. Qualitative methods are much more suited to the excavation of children's lifeworlds as parents are often embarrassed to concede in surveys that their children work. Another factor giving rise to parental reticence is likely to be that door-to-door surveys are most associated with government surveys for elections, school enrolment, population census, livestock censuses and others. In fact, most parents assumed when I started doing the door-to-door surveys in both

villages with my translator, that we were carrying it out for the government - although our survey was carried out a few months into the fieldwork precisely in order to avoid such a conclusion. However, the identification of surveys with government is so deeply ingrained in the minds of villagers that it was hard to overcome that particular barrier, and hence hard to get answers to possibly controversial questions such as the nature of children's work.

While the interviewees in the qualitative sample talked in detail about the work done by children, the regularity of their attendance and other issues, pointing to a very complex set of factors shaping the quality of children's participation, the quantitative survey yielded little information. The results, though clearly not generalisable, are presented below:

Table 17: Children's work (6-9) in two villages by category of work (nos.)

Village	Wage Labour	Cultivation	Grazing	Housework*
V-1	2	-	2	19
V-2	2	1	7	19

* Including Child Care

Table 18: Children's work (10-12) in two villages by category of work (nos.)

Village	Wage Labour	Cultivation	Grazing	Housework*	Services/Trade**
V-1	17	9	5	15	2
V-2	4	8	14	21	-

* Including Child Care
** Including Tailoring and Shop-keeping

There was a discrepancy in the number of respondents who gave any data at all on children's work participation. Data covering only 6% of children aged 6-12 in V-1 was provided compared with 48% in V-2. The reasons for this discrepancy are not clear and could possibly (though not conclusively) be a result of less suspicion and greater level of confidence of villagers in V-2 who are used to being considered a 'model' village in terms of the level of development of the school, and have good relationships with government officials. Even so, these data are not considered as representative of the full picture in either village. A further plausible explanation for these low figures is that the nature of children's work considered important and worthy of reporting is seasonal, and hence difficult to pick up adequately in a one-off round of data gathering using surveys.

In both villages, despite the existence of child-care infrastructure, a high proportion of small children stay at home, with a high burden for their care possibly being borne by older

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siblings of school-age. In the context of high percentages of children out of school in both villages, it is apparent that children do contribute in different ways to household economy and survival. A key example of this is care of younger siblings, particularly of pre-school age. Data for children in the age-group 0-5 were analysed, in order to address issues pertaining to both the use of alternative pre-school facilities in the villages, as well as to assess the extent to which care of younger children could constitute a possible factor in constraining education participation. In V-2, of the 115 children in the age group 0-5, only 38 (33%) were in either an *anganwadi* or in the crèche run by a local NGO. Data on regularity was reported for 24 of these 38 children, of whom 16 (67%) were reported to be irregular in their attendance. In V-1, of the 120 children aged 0-5, 51 (42.5%) attended the local *anganwadi*, a higher figure than for V-2 (there is no other crèche or childcare service in the village). This could help explain the disparities in formal school participation between children in V-1 and children in V-2. Data for 45 of these 51 households on regularity of attendance indicates that 87% reported irregular attendance in the *anganwadi*.

Parents were also asked on what grounds children were either not enrolled in school or had dropped out. These reasons provide a fairly comprehensive picture of the factors that constrain parents from educating their children, or prevent children from gaining a fuller involvement in school. These factors are explored in the next sub-section.

4.2.7 Reasons for non-enrolment

Despite poor data on children's work in the quantitative sample, the explanations provided by parents for children's non-participation in formal school provide some insight into children's lifeworlds. For the purposes of the survey, a conscious decision was taken to leave the description of 'reason' for non-enrolment/dropout to the respondents to allow for the widest possible range of factors that could emerge to do so from parents. No attempt was made to enforce any limitations on how parents represented the causes for their inability to keep children in school. There were proportionately higher responses for age-group 10-12, than for age-group 6-9, in both villages.

In this sub-section I consider reasons given for the non-enrolment of children in school. Parents cited two types of reasons: general, household-centred factors, and child-specific factors (Table 19). Household-centred factors are those cited as general reasons for not educating children. Child-specific factors can further be divided into factors that are child-centred and those that are school-centred. There is a certain measure of overlap between

child-centred and school-centred factors - for instance, where a child-centred factor is the child's fear of school, it is equally an outcome of the school creating an environment in which the child is fearful or uncomfortable. However, these factors have been categorised in terms of the ways in which they have been 'framed' by respondents rather through an imposition of any outsiders' meanings.

Only 4 respondents in V-2 and none in V-1, across both age groups, gave more than one general or household-centred response, or one child-specific response. Hence only the first answer given by the respondent is included in the tables below. Household-centred factors accounted for the largest number of responses in both villages. In V-1, household-centred responses are greater for age-group 10-12 (86%) than 6-9 (60%), whereas in V-2, they remain relatively the same (76% and 72% respectively). For V-1's 6-9 year-olds, school-centred factors were next in importance (40%) and for V-2's, school-centred factors came second (16%) followed closely by child-centred factors (12%).

It is striking that 'poverty' accounted for the highest proportion of non-enrolled children, although many of the more specific factors that parents cited were also factors that could be seen to stem from 'poverty'. Requirements for labour of different kinds (household, grazing, agriculture and migration) accounted for 24% and 32% in V-1 and V-2 respectively for children aged 6-9, and 22% and 32% respectively for children aged 10-12. However, 'poverty' as a factor cannot be disassociated from the labour figures, and in fact, taken together account for a very large proportion of household-centred responses in both villages, thus addressing the proposition that material factors are a primary consideration in decisions around education participation.

Table 19: Percentage of households with responses about the reasons for non-enrolment of children (6-12)

	6-9		10-12	
	V-1[1]	V-2[2]	V-1[3]	V-2[4]
Household-centred factors:				
Poverty	24	32	38	32
Family Ill-health	3	-	-	-
Neglect/Ignorance	9	8	26	12
Agriculture labour need	3	20	8	24
Grazing need	-	-	3	-
Housework/Childcare needs	12	-	8	-
Family Bereavement	-	-	-	-
Family Migration	9	12	3	8
Child-centred factors				
Child's ill-health	-	4	3	8
Child's marriage	-	-	-	4
Child not interested in school	-	4	8	-
Child's migration	-	4	-	4
School-centred factors				
Child fearful of school/teacher	7	8	-	-
Teacher has not enrolled child	9	-	-	-
Teacher not welcoming	-	8	-	-
Distance of *anganwadi* from home	12	-	-	-
Distance of *anganwadi* from school	6	-	-	-
Distance of school from home	6	-	3	8

[1] Of a sub-sample of 34 responses to this question, constituting 56% of all children never enrolled in school.
[2] Of a sub-sample of 25 responses to this question, constituting 60% of all children never enrolled in school.
[3] Of a sub-sample of 37 responses to this question, constituting 97% of children never enrolled in school.
[4] Of a sub-sample of 25 responses to this question, constituting 96% of those children not enrolled in school.

The definition of 'poverty' or the precise meanings ascribable to it were hard to pin down. 'Poverty' can explain both specific types of labour deployment as well as wider circumstances that reproduce exclusion from school. Poverty, in a sense, was used as a catch-all phrase to explain a set of circumstances that were possibly, though not necessarily just, tangible and material, and I regard the 'generalness' of the term to be a significant marker of parents' wishes to *not* be more specific but to characterise the general sets of circumstances and lifeworlds that they found themselves in as a reason for education non-investment.

'Neglect' and 'ignorance' were also cited as reasons for non-enrolment of children in both sub-groups and represent parental acceptance of responsibility for not enrolling children in school. These are also difficult categories to define, but I interpret them, based on the longer discussions with parents, to mean the following: 'neglect' as implying insufficient attention paid by parents to their children's education, and 'ignorance' as implying being unaware of the importance of educating their children. Both these terms are used in 'self-deprecating' ways, and are possibly an instinctive response, or a 'catch-all' explanation, made to an obviously well-educated outsider (the researcher) by people who, recognising

the value of education in a literate and text-based world, felt compelled to explain their reasons for not sending their children to school in these terms.

Taken together, poverty and neglect accounted for the non-enrolment of over 50% children in both villages. Circumstantial factors for some children included early marriage (for girls in V-2), and ill-health, migration and lack of interest in school. Factors pertaining to neglect on the part of teachers, or owing to the distance of educational facilities from the home, or each other, also accounted for a small percentage in both villages. Two findings stand out in the case of V-1 for 6-9 year olds. First, school-centred factors account for 60% of never-enrolled children, which reinforces the wider observations about the condition of the school (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6). Second, distance of respondents' homes from different schooling facilities is cited as a reason for non-enrolment, which suggests the dependence of very young children on parents for getting to school, and also difficulties of managing children of different ages between scattered educational and child-care facilities.

4.2.8 Reasons for dropout

Dropout in V-2 (14%) was higher for children aged 6-9 than V-1 (1%) as has already been presented. Both villages have high levels of dropout in age-group 10-12. As with the last sub-section, the reasons cited were either household-centred or child-centred. Responses as a proportion of the total number of children who had dropped out are relatively high, and higher than the proportion in the last subsection on non-enrolment. As with reasons for non-enrolment, household-centred factors dominate the explanations provided by respondents as to why their children had dropped out of school. In V-2, labour, migration and poverty issues account for a high proportion of children who have dropped out, 89% of 6-9 year-olds, and 82% of 10-12 year olds. Issues specific to children's feelings in relation to school also are cited for children in both age-groups in V-2. V-1 had relatively low dropout rates, but for both age-groups, household-centred factors account for the largest proportion of dropouts.

Table 20: Percentage of households with response on reasons for children's dropout (6-12)

Reasons for dropout	6-9		10-12	
	V-1[1]	V-2[2]	V-1[3]	V-2[4]
Household-centred				
Poverty	-	33	-	-
Need for labour	-	45	-	44
Family migration	-	11	-	33
Neglect	100	-	33	-
Family ill-health	-	-	33	6
Child-centred				
Child not interested in school	-	-	-	6
Child fearful of school/teacher	-	11	-	6
Child's migration	-	-	-	5
Child's ill-health	-	-	34	-

[1]Of a sub-sample of 2 households who responded to the question, constituting 100% of all children who had dropped out.

[2] Of a sub-sample of 9 households who responded to the question, constituting 75% of all children who had dropped out.

[3]Of a sub-sample of 3 households who responded to the question, constituting 75% of all children who had dropped out.

[4]Of a sub-sample of 18 households who responded to the question, constituting 82% of all children who had dropped out.

As with data on reasons for non-enrolment, these broad categories of reasons are inadequate to provide a clearer picture for the non-participation of children. While it is difficult to interpret these findings in a deterministic or certain way, these findings are interesting from the perspective of the discussion in section 4.1 on the different quality of schools in the two villages. It is also interesting that 100% and 33% of respondents in V-1 in age groups 6-9 and 10-12 respectively cite neglect as compared with none in V-2, with the latter citing poverty-related factors as more compelling. It addresses the puzzling difference between relatively poor education participation in a village with a 'model' school (V-2), and higher levels of participation in a village with a neglected school (V-1).

4.2.9 Summary of findings on education participation in V-1 and V-2

The central thread running through the sub-sections of this section has been the discrepancy between a relatively well-functioning school in a context of relatively low education participation in V-2, compared with a poorly-managed school in a context of relatively high education participation in V-1. In both villages, however, education participation was short of the requirement of Universal Primary Education.

The conclusion to which the former finding gives rise should not be interpreted to mean that 'supply' related issues are not important. The quality of supply creates its own demand, and improvements in quality of schooling are likely to bring greater numbers of

children into school, prevent dropouts and promote universal participation. Similarly greater enrolment of children in schooling could also give rise to a higher demand for better quality schooling, and put pressure on the school to respond to the requirements of the greater number of children in school. However, the data pertaining to V-2 and V-1 (see Table 21) suggests that the quality of supply is not the most significant explanatory factor for differences in participation when comparing education participation in these two schools. Rather, caste and class factors, as well as access to irrigation, appears to play a critical role in shaping the ability of households to gain access to schooling. The possibility that, at the community-level, incentives for exclusion rise where well-functioning schools need to curtail numbers in order to maintain their standards, cannot also be discounted, and is discussed later in Chapter 6.

The findings summarised in Table 21 suggest the importance of taking into account socio-economic factors such as household occupation and caste. Again, the patterns and combinations of different factors are hard to unravel. The purpose of analysing quantitative data in this chapter is precisely to surface these complexities as a background to parental discussions of education investment, and not to seek to resolve the puzzle by finding the 'most significant' of these factors.

Table 21: Principal differences between the households with children aged 6-12 surveyed in the two villages

Category	V-1	V-2
Caste	Dominated by OBCs	Roughly equivalent proportions of SCs, STs, and OBCs
Occupations/ Livelihoods	Dominated by cultivation for all caste groups except SCs. Less diversity of occupations across castes compared with V-2.	Greater range of occupations across different caste groups. Greater proportion of wage labour as occupation across caste groups except for Muslims. Multiple livelihoods among poorer households Higher proportion of migrating families.
Education participation	Higher participation rates compared with V-2 across most caste and livelihoods groups, and across gender. Lower participation for age-group 10-12 across caste/ occupational groups. No gender gap in 6-9, but emergence of gender gap for 10-12. Negligible dropout in 6-9, increasing for 10-12.	Lower participation for age-group 10-12 except amongst Muslim/SC households. High gender gap in 6-9, slightly higher for age-group 10-12. Higher rates of dropout in both 6-9 and 10-12 than V-1.
Schooling facilities	HPS (grades 1-7). Present school built in 1967-68. Of 5 classrooms, 2 in bad state of disrepair. 4 teachers including the headmaster, one female.	HPS (grades 1-7) Present school built in 1970s. 6 classrooms, all in good condition. 6 teachers including the headmaster, one female.

4.3. Narratives of schooling participation in two villages

Quantitative data provides information that paints a picture of the education background in villages, but does not help to explain what different categories mean to the respondents who provide the information. Despite leaving descriptions of reason to the respondents, there was little clarity available about what these categories meant - for example, what exactly did 'poverty' mean to respondents? While information could be gathered about the primary occupations or livelihoods of families as well as other secondary occupations, the data were insufficient to permit analysis of how households managed different livelihood strategies and what impact that could have on education investment. Reasons for non-enrolment and dropout indicated either very specific causes or highly abstract, general factors. What this range actually meant to parents could not be derived from the quantitative sample. Similarly, 'neglect' and 'ignorance' were categories that I considered too generalised and not sufficiently explanatory. Qualitative research helped to penetrate the silences of the quantitative data.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out in order to explore the following: the ways in which livelihood strategies structured children's work and education participation; how children's work affected their school participation; and how parents viewed their own role in shaping their children's educational destinies. In order to explore how parents' own educational histories influenced their decision-making around their children's schooling, discussions were also held with parents to see how they described the difference between their own worlds and those of their children, and the role of education in both shaping the difference as well as serving as an important outcome of generational change. This specifically gives rise to analysis of how parents describe the value and benefits of education and express their own views of the purpose and motives for educating children. Finally, as an ideological construct underpinning all parental decision-making around education, parental views on the gender of the child and their educational prospects are analysed, as a reminder that ultimately all hopes, aspirations, material calculations and short-term strategies reflect and are shaped by broader social norms that structure and reproduce particular gender inequalities (here, inequalities in education participation particularly post-puberty) as well as dictate the possibilities for adjustments and flexibility in livelihood management.

This section reflects on the findings in the two villages drawing on household interviews carried out with parents in the two villages. Based on a sample of 17 households, 9 in V-1 and 8 in V-2, the interviews explored in detail parental decision-making on children's education, and in particular, of parental experiences in relation to schooling, both in their own childhoods as well as in the case of their children's schooling. All the parents interviewed were those who had children aged between 6-12 at the time of fieldwork. In addition, two focus group discussions were held in V-2, one with ten women from one street of the village, organised by one of the interviewees, and one with the children of the village who were attending grade 7 (six boys) and were about to take the board examination. As this was the last possible year of study in the village (unless, of course, they failed and repeated a year), we discussed their plans for the future.

Respondents to the semi-structured interviews were drawn from a small selected sample of parents who had children aged between 6-12. The criterion for selection was primarily based on livelihood. Given the diversity of agricultural conditions in the area (variations in soil type and variations in irrigation availability) which gave rise to diverse livelihood strategies, in most cases encompassing both cultivation and wage labour and migration, the

sample aimed to cover households with different land holdings as well as livelihood strategies. Selection of interviewees was also influenced by whether the respondents felt able to talk in an open-ended way around education. The rhetoric of 'worth' associated with education often made it difficult to persist with the line of questioning around education investment as strategy, as noted earlier.

Table 22: Background to interviewees

	Villa ge	Sex	Occupation	Land	Caste	Years of educ-ation	No. of Childre n 6-12	In School	Never enrol -led	Drop-out
P1	V-1	F	Wage Labour; Livestock	Land -less	SC	0	2	-	2	-
P2	V-1	F	Wage Labour; livestock; weaving mats	Land -less	SC	0	2	1	1	-
P3	V-1	M	Agri -culturist	40 acres dry and wet	FC	13	2	2	-	-
P4	V-1	F	Wage Labour; Migration Livestock	Land -less	OBC	0	3	1	1	1
P5	V-1	F	Wage Labour; Cultivation	3 acres dry	OBC	0	3	1	1	1
P6	V-1	M	Cultivation Livestock	8 acres dry	Mus -lim	0	1	-	-	1
P7	V-1	M	Wage Labour; Cultivation Livestock	3 acres dry	SC	0	2	1	1	-
P8	V-1	F	Wage Labour; Migration	Land -less	ST	0	3	-	2	1
P9	V-1	M	Wage Labour; Livestock	4 acres dry	ST	0	2	1	1	-
P10	V-2	M	Cultivation Wage Labour	2-3 acres dry	Mus -lim	2	4	1	3	-
P11	V-2	M	Wage Labour; Livestock; Migration	Land -less	SC	0	4	3	1	-
P12	V-2	F	*Anganwadi* Teacher	28 acres dry and wet	OBC	10	4	4	-	-
P13	V-2	F	Cultivation	10 acres	ST	0	2	-	-	2
P14	V-2	F	Cultivation	6 acres dry and	ST	0	1	-	-	1

				wet						
P15	V-2	F	Livestock; Tailor	Land -less	Serv -ice Caste	0	1	1	-	-
P16	V-2	F	Wage Labour; Migration; Livestock	Land -less	SC	0	4	3	-	1
P17	V-2	M	Agri- Culturist	28 acres dry and wet	OBC	7	4	4	-	-

The analysis of interviews is done jointly for the two villages. The chief purpose of this section is to develop a perspective on the lifeworlds of parents and how they shape education investment strategies.

The first sub-section provides the context for household education investment in the two villages — that of agriculture in a context of drought. Parents' discussions of their livelihoods and the underpinning experience of uncertainty and risk are presented here. Intertwined in this sub-section is a discussion of the ways in which children's work is incorporated into the organisation of the household economy and livelihood strategies. In the third sub-section, I review how parents construct their responsibilities for children's education specifically, and futures more generally. In the fourth sub-section, I review these constructions in the context of parents' own histories of learning and experiences with formal schooling, and in the fifth sub-section, I review the ways in which parents narratives have deeply embedded ideas of the value of education, and the different ways in which 'value' is given shape and meaning.

4.3.1 "Uncertain like the wind": Livelihood strategies and children's work in an agrarian context

The lifeworlds of interviewees in both villages have to be understood in the wider context of agriculture and the way conditions of economic risk and uncertainty underpin the decisions made by households, poor and rich. The satisfaction of basic needs, especially the mitigation of hunger, occupied a premier position in the priorities of all households interviewed, except the two large land-owning farmers. However, the overall context of uncertainty and risk, arising from common experiences of survival and farming in a drought-prone area, were common to all interviewees. A relatively prosperous agriculturist elaborated the context of this:

If agriculture work grows, we improve. We can eat only grains; can we cut and eat money? We can't. We can earn money. Today in this life I have earned money. Can I eat that money in a plate? We don't manufacture grain; it is created by God, mainly by cultivation. We grow everything in a field. We are not in a condition to need to buy [food]. ... If we look from one angle, there is no occupation [as good] as agriculture. There is also nothing as bad as it. It belongs to both sides. If we stop cultivating, all people in this country have to eat [currency] notes. If we farmers sleep, all of us have to eat money.

(P17)

The belief that agriculture provided the main ingredients of life itself, food, and that it was a duty in order to feed people all over the country also gave value to agriculture as a duty, an inherited vocation which one had no choice in terms of leaving:

I have inherited it. After our forefathers, it has come from generations. I didn't start it; my parents didn't start it. ... If I leave this there is no other occupational opportunity for us. I don't know how to weigh using a balance. If we have to put up a factory it needs a lot of investment. There are no facilities for that. In such a situation it is easy to earn bread by retaining the land you have. The feeling has come to us as to why should there be change?

(P17)

Opportunities for economic transitions away from agriculture to other occupations remain limited in the district, and with the investment required for establishing non-agricultural ventures quite high, quite a distant dream for agriculturists like P17 above. However, in his view, agriculture was less a mere economic avenue, and more an inherited occupation, an inter-generational project for which he felt best equipped, despite having received school education.

Representations of agriculture as inherited duty, however, may be most commonplace for agriculturists with land and with a fair amount of security from their investment. This was not a perspective necessarily shared by landless or small farmers in the area:

Curse is on our birth! When the stomach pinches, who can think of the future? When the stomach is full, one thinks of studying, acquiring knowledge and becoming educated.

When one is eternally hungry, who thinks about job and salary?

(P16)

The applicability of schooling to agricultural life-worlds was also questioned by another parent, giving rise to the possibility that withdrawals of children from school for periods of work amounted to a strategy for ensuring that children's connection to their agricultural roots was not lost:

What kind of fieldwork do children who go to school know? They should go and work with whoever calls them. ... If they continue studying as they grow up they cannot learn fieldwork. On the other hand studying a little and doing the field [work] when one is young, it can be learnt. Educated people cannot do works like managing oxen, tilling, erecting fence posts, cooking and feeding. They cannot work. If one does these works gradually, they can learn.

(P14)

In the two villages under study, it is clear that households expressed the role of children in the household economy as important, although there were variations, and households often managed their strategies in such a way that all their children were not fully required to be out of school. Attendance during the peak season in both schools reduced considerably during harvest-time as reported by the Headmasters and teachers in both schools, which is not uncommon, and highlights the "the crucial role of agriculture in the rural economy and its relationship with the demand for child labour" (Bhatty 1998a:1734.).

The main feature of the two villages, particularly V-2, lying as it did in a drought-prone unirrigated area, was the predominance of one-season agriculture. This meant that households with none or limited access to irrigation, invariably had to migrate for one season, or find wage labour opportunities in neighbouring areas. Wage labour was usually found locally during the peak season for non-cultivating or landless households. The daily wage rate for women was Rs. 10 and for men varied between Rs. 20 and Rs. 25. Interviewees also reported that children, especially boys aged 10 and above, could earn a wage of Rs.25 a day. If the labourer was able to also provide oxen the rate would go up to Rs. 50 a day (one interviewee reported Rs. 100). The availability of wage labour was however variable; all interviewees reported that for every four days of wage labour available, there would be four days of "being idle". Most households with a little land

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managed to grow wheat and groundnuts, with the former providing family subsistence, and the latter being sold on the market for income depending on the yield.

Migration provided another option in the second agricultural season (February - June). However, interviewees reported the difficulties and upheavals caused by migration, and in two cases decided to forego the option even if it meant less income and more hardship:

> We have adjusted for this year. In case we decide to go, we have to take children, cows, and calves with us, so we did not go.
>
> (P16)

Similarly P6 had decided not to migrate, and instead spend half the year unemployed, subsisting on loans for survival.

The uncertainty of rain and employment meant that most households who had little land or irrigation had multiple back-up strategies to secure their survival. The keeping of livestock was one major strategy. The high resale value of goats (kids), consumption value and the ease of maintenance led several families to keep goats. Access to children's labour formed a central component of the investment decision. Members of the *Mahila Samakhya Sangha* [Women's Group] of V-1 had bought goats out of the money that they had saved as part of their savings scheme, and this decision was explained thus:

> We wanted to get benefit from it. We have to have some money, our life has to be improved somehow. Boys, girls are available at house readily. Anyhow they will graze [the animals]. Thinking like this, we bought [the goats].
>
> (P2)

Children's role in grazing is central to the survival strategies of poor households in both villages. For P6, grazing was not even considered 'work'. As grazing is also a daily activity, children are either not sent to school at all as a result of their grazing duties (which would relate to the extent of dependence on grazing for household survival, and number of goats or other livestock), or missed part of school in order to graze their animals. Thus the importance of cows and oxen and other livestock to both food and

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income strategies should not be underestimated, given that they offered, in the words of A4,[80] a "no cost and all profit kind of operation".

Households also employed supplementary income-generation strategies to survive. Although all households in the survey reported only one primary occupation, in practice most poor (i.e. relatively assetless) households had more than one livelihood strategy. In V-1, basket weaving was carried out by women in the Scheduled Caste area as a means of earning when wage labour opportunities were not available. A few women in V-2 had turned to tailoring as a secondary occupation, which also had a seasonal dimension, reaping rewards in the festive and wedding seasons, but not otherwise.

The uncertainty of livelihoods for landless or small (dry land) cultivating households translated into uncertainty of schooling for their children. P16 identified schooling as the prerogative of the "rich man" and his ilk, who, owning big houses, land and food stocks and "(h)aving such comforts...[can] send their children to school". Certainly, people with large farms and hired labour did not require their children to be available either partially or fully for labour, and could educate all their children. Indeed two of the agriculturists interviewed (P3 and P17) had all their children in their village school. However, P17, holder of the position of *'patil'*[81] located his educational strategy for his children within the context of being an agriculturist, rather than on the basis of income measurement. Successful farmers were those who had adopted modern farming methods and technologies or hybrid farming, and given the drought-proneness of the area, viewed their livelihoods as equally uncertain and risky as poor households. Hybrid farming was not as simple as "we cultivate, we get, we eat":

> Agriculture is quite OK. But in these days [of hybrid farming], I feel its good if there is a person with a job in the family. I feel such a family manages smoothly because sometimes there is excess rainfall. Due to this we incur loss. On the other hand if there is no rainfall, then also we incur loss. This puts us in a situation where we are compelled to ask loan from others. We ask loan of 10,000/- rupees. There again we have to pay simple interest and compound interest; or even in the bank, compound interest is charged and it increases. And gradually we shrink economically little by little. Instead, if we have an employed person in the house,

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[80] See Table 24, Chapter 5.

[81] An honorary hereditary position within the village where the *patil* is given the responsibility of maintaining law and order. While the state regulatory system has superseded this more traditional form of village regulation, the *patil* still has a role to play in resolving local disputes and recording instances of dispute and crime within the village.

he earns a salary of [Rs.] one to three thousand. Even the
agricultural profit we make by cultivating land adds up to the
family income. I have a feeling that we may improve a little
like that.

<div align="right">(P17)</div>

Short-termism in outlook can be seen as related to short-term risks and uncertainty for poorer households, for whom economic uncertainty necessitated managing livelihood strategies across days, weeks and seasons, whereas better-off, landed households expressed a long-term view that linked to strategies for dealing with long-term risk relating to processes of capital accumulation, the security of savings and the management of variations in profit and loss across years. While both relatively rich and poor households described the circumstances created by agricultural conditions in the area as high-risk, the place given to education in their strategies clearly varied. While education was a valuable asset that could enable households such as P17's to diversify and strengthen their agricultural position by stabilising income flows, for poorer households, the tensions between full-time education for children and household survival meant that children were often pulled out of school either for short or long periods.

Constraints on girls' or boys' school participation were likely to vary depending on the livelihood strategy being used at a particular time, which was reflected in patterns of attendance in school. For instance, poor parents either a) pulled children out when they were at work, to ensure protection of the livestock and other items of value within the home, or to look after younger siblings; b) put the children to work either in the field or for grazing; c) took children with them when they migrated; and d) sent children, particularly boys, to assist fathers in wage labour. Three interviewees emphasised the importance of children's involvement in household economic activity:

...now see, people live by taking care of goats. How can they
live? I have two children; they go to graze two cows. Now,
seven-year old boys... they are sent to take care of goats.
From this one occupation [tailoring], I have saved some
money and have bought two goats and two oxen. I have
bought some land. As to who will take care of crops, grains,
so the mind of our people will go in that direction.

<div align="right">(P15)</div>

We have cattle. They have to be grazed and looked after.
Like others, we are unable to do it otherwise. So I allowed
one boy for it. Yes, he works.

<div align="center">119</div>

> Children's work is important. How can we eat without
> working? Somehow we have to look after cattle, field,
> otherwise how to survive and manage?
>
> (P10)

Even in wealthier households, children are not entirely spared the onus of contributing to household work. P17 noted that his children worked if there were no other helpers available:

> They graze cattle. Sometimes when the servants are not
> there, I ask them to bring cattle and they do. If I ask them to
> go and bring water, they bring. If there is any work in the
> shop, they go and bring if I ask them. I haven't given them
> the responsibility of fieldwork until now
>
> (P17)

The extent of children's participation in labour varied in several ways: a) in the case of fourteen interviewees, there was at least one child who had been withdrawn fully from school or not enrolled; b) other children attended school but were withdrawn as required. For instance, seven interviewees said they sent their children to graze animals and five interviewees said that their daughters stayed home to look after housework and house management. Five sent their children to do wage labour or fieldwork; c) younger children were often withdrawn to replace the labour of older children who either moved on to do wage labour or migrated, or in the case of girls, got married and left home. For instance, P13's older son initially was withdrawn from school to graze cattle. When he was old enough to accompany his father for wage labour, his younger brother was withdrawn from school to graze cattle. However, in the case of P10, a younger child was removed school to do work that an older child *refused* to do.

Discontinuities in schooling for children who also contributed to household economic activity were often significantly high. P6 reported that his son missed an average of 4 days of school a week. P16 and P2 similarly reported high incidence of school absenteeism for their sons. P5 had to pull her daughter out of school for a whole year when their crops failed and the family had to migrate because they "had great difficulty to even eat, that's why." P16's daughter missed two years of schooling owing to the migration of her family:

We take them, pangs of hunger! [Its] as good as leaving
[school], doing this, missing school yearly. [Our daughter]
is now in Standard 3 instead of 5. More or less, it is like
stopping schooling.

(P16)

This situation was clearly not a preference for P16, who at the time of fieldwork had decided not to migrate that year because of the upheaval caused:

We want them to study. We do not want them to work and
earn to give us. [But] as there will be nobody to look after
and care for them, we take them along with us.

P9, on the other hand, required his children to stay at home while he and his wife were away on fieldwork:

When we go to daily wage job outside, then we will be
compelled to tie and lock our cattle inside the house. That is
why we did not send.

The withdrawal of children from school can thus have both economic causes, such as the need for work, but importantly, also non-economic causes, such as lack of suitable arrangements for child care. While P16 had no one to provide the quality of care that she did, there was also an underlying economic factor - the low daily wage rate for women labourers. Her commitment to her children's upbringing and well being had led her to forego work herself, except in emergency, and stay home to look after the children. This was in part due to the low wages paid to women:

They pay Rs. 10 for my work, what can we do with Rs. 10?
That is why I do not go out [for wage labour]. My husband
also does not want me to work outside as he feels that the
children may starve to death if I go out.

Sometimes families preferred to keep labour within the family to prevent property disputes arising where the only alternative source of farm labour is within the extended family. One of V-2's HPS 7th grade students was leaving school to work on the family land, to ensure that dependence on extended family was curtailed. Boys in V-2's 7th grade, poised to make the transition from schooling within the village to high school outside the village, also faced pressure from their peers who had left school:

Some go for harvest. Some work and live. They ask: "What
do you benefit from studying? ... If we work and earn, we get
money. What will one get from studying in school?
(Participant, Children's focus group, V-2)

Peer pressure of the kind experienced by the young boy above is also an indication of the equivalent attractiveness of work to young boys for whom working for the family is seen as an important and responsible duty.

4.3.2 Constructions of, and limits to, parent's responsibilities for children's education

Can UPE be achieved without forcing a choice between work and schooling? Dreze and Sen (1995) do not think so, and neither does Bhatty (1998b). They identify the poor quality and lack of schools as the critical constraint to UPE, citing evidence that parents themselves demand education as offered through the present system of formal schooling which runs from 10 am to 4 p.m. Their argument is premised on the supply-demand metaphor, analytically separating factors relating to service provision from the education behaviour of households.

Although children's work is important to the rural household economy, as demonstrated above, in both V-1 and V-2, there are parents from different livelihoods and castes who educate their children, albeit with variations in the strength of their representation in school. Why do some parents manage to circumvent their circumstances and educate their children, while others do not? Is the education of children ultimately a matter of parental will? In the context of low adult education rates in both villages, and the finding cited in the last section that children's education participation is not strongly associated with parents' education, it is clear that most children in both villages are first-generation learners. Exploring parental views on their responsibilities for getting children to school assumes that rural parents do have long-term strategies, aspirations and views on their children's futures. This proposition is explored below, especially against evidence that parents often discuss children's futures in child-specific terms, "as a matter of personal endurance, gift and the luck of the child, that is, as the children's frontier" (Nieuwenhuys 1994:45).

A factor that can be considered child-centred relates to children's own behaviour and disobedience in the face of their parental wishes that they go to school. P16 noted a

problem, which was hinted at by some parents. Her children, she argued, often refused to help at home:

> After returning from school, the children do not help us. They jump around and sit ... If they get the company of their age group, they bring [water], if not, if they get any other company, then they refuse to do the work, only I have to bring [water].

According to several parents, limitations were placed on their ability to educate their children by the children themselves. P14 expressed her frustration despite repeated attempts to get her son to school:

> He roams with his friends and wastes time. We bought books. We registered his name in school but he does not go. We are serious but he does not go what can we do...? ... Whatever efforts we made and however much we compelled him, he did not go. We gave him money, we coaxed and cajoled, and we praised and encouraged him, and took and left him up to the school. Then we came back and he used to follow us home. ... We are trying at least to get our children educated. But they do not obey us.

Similarly, P5 was unable to persuade her stubborn daughter that she should go to school:

> Her reasons are not known. 'I don't want to study in school', she said and persisted. ... We registered her name, but she said 'I do not at all want to study in school. Why are you telling me?' ... "Don't tell me anything, I do not want to study in school.

Parents are expected to play a critical role in sending their children to school, intervening on behalf of children's interests to ensure UPE. However, this expectation of parental responsibility for children's education was belied in the interviews of most parents, whose hopes for children's educational prospects were often belied in the face of children's disobedience. However, some children who left school for work were reported by their parents to have lost interest in school or as refusing to go to school. P13's children refused to go to school after staying home to work. A participant in the Women's Focus Group interview said that apart from the necessity of her children for housework duties, they did not go to school at all "for the fear of teacher beatings". P6 himself did not send his son to school "due to fear of [his] getting beaten by the teacher in the school".

Why do parents claim helplessness or do little to address children's fear of school taking action against teachers who beat children? Why do they not enforce discipline and send their children to school? One obvious constraint lies in time availability. Poorer parents are often busy all day managing livelihoods and household tasks, and may not have the time to invest in managing their children:

> We are poor and have to work. Is it our responsibility to ensure that we fill our stomachs or stop our children from eating mud? We have no knowing what they do.... but usually there is someone or the other who keeps an eye - either the elders or somebody.
>
> (P16)

However, the evidence that for some parents, the child's own persistence and interest individually determine the destinies of children possibly explains parental attitudes towards children's disobedience. This was evident from a range of views expressed by parents in response to the question 'How far will you educate your child?'. Five parents[82] were loath to ascribe any role to themselves in determining their child's fortunes, and preferred to express it in terms of children's 'wishes' and capacity, as expressed below by one parent:

> I will send there [to school] until he passes. I will educate him for as long as he wants to study. If he says 'no, I do not want, I will work somewhere', then it is his wish. Who can foresee the future? It is god's will.
>
> (P1)

Children's wishes, of course, were about both learning and about staying on in school:

> I will ask her to do what she wants. Beyond this, if she desires intensely to continue her studies, then I have to agree to her wish.
>
> (Participant, Women's focus group)

Pragmatism was also evident in some parent's views. One parent indicated that forcing a child against his or her view would only be counter-productive:

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[82] Including P4, P5, P6, P12

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Purpose is, if they study sincerely, I'll let them study. 'No, no', if they say, 'I'll stop half way', I can make them discontinue. Because if I force them to study, they won't study. Some children, on the other hand, also say, 'We'll study, we'll take and fulfil a challenge'. We'll educate such a child to his capacity, while we are still breathing.

(P17)

However, for some parents, children's education was not in their hands but determined by the child's own fortune and destined trajectory in life, which diminished their perceived ability to influence the child's decision. The expression of belief in 'fate', the 'future' and in some cases a divine hand, was also expressed, although in one case, 'fate' also took the form of a wish for the birth of another child which would permit the one in school to fulfil his destiny:

If fate has written education on his head, will he not study? There is God to look after the future. He may give us one more son ... someone [who] will come and continue the fieldwork.

(P14)

What can I think and plan for him? Madam we ask him to wake up, ask him to go to school and tell him to become intelligent and careful ... If Lord Shiva provides us, we can educate him further. If he studies well, we can continue his studies in future also.

(P10)

Who knows about predicting the future? I will educate her for as long as she stays with us and whatever school can provide here and then do the needful later.

(P9)

I will send there till he passes. I will educate him till he wants to study. If he says 'no, I do not want, I will work somewhere', then it is his wish. Who can foresee the future? It is god's will.

(P1)

Not all parents, however, believed that schooling and general betterment could be achieved by maintaining a distance from their children's decisions. Four interviewees, however, also expressed the importance of parental commitment and influence, in one case, as a statement against the use of corporal punishment:

> Unless parents care about education children can't learn.
> Now I have given birth to my son, if I hit and beat him to
> send him to school, does he learn?
>
> (P15)

P7 rued the lost opportunities of his own childhood, and felt any means used were justified if it meant that children would get some education:

> In present time we send our children to school even by
> hitting and beating... If [our parents] had forcibly pushed us
> telling us that they would look after the cattle and that we
> must go to school, then we could have studied also.
>
> (P7)

In one case, a parent felt that it was the teacher's responsibility to instil discipline into a disobedient child, when the teacher complained about her daughter's irregularity:

> We tell them [teachers] to beat and teach sense if she
> [daughter] absents herself.
>
> (P4)

P17 noted that if parents had the right attitude, children themselves would inculcate values that would motivate them to go to school even on occasions when parents were lenient:

> Parents should be willing. They should also inspire the child
> to study, and feel that 'any child should study'. When our
> children are told 'you have just returned from out-of-town, so
> only today leave, don't go' (to school), they retort, saying 'it's
> time for school' and go away.
>
> (P17)

The boundaries of parental responsibility are differently drawn by different parents, often viewing children's futures as the fulfilment of individual destinies, in some cases determined by the individual child. However, the small number of parents who said that their children drop out of school because of school-centred factors raises the important issue of the extent to which children's participation in household activity can be partly seen as a 'default activity', as argued by Bhatty (1998a). This goes back to the issue of polarising supply and demand as noted at the beginning of this sub-section. The case of V-2, which has a good school by the standards of rural government schools in India in general, challenges the proposition that children are pushed out of school and into work

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because of the poor quality of schooling. Another possible explanation suggested from fieldwork are that children exert agency[83] in deciding whether to go to school or not, an agency that takes shape in the context of parental absence from home for work, as noted above.

A second explanatory factor could be that children's work provides them with a sense of satisfaction for which schooling, as it exists, however competent the level and quality of provision, is not an adequate substitute. Informal discussions with children indicate that they are closely involved in and concerned about household economic survival and their sense of well-being is fulfilled by being able to help out and contribute to household survival. Similarly, Marcus and Harper (1997:25) cite evidence from research carried out by Save the Children Fund that children's work contributions actually can feed their sense of self-esteem and confidence.[84] However, to draw policy conclusions about the importance of children's work over schooling from such evidence is also erroneous, as the role played by the quality of schooling on offer is also not clear. Arguments about the quality of schooling remain necessarily speculative, as the quality of a school can only be measured by the results it achieves – if a school has good attendance, and achieves good results with no dropouts then it can be deemed to be offering good education. It also reinforces the point made earlier about the dangers of over-simplification inherent in focusing selectively on 'supply' side factors at the expense of understanding the interaction between provision and participation. As assessments of quality of schooling are linked to the quality of participation, polarising 'supply' and 'demand' as oppositional categories overlooks possible grey areas that lie in between.

Social risk and the education of daughters

The fulfilment of parental responsibility for children is not expressed merely by investment in children's education. It can be more realistically assessed in terms of framing parental responsibility as the achievement of what is in the 'best interests of the child', howsoever that may be defined. While the economic interests of children may be secured by maintaining a fluid relationship between work and school, as the previous sub-sections indicate, obedience towards social norms that place a reduced value on female education

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[83]As defined in Chapter 3.

[84]Marcus and Harper note: "Many children want to work for reasons including: to earn money for themselves, to help their families, to improve future job prospects or to increase their self-esteem and others' respect for them, or feel that it is their duty to do so", a finding supported in the UK by Morrow (op.cit..). This is a controversial finding, as it may be read as a legitimisation of children's work.

may also be factored in as securing the 'best interests' of female children. This is borne out both by the evidence of gender gaps in education participation in both villages, particularly for the age-group 10-12, which also coincides with the onset of puberty, as well as discussions with parents. The relative lack of education among adult women in the two villages is also testimony to the low levels of encouragement for female education.

Girls' education is considered essential for realising gender equality and takes a central place in NPE and DPEP as seen in Chapter 1. As Bouis et al. point out, it is important to understand the exact ways in which gender differentiation "limits the real and perceived options that parents have for allocating family time, and capital assets", thus generating different opportunity costs for investments in the education of boys and girls" (ibid.). Are opportunity costs externally imposed (labour market discrimination), thus leading to unequal allocations in household investment in education between boys and girls (Kingdon 1999), or is favouritism towards boys an outcome of intra-household values and norms? Research suggests that educational inequalities based on gender derive from the complex interaction of these two factors (King and Hill 1991).

In the two villages studied, the destinies of girls lay in the hands of parents who were often influenced by rigid norms underpinned by the fear of offending social custom if girls were educated beyond what was considered acceptable. Acceptability of girls' engagement with the public world was constructed around puberty, and the onset of puberty was the milestone by which girls' destinies were shaped and decided. The fact that puberty signals the start of a woman's cycle of fertility means that in many families, it determines the age by which daughters start to assume the roles and responsibilities of adult women. This means that limits on girls' mobility, interactions with (male) outsiders are placed when girls 'mature'. Any transgression of that boundary that implies untoward behaviour even if communicated merely through channels of hearsay, rumour and gossip, means possible social stigma and difficulties in finding a spouse of appropriate status. The fear of transgression and its outcomes often influenced the speed with which girls were withdrawn from school and prepared for marriage:

> For girls, we stop education as soon as they grow up [attain puberty]. Men scold us as to why educate the girls, if we continue. They scold us saying that they may find difficulty in finding boys [for marriage]. They agree to educate girls only up to the time when they grow up, and [then] stop.
> (P14)

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> Who wants to bear the blame? If she talks normally with any man, she is accused unnecessarily that she is flirting, and [they] make up such stories. In the present times, which are sensitive, let any man come [forward]; we feel that we should unburden our responsibility as soon as a good man arrives ... that is all [there is] to it.
>
> (spouse of P10)

While the perception of 'risking' social disapproval if girls were seen outside school and engaging in the public world was quite strong, it was clear that prior to puberty, there was less of a barrier on girls' participation from a social point of view. At the level of individual households, there were cases where sons were held back from school and daughters sent, which depended in turn on the type of livelihoods system that was in place. However, the awareness that girls' educational prospects would be curtailed with the onset of puberty led parents to not perhaps invest greater care in girls' primary education, particularly evident in the case of V-2, which had a gender gap even in age-group 6-9, unlike V-1. The dramatic shift came with puberty, particularly in terms of discussing girls' education beyond what was available in the village. Sending daughters to high school outside the village after the age of twelve was rare, and done only in cases where there were relations to whom the girls could be sent.

These features are not unique to the two villages, and are indeed common to India as a whole (see Khan 1993 for a detailed exposition on girls' education in South Asia). However, the main point of considering some of these factors is to point out that facilitating girls' education requires battling the differential social norms that structure economic incentives for parental responsibility towards their daughters, as opposed to sons. These norms are so embedded in the functioning of social life, that transgressing them by investing in education is perceived as risking social sanction. Where securing girls' marital prospects is seen as a key responsibility of parents to discharge, and where the education of girls is seen to facilitate their interaction with a wider public world, then educating girls can be viewed from the perspective of parents as not being in their best interests and a not very responsible action on their part.

4.3.3 Parents' education and histories of learning

Parents' attitudes towards their children's education can be seen as influenced by their own experiences of schooling in their youth. Of the sample only three had been to school. For the rest, work and play were the dominant experiences of their childhood, reinforced by the fact that many of their peer group were similarly out of school. Many lived in villages that did not have a school. Work was the predominant experience, with grazing being an activity carried out by all the interviewees in childhood. The education of women was also considered to be unacceptable, hence for women interviewees there had never been any question of going to school. P15 was one of the few women who had been sent to school, only to be withdrawn within the first year:

> When we were young, we had to do the work of grazing cattle. Continuously with a gap of about two years my mother used to deliver children. They started telling me to take care of children. They had sent us to the school. When I was in 1st standard my mother delivered. They asked me to carry the baby and sit with it. They said 'we shall go to the fields, you take care of young ones'. It means, I sat with the child at home.
>
> (P15)

The absence of peer group pressure meant that many children preferred to spend time with their friends rather than go to school:

> Under the pretext that we do not want to go to school just to avoid beatings by the teacher, we used to walk astray here and there.
> (Participant, Women's Focus Group, V-2)

The absence of pressure manifest in the fact that large numbers of children were out of school, was reinforced by the absence of parental pressure to study, in turn created by the absence of their own learning:

> We did not study. What did they [our parents] know? They did not study and they did not educate [us] also.
> (P16)

> If I wanted to study and study, who will stay in the house? So I did not go. I myself had a desire, but they did not send.
> (P5)

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There is no desire for those who had no education. Nothing was known about it.

(P1)

Illiterates, what did they [our parents] know? Did we also not remove our children from school? Same way.

(P10)

Only nowadays children go to school. We were daily roaming and seeing. But none of us went to school. Our father and mother did not accept this [importance of education]. They were illiterate. They felt that 'cattle are available and these boys can look after them'.

(P7)

What did they know then and what did we know? We used to go to work like grazing - when we were young, what did they teach us? They used to make us sit carrying and looking after kids (babies). Where was the school?

(Participant, Women's Focus Group)

The above interviewees all claimed that their own parents' ignorance, illiteracy and lack of knowledge had limited their chances for going to school, in combination with the relative lack of facilities such as schools and teachers. Such views give credence to the possibility that inter-generational transfers of values around education are critical for changing the shape of education participation in rural India. This emerges most clearly in P10's reference to his own behaviour in relation to his children, quoted above. Two interviewees also noted the role of external catalysts in transforming views on education and behaviour relating to school participation:

In those times so much information was not available to people. They were engaged in farm work. They used to say 'from this our main livelihood will come, it is enough if we have cattle in the house and from this our other living necessities can be met'.

(P3)

We did not feel like studying. Who was there then to advise and compel us like you are doing now? ... Then they were

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giving *uppittu* (snack) and milk. After eating and drinking we were returning hurriedly. We were not sitting there.

(P16)

Information, advice and opportunity in the form of schooling resources were the factors that were identified by interviewees as distinguishing their own childhoods from the present situation where at least 50% of all children were in school. The formation of the *Mahila Sangha*, for instance, in V-1, had played a role in influencing the decision of *Sangha* members:

> We have just now started to educate [our children]. After the *Sangha* was formed, now we have got the feeling to send. Otherwise as the children were delivered, the children were being taken with us to the forest [when we went to work] and then [we would] bring them back. That is all we did.
>
> (P2)

Another *Sangha* member discussed the impact of *Sangha* membership on her awareness, in terms of the difference between her views and those of her husband:

> What will he say? He will say that it is enough if you work and eat. He does not like schooling. He is not learned. It has not come to him to do this. We are used to feeling that it is good, if our children stay with us. [Now we think] 'Go forward and study; do not become dumb (illiterate) like us. ... Learn (study) something', feeling like this that is why I want to send.
>
> (P1)

Characterising their lack of awareness about the importance of education as a consequence of 'illiteracy' and 'lack of wisdom' were also common responses. Interviewees clearly had an awareness that educating their children was a worthwhile investment, although some of their responses contained a mixture of the pragmatic (we had to work) with the wishful (we would have gone to school and become intelligent). Yet, in both villages there was a significant number of children that remained out of school, and many of these parents themselves had children out of school who they claimed not to be able to influence or persuade regarding the value of schooling.

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4.3.4 Ascribing value to education

The view that the rural poor in general do not value education is vehemently discounted in the Indian literature (Dreze and Sen 1995, Dreze and Gazdar 1996, Probe Report 1999, Banerji 1997, Bhatty 1998a and b), and in the views of parents in V-1 and V-2, as the discussion below argues. Before considering the ways in which value is ascribed to education by interviewees in the research villages, I first attempt to disentangle the different *kinds* of statements through which expression is given to the inherent qualities of education that parents cherish or anticipate as an outcome of schooling their children.

In the course of unravelling discussions with parents on education and its role in their lives, I noted four distinct, though interrelated ways in which education was discussed: **value, benefits, purpose and motives.** First the broad category of value, where a range of qualities was ascribed to education which were often intangible or immeasurable, but indicated the worth of education in terms of the broader transformations it could effect in people's minds, outlooks and broader human prospects. 'Value' is thus understood in this thesis to refer to the universe of aspirations of parents, both linked to their specific life-circumstances but also inspired by their experiences and interactions with those outside their own life-universes. A narrower subset of statements on value were statements on the benefits of education, or the tangible or specific returns parents expected or hoped would visit children who were in school. Statements of benefit arose either from hope or from the experiences of parents as an outcome of having, or lacking, education. The experience of benefits in particular could be seen to give rise to the construction of aspirations. Fuelling the construction of views on benefits of education were the purposes for which parents believed it important to educate children. These are the functional achievements which are linked to the broader aspirations made evident in statements ascribing value to education or learning. The last category, closely linked with statements of purpose, was that of motive or the main impulse that parents described had driven them to send their children to school. This last category overlaps with purpose, but is distinguished from purpose by the manner in which interviewees presented them - as specific reasons for sending their children to school.

These categories presented themselves out of the multiple discursive styles used by interviewees to discuss education. Where these discussions were carried out with non-literate interviewees, statements were likely to be extremely broad when discussing the aspirational elements, and extremely specific and narrow when discussing the functional

elements of household education investment. In order to structure these different modes of construction, it is perhaps more useful to view them in terms of a 'continuum of ideas' around education, the range of which are expressed by interviewees while trying to explain their household education strategies.

For the purposes of discussion, I cluster statements of value (ends) and statements of purpose (means) at the aspirational end of the continuum, with statements of benefit (ends) and motive (means) clustered together towards the functional end. Phrases within the quotes that highlight ways in which meaning is attributed to education and its transformative aspects are emphasised.

Value and Purpose

Qualities ascribed to education ranged from ideas about improvement to its role in helping households to become more 'cautious', a virtue particularly valued by households who face conditions of risk. P12, the *anganwadi* worker in V-2, herself educated up to grade 10 (more than her husband) felt this was particularly important for girls, given their greater social vulnerability in times of distress:

> You can't say what happens in a girl's life and when, and
> that's why [education is useful].

The idea of investing in education for the 'future' was expressed by all interviewees, but more clearly by those who had some education than by those who were non-literate. For example, for P3, the investment lay in supporting his own life-circumstances, particularly shaped by his caste position. As a Brahmin landowner, education was an investment to uphold his caste position and his status as an agricultural landowner:

> In our caste, we cannot work in house and fields. That is
> why they [my parents] got us **education as a property**. So
> they educated us well.

For households such as his, education was a means to uphold his distinction from workers, and education as a household strategy is intended to reproduce that caste position and uphold existing status. Poorer households where parents had no education struggled to grapple with why it was they felt education was important:

> Schooling alone **makes one careful,** otherwise having a brain is of no use.
>
>   (Participant, Women's Focus Group)

> Who knows what happens in the future? We feel that **they become careful.**
>
>   (P16)

> By studying they might **become intelligent.** In future it may be of use to them, I feel, and hence send them. Future only shows their fate... Who can see the future?
>
>   (P5)

> People may understand that this education is very good, in further life, they will **stand on their own feet.** So some people understand that at least **in future their life becomes all right.**
>
>   (P15)

> If we have an educated daughter she can **stand on her own feet** even in her husband's house. Such confidence I can see in girls.
>
>   (P17)

> If they had not sent me to school, I would have had to rot in the village in ignorance. I would have had to do the same field/housework. I would not have been **qualified to progress.**
>
>   (P17)

Attempts to give shape to the qualities that education bestowed on those who undertook schooling resulted in broad, future-oriented expressions as highlighted above. All of these expressions were about change, or the transformations that could be effected upon individuals who were educated - in terms of enhanced confidence, general improvements, becoming 'careful' or cautious. Some interviewees however were reluctant to express their views in terms of the future, preferring instead to discuss more specific benefits that could be expected from investment in education. Reluctance to give expression to aspirations relating to education also took the shape of humility. "We are very poor people. We should also be worthy to get educated," said P10.

Jobs and the world of work, were, however, the underlying purpose of educating children for many parents, who had less trouble articulating specific or functional achievements

they felt could be attained through education. The acquisition of skills of literacy and numeracy were seen as important supports of livelihoods:

> Now all of us get fertilisers. We have to know what to do with the chemicals. If we want to understand what to do from time to time to improve the crop growth and to get such important details, it is necessary. ... [Further], household personal **correspondence can be carried out independently,** they can **learn facts and rules** about working, transport and commission charges, and [write] competitive examinations.
>
> (P3)

> They can lead a life **earning some money** by writing accounts in someone's shop.
>
> (P15)

> We think, we wish he/she to become a teacher, and that knowledge will be better. At least, we feel satisfied if **they get a job**.
>
> (P16)

> My children should become **capable of working and earning**. I feel teacher's post is convenient. In our agricultural household, it would be useful if one member is holding a job, that is my wish.
>
> (P17)

For some parents, however, achievements for children did not extend as far as getting jobs, and they were content to place their own goal posts as far as basic skills development:

> We send them so that they can become intelligent and learn four letters.
>
> (P11)

> Further by studying in school, they learn something, otherwise we have to go to other people's houses to read.
>
> (P4)

> Nowadays we are seeing all the people who have studied. That apart, in case if any letter is received we take it to the others' houses. We feel that in case if we had studied we could have read ourselves. ... Whatever they learn will be with them. They can understand letters, accounts, it is like

this." "... if accounts, letters are understood, it is enough"
(P6)

One parent provided a reminder that for the rural poor, getting access to jobs in the formal sector was a remote prospect. The absence of any industries in the area, meant that job prospects lay in government service, particularly teaching. This was a market closed off to many because of the high price attached to jobs - most jobs came with an investment tag of at least Rs. 10,000, which for the rural poor was capital they could ill-afford to save given that children would also be fully involved in schooling for a good ten years of their lives at least in order to qualify.[85] The few opportunities that were made available were thus shut off even before they could be attempted, as was expressed by P16, a landless SC wage labourer:

> Even if we get chances for some good job, we say that we do
> not have the money to pay deposit, and also tell ourselves
> that **our fate is only to do labour.**

The awareness of limited possibilities in a livelihood and geographical context that bore little but risk and uncertainty for survival meant that care was taken not to overstate the potential that investment in education could yield:

> Ultimately **one cannot avoid working to survive.** We are
> **capable of thumb-impression signing only.** People like
> you now sign your name. If he is educated a little, he can
> also sign. Whatever may be our status, we have to only sign
> by thumb-impression. Anyhow ... we feel, let him learn a
> little.
>
> (P10)

Whatever the inner hopes and expectations may have been for poor or relatively assetless households, they were only allowed expression in terms of cautious assessments of possible changes that could arise. Like P10 above, the overall picture that emerged was of parents who, aware of the uncertainty of income and survival, but equally interested in the prospects of change that educating their children would bring, were trying to evolve a strategy that would enable them to be flexible - flexible in their investment, in the context of flexible outcomes or expectations.

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[85] This is not an unusual finding. R.Aruna (1999) notes that in urban Tamil Nadu, parents encourage part-time work of young children to enable them to develop networks with employers that would guarantee their long-term employment, given the difficulties of breaking into the labour market in a context of excess labour supply.

<u>Benefits and Motives</u>

Only for parents who already had some security in the form of irrigated land, could ensuring that education led to multiple livelihood strategies as with P17 (quoted earlier) mitigate the uncertainty of agriculture. P17 was also the only interviewee who took a broader perspective on the role of education as a means of alleviating poverty, drawing a link between the impact of education on individual confidence and income improvement:

> If **poverty is to be eradicated**, education is necessary. I personally feel from any source, if they can get a little education, they can go to earn in other places also. Because we would have **gained the confidence and courage** to go out. Only with education can you get the idea - which bus to sit in, where to go, who to talk to. So if he stays without education, he'll end in poverty.

In fact, he was against the view that education could defeat poverty merely in terms of making people qualify for jobs:

> I don't agree that you *should* get a job [as a result of education]. It's [the individual's] luck. He'll gain **education in worldly dealing** at least. Then people like us can go to the shop and take things, and also help to make and settle bills and accounts. If they have education, they will use it to **help themselves in little ways**.
>
> (P17, emphasis in intonation)

However, P17's views were also shaped by his relative wealth and his own experience of having been educated to grade 7, married to a salaried wife who had been educated to grade 10. For him the benefits of education were multiple: it helped him carry out his role as hereditary police *patil* in a more authoritative way, enabled him to be clear and to give advice. This could not have happened if he had not gone to school:

> If I were a thumb-impression person, I would have sat with others and smoked *chutta* [tobacco]. Whatever little education there is, it is helpful. ... Which manure to use, Potash or Urea? If I am a thumb-impression person, when I ask for Potash, even if I'm given Urea, I'll just carry it home. If I ask for one chemical, and I'm given another, I'll have to bring it. So in all these ways, we use education.

The socialization effect of education, in terms of the ways in which it could enable individuals to enter the mainstream of decision-making and give rise to a body of educated

individuals within a village with a similar set of values and outlooks was also referred to by interviewees. P17's assertion that education helped build confidence and leadership skills was tempered by his admission that he still felt rather "inferior" on account of his incomplete education. Part of the benefits of education were that it meant that people did not hold themselves back for fear of being different from or not as intelligent as others. For him, this was the feeling that he had experienced when young: "When eminent people are talking, we also felt 'we aren't like that'". For non-literate parents, however, 'becoming like others' was a common means of expressing hopes or articulating the expected benefits of education, especially in the absence of any direct experience themselves. Role models thus played an important part in catalysing the decision to send their children to school:

> By becoming intelligent he will **become like others**.
>
> (P2)

> What do I know about it? Only because **people like you advise**, we educate them. Whether it is of any use, we do not know.
>
> (P12)

> **People like you come and advise** that I should send my son to school, and let [him] at least learn to write his name. That, even though I did not learn, at least to educate him
>
> (P10)

> It appears good. When I look at people like you or at teacher, it looks fine in one way. **I realise that to be educated is to be like you**. I realise had I had studied like these [people], I also would have talked like you, I feel.
>
> (P4)

> Nowadays, a climate is catching up about sending [children] to school, that is why we send. Like this, **some persons like you come and tell us**. Then we feel, "OK it is all right". By looking at this side and that, we feel to educate."
>
> (P6)

> According to **advice of many** we educate them. ... Our **children should be like any other**.
>
> (P11)

In many cases, parents' motives, or what I call the main impulse, were expressed in terms of seeing the effects of education on outsiders. Motives are distinguished here from 'purpose' on the basis that this is how parents often expressed the main reason for sending children to school. Parents often expressed a diversity of views, some contradictory in the course of interviews, often a reflection of the conflict and uncertainty they felt when discussing education in terms of long-term strategy. Pressure from external catalysts, in the absence of pressure within the family or within the village, acted as an important spur. However, whether it is a sufficient spur in terms of the retention of children within school is not clear. Data from both villages indicate otherwise. As noted earlier, parents also held the view that the child's ability and 'fate' would determine the child's prospects, and in the absence of individual attention and motivation from village elders and school staff, this view was likely to remain unchallenged.

4.4. Conclusions

In both villages participation in education for children aged 6-12 was well-short of the goal of universal education. Education participation was shaped by multiple factors, and combinations of these factors provided patterns of exclusion that led the relative disadvantage of children from wage labour and migrating households, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Muslim households, and for girls across the different caste and livelihood groups. Thus exclusion from education can be attributed to a range of factors, some of which are summarised here, based on the data and interviews analysed in this chapter.

Exclusion can be an outcome broadly of socio-economic position such as caste, livelihood and gender. However, exclusion can also be shaped by parents' own experiences as young people, their interaction with the outside world and the resultant shaping of aspiration; the evaluation of prospects for future employment; considerations about land and retaining it within the family; the availability of labour particularly for the management and care of young children when parents are out at work; and feelings of self-worth and relevance of education to agricultural life-worlds. Exclusion could also be fostered by school, the treatment of the child by the teacher, or the distance of the school from the home and the *angamwadi*. However, a third category of factors giving rise to exclusion is child-specific. For instance, parental evaluations of the prospects for individual children can vary, which could also shape the extent of encouragement provided to individual children to pursue in

education. Children's own interest in and enthusiasm for school can also shape the extent to which parents encourage their children, or view the prospects for each individual child. However, child-specific factors could also result from sheer circumstance, such as birth order. The multiplicity of factors that shape the prospects of individual children also point to the greater vulnerability of first-generation learners, where pressure from any one of these sides could push children into the ranks of the education excluded.

Exclusion, however, is not necessarily an imposed constraint on parents. Parental choice to invest in education or not, is ultimately a private decision, fuelled by the evaluations of private returns made by each individual household. Patterns of exclusion can also be broken where parents have the will or commitment. However, the extent to which households buy into the goal of UPE is likely to vary, which places the issue of 'parental responsibility' for children's education in a very complex light. Where decisions about the best interests of the child are framed within the context of hunger, economic uncertainty and the risk of incurring possible social sanctions if social codes about appropriate female behaviour are broken, then how can parental non-investment in education be judged?

The chapter argues for a fluid model of analysing parental decisions, not pinning on them a finality either in terms of being in favour of or against education investment, but recognising that at least for some excluded households, the jury on the cost-benefit trade-offs in education may still be out. Relevant to the exploration of parental responsibility for children's welfare is the extent to which education decision-making is the exclusive domain of parents. Some studies have included children's perspectives and preferences in the decision-making arena (Nieuwenhuys 1994, Bouis et al. 1998), arguing that their "preferences may have a significant influence on family investment decisions" (Bouis et al. 1998:2)

Thus although parents work within a broader attribution of value for education, practices in relating to the organisation of household livelihoods and children's time reflect a much more ambiguous relationship with education. Three concluding arguments are made here in relation to the theoretical questions raised in Chapter 2.

First, it is clear that there are social norms that run counter to the productive norms that are required to encourage inclusion of excluded groups, such as girls, in education. The continuing vulnerability of first-generation learners, or the newly included, to factors that

reinforce exclusion is also an indication that social norms take time to change into established patterns of inclusion.

Second, dividing supply and demand factors is inherently unhelpful in understanding the complex factors that shape education participation. Both supply and demand factors are dynamic and continually shaped by the vagaries of circumstance, whether caused by the actions of an individual teacher, or of a particular child in a particular household.

Third, in terms of coproduction, this would require a blurring of the boundaries drawn in analysis to recognise not just the interplay of these worlds, but also the influence of informal networks and norms in shaping the co-operation between different actors in the process of producing education services.

the goals of UPE in the context of the innovations fostered by the DPEP provides the framework of analysis, at two levels. First, focusing on prospects for innovating new methods for the inclusion of excluded children into school, and second, at the broader level, on the prospects for constructability of social capital for synergy through state action.

Although statements made within education policy are often dismissed as mere rhetoric in the face of evidence of failure to achieve policy goals (Dreze and Sen 1995, Weiner 1991), it is the basic premise of this chapter that features of policy (such as in the NPE 1986, and DPEP guidelines) are useful as a framework[87] within which the actions of administrators can be assessed. There are three principal reasons for this. First, administrators represent the substance of state policy in diverse contexts and are caught at the interface of the interests of the state (UPE) on the one hand, and the interests of diverse and heterogeneous groups of citizens, on the other. Understanding how they mediate these conflicting pulls is important for assessing their scope of influence. Second, assessments of bureaucratic actions within the framework of broad policy directions indicate the extent to which administrators respond to an overall vision, or the extent to which they follow their discretion and experience in responding to policy challenges in the field. These are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The discretion of education administrators at the district-level has increased particularly since the institution of DPEP. As noted in Chapter 1, DPEP's claim to innovation rests on the recognition of district and sub-district units of administration and governance as central to the process of service delivery and planning. Third, negotiations of responsibility for aspects of education service production are a consistent feature of delivery on the ground, even if the responsibilities appear to be clearly charted in policy rhetoric. Although there is policy separation of supply-side issues (provision) from demand (parental investment), at the field-level, supply-demand issues are not easily separable, as Chapter 4 has argued. Even though schooling "provision" appears to imply clear-cut divisions of responsibility, understanding how field-level administrators discuss responsibility is essential for assessing the potential for efficient and equitable services delivery.

There are two inter-linked themes in this chapter – how much discretion field administrators have, and how much discretion they apply when confronted with diverse patterns of investment in the context of education exclusion. It is the contention of the

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[87] Guhan also argues that policy 'intention' is a crucial parameter for policy analysis, as it facilitates observation of "the extent to which contradictions are accommodated in Indian policy by dextrous tight-rope walking (1985:257).

chapter that in the absence of policy clarity on the means for achieving goals, and in the absence of clear guidelines as to how administrators should act, administrators develop their own rules regarding their discretion. I argue particularly that the discretion of administrators is embedded a) in their views on the determinants of education non-participation; and b) in their particular constructions of their responsibility towards the achievement of UPE. Both these aspects are intricately intertwined.

I further argue that field-level administrators are positioned to serve as the interface between local context and the broader goals of public policy, with the capacity both to innovate at the field-level and to provide the necessary feedback to policy makers located in distant capitals. However, opportunities for facilitating innovations in relation to bringing the educationally excluded into school are often bypassed, and in this chapter I identify two reasons. First, there is ambiguity in the definition of responsibility for the care of children, and administrators perceive a 'risk' in setting up interventions that would take responsibility away from parents and onto themselves. Second, there is a construction of 'helplessness', which partly stems from the perception of risk in relation to taking on responsibility for children, and partly from their own positions within the administrative hierarchy.

Structural support for innovation within administration is essential. However, as noted in Chapter 1, it is unclear whether the programme can facilitate innovation at the core of administrative practice, the Department of Education, given that it is administered primarily through a parallel project structure. Principally, the implementation of DPEP in the district is used to reflect on how administrators locked into mainstream delivery systems receive and negotiate innovative programme features.

In Section 5.1, the views of mainstream administrators and innovators on education and reasons for exclusion are analysed. It is argued that innovators work more closely with village communities and are hence better placed to refine their understandings of exclusion. Different views held by administrators also influence the discussion on the 'form' of schooling best placed to address the education needs of excluded children. In Section 5.2, I analyse the ways in which innovators exercise their discretion in relation to policy challenges that arise from patterns of exclusion in two respects: the provision of facilities to cater for out-of-school migrant children, and the challenge of pedagogical reform as played out in the context of first-generation learners in particular. These two cases are then used to examine how administrators draw boundaries around their

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responsibilities for UPE. Section 5.3 looks at some of the innovations of DPEP that have been grafted on to mainstream administrative practice and their implications for change. Section 5.4 concludes.

5.0.1 Research methods and background to interviewees

Interviews with administrators throw up a large litany of complaints about obstructions to their work from within the system to which they belong, as well as reflections on their relationships with parents and village communities. A mere reproduction of this list serves little purpose, particularly where the effort is to understand the perspectives and relationships that underpin service delivery and the factors that give rise to the constraints identified. The attempt here is not to directly map constraints and administrators' actions on to the relationships in which they are embedded, but to analyse administrators' actions and views in the context of the actions and views of households reviewed in Chapter 4. Discursive frames that presented themselves through the interviews are used to organise an understanding of how relationships and norms are framed in the course of the interactions and work of administrators. Events and examples of activities around which many of the discourses were framed are also used to provide an insight into the daily worlds of functioning of administrators and their publics.

In order to explore the broader argument about the attempts to innovate within the mainstream of education administration, I separate the administrators interviewed into two sub-sets: mainstream administrators and DPEP innovators. Mainstream administrators are state government officials who have worked within the administrative side of education their entire careers, and whose work under DPEP involves integrating new innovative methods designed under DPEP into their existing mandates and tasks. DPEP innovators are those project personnel recruited from within the state education ranks because of their particular qualities of leadership or ability that are considered important for furthering project goals. These are personnel recruited either into the DPEP district office, or as resource persons in the training component of the programme, where they staff either the Block Resource Centres or Cluster Resource Centres as explained in Chapter 1. The purpose of this distinction is not to 'essentialise' the qualities of either set of actors, but to recognise that innovators within DPEP are selected carefully for their innovative capacities, and are the 'practitioners' of the Department of Public Instruction, in that they are usually teachers or headmasters/headmistresses of high schools in the district. Their

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job responsibilities also place them closer to the interface with parents and schools, and their administrative responsibilities are temporary, for the duration of DPEP.

Table 23: Background to interviewees

Inte rvie wee	Organisation/ Administrative unit	Responsibilities	Background	Classification in this chapter
A1	Department of Public Instruction/DPEP	Overall responsibility for academic and administrative management of primary education in the district	24 years of experience in education administration, Karnataka state, Class I officer	Mainstream administrator
A2	DPEP/Department of Public Instruction	Responsible for supervising construction works and engineering, monitoring and planning	21 years of experience in education administration, Karnataka state, Class I officer	Mainstream administrator
A3	Block Education Office, B-2	Responsible for inspection and monitoring academic quality of primary schools	15 years of experience in education administration Class II officer	Mainstream administrator
A4	CEO, *Zilla Panchayat*	Administrative officer in charge of liasing between the *Zilla Panchayat* and the district administration	IAS officer	Mainstream administrator
A5	DPEP	Responsible for overseeing microplanning, teachers' training, VEC training and gender issues	Principal of a high school, deputed to work in DPEP	Innovator
A6	Block Resource Centre, DPEP	Resource person for training teachers on pedagogical innovations such as Joyful Learning	Principal of a high school, deputed to work in DPEP	Innovator

In-depth semi-structured interviews carried out over eight months of fieldwork with six administrators form the principal basis of this chapter. Given my own mobility between the district headquarters and two blocks studied, these were the actors to whom I had the closest and the most consistent access. A2, A5 and A1 were the three principal DPEP actors in the district, although plans were underway at the time of research to expand the size of the DPEP unit to relieve their workloads. A3 was a critical informant because he was part of the education administrative sub-structure at block-level, and his work was likely to undergo a serious transformation if DPEP's main thrusts of improving the quality of education were to be implemented and mainstreamed. Given the numerous vacancies in the Block Education Offices of both blocks studied (5 in B-2 at the more senior levels, out of a staff strength of 15), and frequency of transfers (the Block Education Officers (BEOs) of both blocks changed during the fieldwork period), A3 was a consistent informant.

5.1. Goal-orientation: the challenge of getting excluded children into school.

I identify two potential roles for administrators located at the interface – to innovate in response to field-level concerns and experiences and to provide feedback up the administrative hierarchy. In this section, I assess the ways in which administrators discuss their perceptions of the challenges to, and their responsibilities for UPE. Analysing administrators' discussions on these matters makes visible the extent to which their perspectives are embedded in strong views on children's lifeworlds and on poverty, and provides a discursive context for administrators' actions, and for how administrators construct understandings of their 'responsibilities' for UPE.

5.1.1 The policy context of innovation

Modern education policy has stressed the importance of childhood not at the workplace, but in school. Weiner (1991) mounts a scathing attack on Indian State policy towards compulsory education, noting its ambivalence and hence inaction on the education front. He notes that most states of the Western world and several developing countries have made considerable progress in universalising education, and that commitment and political will, and not just resources, are the key factors in state action on education.

The design and thrust of DPEP indicate that the Indian State is perhaps finally ready to take international pressure seriously, and to focus on education. By strengthening schooling provision in villages, changing the overall pedagogical style, content and methods, and by providing village communities with their own decision-making bodies, the programme aims to stimulate interest in the education system, by getting the supply of education services 'right'. However, given the endemic nature of children's labour force participation both in the informal as well as the household sectors in India, it is critical to note the ambivalent position taken in DPEP, and policy in general, on children's work, and the vagueness of proposals in relation to the means for ensuring that children participate fully in education, as argued in Chapter 1.

Side-stepping the very fundamental links between education and economics in the eyes of poor households, contemporary policy focus pushes out a new message about the importance of education as a general "life enhancing" input. School walls are plastered

with slogans that exhort children to be truthful, charitable and god-fearing,[88] but also make strong emotive cases for education: "Rubbish destroys the harvest. Illiteracy destroys life". The inscription on the book used by the cultural troupes (*kalajatha*) that are formed by teachers as part of the 'awareness raising' component of the project makes the strong point that poverty should not be used as an excuse to deny children knowledge because "knowledge is more important than poverty, and is the birth right" of every child. In the same vein, the subtitle of this book, compiled by the Karnataka State Directorate of State Education Research and Training (DSERT) and DPEP and focused on promoting girls' education, is "Collection of Propaganda Literature".

The types of slogans used, and focus on 'awareness' raising betrays an assumption that the poor have no value for education, an assumption belied in the discussion in Chapter 4 on the complex ways in which households construct their views on the value and benefits of education. DPEP's model of education provision closely follows the policy route of not compelling but attracting children towards school by improving the school environment, and convincing parents to send children to school through the performance of street theatre, and conducting participatory microplanning exercises. Yet, the policy of compensating for the economic costs of children giving up labour to attend school also persists, as noted in Chapter 4. Education is also free, and free uniforms and books are provided to children, with extra scholarships and resources for the higher education of children of SC/ST families disbursed through the *Gram Panchayats*. Thus there appears to be a simultaneous emphasis on the rhetoric exhorting parents to develop a broader non-material vision underpinning education investment, and the practice of acknowledging economic costs.

How do DPEP's slogans fit in with the reality explored in Chapter 4? Children's participation in the economic lives of their households is widespread, and operates as a constraint to their participation in school. In a context of economic stagnation, unemployment and drought, education's economic benefits are not widely known or experienced by poor households in most of the drought-prone blocks of the district, like B-2 and B-1. Child labour exists out of both necessity as well as parents' perception of lack of economically beneficial outcomes from educating children at the expense of losing their labour contributions. However, the extent to which children's household labour

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[88]For example, "Conscience is God", "Do or die", "Truth will always triumph", "Charity is the basic meaning of *dharma* (duty)", "Whatever you are, you are just a human being", "God is one, his names are many" (from the school walls of a Lower Primary School in B-2, translated from the Kannada originals)

contributions are incompatible with education are not clear, given the evidence in Chapter 4 that many children, particularly below the age of ten, perform tasks in the home which do not consume their time fully, and hence can be accommodated alongside schooling. This raises questions about a range of education management issues - the timing of schools, both daily as well as academic terms; provision of support services to households, such as childcare; and at the household level, about how households plan their schedules so as to allow for both full primary education as well as child labour use. A further critical factor in the context of the fieldwork district, as noted in Chapter 4, is the prevalence of seasonal migration. The management of children at this time is a critical factor in determining if they can stay back for schooling, and constitutes one area in which there is a clear tussle over who is responsible for the care of children.

5.1.2 Inability or disinclination? What administrators think about poverty and aspiration

Underpinning all discussions on reasons for non-universal education is the fundamental question: education for what? It is to this question that the roots of most of the conflicts, disagreements and behaviour around education can be traced. Applying an 'inability or disinclination?' framework of analysis (B. Harriss 1992) to administrators' views on the links between poverty and education participation may help to locate the judgements placed by administrators on the constraints to education participation by administrators. While there were no single-factor attributions in the accounts analysed, each person's account appeared to betray a bias towards one side of the inability-disinclination equation rather than the other, with implications for views also on appropriate responses to the challenge of inclusion.

DPEP administrators, asked why people did not invest in their children's education, invariably talked in terms of the need to stop making people see education as a means of economic betterment, but as a life skill:

> "The psychology of parents ...is - 'what do we get out of education? Nowadays educated people are highly unemployed, what will happen to our children if they study' - this is the attitude that every parent holds. But if those people are properly convinced, then they send."
> (A2 - Mainstream Administrator)

'Convincing' parents to send children to school is a principal aspect of administrators' responsibility for UPE, and DPEP used many techniques to spread the message of the

importance of education to villages. However, administrators did not dispute villagers' scepticism about the economic benefits of education, and seemed to understand that emphasising economic returns would not be an effective strategy:

> In the villages, people expect to see some benefits to education. They want their child to become something. When they see SSLC fail students they think, why should I educate my child? The key question is 'what are we educating our child for?' This, policy makers need to address. ... Frankly, they don't care to send their children to school; they are only sending them because government is asking them to, and because they are getting wheat. [Here] you see so many students who have completed SSLC and are loitering about - then you wonder, what is the point of education? These children also become burdens to their parents. They finish Standard VIII and they dress up well and smoke cigarettes and their parents have nothing to eat.
> *(A1 – Mainstream administrator)*

The internal contradictions in this account are striking – with a seamless segue from presenting a philosophical 'education for what' standpoint to a dismissive explanation for not investing in education, and then back to an explanation that education failed to deliver employment opportunities and thus served as a disincentive to parents. The view that the lack of fit between employment and education curtailed parental investment in education was, however, a strong theme of administrators' accounts.

> "If they study, the question mark is applied to the issue 'what will happen next, after studies?' A person who has studied up to the 10th, he forms such an attitude "I will not go to the fields, I will not do [such] work, I am educated". Whether such an attitude comes from school or from society, I don't know."
> *(A5 – DPEP Innovator)*

> Children are not having thirst for knowledge because our education is not able to change their way of life. Even after getting degrees they are not able to earn their daily bread. They are depending on Government jobs. We need to give [them] the kind of education that decreases their dependence.
> *(A3 – Mainstream Administrator)*

The link between education and employment (and hence direct economic benefit) is now disregarded in Indian policy rhetoric, and the value of education is being repackaged to promote its public good aspects, particularly developmental benefits like enhanced quality

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of life, better health, nutrition, reduced alcoholism, and smaller family size, among others. This message is being spread by administrators who themselves are aware that given the widespread unemployment and economic uncertainty in the area, the key motivation for education, economic returns, does not provide a single compelling factor for investment, and that other arguments are of secondary persuasive value in the context of poverty. There is also an awareness that repackaging aspirations relating to education is difficult, given the evidence in villages of educated children considering themselves to be socialised into a life better than that of their labouring families.

Attribution of parental non-investment in education to 'inability' or poverty constraints and the need for children's work was also reflected in some accounts. The two innovators had views based on their own work with children, and observations of children's participation in rural household life, and importantly, on the impact this had on children's moods and hence motivation. These were *empathetic* accounts, and placed children's emotional security at the centre:

> We keep doing seasonal charts [with the children]. When they are very happy, it's actually season time, and they have a little money in their hands, but that's the month of our holidays. After the holidays we start in November, just after they have spent a happy month playing in the fields and at home. Suddenly you bring them into what feels like a prison to the children. If you just continued what they were doing it would be terrific.
>
> (A5 - DPEP Innovator)

Children's perceived 'happiness', significantly, is linked to their economic contributions to households - a view expressed by the other innovator. In her experience, children were proud when they earned, and often that pride was expressed in terms of contributions they made to the school:

> They go to the field, do the work, then they save their money and buy jugs and glasses for water [for the school] ... 'I have earned and want to do something for my school', like that, small glasses, wall charts ... they have given.
>
> (A6 – DPEP Innovator)

While there may not be significant differences in the personal opinions that administrators may hold regarding reasons for non-participation, innovators in DPEP had greater opportunities to hear voices of the people they were discussing, and wove into their

accounts experiences or discussions they had with parents and children. There were, however, among the mainstream administrators, those who felt that poverty was a state of mind that perpetuated 'backwardness' and prevented certain types of poor people from inclining towards what was essentially good for them (the 'disinclination' side of the equation). A4 developed the latter view in particular:

> Poverty is very difficult to define, actually it is an urban phenomenon that defines poverty. It's very difficult to define poverty in the villages, what you have is backwardness ... your mind is not open, you can't think of how you can develop in the long-term ...**whosoever gets above all this, must have had some kind of force behind him to get him educated, him or her.**
>
> (my emphasis)

There were references in different accounts to the need to make parents 'aware', or of the administrators' need to "convince" parents of the non-economic benefits of education. A2 exemplified this view:

> The questions [parents] ask are "...you people study, you people get jobs, if the world studies, everyone cannot get jobs, so why should we educate our children?" Now that is what they say, they must be asking you [interviewer] too? If you ask me what those people lack, I would say their awareness is lacking. Our people go to the villages, going from house to house, [explaining] ... 'don't just study for the jobs, education is needed for life', by saying this if you convince those people it is much better.

A2's personal circumstances mirror the lives of those people DPEP is trying to target at present. His own experience of being educated as a member of a Scheduled Caste in a context of economic adversity underpins his view that poverty is an 'excuse' for not sending children to school, and poor households can transcend poverty if the will exists:

> I am also from such a family, my parents are illiterate, you know, I have come from such [circumstances] ... my parents used to say "we are illiterate, my child will not be" and sent me to school. If that attitude is there ... they need to think like that, no? If I am poor, then I must ensure that my child [goes to school]... and after sending my children to school, is my work over? Every fifteen days going to the school, seeing, what are my children learning, are they going regularly? ... They don't ask, people from this area. ... I grazed cows, from the age of five, cut wheat, doing

responsibilities for UPE. Section 5.3 looks at some of the innovations of DPEP that have been grafted on to mainstream administrative practice and their implications for change. Section 5.4 concludes.

5.0.1 Research methods and background to interviewees

Interviews with administrators throw up a large litany of complaints about obstructions to their work from within the system to which they belong, as well as reflections on their relationships with parents and village communities. A mere reproduction of this list serves little purpose, particularly where the effort is to understand the perspectives and relationships that underpin service delivery and the factors that give rise to the constraints identified. The attempt here is not to directly map constraints and administrators' actions on to the relationships in which they are embedded, but to analyse administrators' actions and views in the context of the actions and views of households reviewed in Chapter 4. Discursive frames that presented themselves through the interviews are used to organise an understanding of how relationships and norms are framed in the course of the interactions and work of administrators. Events and examples of activities around which many of the discourses were framed are also used to provide an insight into the daily worlds of functioning of administrators and their publics.

In order to explore the broader argument about the attempts to innovate within the mainstream of education administration, I separate the administrators interviewed into two sub-sets: mainstream administrators and DPEP innovators. Mainstream administrators are state government officials who have worked within the administrative side of education their entire careers, and whose work under DPEP involves integrating new innovative methods designed under DPEP into their existing mandates and tasks. DPEP innovators are those project personnel recruited from within the state education ranks because of their particular qualities of leadership or ability that are considered important for furthering project goals. These are personnel recruited either into the DPEP district office, or as resource persons in the training component of the programme, where they staff either the Block Resource Centres or Cluster Resource Centres as explained in Chapter 1. The purpose of this distinction is not to 'essentialise' the qualities of either set of actors, but to recognise that innovators within DPEP are selected carefully for their innovative capacities, and are the 'practitioners' of the Department of Public Instruction, in that they are usually teachers or headmasters/headmistresses of high schools in the district. Their

everything I studied. **If the urge to educate is within us,**
then nobody can stop us.

(my emphasis)

Dismissing the arguments about poor schooling infrastructure in rural areas, he pointed out that things were indeed better in present times than they were in his school days:

> ...nowadays when you talk about distances from the school its only about 1 km or 2 km. When I studied, in 1967-8, everyday I would walk 9 km to the school and back from school, I used to walk 18 km, and still I studied. Now there is a bus, everyone has a pass ... **if you ask why they still don't go, it's really an issue of parents not being interested.**
>
> (my emphasis)

Disinclination, in the sense of lack of interest, was in this administrators' view the major constraint to UPE, requiring that administrators spent time convincing parents to change their behaviour. The success of this approach seems unlikely when viewed in the context of parents' own responses in the two villages studied as reported in Chapter 4. There, 'inability' and 'disinclination' were intertwined, and arose out of a complex calculation where investment was planned on the basis of calculation both of short-term costs as well as long-term returns, within contexts of uncertainty. Such complexity is reduced in the eyes of administrators who either have a generalised view of education as a broad pattern of backwardness emerging from social or historical factors in the geographical arena, or generalise from their own experience, which, though selectively presented, is seen to represent the possibilities for all. For instance, there was no reflection in A2's account of whether all his siblings were educated (i.e. his sisters may not have been), which in rural contexts is a significant aspect of the investment equation. As Chapter 4 points out, individuals' education profiles are a reflection of the value placed on that individual child simultaneously embedded in a reflection on the future of the family as a unit or as a whole.

Views on education also map onto administrators' responses to policy challenges of inclusion. DPEP's focus has been to build the infrastructure of 'modern' formal schooling in rural districts of India, and focus on the quality of primary schooling as a way of indicating state commitment to, and support for education. However, the extent to which the emphasis on formal schools, with fixed daily as well as seasonal calendars, fosters inclusion or reinforces exclusion is an important question in the context of UPE.

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Administrators, particularly the innovators, are caught at the interface between these two aspects – upholding state focus on formal schools on the one hand, and recognising that significant numbers of children are out of school.

In innovators' accounts, children's happiness was increased when work and schooling were both allowed:

> If we gave them the facilities to work and study at the same time, then it would be good. If you leave them to work for a little while then they will focus on their studies better, because they also have so many problems at home. If [the schooling system] were like that, then it would be good.
>
> *(A6 - DPEP Innovator)*

However, A6 felt that giving respect to children's work and understanding the importance of their financial contributions to their personal sense of well-being meant that during the peak season they should be let off school and allowed to work. A4, who also felt that greater flexibility needs to be introduced, and that the start of the school year should be delayed to avoid the season, echoed this.

> See for example, our academic year opens in July, or June, at the same time as the agricultural operations will start and the transplanting of paddy and the harvesting of paddy and all that takes place. Again, another thing is the holidays you have in the summer, where the child is spared the sun or the summer in the schoolrooms, but again, what does he do in the house? House is in no way better. So those agricultural operations perhaps have to be kept into mind while determining the academic calendar.

This differed somewhat from the suggestion of A6 above who felt that school should be open during the season, albeit with changed timings, in order to accommodate both the work and school needs of children. According to her, teachers who prevented children from managing both impeded flexibility:

> Some children come back from the field at 10 am, eat their food, bring grass from the field, and then go back to the field. They return at about 11 am and then they don't go to the school because they say the master beats them. It's also like that.
>
> (A5 - DPEP Innovator)

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These accounts, however, differ from A2, who was less sympathetic to the view that labour contributions take precedence over school attendance, and hence should be taken into account in the formulation of school timetables and schedules. His view was that children's labour was not so significant to households, and if migration was the constraint, then parents could at least send children to school for the months they did not migrate:

> Does a five-year old sit at home and earn money? ... In the harvest season they take them away. Where are the children the rest of the time? If in one year, the school runs for 10 months, and they are out for 6 months, they are in for 6 months, aren't they?
>
> (A2 - Mainstream Administrator)

He was impatient of the various reasons that could explain the difficulty of readmitting children who have been away, including that of teachers' intolerance cited earlier, and dismissive of the notion of the importance of children's labour contributions.

While the difficulty of mapping views on education onto thoughts on policy particularly within a snapshot of fieldwork is not underestimated, I would suggest that inability-oriented explanations are empathetic to household constraints and more likely to give rise to approaches that are flexible, and adaptive to local needs. Views that tend towards the disinclination hypothesis, however, appear to be entrenched in the belief that the state approach, as defined, is the 'right' one into which excluded households would fit themselves if interested.

5.2. Discretion and innovation: policy struggles at the grassroots

Policy approaches in the context of exclusion and a 'vulnerable' generation of first-time learners are likely to require great amounts of nurturing and follow-up by administrators. These approaches are also likely to encounter diverse responses from excluded groups, which administrators have to mediate. In this section, I analyse the construction of administrators' discretion in the context of their constructions of their responsibility for UPE. Two cases are examined below with a view to assessing how discretion is shaped and exercised. In sub-section 5.2.1, the provision of residential schools for migrating children and in sub-section 5.2.2, the case of joyful learning. In sub-section 5.2.3, I look at

the exercise of discretion in the context of the ways in which administrators draw boundaries around their responsibilities for UPE.

5.2.1 Residential schools

Administrators carry in their work implicit positions on the best route to UPE, along the lines of the 'school or work?' debate. It is argued that their diverse views based on diverse positions are likely to have an effect on policy challenges as they emerge from the field, in terms of what information is fed up the system, and what information is suppressed, which may have implications for the achievement of UPE.

An area of policy that makes explicit some of the conflicts relating to tussles over responsibility in the education sector relates to the provision of residential schools for children whose parents migrate in the low agricultural season. The provision of residential schools has been indicated in DPEP policy documents, as a possible investment if so required or requested in a given district or block.[89] However, in discussions at the state-level, I was told off the record that such schools could not be sanctioned because of the difficulty of looking after little children. The suppression of the suggestion at the district-level means that there is no response from the state to a locally articulated request. Thus the rhetoric of local planning is exposed. This was spelt out in greater detail by A5:

> The plan was to have a primary residential school, but now we know its not possible ... 1-4th [grade] children are too small. Who can look after them properly in a hostel? Who will take responsibility if something happens? If you are talking about [older] children then it's different, at least they can understand something, and if you tell them they can listen.

She explained that many parents were indeed keen to leave their children behind if adequate provisions were made for them - "they themselves say it...'we are going to earn, will you keep our two children and look after them, why don't you?' What can we say?" However, this policy provision, backed up by apparent community support, was considered not implementable, because of the difficulty for the administration (the state) of looking after children. A fundamental concern was about the responsibility this would

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[89] I learned subsequently that there is a legal provision which mandates that state governments provide education to children of migrant labourers that they host. This would mean that rather than provide schools for children whose parents migrated, they could focus on ensuring that the children went to schools at the place to which their families migrated. Interestingly, neither the adminstrators on the ground, nor the policymakers in Bangalore, the state capital, (and perhaps even DPEP chiefs in Delhi) appeared to have any knowledge about this. If they did, they ignored it.

entail, and who would be able to carry out that responsibility well. A5, an innovator, met the suggestion that community women could be hired to run the schools with derision:

> How many children can one woman look after? If we are talking about a hostel of minimum fifty children - can 1-2 wardens look after so many small children? **They can barely look after their own children.** How can they look after someone else's children? What if they look after them well for 1-2 days, then if they get angry and hit them, and if the child gets fever, **who will take that risk?** If you think about these practical things, there are lots of problems.
> (My emphases)

In the case of this innovator, 'risk' referred to the negotiation of responsibility for children between the state and parents, and was framed in terms of the wider community-state interaction. Thus an innovation which could have a positive impact on the prospects for including migrating children was rejected. However, what is noteworthy is the intertwining of subjective evaluations of the capacities of users, as the quote above suggests, which also indicates the ways in which administrators' judgements also filter policy responses.

5.2.2 Joyful learning

A significant innovation brought into the education system in India has been the widespread adoption of the UNICEF-developed concept of Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) which has revolutionised curriculum development and teaching in general in India, and elsewhere in the developing world, as discussed in Chapter 1. In India, it has widely been held that the poor quality of teaching and heavy reliance on outdated pedagogical methods like learning by rote have made schools less attractive places for children.

'Joyful learning' has been one of the key aspects of DPEP's integrated approach to primary education, and new textbooks have been commissioned based on MLL. Teachers are being re-trained both with reference to the new joyful approach to learning as well as the development of sensitivity to social inequality and exclusion. The introduction of new pedagogical methodology has stirred up debate and controversy in village classrooms, particularly with teachers divided on whether the joyful learning approach of MLL is effective or not. This debate has by and large been carved up on generational lines - older teachers find adjustment to the new anti-corporal punishment approach difficult, younger ones are enthusiastic about the use of song, dance and creative materials.

Teachers who do not support the innovation, and the effort they are required to put in, carry their resistance over into the classroom, and are not necessarily open to change. The difficulty of bringing change to individual teachers entrenched in older ways of doing things is compounded by the absence of strong regulatory mechanisms and supervision. However teachers are not the only ones who have been stirred up by this innovation in teaching methods. Parents, too, have views on the value of creative teaching methods, particularly on the impact these methods are having on learning outcomes of children, with particular reference to the development of reading and writing skills. In a situation where parents are clearly undecided or ambivalent about the benefits of giving all their children over to the schooling system, their views on joyful learning and their uncertainty over its usefulness could reinforce their ambivalence or partial participation in the education system. Further, in the case of 'joyful learning', parents' views are often shaped by their own criteria for education outcomes which are based on their own limited or non-existent engagement with education. Parents can constitute a source of pressure on teachers, but their own illiteracy often inhibits their confidence to address issues of learning and pedagogy, and teachers often use this as a way of deflecting or rejecting parents' queries.

Decisions taken in policy and on the ground were played out in a context of great scepticism about the new innovation, and it was not entirely clear if administrators themselves were in a position to deal with the conflict, given that the exposure to the innovation was new to them as well. Joyful learning had the complete support of one of the innovators, A5. However, she said that parents were often concerned that children were going to school "and all they are doing is singing, dancing and playing". The principal feedback she received from parents was 'you teach my child so much and yet he can't write'. Her own position, however, was to try and reconcile the two - while she felt it was critical to make schools attractive to children, she felt that the delay in writing was also not right. Writing and reading skills are put off till the third and fourth year of primary schooling, in contrast to the earlier system where reading and writing were the central focus of teaching from the very beginning.

This, felt A6, the other innovator, would have negative impacts on children who dropped out of school by grade 4. She felt that these children would leave school with a low level of skills and a lower capacity to retain skills, hence making a mockery of the new policy line that primary education would provide a minimum sufficient level of education:

> Only studying until the 4th standard will not produce any
> outcomes, with MLL that level cannot be attained. Our
> superiors think that if they [children] study this much then
> it's enough, but in my view, it doesn't come, for hardly 30%
> of the children it will come.

The outcomes referred to here are reading and writing skills. However both DPEP administrators felt that getting children to learn to read and write was not straightforward. Both felt that children had a very negative attitude to writing and to holding a pen; one felt that the children would get 'bored' if they were expected to pick up a pen and write; the other that they were too 'shy' to do so.

The significance of these observations lies in the way in which constructions of children's psychology and motivation were used by administrators to discuss aspects of policy relating to pedagogy and teaching. Both felt that without MLL and creative methods of teaching, children would not stay in school; equally they felt that children should learn to read and write, but perhaps the methods for doing so should also have 'joyful' roots. While administrators' personal views are by themselves of little importance, when applied to a context where innovations and policy shifts are likely to have short or long-term impacts in contexts of exclusion, they became of paramount importance. In the context of the findings of Chapter 4, where a large percentage of children are first-generation learners, whose participation in school is still vulnerable, it is apparent that parents' evaluations of what children are learning is an important component of children's attendance in school. For parents, the development of skills such as writing and reading are important outcomes of education investment.

A5 made her views on joyful learning clear when discussing the NFE model developed and followed by *Mahila Samakhya*, which blended creative methods with the development of literacy skills. She was not convinced about the means used:

> In that [module] they start directly with teaching them how
> to write and then they want to give social awareness. What
> can a six-year-old child understand of social awareness
> stories? ... To teach a six-year-old child how to graze sheep,
> about fertilisers, those are the subjects. Then about
> immunisation, how to stay clean, how can you teach a child
> of six years? Singing and songs are fine, but those subjects
> for a 6-year old child?

Her preference was for creative activities to teach children eventually to write, but she was adamant that writing skills should not be the starting-point given that, in her view, children were negatively disposed towards writing. Her view, however, had policy implications, thus transcending the personal. Discussing the need for setting up non-formal schools for children who were working full-time and hence not able to attend day school, she volunteered the information that there would be no funds available for providing children with slates or pencils. When asked if this was because of lack of resources (an ironic question in the context of vast DPEP budgets), her response was clear:

> No, no, because we don't believe that we should make children start writing just like that.

Her explanation, it eventually emerged, was actually based on her own experience of teaching literacy skills to children in her own village:

> Why, because they come home in the evenings tired, when they come if you start telling them to hold the pen, hold the slate ... I think this, because in my village I used to teach literacy class to the children. Those children used to come so tired, if you asked them to hold a pen they would find it difficult.

While this was probably a real and empathetic account of what running NFE or literacy classes for working children is like, it conflicts with what she herself reports as what poor parents said:

> ...lots of people in the villages say, every villager says, in this *taluk*, in other *taluks*, regardless of how many children go to the fields in the day, 'in the evening we have time, take our children, ... we work from morning to nights in our fields, if the children don't work, it is a question of survival. That's why educate them in the evenings.

Nor did it mesh with the official policy that was A5's job to promote. Firstly, it is not clear whether disallowing expenditure on slates and pencils was explicit policy or not. While it is true that NFE, although officially part of DPEP's package of education services, was unofficially considered to be an option that should not be encouraged,[90] there is no

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[90]A senior state level official told me, off the record, that the whole point of DPEP was to universalise primary formal education, and hence it was not appropriate to put in place NFE schools - because that would perpetuate sanction for child labour. Abandonment of NFE has also been an outcome of the long-standing critique of the implications of a dual education system, with the poorly resourced NFE providing little more than a sanction for child labour, as discussed in Chapter 1.

reason to believe that if allowed, funding of something as basic as slates would be vetoed. Hence A5's response merited some thought - if she felt so strongly about not teaching children of six how to write immediately, and tied resource allocation to this particular idea - then was the decision not to allocate funds an exercise of her discretion? Given her relative autonomy as the DPEP official who was in charge of all "field" activities, if she suppressed this particular aspect based on her own views, then that could pass relatively unchallenged as policy.[91]

However, I would argue that what appears to be 'discretion' is in effect an outcome of the abandonment that the innovator felt, coupled with a sense of powerlessness. Within the overall framework of joyful learning there is little clarity available to field administrators about the academic rationales for creative approaches to reading and writing, and so their arguments develop based on their own experience rather than the pedagogical standards that have been established. The outcome of this is that it impedes communication between parents and administrators about the goals of the education system, and does not help administrators to deal with the concerns that parents have regarding the education of their children. The lack of clarity on the purpose and goals of the 'joyful learning' approach is evident also in the actions of teachers. A6 found to her disappointment that all the teaching aids made by teachers during the training programme were not used by them, but stored away in boxes:

> ...here, all the teachers make teaching aids and keep them in boxes. **Because no one is clear.** When officers come they need to be shown. If 50-60% were kept for the children's use, then it would be good. But, when officers come, they ask 'where is it, what is it?'. That's why it is kept locked up in boxes. If there were a clear order, it would be good.
> (my emphasis)

Innovations aimed at 'liberating' the classroom and the student from traditional methods of rote learning, however, do not focus on liberating administrators and teachers from rigid methods of evaluation and monitoring. The context within which innovations can thrive thus remains untouched, giving rise to de facto discretion on the part of administrators, rather than discretion that is actively supported and encouraged within the policy and administrative framework.

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[91] See also Dyer (1993, 1999) for discussions on policy and implementation in relation to Operation Blackboard in Gujarat.

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5.2.3 Drawing boundaries around responsibility

Administrators constructed their responsibilities for UPE through different means, principally defining their jobs by what they cannot do, or processes of elimination. For instance, they expressed helplessness on many aspects of policy that were indeed *theoretically within* their control or possible range of influence, such as timings of school ('demand should come from the community; teachers are opposed to it'), or equipment/resource allocation ('what can we do, there is no money'). As the vital presence of the state within village communities, administrators could have carved out a very important role for themselves in terms of feeding back their field-level impressions to the state policymaking level. However, their accounts are replete with references to their helplessness in the face of their perceptions of other actors' interests: children, teachers, parents, and central government.

First, there is a tendency to define 'out' of their responsibility, any issues relating to the provision of schools. Administrators, including those who had little sympathy with children who did not attend school, expressed sympathy for children on the grounds that schools were not pleasant places to inhabit:

> What attraction do our schools hold these days? You have seen, is there anything in the vicinity of the school for the children to play? There's nothing. If you provide those facilities then wouldn't the children go? Compel people, is what is said, ... but for how many days can we sustain the compulsion?
>
> (A2 – Mainstream Administrator)

All the administrators interviewed complained about the lack of materials, the "prison"-like schools, and one even noted that a high level of resources need not be spent on buildings, but preferably on equipment:

> Schools should be attractive centres, the pleasant environment is to be there. We should provide maximum facilities. The main responsibility is with the Government - to use funds well. There must be gardens, play items. ... Concrete buildings are not important, not essential. Anyway, [the present buildings are] like Central Jail. Then we don't need to spend huge amounts on construction.
>
> (A3 - Mainstream Administrator)

Any reflection on the quality of supply is presented in neutral terms to refer to the problems of 'government' by administrators adept at writing themselves out of their own critique.

Second, there is a tendency for administrators to locate children's educational participation exclusively in the province of parents. The 'disinclination' argument that views low parental investment in education as an outcome of an attitudinal barrier rather than material 'inability' leaves little space for attempting innovative solutions to the constraints poor parents may face. A4 embodies this position in his argument that participation in education is shaped by 'society':

> So perhaps it is the social structure and now [government] cannot really make a dent, you can't stop a person and say that "Look here your girl has to go to school and if you're not going to do it you're going to be penalised.

If the responsibility for UPE is considered to be primarily belonging to parents and communities, then it also lends itself to a convenient supply-demand framework that enables administrators to see their work as focused exclusively on implementing national policy standards on formal schooling. Fitting into this system is considered the responsibility of parents and communities. Administrators also view local institutions such as *panchayats* and VECs as playing a key role in the community, thereby decreasing their workloads:

> Now we have given them schools... In our state a Compulsory Primary Education Act was enacted, and if the Village Education Committees or *Gram Panchayats* had implemented it well, there would be no dropouts today, the children would be attending properly. ... If the *panchayat* members became a bit active, then those people could properly call the parents, and ask them 'why don't you send your children to school?' ... If they did this then it could be done properly.
>
> (A2 - Mainstream Administrator)

There is little discussion on diverse means to facilitate participation that could build on the constraints faced by parents, unsurprising when the approach is based on the belief that poor parents are either uninterested or unaware.

Third, there is the extent to which discretion is a matter of choice, or *de facto*, a matter of powerlessness. It was argued at the outset that administrators' views are important because of the discretion that they are given in DPEP, with the district forming the base unit of planning and delivery. However, on reflection it is not clear whether their discretion is entirely a matter of choice. In some cases, it was clear that their own individual views on matters would have shaped what information was passed on and upwards within the system. In other cases, however, there is a clear policy view which administrators feel powerless to challenge, as in the case of alternatives to formal school times and calendars. References to their 'helplessness' can also possibly be attributed to their feelings of powerlessness.

While the innovators demonstrated an affinity to the constraints on the ground, they too did little to feed their concerns upward within the system.[92] For the two innovators, there is a clear lack of identification with 'government', although they are both teachers and hence government employees. They clearly view themselves as outsiders within the government which carries interesting implications for their ability to be innovative within DPEP in a manner that transforms mainstream functioning, with which they do not identify themselves. For A6, the lack of encouragement or space to discuss perceptions and constraints freely within the administrative set-up was linked to the inability of government administrators to take responsibility for their actions:

> Saying that everything is all right will be of no use, which is why whatever I say to you, I want to say from my heart. I think that whatever problem there is, maybe I also have a part in it, similarly the officers too have a part. If this were expressed clearly, then maybe the problem could be solved, that's what I think. ... Sometimes I feel so strongly, why did I come to work for the Government?
>
> (A6 – DPEP Innovator)

Fourth, regulation of service standards is made complex within a large centralised administration, where rigid hierarchies make professional standards within the administration very difficult to uphold. This again led administrators to maintain a distance from their tasks as regulators of service provision. For instance, the regulation of the professional behaviour of teachers was hard to achieve, particularly when there were policy contraventions such as the use of corporal punishment. In such cases behaviour was

attributed to whether a person was 'good' or 'bad' and the exercise of moral self-regulation became the option to which administrators took recourse:

> There has to be self-regulation. There are some permanent teachers here, two or three of them, and they come in front of us, they come drunk and talk to us. What can we teach such people? What action can be taken? They can be suspended ... then they roam around ...how long can they be suspended for? Three to four months minimum, up to six months, you can cut their salaries, then after that they rejoin. ... Some people also try to teach them 'You must not behave like this'. Some people change, some people don't. It's an individual thing.

Further, lack of time to monitor programmes and efforts necessitated that DPEP coordinators place implicit faith in the abilities of those working under them to carry out their programmes as discussed. A5 reacted strongly when asked how she supervised the work of administrative officers under DPEP:

> But they are doing it, aren't they, they are doing the work!
> ... They do everything, don't they, they are the ones doing it, that's why we believe them!

In addition to the problems of scale in monitoring, the added difficulty is the strict hierarchies of seniority and grade within the administrative structure that would restrict the ability of A5 (innovator) from monitoring or supervising the work of the Block Education Officer, for example, who was senior to her within the hierarchy. Regulation of others would become difficult given that positions were allotted on the basis of the individual's level of entry, or seniority, and hence the credentials of various individuals were used as proxies for the quality of their work.

5.3. Grafting innovation onto administrative practice: social distance, inequality and change

Distance is a central theme in shaping the relationships between administrator and user, between 'provider' and 'provided for'. Promoting equality and inclusion in education, values emphasised in NPE 1986 and in the DPEP guidelines, and synergy, requires that

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[92] See also Dyer's discussion on the difficulty of policy penetration into implementation routines, because 'actors at all points in the implementation process did not perceive themselves as having any stake in the changes that were suggested.' (1999:58).

major barriers of cultural separation between communities (users) and the state (administrators) be removed at the interface. Administrators claimed that caste served as a big barrier to the functioning of their work, particularly in terms of processes at village-level. A2 claimed that village-level hierarchies and obstructions prevented them from carrying out their jobs, especially where meetings were to be held with a wider group of village members. The elite of villages often obstructed participation:

> If the headmaster personally goes and calls them, then meetings are held. In some villages it is like that ... 'Why should I go to *that* street, call them here,' they say. The important people summon the officials to their houses, how can they go to these [low caste] people's houses?

He claimed that there was little he could do:

> ... changing their mindsets, that's not up to us, they will have to change themselves, we have our rules and regulations, they have to change, how can we get it done? ... Look, this cannot be done by officers. These people, village people, their mindsets, what can officers do?

He claimed that implementing or even citing legal provisions that outlawed discrimination on the basis of caste was impossible because it would further alienate village elites, claiming, "They would get irritated. Then the work of our department suffers". Part of the problem was the distance between administrators and villagers, again an outcome of the sheer physical scale of management:

> We go for one day and then we return, if we go another day, we come back. People who are with them everyday, from morning to evening, they can change their minds. If we go and tell them then even they say "you are a big officer from [the district], you come and say a lot of things, so say them". After we have gone they abuse us.

The huge physical distance between administrators and their publics reduced administrators' scope for influencing change. However, there was a begrudging acknowledgement that administrators too, reinforced discrimination through their own actions. The innovators were the most forthcoming about the ways in which they saw social distance between administrators and citizens, particularly poor and uneducated ones, as shaped by the particular modes of interaction when administrators breezed through villages:

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In their [administrators'] hearts, they want to go and mingle.
If a senior, some one more senior than them, that is, comes,
they have no choice. Then they stay for five days, why, ten
days even. But after that they withdraw again and become
distant. But to interact with them, with love...would earn
them [administrators] a lot of respect. Why they don't, I
don't know. ... We should also feel something for them. We
[would] also get to know what their reality is ... but what
[administrators] do, they see all of this and distance
themselves. We aren't like the villagers, are we? There is a
little difference. But we must go, see... that's what I think.

(A5, DPEP Innovator)

The recognition of the importance of changing the ways in which administrators interacted
with villagers was, however, in the above account, based on a recognition of difference,
which could also be argued as patronising towards the poor. However, the intention of this
was to point out the importance of closer encounters with the realities of the poorer
villagers, which was one advantage the innovators had over the mainstream administrators.
For the innovators, the distance between mainstream administrators and village realities
served to prevent them from exerting much influence, as their own field-based experiences
were then at odds with the views of the mainstream district administrators.

The state DPEP office in Bangalore was attempting change in the culture of distance.
Innovators addressed many of their problems to the senior state DPEP official, in the
process bypassing the mainstream district administrators who they felt had little
understanding of the issues they were choosing to articulate. The senior state DPEP
official had also insisted that trainers of the BRC spend a month each in villages to follow
up on their training and to interact more closely with teachers and students. Such
innovations were new to education administration, and represented a conscious effort to
shift older cultures of maintaining distance between administrators and teachers on the one
hand, and administrators and villagers on the other:

In our district there is a hierarchical system - that person is
big, and that is his assistant. But in [the Project Director's]
views, ...everybody is equal. People here don't like it. Our
DPEP project is based on this.
(A6 – DPEP Innovator)

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The innovators recounted many stories where conflicts were caused over these changing styles of functioning. For instance, there was an oft-recounted story about a disagreement between a mainstream administrator and the senior state DPEP official, who berated him for organising the lunch of the project staff at a venue separate from that of the teachers who were being trained. The separation of administrators from teachers particularly over food, is a symbolically powerful way of denoting difference in class and hierarchy. By attempting to overturn this convention, the senior state DPEP official was eroding a mechanism through which district mainstream administrators have always maintained their status. Such conflicts were thus par for the course in the new DPEP style.

Social distance can also be seen as an outcome of managing physical distance or a necessary behavioural mechanism for coping with a large administrative jurisdiction such as a district. This was noted by A5:

> In our department, the programme is so big, but the manpower is less. That's why the follow-up does not happen. If it did, we could retain high contacts with the public.

Issues of scale in the administration of vast districts and the maintenance of social distance from users also had an impact on the means through which services were regulated. Monitoring and evaluation activities were managed in a way that minimised the need for personal involvement on the part of administrators. Mainstream administrators focused on tangible 'outputs' or parts of the process, rather than the intangible debates and discussions that emerge from the process. In a system undergoing transition, as the Education Department is with changes in pedagogy and institutional cultures (particularly the emphasis on community participation), the mainstream approach is revealed to be entirely archaic. The nodal officers at district level visited a training programme conducted by A5 for teachers, and the latter noted that the only question she was asked was if the course conducted was residential or not:

> They sit while we are giving a lesson. They do the observation, write their report, give us a copy and then go.
> *Q: So what do they notice in their report?*
> Only this, that it is not residential. What is the purpose of writing only this? We should all get together and look at the situation. What is the purpose of writing only 'yes/no'?

When I asked at district-level what was being done about the monitoring and inspection functions of mainstream administrators to address the changes in approach fostered by DPEP, I was told that new formats were being developed that could be used by the inspecting staff. However, the development of new formats by itself is unlikely to stimulate change on the part of administrators for whom an entire new vocabulary has to be learned for which they have little support. This point is elaborated through the review of the case of microplanning carried out in V-3, a village neighbouring V-2 in B-2 block.

A big challenge for DPEP lies in mainstreaming innovative approaches such as microplanning in a manner that ensures that project management skills and tools, never before used by administrators, are developed without losing sight of the importance of communication skills with poor, low-caste villagers. Microplanning is the new innovation of DPEP where participatory rural appraisal (PRA) exercises are carried out with entire villages to ascertain the extent of participation in a village and to collectively identify with villagers the constraints to participation. Microplanning, where officials stay in the village for the duration of four days and interact with villagers, has come to symbolise the new participatory approach of the programme.

For A3, a mainstream administrator, not only did microplanning represent new skills and techniques that had to be learned, but requires an attitudinal change based on the concept of 'mingling' with community members, an entirely new requirement of working in government. This event to which I was a witness demonstrated the complete panic experienced by mainstream administrators in the face of these new requirements, and in the face of complete lack of support from others within the programme. This was only the second microplanning exercise, and already others within the programme had dropped out of it, leaving A3 entirely abandoned.

The second microplanning exercise was carried out in V-3 in February 1997, and was held two months after the euphoria and "success" of the microplanning exercise in V-2, which had been carried out by a local NGO and attended by all the key district DPEP staff, the BEO of the block and documented meticulously by DPEP. By the time it was held, about 3 months after V-2, NGO involvement had been ruled out in a policy decision made by the BEO, who felt that NGOs were too transient and hence unreliable, thus choosing to work with teachers. However, by the time the dates of the microplanning exercise drew close, the only person left to carry out the exercise was A3, who was left alone to manage a

process for which he claimed he had no training.[93] On the first day of the microplanning, when the *kalajatha* was to be held, A3 showed up very late in the evening. On the second day he did not appear, and the vast amounts of food cooked by the village residents for the microplanning team had to be distributed among villagers. Not only had the village head been informed that a large team was to arrive and stay in the village, but a team of volunteers had been recruited, including a local teacher who taught elsewhere and had taken time off to participate in his village microplanning. A3 finally put in an appearance on the third and fourth days and the exercise was done, but with most of the elements that were originally planned dropped from the final timetable. His excuse for the second day's non-appearance was that he had gone to pick up the survey schedules from the printer and the long journey times had prevented him from arriving in the village that day.

Later, A3 reflected on the experience and said that he had been unprepared for taking on such an important exercise. It also emerged that he had actually travelled (on the second day) to V-2 in an attempt to persuade some of the volunteers (from the village youth club) to help him in V-3, and failing that, to talk through what he had to do, and not to the printer as he originally claimed. They did not join him. He expressed anxiety about carrying out the exercise, and repeatedly claimed that he had no idea how to carry it out. However, A5 was less sympathetic:

> He did [get training]! 'I was not there, the training was not there...' what can be done if someone keeps talking like that? A little dedication is required to do microplanning... dedication is necessary. **Coming at 10 a.m. and leaving at 5 p.m., that's not doing your duty, that's not government duty, when you talk of microplanning.**
>
> (my emphasis)

But she also acknowledged that 'he should not have been left to do it alone'. However an indication of the different behaviour that DPEP suddenly expects from administrators is evident in this very revealing response A5 says she gave to A3 on his failure to carry out the microplanning in the 'true spirit':

> I said 'so what if you went alone? The youth club was there. Why did you not stay there? **If you had stayed there, then the question of what your results say would have been secondary.** Now in the hierarchy system, what happens...it's a fault. 'Why did you not stay there?' - that question will be

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[93]Disputed by A5 who said he had been present all through the V-2 microplanning exercise.

raised. **But if you had stayed there and experienced it, then that process, the process of microplan would not have been questioned, but accepted.** The process of microplanning, the technique of developing a map, we all know that, so leave it. At least by staying, you could have talked to people and that would have been very good'. He just kept saying 'I know how to make this map, I know how to do this'. 'Let it be, brother, this is not about the map. **But you should mingle with the community', [I said].**

(my emphases)

The reconstitution of government duty as 'mingling with community', staying in villages beyond official working hours, were clearly all new to A3, for whom the experience was made more difficult through lack of support. In fact, in her reaction to the incident, possibly made stronger by the fact that I had witnessed it in its entirety, A5 had indicated a fundamental reversal in the approach to administration, where the process was emphasised as more important than the outcome. To assume that administrators can absorb these lessons through training, or learning by experience, is to underestimate the extent to which the change is fundamentally cultural. In a sense, the attitude towards cultural change within administration is similar to the change that is considered procedural – it can be learned on the job, or imparted through training. Thus the underestimation of the challenge of grafting innovation onto administrative practice is almost a bigger concern than the actual occurrence of management disasters on the ground.

5.4. Conclusions

The challenge facing the Indian state in relation to UPE is at two levels – reforming the content and approach of policy towards greater inclusion, and developing institutional structures that support innovation and inclusive practices on the ground. On both counts, I argue that institutional structures have not sufficiently been reformed to support changes proposed in policy and in DPEP. However, the challenges to developing productive social capital within institutions cannot also be underestimated.

First, the reform of the content and approach of policy has not lent greater clarity to the means of achieving UPE apart from specifying changes in pedagogy and in selecting specific forms of schooling that are standardised, as the examples cited above indicate. This leaves administrators, particularly those near the ground in difficult positions when faced with the challenge of keeping vulnerable first-generation learners in school, or

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redressing the exclusion of out of school children such as those who migrate with their families. In the absence of clear policy guidelines, administrators also rely on their own views, and where these views incline (like policy) towards a 'disinclination' hypothesis that views poverty and non-investment in education in terms of attitudinal 'backwardness', then there is the attendant danger that administrators will be unlikely to find innovative, flexible approaches to tackling exclusion. Further, the lack of clarity in policy also gives rise to *de facto* discretion exercised by administrators, rather than *de jure* approval for their use of discretion, based on the institutional support, information and trust that they require. Providing the necessary support may enable administrators to embrace rather than disown their potential role in helping to achieve UPE.

A second conclusion pertains to the attempt within DPEP to transform institutional functioning without rethinking the incentives that motivate administrative functioning. Administrators are expected to be accountable to national and state-level DPEP structures and personnel (and extending further upwards to the World Bank), to *panchayats*, work in partnership with village-level committees, absorb new ideas about education and pedagogy, be more gender and caste-conscious, and be social reformers, all with absolutely no shift in institutional incentive structures, and inadequate human and material resources.

The literature on coproduction emphasises the importance of institutional issues, and Tendler and Freedheim (1994) in particular provide an illuminating insight into the importance of appropriate institutional incentives that emphasise productive social capital. However, administrators' actions are often embedded in their views, in their relationship with communities and gives rise to diverse ways in which they negotiate distance between themselves and users. The challenge of prior stocks of social endowments constraining prospects for innovation cannot be underestimated in evaluating prospects for synergy and coproduction. The faith placed in the 'constructability' hypothesis by Evans (1996) and its generalisability across diverse contexts betrays a limited comprehension of the challenges placed in the shape of entrenched forms of social hierarchy and distance in which administrator identities are embedded in India.

Chapter 6: Achieving Synergy: Communities, participation and UPE

6.0. Introduction and key arguments

The importance of facilitating people's participation has increasingly taken centre-stage in development, to counter decades of top-down development strategies. The coproduction literature identifies two theoretical sources for this interest in the role of the community in development: a) the search for a way out of the 'state or market?' impasse, establishing the argument for placing people back at the centre of development, and making institutions work for them; and b) the focus on co-operation and coordination, and the recognition that informal social networks can bring people across institutions together in a way that facilitates public action and development (Evans 1996a).

As noted in Chapter 2, critiques of applied social capital focus on the implicit 'communitarian bias', and the romanticism of the notion that communities are best placed in terms of knowledge and capacity to manage complex public services. Thus the coproduction framework focuses on the importance of creating synergy between the actions of state and the actions of community. Chapters 6 and 7 focus on prospects for synergy between community organisations and the state, using two different cases from the fieldwork area. In this chapter, I analyse the relationships between community, school and state in each of these villages from the perspective of communities, specifically addressing three arguments.

First, as I argued in Chapter 2, the interests of communities are pulled in different ways vis-à-vis a mixed good such as education, which has both private and public good characteristics. How communities, especially those individuals charged with the particular task of representing the community on formal user-group bodies instituted by the state such as the Village Education Committee (VEC), define their responsibilities and their capacity to represent the collective interests of households is the focus of Section 6.1. In particular, based on evidence from V-2, I argue that a VEC-led process of consensus formation around UPE is likely to be constituted through, and constrained by the view of VEC members that decisions on education investment are the individual responsibility of parents.

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Second, the ability of members of the VEC to promote collective interests in the face of diverse private interests, as argued in Chapter 4, depends on more than just their personal views and perceptions. The establishment of formal structures such as VECs by the state, designed to institutionalise, and hence standardise community involvement in education, rests on the view that such user-groups will be well-placed to represent these diverse interests. An underpinning assumption, therefore, appears to be that productive social capital can be relied upon to facilitate co-operation in the process of achievement of common goals. To aid this process, VECs are based on norms of representation that stipulate the participation of members of different caste groups, and women, to prevent entrenched elites from dominating user-groups. The fundamental assumption in the "blueprint" for VECs is that the institutionalisation of community participation and community mobilisation is easily achieved (Vasavi et al. 1997). However, norms and networks are also based on explicit and implicit hierarchies of power and authority, and hence participation in user-groups cannot be facilitated by the mere standardisation of procedures. Section 6.2 addresses issues relating to participation and representation in the VECs, and particularly focuses on ways in which standardised procedures can result in reinforcing divisions between members who are economically unequally endowed.

Third, the methods and interests of formal user-groups inevitably develop out of prior histories of engagement between the community, the state, and in the case of education, the school. They also build on histories of state-community interaction peculiar to each village. Different villages have used different strategies to develop their relationship with the state and to lay claim to its resources. In Section 6.3, I demonstrate this through an exploration of the conditions under which, prior to the VEC, collective action in both V-2 and V-1 developed in relation to the school in particular, and education in general.

The foundations of community mobilisation are analysed in relation to the fieldwork villages in support of the view that "any assessment of the viability and feasibility of a VEC must be linked to an understanding of the social and political conditions of villages and to the variety of factors affecting education" (Vasavi et al. 1997:3181). Diverse histories may help explain differences found at the time of fieldwork between the condition of the schools in the two villages, as outlined in the last chapter. In examining the diverse histories of collective engagement between villages, I draw conclusions about the nature of the state-community interaction in these villages, and show how strategies used by communities have depended upon the development of informal networks between village

members and administrators, which have reinforced norms that exclude non-literate, labouring households from processes of engagement.

Concepts of community and participation are important to define and their usefulness in different contexts depends on the operating sets of assumptions. As noted in Chapter 1, the term 'community' is unspecified in meaning, and can be used to refer to the formal, representative, institutional form such as the VEC, or the *gram panchayat* (though the former is nominated and the latter elected); or to refer to members of a geographical entity, for example a village, or to a body of citizens demanding accountability of the state and acting through its elected representatives on the *panchayat* system. It can also be used, as noted earlier, to denote a more specific group such as a user-group related to a service (i.e. *the community of parents served by the school*). 'Community' thus has an institutional form (with specific organisational forms derived from it, such as *Gram panchayat*s and VECs) as well as a 'mass' or 'public' form. In this chapter, the term 'collective' is used to denote a subset of community, or a smaller group of people within a community who assume, or are implicitly charged with responsibility for representing or acting on behalf of the wider community.

'Collective' action is preferred to the term 'public' action, again on the grounds that it enables identification of specific collectivities of agents in different village contexts, rather than applying a broad term such as 'public' which encompasses a wider array of methods of mobilisation than evident within a village community, and a wider range of actors, including those exogenous to the village.[94] A distinction is also made between the terms 'action' and participation, to discuss the involvement of village members in activities relating to education development. The distinction between action as output, and participation as means is upheld on the basis of the understanding that people's involvement can take place at two levels - a) *contributing to production of services* (the 'means'); and b) *benefiting from the outcomes* (the 'ends') produced. Here, participation is taken to refer to the achievement of consensus and representation, while action is seen as the purposive events or acts undertaken by representatives of a community which can have impact on that community irrespective of the achievement of consensus.

These usages are preferred as it is considered important to avoid conflation of discussions of community-level action with both the *representation* of all members, as well as with

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[94]For instance, Dreze and Sen (1995) use 'public action' to include actions taken by the media and political parties, among others, to address deprivation and related social inequalities.

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consensus about the course of action. Thus the distinction between actions that are community-wide (and representative of community consensus) and those that are undertaken by a group of self-appointed custodians of 'community' interest is upheld by using 'collective' rather than 'community' to refer to the latter. I consider it particularly important to distinguish between the ways through which the village communities studied have been *historically* involved in education development, which are more indicative of collective action than community participation, and subsequent interventions to institutionalise community participation through formal bodies such as the VECs, which are principally attempts to ensure representation and build consensus.

6.0.1 Background to VECs, research methods and interviewees

VECs form an integral part of DPEP's vision of decentralised education provision and are viewed as "village representative mechanisms for building the interface between the village and the school".[95] DPEP documents use the term 'decentralisation' to refer to the processes by which communities are encouraged to participate in the education provision, fostering community involvement in the day-to-day management of primary schools to enable the achievement of policy goals of universal primary education. The mid-term assessment (ibid.) of the achievements of DPEP in community mobilisation summarises this thrust: "DPEP has earned the distinction of being 'the first experiment of its kind in the social development sector of the country, where decentralisation and community participation are being put into practice on a very large scale.'" VECs are expected to function as "empowering community organisational structures", which can facilitate the programme strategy of "community mobilisation as a precondition to active involvement of local stakeholders in the Programme" with specific objectives:

> "(i) to build the general environment for primary education (ii) motivate the parents to enrol their children in school and retain them in the school till they complete primary education; and (iii) enable the community, or local stakeholders to participate in the programme." (ibid.)

These objectives refer to the process of community mobilisation, and as VECs are described as the "structural aspect" of community participation (ibid. pg.10), they are taken as the broad objectives of the VECs as well.

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[95]All references here are to the document 'Community Mobilisation and Roles and Functions of VECs in DPEP: A Synthesis Report' (DPEP Bureau 1997: Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India)

The concept and institution of the VEC is not new to the education system in India. An earlier version of the VEC was the School Betterment Committee (SBC) which functioned in name and not in practice in most states of the country. SBCs were bodies comprising members nominated by local administrators, which overlapped with existing power structures and political organisations in the village, and hence were indistinguishable as institutions from general community leadership structures. SBCs were not given any specific guidelines for functioning or powers and hence were neither distinguishable from other bodies in the village, nor particularly integrated into education decision-making. DPEP documents acknowledge this reality and do not assume SBCs to be significant precursors to VECs. VECs differ from SBCs in three critical ways: a) they are either constituted through selection by headmasters or are elected bodies, where SBCs were constituted solely through nomination by administrators; b) there are strict norms for their constitution which includes reservation of seats for women (1/3rd), Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe members, following *Panchayati Raj* policy in this respect[96]; and c) VECs are given Rs. 2000 each year (a grant that will be given for the duration of DPEP) to spend on school development, over which they have full discretion, subject to guidelines developed by DPEP. The provision of a grant to VECs is a particularly strong symbolic gesture, part of government intention to develop a sense of 'ownership' by communities and VECs over schools and schooling.

There are four identified roles for VECs in DPEP: "facilitation role, supervisory role, attitudinal role, and school improvement role". While the facilitation role is not clearly defined, it reflects broadly to the facilitation of participation in UPE. The remaining roles refer to overall supervision (monitoring) of schools and teachers, orientation of community attitudes towards education participation and universal education, and improvements to school (such as maintenance and repairs, furnishings, equipment, etc.). In order to ensure that VECs function effectively, training in the goals and objectives of DPEP and on issues like gender and caste equality is provided to VECs. DPEP state project offices have drafted a special module and training is imparted by the DPEP-constituted Block Resource Centres, which exist as training resource centres in each block of each DPEP district.

The VECs in both V-1 and V-2 had been formed in 1996. The headmaster of the village serves as the ex-officio secretary of the VEC. In both villages, the VEC was formed

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[96]The 73rd Constitutional Amendment which provides the framework for democratic decentralisation in India (*Panchayati Raj*) has legislated for the reservation of seats for women, SC and ST members in local government.

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through a process of nomination, where the headmaster and/or prominent members of the village already associated with education approached individuals.

Interviews were carried out with members of VECs in both villages, as well as with others involved in the history of village education in both villages. In addition, material drawn from visits to neighbouring villages (V3, V4 and V5) is also incorporated where relevant. All the interviews were carried out during residential stays in each village, which enabled me to build links between events narrated by different interviewees, and thus develop a broader, multi-actor perspective on events in the village relating to the VEC and histories of school development. In addition, I draw on interviews with parents (see Table 22, Chapter 4) and DPEP administrators (see Table 23, Chapter 5).

There were differences in the research process between the interactions I had with VEC members in V-1, and with those in V-2. As the table below reflects, I was able to meet and interview 10 members of the VEC in V-2 (out of a total of 14) and only 3 (out of a total of 15) in V-1. In V-1, many declined to be interviewed and instead redirected me to one member of the VEC who was considered to be the most active and concerned about education in the village.

Table 24: Background to interviewees

Interviewee	Village	Sex	Institutional membership	Caste	Occupation
M1	V-2	F	SC/Woman – VEC	SC	Cultivator
M2	V-2	M	General – VEC	FC	Agriculturist
M3 (P17)	V-2	M	General –VEC	OBC	Agriculturist
M4 (P12)	V-2	F	Woman –VEC	OBC	*Anganwadi* Worker
M5	V-2	F	Woman –VEC	FC	Agriculturist
M6	V-2	M	ST – VEC	ST	Cultivator (Retired)
M7	V-2	M	General/Youth – VEC	Service Caste	Unemployed
M8 (P9)	V-2	M	ST/ Gram Panchayat member/VEC	ST	Wage Labourer
M9	V-2	F	ST/Woman -VEC	ST	Cultivator
M10	V-2	M	ST/VEC President	ST	Agriculturist/Local Politician
M11	V-1	M	General-VEC	OBC	Cultivator (Retired)
M12	V-1	M	General/*Gram Panchayat* member/VEC	FC	Agriculturist
M13	V-1	F	Woman - VEC	FC	Agriculturist
M14	V-2	M	-	SC	Teacher; ex-headmaster, V-2 school
M15	V-1	M		-	Headmaster, V-1, HPS
M16	V-2	M	-	-	Headmaster, V-2 HPS
M17	V-3	M	-	-	Headmaster, V-3 LPS

6.1. VEÇs and the framing of consensus on UPE

Two clear tasks are placed before VECs within the framework of UPE. First, to mobilise participation among parents and children, and second, to monitor the functioning of the school and the regular attendance and good performance of teachers.

6.1.1 Promoting universal participation

The views of VEC members in V-2 about their role in promoting universal participation are important, as they shape the limitations placed by these individuals on their ability to effectively fulfil their roles. Attitudes towards universal participation varied according to the class position of VEC members, with large educated landowners dismissive of parents who did not educate their children:

> "... parents need to be concerned about educating their children. They have not yet understood the value of knowledge. If they were aware of the value of education, they would have tolerated this problem as one among hundred of their problems and would educate them. But **it has not come to them**"
>
> (M2) (my emphasis)

> "By ourselves, we go to every house, meet them [parents] to ask everyone to send their children. The reason is that we want them to feel that education level should improve. But... **it will not come to everyone**"
>
> (M3) (my emphasis)

For agriculturists from higher castes, parents whose children were out of school, lacked awareness of the value of education. However, VEC members drawn from cultivating or wage labour households shared some sympathy with households who were not sending all their children to school, based on a economic analysis of their reasons for not doing so:

> "[Universal education] is not possible at all, because our main job is agriculture. Naturally, every one will have bullocks, buffaloes, sheep, goats etc. If every one starts learning, then what is our condition?"
>
> (M6)

"Suppose if 100% of our children go to school, who will look after our main jobs like agriculture, animal husbandry? That's why half study and another half don't."

(M1)

"Some will send; some will not send due to their poor economic situation. If they send for cattle-grazing, some will say [to the children] 'we go for field work, you look after the house and stay.' - then they cannot send to school. Food - due to this insufficiency of food they send children to work, and cannot send them to school."

(M10)

The problems are - they have to send them to graze cattle, so they withdraw them from school. Some feel it is enough if girls look after household chores - washing, cleaning, etc. Why should we pay daily wage of Rs. 50/- for a servant? Let me send my boy to graze. So out of such poverty they withdraw them. Middle class people also do so. But the main cause against education is poverty. ... There is a government plan that every child has to be educated, but it should be possible for all, is it not?

(M3)

The views of these VEC members arose more from *empathy* than a feeling that these households were somehow 'deficient' in their values or their aspirations for the future, as the earlier set of quotes indicates. M1 was emphatic in her belief in the importance of education:

If we send them to school, this is much better than sending children behind cattle. If they learn, they'll be clever, the cow boys [sic] will be naturally dull. We [illiterate people] don't know about how and all, we are dull, but people say if the children know how to read and write, they will be clever.

Many VEC members faced similar agricultural constraints and challenges as those from non-educating households, and were loath to take on a position of preaching the importance of education to households who they felt were struggling to survive. For one VEC member, the difficulty stemmed from a different source - his own inability to serve as a role model for education:

"We can convince [parents to send their children to school] through the VEC, but for example, if I go to tell them to send their children to school, they may question me 'What are you

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doing now after your studies?' I'll be left having no answers"

Members on the VEC who represented poorer households shared with non-educating households the view that material or economic issues were a priority, and education was an aspect of livelihood management strategies, not a determinant. As a result, many members of the VECs conceded that they were "helpless" in the face of households citing economic constraints as reasons for not sending their children to school:

> "We will try to convince parents. If they start telling us about their problems ... like looking after fields and all ... we become helpless"
>
> (M7)

Broad class and caste differences played themselves out amongst VEC members as well. Differences in opinion on the reasons why parents did not send children to school can thus be clustered in two groups: those based on empathy and an understanding of the livelihoods pressures that compelled parents to keep some children out of education, and those that were more dismissive, believing such decisions to be made on the basis of ignorance. It is no coincidence that the clusters also fall on either side of the divide identified in Chapter 4, with better-off households of agriculturists whose ability to ride out patches of economic uncertainty in a relatively more secure position vis-à-vis their education strategy, than those who were cultivators, wage labourers or unemployed. For instance, M7's perception that the value of education was linked to opportunities for non-agricultural employment was, in turn, linked to his own predicament, that of an educated, unemployed youth:

> Definitely after supporting children for their studies, if they don't get a job means what is the use?

Agriculturists M2, M3 and M10 were also the leaders of the village, intimately involved with the history of the development of V-2's school. Thus their views, rather than those of the remaining VEC members, were likely to carry far more influence in the VEC than those of the other members, a point which section 6.2 elaborates.

6.1.2 Developing the school

Irrespective of their views about the appropriateness of VEC intervention in parental decisions, and about why parents did not send children to school, VEC members had a range of innovative proposals to offer to address the education problems in the village. VEC members interviewed were particularly keen to focus on measures to improve schooling.[97] Measures discussed included making school hours more flexible and introducing NFE schools. M1 noted that many villagers wanted schools to be closed during the harvest season, and instead run in the summer when they were normally closed. This idea, she said, had not been well-received during the microplanning exercise by DPEP officials (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5) conducting the survey, who had said that running schools in the summer would have been difficult on account of the heat particularly for children from neighbouring villages who attended the HPS. Setting up a non-formal school to target older out-of-school children was also mentioned by M2 as an important way of supplementing children's participation in formal schooling, though he was careful to mention that NFE could not provide many of the attractions of formal school such as sports, essay writing and debates. He was, however, confident that in V-2, the formation of study groups in every street of the village would facilitate very focused identification of children who could be sent to an NFE school rather than the formal school. All the members had strong views about the abolition of the existing wheat incentive and replacing it with a midday meal program, which they felt would help children far more than the collection of grain once every month. In V-1, M12 expressed the strong belief that education should be compelled through making the disbursement of IRDP loans conditional upon school enrolment and attendance, or, at least permitting local VECs to enact 'local laws' enabling them to do this. Interestingly this view was expressed in the context of an inactive VEC and a crumbling school environment.

These suggestions, however, were based on very different views on the causes of non-universal school participation. In V-2, the differential socio-economic positioning of members of the VEC leads to an absence of consensus on the extent to which parents are responsible for their children's non-participation, and how far VECs can go in actually altering parental decisions. Focusing on the school as a central resource of the village may have been a more strategic option for the VEC:

"If our village develops it means its name will come up in the surrounding villages, even in the eyes of the government. That's why we are putting more interest in education."

(M6)

Focusing on the 'supply' of schooling in terms of mobilising resources for the development of the school, lobbying with the state for more resources, and coming up with proposals for improving the quality and options for schooling in the village are extremely important functions for the VEC to play, even if the motivation is to attract the attention of the government. This is a finding more widely echoed in Saxena's (1994) research and review of other studies, where he argues that the personal interest of, and role played by, village elites in the management of commons is a crucial element, particularly if the leaders, whether generally prominent personalities (Wade's (1994) 'big men') or *panchayat* leaders, are driven by motives of enhanced status, power and reputation.

At another level, however, many of the factors of exclusion discussed in Chapter 4 are not addressed at all. For instance, it was interesting that none of the VEC members identified the vulnerability of first-generation learners as a concern, or thought it important to address the social distance between non-literate parents and teachers, for instance, issues that were raised either explicitly or implicitly by parents. The view that parental 'awareness' may be lacking has also been discounted in the sample of interviews discussed in the earlier chapter, but such a view, held by influential agriculturists in V-2, is likely to limit possibilities for developing an universal education strategy from the perspective of the excluded.

6.2. Standardisation versus participation: institutionalising community participation

Developing strategy from the perspectives of the educationally excluded is essential, given the deeply embedded constraints to universal education discussed in Chapter 4. However, it is not clear if VECs are in a position either to be representative of the wider community, or even internally representative of its own membership. Norms determining representation within the VEC guarantee the presence of members from a cross-section of the villages' caste structure, but whether this presence amounts to active participation cannot be assumed.

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[97] That VEC members in V-2 did not raise the issue of teachers' attendance is interpreted here as an outcome of the efficiency of V-2's school - where teachers on the whole were regular and conscientious. In other villages, teachers were the

In V-2, four of the ten VEC members interviewed were unable to say much about the VEC because they never attended meetings. M4 and M5 did not attend meetings because their husbands were members. M9 said that she did not attend meetings because with three children it was impossible to find time - instead she signed papers that were brought to her at home. M8, also a *Gram Panchayat* member, did not attend because he was usually away and felt that his non-attendance would not make a difference because "anyway the senior people of the village are there", a view echoed by M9 who said that she did not quite know what she could say in front of "such senior people", the other VEC members. In V-1, the reluctance of most VEC members to even discuss their roles, and the general view that VEC meetings were not being held regularly indicated a wider context of apathy.

That full trust was placed in a few leaders, particularly M2, M3 and M10, was mentioned widely by villagers in V-2, and M3, the village *patil* acknowledged it:

> See, ... to inform parents is the responsibility of 2-3 leaders. Others don't participate because they feel that if leaders are there, then it's OK. 'Why should we go, they [the leaders] have concern about school, what is there for us to ask', they feel.

Class, gender and caste distinctions between members created divisions between members, and caused some members to take a subordinate role based on their feeling of inferiority. Women represent a group most marginalised by formal political processes, given their lack of education, power, authority relative to men, and given that neither caste nor class provides them with the authority that it confers upon men. Women villagers interviewed in V-1 and V-2 had little to say about the *panchayat*, its roles, decisions, meetings and processes. They did not attend meetings, nor did they participate in informal discussions about village affairs with *panchayat* members. The only exception was the V-*1 Mahila Sangha*, a women's group formed and registered under the *Mahila Samakhya* programme, where the focus was on the empowerment of women (in the case of V-1, SC women) through conscientisation and awareness-raising. The women's group had some interaction with the *panchayat*, albeit only to resolve problems relating to their *sangha*. P2, a vocal member of the *sangha* explained that in the course of building their *sangha* centre, they had encountered problems, which they wanted the *panchayat* to address:

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main focus of concern for VECs (interview with A-6)

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Q: Here do women go to (attend) *Panchayat* meeting?

A: If we have any deficiency something like this, we will be going to represent [ourselves]. For our *Sangha* Building works, the cement was less. We had gone to ask for it. And here from adjacent areas water was flowing to here - we had gone to request for something like a bridge to be constructed.

Q: Do all the ladies [*sangha* members] together go to ask?
A: Not all will go. We conduct a meeting among our group, discuss and any two representatives go.

Q: Did you get any solution for your representations?
A: Nothing has happened till now.

Q: Did you attend *panchayat* meeting?
A: I have not gone myself.

Q: Before the *Sangha* was formed were you going [to any meetings]?
A: No, after its formation, I go.

Q: If you go to the *Panchayat* meeting now what will people say?
A: Now there are secretary and others. They are happy that we have become intelligent and reformed.

While the formation of the group had provided support for women to participate selectively in *panchayat* processes, for individual women, participation in community fora still remained the preserve of men, where speaking out was impossible. For women VEC members there was no solace to be found in group strength, as they formed a considerable minority. M1 was the only woman on the V-2 VEC who attended meetings regularly, and she expressed her diffidence when asked if she was as outspoken at meetings as she was at the interview:

No I can't, because in the meeting all big big people will be sitting, and it doesn't look nice if I speak like this, I'm the only woman who is in the meeting.

Her diffidence before government officials, however, she explained in a different way:

When our village elders say that we have no problems, how can I tell before them. Our elders will slap on my face.

The implication that village elders rarely discuss 'problems' with government officials makes the point about the use of conciliatory rather than conflictual tactics in village-state

interactions, a point developed in the next section. Here, however, the concern is with M1's view that speaking out, as she did in the interview, was not considered appropriate in the course of village interaction, no doubt compounded by the fact that she was a SC woman. Any interaction she may have had with government officials was limited to her participation in the VEC in meetings with the government. Apart from that, there was little or no interaction with government officials:

> They [government officials] come [to the village] but not this
> side [the SC colony]. They don't even call us. They have
> called me only twice [to meetings] since I became a member,
> neither they ask anything nor I inform anything to them.

This view was supported by P2, a *Mahila Sangha* member in V-1. Spatial segregation between castes was much more sharply delineated and maintained in V-1 than V-2 which meant that membership of the *sangha* could not be expanded beyond the SC colony, and teachers and government officials never made their way into the area to hold discussions with households there. The spatial distinction between the SC colony and the rest of the village was referred to in terms of 'sides' - 'any person from that side cannot have come to this side - only from here, to this side are allowed'.[98]

The standardised VEC format, with its set procedures for including traditionally excluded groups, for ensuring representation, was thus not interpreted in spirit in the villages concerned. Ironically, many of the hierarchies within the VEC, and the village community, of which it was a microcosm, were reinforced by the actions of representatives of the state. Biases of administrators and officials also resulted in the absence of representation of illiterate villagers in discussions about the school and its development. All the parents referred to in Chapter 4, except for P17/M3, mentioned that they had little to do either with meetings, or with activities linked to the school as mentioned above. Administrators too made little effort to visit pockets of the village where poorer or lower-caste households resided. This point was supported by M3 himself:

> [Administrators] talk to us [VEC members] and go. They
> ask us how the school is functioning. ... If they
> [administrators] talk to illiterate people they [illiterate
> people] give irrelevant answers. If uneducated people say
> something, they [administrators] feel insulted. They
> [administrators] talk only to those people who are there and
> enquire about well-being.

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[98]Interview with P2.

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This was corroborated by P15 in V-2, in a discussion on reported irregularities in the distribution of the wheat incentive:

> "If they don't give, can we shout at government as to why they didn't give? Who will ask? Are we capable enough to ask them? ... If *panchayat* members of the village and elders ask, it is possible, otherwise not. If small people go and ask, does anyone put it in their ear? No they don't hear. Especially if *panchayat* members and other important people like them tell, they may hear, what do they care if uneducated like us tell [them]."

While institutionalisation and standardisation may be considered important to ensure that *all* villages develop capacity to plan for themselves locally, rather than depend on the variable capacities of villages to organise themselves, there is the attendant danger that significant economic and social differences between members are not addressed. The VEC is constituted by unequally endowed (economically and socially) individuals, a feature overlooked in the design of programmes of training for 'community' organisations. This lesson was painfully experienced by DPEP officials who were organising training programmes for the VECs as part of VEC orientation into their roles as community enforcers or promoters of UPE.

The assistant coordinator of DPEP recounted the difficulty faced in getting VEC members to attend the 4-day training programmes that were held at the Block Resource Centres:

> Because most of them are daily wage earners ... you will get only 2-3 people like [M2]. These people earn daily wages from Rs. 30-Rs. 60. These people come to us and all they get is a quarter (Rs. 20). If you ask them to take Rs. 80 and spend 4 days with us in training, it makes it very difficult for them.

The issue of financial compensation has been a particular problem for government, with debates about what constitutes fairness and the trade-offs that may occur in terms of securing sustainable participation for a programme. Many outcomes in DPEP depend on developing a spirit of voluntarism both within the community and administrators, as noted in Chapter 5. In the context of village communities, the issue of compensating poverty/financial loss is a dilemma that is yet to be resolved. In the meantime, training programmes were being held up:

That's why in many [blocks] people are not coming. In [a neighbouring block], after dates were fixed the programme had to be cancelled. They [VEC members] said, 'we are not coming'. The 2-3 people who have scooters come, usually the VEC presidents, people like that come.

The battle of wills over VEC training continued during my fieldwork period. Visits to different training programmes revealed the difficulty in getting all VEC members of a village together in training, particularly if their villages were not near or well-connected to the block headquarters. The dropouts were also the less wealthy members of the VEC.

The distance between VEC members' homes and the BRCs created a set of constraints because the administrative rules deemed that only those who lived beyond 8 kms. away from the BRC could claim their travel reimbursement. Other VEC members got a standard sum of Rs. 20. This created much disgruntlement amongst VEC members who lived say between 5-7 kms. away, who felt that forgoing wages for a residential training and not getting an allowance to cover expenses during the training was unfair. A BRC resource person recounted that in one of the training programmes conducted, many VEC members who lived less than 8 kms. away boycotted the training and refused to accept the discriminatory payment. At the time, because of delays in building the BRCs, premises without kitchens were being rented by the BRC coordinator in different blocks, and hence VEC members and trainers had to provide their own food.[99] A6 felt that this was unfair, and had an impact on the training process, which was otherwise effective:

If they were given more money than they earn in the village it would be effective ... In my view, if you give money and along side have good activities then it will be better. Even if you bring in good effective field training programmes, whatever you do, *there is no commitment more important than the stomach.* Because they leave everything there [in the village], they should get something there. ... The VEC training has not been an utter failure. ... If you give them money also, the training would be very effective. ... Those people are not getting food, they are not getting [travel reimbursement], and on top of that the wage for that day is wasted.

(my emphasis)

The difficulty with imposing formal institutions on villages in the belief that these will democratise decision-making processes is that they attempt to cultivate new forms of leadership through diktat rather than process. Striking a balance between expanding representation and respecting village internal processes has meant that while formulating norms for the representation of women and low-caste village members through a reservation system, the process by which VEC members are selected is still carried out through the dominant 'leaders' of the village. According to M15, the secretary of the V-1 VEC, the VEC was in effect less effective than the earlier SBC. Rather than select people with an interest in education, he argued, disinterested people who did not attend meetings often occupied positions on the VEC:

> The VEC has become tired now compared to what it was before. The Government is restricting us. 'The VEC should only be this much. There should be so many people in the VEC. This many SC, this many ST, so many others. So many women have to be there. So much about education should be there'. But out of these 15 people, how many of them are really interested in the school? Don't you have to think about that? – [SBC members] used to think about the school, at the time they would give their full dedication. Just by doing this they brought about the school's improvement. But nowadays what is happening? 'No you have to [come to the meetings]' - take master [X] for example, [even] if he is not interested in this line, I will [force] him - 'no you have to come here'. He said, 'no sir I am not interested in this, please make it [select] another'. But we will not lose him - 'no, no, no, you have to come here. You have to - I will write your name on this paper'. Ultimate result is he will lose interest in the meetings. When he is not interested in this line, why is he coming here? Isn't it? This is the main problem with the VEC.

In the view of the headmaster, enforcing participation against the interests of people who were selected on the basis of their caste group meant that others who displayed genuine interest were left out. This, in his view, went against the interests of the village school:

> Exceptions are also there. Some people are also like this - even if they don't come here, wherever I meet them they ask 'how is the school running? What are your problems? How much of the syllabus has been covered? How much [of the syllabus] is left to be covered? How are the exams? What are the exam fees? How are all the functions being held? When are you calling a meeting? How many meetings have

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[99] The irony of a financially well resourced programme like DPEP being held up on account of dilemmas of reimbursement of small payments for a one-off training cannot also be missed.

you held?' They ask about everything. There are people like that, and people like this. **But among people, there are more people who just hang about with no purpose than people who ask about the school.** It is the main problem. So the education in the village - it is not getting much improvement.

<div align="right">(my emphasis)</div>

6.3. Embedded histories: collective action and the school

The contexts for the development of the school within the different villages clearly pre-date the formation of the VEC or the establishment of DPEP in general. State-community interfaces in the two villages were also different, which could help explain different outcomes in the two villages in relation to the conditions of the school buildings. I argue that the 'supply' of schooling is embedded in histories of state-community engagement particular to different villages, and these histories can be seen as endowments shaping the project of coproduction of education in these villages. In particular these histories are shaped by the context of scarce resources being allocated by the state, which places communities in competition, and leads them to develop innovative strategies for claiming the attention and investment of the state. Further, these engagements are marked not by community-wide participation, but by the actions of individual catalysts or collectives of influential elites.

The construction of a composite narrative of the history of schooling development and community action was made possible through the piecing together of different personal narratives of individual involvement and action undertaken by villagers as part of a broader effort. In V-2, pieces of the history of the development of the village school began to emerge from different accounts in the course of interviews about the contemporary village school. Piecing together these different stories presented a picture of the local level activism that had responded to fluctuations in the fortunes of the local school, and the processes by which villagers engaged with the state to gain attention for their school and push for its development. In V-1, by contrast, the story of the development of the village school was eloquently narrated in the *silences* about the village school and in the dilapidated state of the school itself. One actor alone provided the narrative of school history. Subsequent disillusionment about the processes through which school resources could be garnered for the village had led him to withdraw from active participation in the

VEC. What this tells us about the state of schooling in the two villages will be further explored in this section.

In V-2 the key informants from whom the history of schooling development was elicited are the following. M2, from the only Brahmin family in the village, was widely recognised within the village as the 'leader'. He was also the largest landowner in the village with 40 acres of land and the district leader of the Congress party, in opposition at the State-level at the time of fieldwork and writing. M3/P17, an active member of village affairs; M14, until his transfer to another village school in a neighbouring village, M10, who was V-2's representative on the *Taluka Panchayat* and came from a prominent, well educated family in the village whose father and sister had been, or were also, active *panchayat* members, and M16, who had joined the school in 1987, were also key informants. Other interviewees supplemented this picture but uniformly credited these individuals as the most active members and benefactors of the village in general.

In V-1, the key informant for schooling development was M11, a *Lingayat*, who was widely credited with promoting the development of the school, and considered to be best placed to talk about the school's history. Efforts to find other informants of schooling development were unsuccessful, and the silence of other village members is part of the story in this section.

6.3.1 Chronology of schooling development in the two villages

6.3.1.1. Village 2 (V-2)

V-2's school was started in the 1950s, though village accounts differ about the exact year. According to various village sources, the history of the school has been quite eventful. Till the mid to late 60s, the school functioned in a school building with two rooms and was developed by two teachers over a period of ten years, who oversaw the addition of classes in subsequent years. By 1969, according to M2, who returned in that year to V-2 after completing his education in various neighbouring towns, grades 1 to 5 were running in the school, although the number of enrolled students was low.

The school suffered a setback in the early 1970s, when the building collapsed and the number of grades taught reduced to 1 and 2. Another factor in the school's decline was reported to be the outbreak of famine, which led to an increase in poverty and migration

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out of the village. Although at the time the school had been sanctioned expansion to include grade 6, the decline in students and the fall of the building resulted in the withdrawal of one of the three teachers posted there. The school premises were shifted to a temple opposite the old location, and classes were held there for a few years (in one account this was until 1980) until local initiative led to the building of the present school, located at the roadside near the entrance to the village, about one mile from the main village, but next to the Scheduled Caste (SC) hamlet.

The development of the school progressed at the time of M2's return to the village and the subsequent appointment of M14 as teacher. Both M2 and M10 mention the influence of the then *Gram panchayat* chairman (M10's father), and M2 cites the role played by the then Block Development Officer (BDO) in supporting the activities in V-2. Over the 1980s, the school was built and gradually expanded to become a HPS, which includes grades 1 - 7. The new ambition for M2, endorsed by the VEC at a school function to felicitate the new Block Education Officer (BEO) at which I was present, and at a meeting with a DPEP Mid-Term Review team (as reported by a VEC member, M1) is the upgrading of the HPS to a high school for which he indicated willingness to provide land free of cost to the village.

The problems of the school did not end with the expansion to HPS. The sanction for school building was a mere Rs. 400, and there were already heated arguments in the village about construction material, with some arguing for a wooden structures, others including the then *Gram Panchayat* (GP) Chairman, who offered to put in his own money, arguing for a concrete building. The building remained incomplete for a further three years. Some of the classes were held outdoors, and during one such class period, there was an unexpected visit from a local officer, who expressed his shock at the state of affairs and threatened to downgrade the school to LPS from the sanctioned HPS. This set off a flurry of activity in the village, especially when the officer expressed his intention to issue transfer certificates to the older children to enable them to move to other HPSs in the area. One of the older children due to be transferred was the son of the then GP chairman, who then personally went to the Assistant Education Officer (AEO) and pleaded his case. According to M14, the AEO cited several reasons for the decision to downgrade the school, including the conditions of teaching (outdoors), the failure to complete building after four years and because 'other villagers [are] not helping [the teacher]'. However, the persuasion of the then GP chairman and promises to overcome all obstacles and complete the building won back HPS status for V-2.

The HPS started functioning fully in 1984-85 when the present headmaster, M16 joined the school. The M14 recounts that it was the former's suggestion that triggered off the expansion and the village's application for an extra teacher. In 1987, M14 was transferred (as a matter of course) and M16 took over from him. The former also attributed the increasing number of children in school to the midday meal scheme, which he brought into the school when he was headmaster. Both he and M10 mentioned a change in the economic fortunes of the village since an episode of famine in the early 70s, with greater access to loans enabling people to dig water wells and irrigate some of their land, and a decrease in reliance on migration as a survival strategy.

Changes in the fortunes of the village's schools thus resulted in the activities undertaken by influential members of the village community at key moments in the school's history - moments which would have otherwise resulted in the downgrading of the school. Although the low numbers of children attending school was a concern, the main priorities for members were making improvements to the physical condition of the school, and securing the permission to expand the school from lower primary to higher primary. The striking feature of these accounts is the insights provided into the nature of school development. Rather than receiving schooling as an entitlement, this village community had to *prove* its worthiness for greater funds and resources, has been asked to show its commitment to education as a precondition of receiving state funds, or any sign of state commitment to education.

The state also places pressure on communities to ensure UPE. As in the case of V-2, falling enrolments often result in threats to close down schools or deny permission to expand schooling facilities. Such punitive measures taken against villages where education participation is low in turn lead villagers to place pressure on teachers. In two tribal hamlets (*tandas*) neighbouring V-2[100] teachers complained about being placed under pressure by local leaders to doctor attendance records in order to keep the schools running. Thus the state-community engagement involves both communities claiming the attention of the state, as well as states demanding community co-operation for increasing enrolments through enacting punitive measures.

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[100] *Tanda* N and *Tanda* L were neighbouring V-2. I have deliberately avoided naming them in keeping with the norms of confidentiality used in the thesis. It is no coincidence that the teachers who complained about this phenomena, are those who teach in *Lambani tandas* - it is quite possible that this is also an outcome of a strong bias against *Lambanis* who are commonly represented as drunkards and thieves, and backward. Teachers commonly resent postings to *Lambani tandas.*

M11's story of schooling development in V-1 reveals a significantly different history, at least in terms of the level of involvement of villagers in the development of the school. V-1's HPS did not develop until the 1970s. The LPS developed in the early 1950s, expanding an earlier *matt*[101] school into a four-grade school. The present school building was constructed in the years 1967-8. M11's chief complaint was about the lack of support he received within the village for schooling development - if he was not actively involved in promoting education, he said, nobody would be bothered in the village. His explanation for the relative backwardness of the village in schooling was that the teachers were the biggest source of problems, bringing into the village the politics of the outside world. Other villagers interviewed supported his accounts of the problems with drunken teachers and the efforts to deal with the problem, and by observation during the research of different incidents that took place around the school, especially of quarrels between staff.

Strategies to deal with problem teachers involved both adversarial (such as complaints to the block education office) as well as conciliatory measures (talking to teachers' family members). Two teachers in V-1 school had the reputation of being alcoholics and missing several days of school on account of illness related to alcoholism. In the case of one teacher, a village son-in-law, M11 revealed that his chosen strategy was to work through the in-laws to find a "reasonable solution" and to get the Inspector of Schools to warn him, but not to punish him in any way that threatened his job. Another incident that took place during fieldwork and reported by the school's only woman teacher, involved a quarrel between her and one of the two alcoholic teachers, with the latter suspecting the former of complaining about him to the Block Education Officer (BEO) who was on a visit to the school. His paranoia led him to ask the children in school whether she had indeed done so despite her denials, and following their denials, he turned on the children and accused them of being liars. The incident resulted in a slanging match between the teacher, his mother-in-law (the village nurse) and the woman teacher, causing the latter to cry in front of her students, and eventually leave the school to go home for three days. M11, however, noted the incident as yet another sign of teacher intransigence, as she had left the school without giving notice, causing him to complain to the BEO. The BEO in the meantime, having witnessed a part of this episode, overturned the complaint.

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[101] *Matts* or monasteries run by *Virashaiva* (a religious denomination within the Hindu *Shaivist* tradition) priests play key roles in organising religious discourses and festivals, and in some areas play a dominant role in the economic and social activities of the people (Vasavi 1999: 31) such as running schools.

It may be no coincidence that conciliation tactics were used with a teacher who was a male village 'insider' and adversarial tactics against a 'female' outsider. M11 complained that the BEO's overturning of his complaint was a sign of the close relationship between teachers and officials, and the helplessness of villagers in the face of this 'nexus'. M11 felt that the politicisation of teachers and officials had led to greater apathy on the part of community members who, he argued did not want to jeopardise their relations with either teachers or officials by engaging in a tussle over school. In the same vein, however, villagers were reluctant to jeopardise their own internal relationships by taking action against a village 'son-in-law'. I heard many stories, rumours and gossip about the various teachers in the village, and many villagers were aware of the bad relations between the alcoholic teacher and the woman teacher, although none were willing to discuss it 'on the record' with me.

This incident provides a snapshot of the quality of teacher-community interaction in V-1, with children being drawn into conflicts between teachers without any sense of propriety or duty shown by the teachers towards the children. These tense relations were symbolic of the overall condition of the school – as noted in Chapter 4, of the 5 rooms in the school only three were functional, catering to seven grades of HPS schooling. Two were in such a state of disrepair that they had to be locked and could not be used. There had been no community effort to repair the buildings, and there was no effort to resolve the tensions within the school. Tensions were further exacerbated when the BEO then promoted a newly appointed teacher to the post of headmaster of the school over the head of the alcoholic teacher who was more senior, further entrenching the battle ground within the school.

The fragmentation of leadership and authority in V-1 is paralleled with the fragmentation of the schooling system - a crumbling formal school and an efficient, active NFE school run by a volunteer teacher catering to Scheduled Caste children. Fragmentation of authority, schooling structures and of castes through spatial segregation, prevented a united front from being developed which could have led to firm steps being taken to deal with the excessive politicisation of the teachers. The fragmentation within the village enabled government officials to also pass the buck – M11 mentioned an encounter he had with a DIET[102] inspector who had come to inspect the NFE centre. When the former requested

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[102] The DIET is the District Institute of Educational Training, which is the district unit of the State Council for Education Research and Training, providing academic support to the district education administration.

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the inspector to visit the formal school to take note of its condition, he refused, saying that it was not part of his job description.

6.3.2 The underpinnings of collective action

The contrast between V-2 and V-1 in relation to the involvement of prominent village members in securing the development of the school is striking. The former displayed collective action that, although not "representative" or consultative of all village members, was indicative of the keenness of dominant members to engage positively with the state and access available resources. This engagement is viewed by anthropologist A.R. Vasavi as "providing further grounds for the acceptance of the state" where "rural people, especially the dominant though not the majority, are themselves willing partners and participatory members in the 'society-state' engagement" (1999:8).

The types of action favoured by the prominent members who led village mobilisation in education (in the case of V-1, the one prominent member) were conciliatory and persuasive, often, as in V-2 mobilising some community funds to prove their interest and willingness to the state. This experience was shared by a neighbouring hamlet of tribal *Lambanis*,[103] a nomadic people who had settled in the area over the course of the last century, and who migrated out in the non-agricultural season to work on construction sites. This particular hamlet did not have its own *panchayat*, as it was constituted by eleven other dispersed hamlets, and hence was not counted as one village. Because of the scattered population belonging to this particular community, they had not been granted a school, and less than 1% of the adults were literate. However, in order to gain a school, they had to be granted the status of a village. This they could only do by first proving eligibility to get their own post-office (basically a nominated member of the village who would serve as collection and distribution point), and by converting their mud huts into semi-*pacca* (semi-permanent) houses which involved getting loans from a government scheme (the *Indira Awas Yojana*). Thus a range of resources had to be mobilised within the village prior to being granted a school, and to prove their worthiness for state investment.

In the context of competition with other villages for scarce resources, the village-state engagement in both villages has thus been based on conciliation and co-operation rather than conflict, albeit with different consequences. Neither V-2 nor V-1 had attempted to

use tactics of conflict or non-co-operation to get their way - probably because of a realistic evaluation that it would have had a negative impact on the fortunes of the school. Co-operation and community effort were far more likely to gain support from the state, as V-2 discovered to its benefit. V-2 is considered a model village by the district authorities and many evaluation and review teams have visited this village.[104] In return for state attention, V-2 elites invested greatly in the officials with whom they had to interact. When the BEO was transferred in August 1997, the VEC (led by the same actors who had invested in school development) held a special function, at which I was present, to bid farewell to the outgoing BEO, and to welcome her replacement. The function was a rather grand affair. Shawls were gifted to the outgoing and incoming BEOs, speeches were made, and a rather emotional outgoing BEO referred to V-2 as her "second home" during her stint at the Block Education Office. The Headmaster later commented that it was investment in such functions that brought benefit to the school, an investment made by all VEC members and teachers who had contributed money for the garlands, shawls and the snacks and refreshments that were later provided. It was also an event for the students of the school who were also present at this function which took place in the school courtyard. Quite apart from any cynical motive that may have underpinned the whole exercise, it was also apparent that investment would reap greater, more long-term rewards in terms of improving parents' and children's perceptions of the school, giving students formal occasions which would enhance the status of the school, and make it look like a worthwhile institution, especially with the visits of so many outsiders.

Negotiation was an art well mastered by the leaders of V-2. M2 commented (off-the-record) that in his experience of working with government for the village, the government always granted only half of what was requested or demanded, and rarely conceded to all the demands of the village. He also claimed that success in gaining resources from government was also not a straightforward matter of putting a strong case forward - the merit of claims made by villages was filtered through a political decision-making process and playing the political game was also an important tool that was required. However, M2's prominence as a local politician representing the Congress party, in opposition at the State level and at the district level (where the ruling *Janata Dal* party was in control of the ZP) also had drawbacks - for instance, he claimed that the village's request for a hostel and a high school was being turned down because of his political affiliation.

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[103]Classified as Scheduled Castes though.

Differences between villages and their ability to engage effectively with the state to develop schooling resources can be explained by differences in the calibre or commitment of individuals in each of these villages. V-2 may have just been fortunate to have in its population M2 who, despite not having lived in the village in his childhood and whose affiliation to the village arose from having inherited land in it, was politically engaged and committed to "social service". V-2 may have also been fortunate to have had M14, a Scheduled Caste teacher, whose own personal experience of discrimination and will to overcome it, had led him to believe that he owed his village school a debt. It was not unusual to find SC members within the district administration who held the opinion that a willingness to struggle was all it took to overcome poverty and deprivation, and who had little sympathy for those who failed to come up in life, when they themselves were proof that it was possible given commitment and a willingness to make sacrifices in the short-term. However, M14 saw his debt differently:

> "When I was appointed [as a teacher] in 1978, the government did not post me here. I came here on my request. This is the school I had studied in. It is said "when poverty comes to the mother one must help her improve; it means repaying the debt of blood". That means I came back to repay my debt to the school I had studied in."

He recounted that on his return to the school as a teacher, he was invited by the then *Gram Panchayat* chairman (also M10's father) to discuss the new location of the school. M14 gave his opinion that the school should be located at the roadside for the 'convenience of the public'. This had a crucial effect on an issue close to his heart - the improvement in access of SC children, and was influenced particularly by his direct discussions with SC community members about education:

> "After gaining approval [from the authorities] I got the school foundation laid. Then I asked SC people to send their children to school. They said 'dear sir, it is in the temple now; there is caste feeling here. You are the master and educated, so they will permit you to enter. ... [I]f the school is located in a public place, we can send our children'."

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[104] For instance, the Government of India supervision mission 1996, the mid-term review mission on gender in DPEP in 1997, the mid-term review mission on VECs and community participation in DPEP in 1997. It was also the first village in the district to be used as a basis for microplanning, specifically because of the high level of village involvement.

The move of the school to the temple in the earlier years had a negative impact on 'untouchable' children (now SCs) from schooling. Even prior to that, when M14 was a student, children from the 'untouchable' caste were made to sit separately. He recalled this segregation:

> "In those days at school, upper caste children would sit on one side, and SC children on one side separately. When I was studying in 1968 there was a Brahmin teacher. He was not touching us. He was not critical about low castes, but pretended not to notice us. In total he did not care."

From being a small group of four in M14's time, SC students were totally excluded from school during its location in the temple. This story is a common one all over India - the lack of school buildings meant that many individuals voluntarily took on the task of educating children in their villages in available buildings, and in many cases, temples were used resulting in the exclusion of untouchables and low castes. By being written out of society, low-caste children had absolutely no option but to remain excluded and this exclusion was handed down through generations. M14's return to his village school and memories of his own experience meant that he could exercise his influence as an educated man to enable 'inclusive' strategies to be adopted, as with the location of the school building. In fact, the location of the school near the roadside and right next to the SC hamlet of the village has made a significant contribution to the inclusion of SC children in the school.

V-1, on the other hand, presented a picture of apathy, indifference and a general lack of faith in working towards any collective good, because of the perception that ultimately it was politics that ruled. M11's disenchantment with trying to sort out school affairs was matched by another VEC/GP member's views on the activities of both institutions in which he was involved. M12, a member of the *Gram Panchayat* and VEC member in V-1, made disparaging comments about the processes in the VEC (we just meet, discuss things, that's all) and the *panchayats* ("we eat and sleep, nothing happens. We meet and take decisions, but nothing changes. We just keep talking."). He explained that his initial keenness to be involved in public life had degenerated into a loss of interest, because of the lack of real action within the village.

Unlike V-2, where M2 found in the elite a group of people who came to trust him and were people "who thought alike", V-1 displayed a complete lack of collective action in tackling the problems of the school. The key difference between the two villages lies in the ability of a small, yet influential and determined, group of people to invest time and effort in setting up a fruitful state-community partnership. This finding is echoed in a study of *panchayats* and VECs in Gujarat state which found that the role played by "a set of agents" influenced "the effective functioning of schools and their accessibility to a majority of village children" (Vasavi et al. 1997).

Key catalysts of community action were not always residents of the community. Teachers, too, on the rare occasion provided the stimulus for community involvement and action on education. The case of V-3 village illustrates this point. A small village located near V-2 village, V-3 residents are covered by the V-2 Primary Health Care sub-unit, and have to walk to V-2 to access the road and transport. The walk is about 30 minutes through flat lands with hardly any trees, which is particularly difficult in the scorching heat of the Deccan summer. V-3 has a LPS, and children have to go to school in V-2 for HPS. However, until 1989, there was no properly functioning school. The current Headmaster, M16, recalled the condition of the school when he arrived there in 1989 on posting:

> I came in 1989. When I saw the school the very first time it had not even a door. Sheep and goats were sleeping inside. I asked 'to whom do these animals belong?' No body answered. I had to wait for the owner to come. I said to the owner of the animals to not bring them tomorrow, since the school is going to be started. The very next day I tried to catch the members and the lists of the children who had admission. That day I could find only 13 students.

His attempt to rebuild the school involved meeting parents and motivating them to send children to school. This was initially met with great scepticism:

> I started meeting parents in the afternoon lunch break. In the beginning they used to see me like a stranger. They said "So many teachers came and did nothing. What can you do?" As I started spending time with the people, having tea with them and all, they slowly started accepting me.

Through the slow process of winning the trust of parents, the headmaster finally broached the topic of setting up a village council of parents on August 15th of that year,[105] to start raising local funds for furnishing the school. At the first council meeting, the village members took the decision to buy a table and chair for the school, to supplement the only other piece of furnishing that was there - a mat provided by the headmaster himself. They contributed bullocks and implements for clearing up the weeds that had grown around the building. The process of community involvement became so successful that today the resources of the school are valued at Rs. 25000, of which the government contribution has only been a chair and table, and the rest belongs to the village.

Village contributions were not the only means through which the school was developed. Within five years of M17's arrival in the village, the numbers of children attending school had multiplied and there were more than 60 children. The lack of classrooms became the biggest constraint. Children would sit under the trees and study, but in the monsoons that was impossible. Heavy rains also meant that the old classroom would leak, rendering it useless for months on end. In fact, district and block authorities had advised the headmaster not to run classes in the rains, as there was a danger of the building collapsing.

M17's strategy for involving the community in his efforts was extremely focused. First, he circumvented village 'leaders', and tried to develop "marginal leaders" - that is, he worked with parents rather than with the acknowledged leaders of the village. This was a strategy to avoid being taken over by the dominant politics of the village and to avoid having the interests of the school being taken up by a very narrow section of the village. He was, however, also careful not to antagonise the leaders: "I never exactly went to the leaders nor I left them". Second, he organised a youth club and gave its members some leadership training, through which they developed awareness of the functioning of different government departments, enabling them to lobby for funds from different sources for developing the school building. This led to two members of the youth club standing for election to the *Gram panchayat*, as their experience with requesting the Department, the ZP and the *Taluka Panchayat* to intervene in their favour was also not positive. These members were unanimously elected for the GP and channelled their interest in education into *panchayat* politics, in the process securing *panchayat* funds for the school. In 1993, funds for rebuilding the school were granted, and two buildings were constructed, and two more under construction at the time of fieldwork. Third, M17 used his own relations with

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[105] A symbolically important date - the date of India's independence from British colonial rule.

officials to put pressure for getting more teachers for the school. The village council took the step of even threatening to go on strike if they were not given teachers for their school.

M17's involvement in the village school is extremely unusual. Without him V-3 would not have had a fully functioning LPS, and the process through which community action was developed is also unusual. The activism of the external catalyst has meant that in V-3, traditional leadership structures were circumvented and alternative leadership developed. It is a tribute to his charisma and persistence that this was done without too much resistance from within the village. He himself set a personal example which could be seen as inspirational and possibly clinched the support of the villagers: he refused to be transferred from the village, and lived there without his family who lived in another district of the state. However, his extraordinary commitment and activism is explained by one important factor: he was a member of the *Bharatiya Gyan Vigyan Samiti* (BGVS).[106] This successful movement had catalysed communities into participatory and community-based learning methods, and M17 was a committed member, using his position as a government teacher to promote its ideals.

The experience of V-3 in contrast to that of V-2 also raises another important point: the willingness of V-3 VEC to threaten conflict through strikes in order to get its way, and the absence of any conflicting strategy on the part of V-2. This may point to the differences that arise when a village is represented by elites who have good relations with government and are individuals of some prominence (V-2) and when there is a village where the process of collective action has been organised from the bottom-up, developing 'marginal' or alternative leaders who may have no prior relationship with administrators shaping their interactions with the state.

In the case of V-3 it was the headmaster's persistence, charisma and personal example that won trust from villagers. In V-1, the fragmentation that existed and resulted in the spatial as well as schooling segregation of villagers was unquestioned and not considered problematic, and this possibly resulted in the inability of villagers to co-operate in the pursuit of a common goal.

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[106]Roughly translated, the Indian Society for Knowledge and Development, a people's movement aimed at eradicating illiteracy and promoting scientific knowledge through society founded in 1989.

6.4. Conclusions

The evidence from the villages studied suggests the following: a) class and caste differences within VECs give rise to different perceptions of the prospects for influencing parents' decisions on education investment, a role intended for VECs; b) focusing on the school as a resource, or the 'supply' side is likely to be a far more attractive strategy for VECs given these class and caste differences, thus resulting in many of the complex factors that shape education exclusion being overlooked; c) VECs in different villages are differently endowed in terms of caste, class and gender dynamics, and traditional hierarchies are not easy to overcome in the process of community-wide interaction; d) actions of VECs are embedded in prior histories of state-community engagement, with the condition of resources available in each village dependent on the extent to which the community concerned has been able to negotiate or fight for resources from the state; and e) state efforts at institutionalising and standardising community participation thus builds on prior histories of engagement which have, more often than not, relied on actions of a collective of individuals, or individuals, rather than community-wide participation. All of these factors result in the formalisation of prior hierarchies, which constrain the capacity of VECs to focus on the mechanisms that perpetuate exclusion of certain children from schools.

The three villages discussed display different aspects of the productive social capital argument. V-2 demonstrates that the existence of productive social capital can be mobilised to further the interests of a village community, V-1 argues the same by demonstrating the consequences of the *absence* of productive social capital, and V-3 supports the constructability argument through its demonstration that a catalyst employing alternative political strategies can break vicious cycles and lead to virtuous ones. However, the differences between V-2 and V-3 also demonstrate a further distinction, between on the one hand, *collective action* where investment in education is promoted through the reinforcement of the authority of a few (V-2), and *community participation*, on the other hand, which is demonstrated in the case of V-3. In V-3 the development of alternative leadership through the encouragement of non-traditional leaders, while simultaneously drawing upon the support of the traditional leaders, has led to a string of associated positive outcomes such as the harnessing of opportunities within local government processes for the promotion of education. Thus differences in the way social

capital is mobilised or constructed also depend on the extent to which they are inclusive, or challenge patterns of exclusion embedded within the social functioning of village communities.

The case of the *Mahila Sangha* of V-1, where the participation of women from Scheduled Caste households in public affairs is being promoted and encouraged through the facilitators of the parent programme, *Mahila Samakhya*, also indicates that breaking patterns of exclusion demand attention in the form of bottom-up processes that standardised, formal groups such as VECs are unlikely to foster.

Is community participation necessary for promoting universal education? Evidence from other states points to the important role played by narrowly-defined communities based on religion or caste, in promoting the education interests of their members (Heller 1996, Nieuwenhuys 1997, Velaskar 1998). The question of the importance of community participation to education development is also raised in the context of the two main villages discussed in the thesis thus far. Clearly in the case of V-1, participation in education is not hampered by the lack of collective action or community participation, relative to V-2, which despite collective action on the part of very active village members has a lower education participation rate. However, I would argue in conclusion to this chapter, the fact that both villages are considerably short of the target of universal education means that some of the challenges to achieving UPE may yet lie in addressing the persistent exclusion of children out of school. Synergy between state and community in achieving UPE is unlikely to be achieved in a context where the education excluded continue to remain outside of both the formal community organisations established by the state, or the informal relationships that have traditionally informed the state-community engagement.

Chapter 7: Synergy at the interface between administration and local government: *panchayats*, administrators and UPE

7.0 Introduction and key arguments

The importance of eliciting the participation of village communities for development in general, and for the production of education services in particular, is emphasised in Indian government policy in the 1990s as noted in the last chapter. The focus on accountability and participation in development-oriented governance that underlies the Indian state discourse on decentralisation,[107] has led to the focus on "the establishment of effective participatory institutions and organisations at the local level leading to further redistribution of power and command over resources to the particularly disadvantaged groups and communities in society" (Agnihotri et al. 1994:93). In this process, both state-led processes of decentralisation and socially led movements and public action are seen as engines of more effective bottom-up governance.

In this chapter I focus on a second case of synergy between state and community, specifically the relationship between *panchayats* and the administration of education in the district. The main rationale for *Panchayati Raj*[108] in India has been the promotion of development through local-level planning, with the links between each (autonomously elected) level of the three-tiered PR system considered necessary for functional purposes and coordination. The involvement of local government through elected representatives was considered particularly vital for implementing "socially motivated economic development" (Ashok Mehta Committee report, cited in Satishchandran 1994:24). A definition of decentralisation that captures its Indian flavour[109] is provided by Agnihotri et al.: "a political strategy directed towards, *inter alia*, the promotion of enhanced people's participation in the initiation, planning and implementation of development" (1994:90). In particular, the role of *panchayats* in increasing flexibility in planning, mobilising local

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[107] As laid out in the 73rd Constitutional Amendment of 1993

[108] The term '*Panchayat*' has its roots in the traditional governance of villages where a council of five (*panch*) village elders decided on the affairs of the village. '*Panchayati Raj*' is the term given to the modern system of local government, which has three tiers of local government, operating at the district (*Zilla Panchayat* or ZP), block or *taluka* (*Taluka Panchayat* or TP) and village-level (*Gram Panchayat* or GP).

[109] Decentralisation is defined by form (devolution/deconcentration - either territorial or subject) (Turner and Hulme, 1997), or by rationale (administrative, technical or political) (McLean and Lauglo 1985). See Wolman 1990, Rondinelli (1981, 1993), Turner and Hulme (1997), Smith (1985) for detailed discussions of different definitions of decentralisation. There is no single model of decentralisation, and there is some amount of decentralisation inherent in the functioning of all governments, with relative differences in distribution of power and authority.

resources and increasing effective coordination of development activities at different levels is emphasised (Agnihotri et al. 1994).

The difficulties of studying decentralisation (Conyers 1990, cited in Turner and Hulme 1997) arise from the absence of a single framework of analysis (Crook and Manor 1994) as evident in attempts to compare cross-country case studies (Aziz and Arnold 1996). However, another source of conflict lies in the appropriateness of decentralisation for different sectors. Many aspects of education make the case for centralised control, especially the demands for standardised, universal education, which provides unity of curriculum and qualifications and hence promotes equality between students despite their socio-economic backgrounds. This creates oppositional strategies within the education sector, where people's involvement, considered necessary for achieving universal primary education, is quite distinct from the devolution of decision-making and control in relation to primary education.

No consensus exists on how decentralisation of service delivery should take place, or on what basis the mix of centralisation and decentralisation should develop. Sectors that raise "distributional concerns " are also candidates for greater rather than less centralised decision-making (World Bank 1997:116). Education, particularly primary education, is thus a candidate for primarily centralised control on three important grounds: a) the importance of maintaining minimum standards of education across the sum of jurisdictions; b) the pursuit of equity and redistribution in access to important social and economic resources, where education is considered to play a key role in enhancing equality of opportunity, by providing individuals with an equivalent basis from which to participate in the economy; and c) the existence of consumption externalities which may inhibit individuals from participating in the education services provided. Education is a sector defined in importance by its contribution to the national interest because of the high social returns associated with it as discussed in Chapter 2.

What role remains for decentralised governance when centralised control is deemed essential for public goods, and mixed goods such as education? The World Bank's World Development Report of 1997 makes the case for decentralisation in terms of enabling and facilitating public discussion on policy directions and standards. The argument made is that "arrangements that promote participation by stakeholders in the design and implementation of public services or programs can improve both the rate of return and the sustainability of these activities" and that the "education sector has provided particularly

fertile ground for this kind of experimentation" (ibid.pg.117). In the case of education, therefore, decentralisation is viewed as a means of stimulating community participation within a centralised framework of policy. However, the WDR 1997 recognises in passing that the stimulation of community participation will require "redefining tasks and responsibilities, re-allocating staff resources and developing new mechanisms for learning and experimentation" (ibid. pg.119). Thus effective decentralisation requires an adaptive and flexible set of organisations that can change with the demands placed upon it by an alert and participatory civil society.

Prospects for constructing new avenues for synergy between state and community in coproducing education are positively enhanced through the establishment of three-tiered democratic local government in India. Although decentralisation has been a strategy of governance since Indian independence in 1947, the Panchayati Raj system could have far-reaching implications for the success of several development programmes like DPEP. These measures include greater devolution of powers regarding financial allocations for development sectors like health, irrigation and education, to democratically elected local government institutions at the village, block (cluster of villages) and district levels. 30% of seats are reserved for women and proportional representation through reservations for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. Elections have been held in almost all states of the country, and the exact nature of the devolution of resources and decision-making powers are being negotiated between the Centre, the states and the district level bodies of local government. The administrative power at the district-level has shifted away from the Collector (civil service appointee) to the ex-officio secretary (also a civil service appointee) of the district level of local government, the Zilla Panchayat. This necessitates a shift in not only the way districts are governed but also the creation of new sets of power relations. How the DPEP structure and more broadly, the government departments at the district level interact with these changed power relations will carry important implications for the programme, and constitute an important parameter of the capacity to carry through the policy innovations.

Following the arguments about synergy and the constructability/endowments hypothesis which were discussed in Chapter 2, and partially explored in Chapter 6, the discussions in this chapter centre on two central aspects: a) the embeddedness of institutional links in pre-existing norms and relations; and b) the challenges to the provision of 'common-cause' between provider and provided-for, here mediated through democratically elected

representatives. These aspects are considered crucial for the discussion on the prospects for constructability in the contexts of social exclusion and the delivery of education services.

The principal argument of this chapter is that the trade-off between local autonomy and nationally set development priorities has constrained the potential for synergy to develop between state and local government. In India, the democratisation of governance at the local levels has been led by the need for effective development and poverty-alleviation, leading to a process which I term 'democratic development'. This mixture of centrally led agenda-setting for development with the expectations of local involvement through an electoral system gives rise to a set of potentially oppositional developmental strategies. In particular, I argue that it is likely to constrain possibilities for the emergence of strategies that are locally led and hence closer to the realities of excluded populations.

Section 7.1 provides a brief background to the functioning of *panchayats*, with specific reference to the fieldwork district. In Section 7.2, I argue that the different levels of *Panchayati Raj* are embedded within distinct institutional identities which give rise to boundaries being placed by actors around the type of action they perceive to be legitimate to their institutions. In Section 7.3 I argue that the financial and administrative dependence of *panchayats* continues to be a factor that inhibits their role in the development of local strategies and local initiatives. Limited financial powers and tussles with administrators restrict the ability of formal institutions to enforce their agendas, or to take on more proactive roles determining local-level priorities and needs in the sectors which they formally control. In Section 7.4, I argue that the relationships of power and authority within pre-existing district administrative and political structures give rise to particular patterns of relationships which prevent the emergence of local priorities in education.

7.0.1 Research methods and background to the interviewees

This section draws on interviews with members of the ZP, members of the *Gram Panchayat* of which V-2 is a part, and V-1 *Gram Panchayat*, including the ex-officio secretaries of the two GPs (see Table 25) as well as administrators of the Education Department in the district.

Table 25: Background of interviewees

Interviewee	Position
Z1	*Zilla Panchayat* member; former President of the Standing Committee on Health and Education
Z2	*Zilla Panchayat* President
T1 (Also M10)	*Taluka Panchayat* President, B-2
G1	Member, *Gram Panchayat*, V-2 GP
G2	Member, *Gram Panchayat*, V-2 GP
G3	Secretary, V-2 GP
G4	Secretary, V-1 GP
G5	Member, *Gram Panchayat*, V-1

7.1. Institutional functioning of *panchayats*

The governance structure in India is built around three critical entities: the Union Government, the states and Union Territories, and the district *panchayat* bodies and their sub-units. The structure of federalism in India as laid out in the Constitution recognises two levels at which power is distributed - the centre and the states. Since 1993, *Panchayati Raj* has become the pivot of the Indian Government's decentralisation and development efforts in the 1990s. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment enacted in 1993 has brought a uniform system of local government into effect all over India, with a three-tier system in place connecting village-level to district-level government. The Constitutional Amendment represents the first constitutional sanction for *Panchayati Raj*,[110] and the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution lists the subjects under which powers and functions are distributed to the *panchayats* at district, intermediate and village levels (Ramachandran 1994).

The structure of governance in Karnataka[111] mandates a three-tier *Panchayati Raj* system at sub-state level:

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[110]Previously, Article 40 of the Directive Principles of state policy, which serve as guidelines to governance, had noted that village *panchayats* should serve as units of self-government, but this development was not considered mandatory, hence the uneven development of *Panchayati Raj* in different states.

[111]Apart from small states, which have a two-tier system on account of their size, most states have a three-tier system as described above.

Table 26: *Panchayati Raj* responsibilities

Level	Term	Responsibilities	Sub-committees	Responsibility for education[1]
Zilla Panchayat (district)	5 years directly elected	Supervision of 18 administrative Departments – President elected for 20 month term	5 Standing Committees - Health & Education - Industry & Agriculture - Finance - Works - Social Justice Members of the Standing Committees are elected from within the General Body, and they in turn elect their Chairperson for a term of 20 months	• Promotion of educational activities in the district including the maintenance of primary and secondary schools. • Establishment and maintenance of ashrams, schools and orphanages. • Survey and evaluation of educational activities.
Taluka Panchayat (block)	5 years		4 sub-committees: - Social Justice - Amenities - Production - Planning	• Promotion of primary and secondary education. • Construction, repair and maintenance of primary school buildings. • Promotion of social education through youth clubs and *mahila mandals*.
Gram Panchayat (village)	5 years directly elected		3 sub-committees - Production - Social Justice - Amenities	• Promotion of public awareness and participation in primary and secondary schools. • Ensuring full enrolment and attendance in primary schools.

[1]Source: Eleventh Schedule, 73rd Constitutional Amendment, cited in Satishchandran 1994

Norms for the constitution of the different *panchayats* are governed by population size. In the fieldwork district, the *Zilla Panchayat*[112] (ZP) has 54 members, each covering a constituency of approximately 25000 population. There are 302 *gram panchayats* in the district, including 3 ward committees at the town-level.[113] Hence, each ZP member represents between 5-6 *gram panchayats* (GP) on average, or more, depending on the size of each GP (between 20-48 villages).[114] In the two villages studied in this thesis, each GP had 15 members. The GP in which V-1 was located constituted 10 villages and V-1

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[112]This information pre-dates the division of the district in 1998, as discussed in Chapter 3. As per information from the district at the time of writing, the sub-division of the *Panchayati Raj* structure would take place with the next *Panchayati Raj* elections, which are due in 2000.

[113]Interview with A2

[114]Interview with Z2

village served as the headquarters of the *Gram Panchayat*. V-2 was not the GP headquarters, but lay within a GP covering 12 villages.

In the sections below, I focus primarily on *Gram Panchayats* and *Zilla Panchayats*, as institutions on either end of the *Panchayati Raj* institutional continuum.

7.2. Perceptions and boundaries: *gram* and *zilla panchayats* and universal education

The roles envisaged for the ZP are quite different from the roles of the GP, with a division between the administrative and political responsibilities of the former, and the mobilisation-related responsibilities of the latter. This is clear from the emphasis on GP activities in relation to mobilising community participation, in contrast to the emphasis on wider supervision roles of ZPs in relation to education.

Within the range of possible activities that ZP members could undertake in education, the members interviewed emphasised the importance of focusing on teachers for two specific reasons: a strong belief that enhancing the quality of schooling was a more important issue than universal education; focusing on teachers was the role they were best placed to perform given their particular combination of political and administrative responsibility. While Z1 felt that the monitoring of teacher's performance was the most crucial aspect of the education system, Z2 was particularly concerned with the issue of recruitment of sufficient numbers of teachers. For both members, the quality of schooling afforded students who did enter school was more important than the issue of making sure all children were in school:

> "I am not worried about dropouts, let them go, but about children who come to the school. At least they have got to be looked after.
>
> Z2

Both Z1 and T1 emphasised the importance of schools producing good results for the children who did manage entry. One village in Z1's constituency, which had a high school, had produced results that had horrified him, and made him aware of the failures of the education system. Of the 32 children who sat the SSLC (10th grade board examination), only 2 passed, and of the remaining 30 children, 22 got zero marks in all

subjects. This village had become a symbol of all that was wrong with the system and had motivated him to pursue the issue of quality of schooling:

> I harassed the BEO and DDPI so much - 'do an inspection of
> the school' but no one did it. ... 'Sacrifice something, if the
> children are not going to school, then go and enquire in their
> houses', I requested them.

While the administrators did eventually investigate the poor results, they blamed it on the students, telling Z1 that it was because the children all went to work rather than attending school, and because there was a language problem, as the village was in a Telugu-speaking area of a Kannada language state. This did not convince Z1:

> Then I said, when its not happening in [X] or in [Y],
> [neighbouring villages], why is it happening here? These are
> also Telugu speaking areas. Why is it only happening here?

In two other villages of his constituency (in one of which he was a member of the VEC), VEC meetings were held regularly, and monthly progress reports were presented detailing children's schooling, their performance, attendance and discipline. This was a model he had encouraged for the 'failure' village, but it was a model that they did not take up. His complaint against the state government was that they failed to see their responsibility as one beyond provision of buildings and teachers, and thus failed to monitor and review the work of teachers. Not only were important monitoring posts lying vacant in the state, but also administrators were too busy with paperwork to actually do their jobs in the field. Even the system of recruitment and selection of teachers had been flawed, he alleged:

> Last time, the [teachers'] appointments were done, [they
> recruited teachers] from the age 30 [and above]. By that
> time they [teachers] have forgotten everything. What can
> they teach children? Do we give them salaries [only] so that
> they can improve their lives?

That the recruitment of teachers to the blocks and areas which were most educationally disadvantaged was a problem is borne out by the statistics recorded in the DPEP Monitoring Information System (MIS) for the years 1995-96. The average number of teachers per section (grade) of schooling was less than one for all blocks *except* the block in which the district headquarters was located, and lowest for B-2, as Table 27 below shows:

Table 27: Teacher-pupil ratios in three blocks

Block	Teachers per section	No. of sections	Pupil-teacher ratio
B-1	0.90	607	47.08
B-2	0.70	558	47.37
District HQ block	1.14	833	42.65

Source: DPEP MIS (1996-97)

The gravitational pull of teachers away from the most backward block to the most urbanised block, with the latter not only having a higher number of teachers per section, but also the best pupil-teacher ratio for the district backs up the *panchayat* members' concerns.

The management of teachers was also an important issue for ZP members, because of the critical role they played in the politics of power and patronage within the district. Teachers served as a critical pawn in the game of politics played between administrators and *panchayat* members, especially as teachers served as important political resources in the district, given that they were unionised, and spread widely across different political constituencies. ZP members relied immensely on support gained through representing local constituents effectively. Power exercised through cultivating patronage and granting favours was still an important tool or manoeuvre for ZP members (as is discussed in Section 7.3 in greater detail). An example of this is provided in the case of the power to transfer teachers. Transfer of teachers is a big source of corruption, with teachers willing to pay large sums of money to secure postings to towns. Informal discussions with teachers indicated a concern with the education and health facilities available in villages, particularly remote villages, which often led to vacancies in schools as teachers applied to work in schools in or near town centres or large villages.

Pressures on administrators to sanction transfers out of remote villages and into centres of teachers' choice had resulted in allegations of corruption against the head of education administration, which had further led to the withdrawal of powers of transfer away from the district administration to the Commissioner of Public Instruction working in the state capital, Bangalore. The administrator was not the sole decision-maker regarding recruitment, deputation and transfers: decisions were made through the District-Level Recruitment Committee (DLRC) which had members nominated from the ZP and administrators. Teachers tended to mobilise support on party lines, developing links with ZP members from different parties to further their careers.[115]

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[115]This point was corroborated by interviews with both Z1 and Z2.

The rationale for the centralisation of powers at state level was that dispassionate judgements could be made about transfers without local politics being involved in the decision-making process, and without creating conditions for corruption of the services. While A1 admitted to a sense of relief at having these powers withdrawn, the President of B1's Primary Teachers Association (PTA)[116] reported that teachers on the whole did not approve of the change, because it took away control over decisions from the district-level and removed the capacity of the local administration from applying knowledge of local conditions and local people to decision-making processes. The PTA president blamed the acceptance of bribes as the main cause for the shift of powers, and not the giving of bribes by teachers, citing the corruption of an earlier district-level head of the Department of Public Instruction as the cause of this action:

> Before if there was political involvement, the DDPI could say 'no, I know that teacher. He is deserving (or not)'. But the CPI has no connection with local conditions. Besides it increases the scope for political influence to be directly applied on the CPI with no control over it at the district level.[117]

Z2 glossed over the unhappiness of teachers at this move and insisted that the teachers were happy because "genuine people will get correct promotions". He also acknowledged that the concentration of powers at the local level gave rise to conflict:

> Usually there used to be some nuisance, a tussle against our people, officers, these teachers, all unions. But now they are so happy ... and they just say 'thank you sir', that's all.

The shift of powers also meant that the types of transfer cases considered by the Commission were also more narrowly defined. Only in the cases of couples (both teachers) who wished to be near each other, where there was mutuality and teachers wanted to swap locations, or where a complaint had been lodged against the teacher of a fairly serious nature could transfers be authorised. This meant that teachers who did not have 'genuine' need to be transferred could not really lobby or use local influence to get their desired outcomes.

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[116]A body constituted by government teachers in every block culminating in the District PTA

[117]Interview with PTA President, 15.6.1997

Z2's keenness to represent the shift of power over transfer to a more centralised system as a move welcomed by all, including teachers, contrary to teachers' reactions, is noteworthy against the backdrop of what this loss of power would mean to him and his position. For the Z2 this situation represented a minor decline in power and the removal of a source of patronage. He took the issue up with the minister, arguing that in return for the 'honest' co-operation provided by the ZP to the state government, they should be given some local powers in return, such as deputation and transfers, although he noted that this would mean dealing with cases that were not necessarily authentic:

> But so many obligations we have, so many promises we will be making and to build up this party, what we are struggling since the beginning of this party,[118] since 1977, that is the *Janata Dal* ... So some people will have some expectation. *That is not illegal* ... Because of this strictness a little trouble we are facing.
>
> (my emphasis)

Responding to the needs and concerns of local teachers constituted, in his view, a *legitimate* act necessitated by participation in local government, and removal of these powers effected a constraint on ZP members' ability to keep local teachers happy. While Z2 was careful to give an instance of a 'genuine' case (a teacher in his village who had suffered a heart attack and wanted to be transferred back to his village of origin), indicating that it was cases like this that could not be dealt with at centralised level, his overall view of teachers was not particularly positive and he reflected on the decline in teaching standards:

> In the beginning there was no high school in any of the villages in my vicinity. My father used to run a private school. There were hardly three teachers. And all the products - students who have come out, they are doing quite well today. Now we want to run a high school with three teachers, everybody tells us there are 10 subjects, [you need] that teacher, PT teacher, peon, we don't have this, we don't have that. Why, [before] they never used to bother...only three were there. We have all learned in their hands. We never felt that we are short of teachers or subjects or anything. Today if they are posing that same problem, shall we believe that it is true?

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[118] This is a reference to the party-based political system that is the basis of *Panchayati Raj*. Many debates were held before the final draft of the Constitutional Amendment was passed regarding the appropriateness of allowing *panchayat* elections to be fought on mainstream party lines. Finally the argument that this was essential for the development of democracy by making parties more accountable to the grassroots, and the pragmatic realisation that parties would be active anyway in such a localised political process, led to the acceptance of party involvement in *Panchayati Raj*. The Janata Dal, the party that Z2 represented, was also in power in Karnataka state at the time of research and writing.

Despite their responsibilities being defined in terms of administrative management, the ZP members had very strong views on how to improve the system, and did their best to take action. *Gram Panchayat* members, on the other hand, had a narrower view of their responsibilities relating to education. V-2 GP members interviewed insisted that as health and education were state subjects, implementation of any aspect relating to these two sectors had been placed out of their hands. G1 said "We can watch what is going on, and report to the BEO if teachers are not coming on time. But beyond that we cannot take disciplinary action". Even T1 defined the role of the *Taluka Panchayat* in education as restricted to demanding more teachers if they heard that there was a shortage.

Perceptions of role and responsibility clearly differ between these two levels of *panchayats*, ZP and GP. Institutional boundaries were drawn, enabling GP members to distinguish between different kinds of institutions and different kinds of responsibilities, suggesting the importance of not viewing institutional agendas as just formally constituted, but also in terms of the identities conferred upon and reconstructed by individual members. GP members distanced themselves from responsibilities for UPE using three different types of argument. The first argument was that they did not have a mandate under the PR system to address education issues, and no powers to intervene in teacher absenteeism. The second argument was that parents were not putting in the effort to utilise the facilities provided to them. Third, that they could not play a role because it was a matter that concerned individual households and there was no role for outside intervention in addressing education participation.

While G4 recognised that education came under the GP's purview, he explained the absence of any discussion on any aspect of education participation and quality as a policy of non-interference in the functioning of the school: "they would not like it if we did *kiri-kiri* (nagging) every day". This runs counter to their expected functions. In addition to official responsibilities as laid out in the Eleventh Schedule, *panchayats* are expected to play a role in aiding the policy goals of UPE and, in Karnataka, to facilitate compulsory education. Under the Mysore Education Act of 1961, *Gram Panchayats* are given the responsibility of 'fining' parents who do not send their children to school. As noted in Chapter 5, administrators thus felt absolved of the responsibility of playing a persuasive role, and this role has been displaced onto VECs (Chapter 6) and *Gram Panchayats*. For some GP members, distancing themselves from responsibilities relating to education development at village-level, in turn meant placing expectations on parents. For instance

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the two members of the V-2 GP held parents responsible for the lack of development and not the Government:

> Government is doing everything it can to help, now schemes like DPEP are contributing fully to the education system, but people are not utilising it fully. Some effort has to come from people also. ... Parents have a responsibility to their children.
>
> (G2)

They saw their own role in this light:

> "We can't control someone else's children. During VEC meetings we go door to door and tell people but ultimately we can't force someone else's change. We can't resolve people's poverty"
>
> (G1)

While the formal model of *Panchayati Raj* sees these two as different ends of a continuum in local governance, each operates in a distinct way as each is enmeshed in different relationships and has different audiences to consider. Administrators' links with GP members hinged on their intermittent visits to villages, or visits by GP members to the offices of administrators at block or district level. Village hospitality for visiting administrators gave rise to a different environment for consultation and discussion from that of ZPs, where the status and prestige of members was at greater stake, and where formal interactions took place at large meetings, with the media often present to report on interactions. Further, links between administrators and GP members have a rhythm of their own, pre-dating the formal institutions of *Panchayati Raj*, and that format of relating had not quite changed.

The authority of GPs is also differently constituted. Both G1 and G2 mentioned that they had good relationships with administrators despite occasional conflict ("of course, they can't give us everything we want - but so it goes on" – G1). The issue was often not one of powerlessness, but of being caught between different actors with neither the political capacity nor the authority to command either local or administrative support.

> For our decisions to be implemented, we still have to rely on officers... Giving *panchayats* greater powers will not help, we also need to have the capacity to go and ask and hold people accountable. Members are generally farmers, they don't have the capacity to go and ask [officials]. Members

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get stuck between communities and officials. We are asked
to select beneficiaries, and then we pass on the names. If
nothing happens subsequently, we get blamed. The villagers
come and shout at us"

(G5)

The articulation of institutional identity became even more apparent when G1 and G2 (both also VEC members in their own villages), demonstrated a more active interest in education as VEC members, where G1 referred to making door-to-door visits, in the quote reported above. Membership of VECs often overlaps with *panchayat* membership, as a mid-term review of DPEP established based on a study of 128 VECs from 16 districts of 7 states. This study found that overlap in membership existed in 78% of the VECs visited (Government of India 1997:10). Membership overlap however does not address the issue of institutional overlap. Institutional boundaries may be drawn between the functioning of the *panchayats* and VECs in a way that disrupts chances for co-operation, and divides "community participation" into two artificially distinct subsets of functioning: financial and substantive or qualitative. G1 and G2 saw certain actions as legitimate parts of their functions as members of the VEC, but not the GP. Having functional groups such as VECs may make GP members disclaim responsibility for education-related activities, and may limit their own perception of responsibility to one of financing development 'works' such as sanctioning infrastructure development and maintenance.

7.3. Financial powers and development functions of *panchayats*

It is argued that decentralisation of functions without adequate devolution of resources or decision-making power can diminish the scope for local-level autonomy and decision-making (Mathew 1996a 1996b). The bulk of education expenditure at the district-level is provided by DPEP, over which the ZP has no direct control. Accounts for expenditures under DPEP are administratively managed and accounted, and hence ZP financial powers are not addressed here. Here evidence is drawn from the accounts of the two GPs concerned regarding financial receipts and expenditure, using material from secondary sources as a wider context for issues linked to the *Panchayati Raj* system as a whole.

While financial powers are granted to *panchayats* "to enable them to function as institutions of self-government" through the levy of taxes, duties and fees, allocation of taxes, and grants (Ramachandran 1994), these are now widely considered to be inadequate for the purposes of locally-directed and planned development initiatives (Girglani 1994).

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In particular, the reliance on resources raised through taxes levied by *panchayats* is extremely low in most states (ibid.), given the poor capacity of *gram panchayats* to levy and collect taxes, and making a strong case for centralised tax collection (Cowlagi and Mehta 1994). 'Poor capacity' is considered to play a role in two different ways - a) *gram panchayats* do not have adequate staff to enable them to systematically collect taxes; and b) social proximity and intimacy is a barrier to the efficient collection of taxes and imposition of penalties (Ashok Mehta Committee report, cited in Girglani ibid.)

This is borne out by the experience of the two GPs studied. V-1's GP has a total budget[119] of approximately Rs. 3 lakh a year. Rs. 1 lakh of this amount is the *panchayat* grant provided from the ZP, and Rs. 175000 is provided through the *Jawahar Rozgar Yojana* (JRY), a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) where grants are allocated on a per capita basis for carrying out development works. The taxes collected contribute at the very most, and with great difficulty, Rs. 20,000, somewhat short of the projected revenue collection[120] of Rs. 25000. The situation is almost identical in V-2 GP. In the district as a whole, 80% of the JRY funds are sub-divided between *Gram Panchayats* and *Taluka Panchayats*, with the GPs receiving 65%, and the TPs receiving 15%.

Centrally sponsored schemes are highly prescriptive, providing *panchayats* with a list of items that define the kinds of work that can and cannot be carried out (Girglani 1994). While the allocation of taxes collected at state level and grants assigned to *panchayats* from central government funds originally constituted the most significant source of funds for *panchayats*, contributions from centrally sponsored schemes (CSS) have increased and dominate as a sector. Resources transferred from the centre and state are often 'tied' grants, linked to ongoing schemes or plans and reflecting pre-set priorities. Summarising the findings of several evaluations of *panchayat* financing, Girglani (1994) notes the following points: a) financial resources of *panchayats* are not adequate for the functions they are allotted; b) full finances provided are not always allotted or transferred; c) resources are not sufficiently 'untied' for *panchayats* to use them in ways that respond to local demands or needs; d) PRIs do not have the freedom to tap and utilise local resources either because of state government inroads or their own reluctance to raise taxes; and e)

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[119]Although G5 alleged that the funds they received was lower than the budget because of corruption - he claimed that approximately Rs. 55000 p.a. went on commissions for officials, and as the Secretary and *Panchayat* President managed the accounts without interference from other members who "don't concern themselves with it", the latter were often told that it was "necessary expenditure".

[120]Estimated amounts provided by G4. Revenue sources include water tax, health cess, education cess, housing tax.

there is scope for increasing resource availability that is untied and independent, given necessary will and support from the centre.

The national experience indicates that *panchayats* have little autonomy in disbursing funds and hence minimal discretionary powers, and this is borne out again in the fieldwork district. When *Gram Panchayat* members (and secretaries) in both *panchayats* were asked about the functions of the GP, all brought out similar lists: development works, like water, electricity, maintenance of water infrastructure, identification of beneficiaries for centrally sponsored schemes such as the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and the *Indira Awas Yojana* (IAY), provided the main substance of the work of GPs. In V-1, the GP had utilised funds from JRY to build a *gram panchayat* office, a general community building, and had funded a youth organisation. The *panchayat* grant had covered costs of maintaining electricity, and funding a mini water supply (in five villages). 20% of the *panchayat* grant was earmarked for expenditure on the welfare of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) groups, which had been spent on providing free books to children attending secondary school and college from these groups, and providing community vessels for marriages and other functions. The funds were also spent on payments to the *gram panchayat* members as sitting fees for their bi-monthly meetings.

In V-2 *Gram Panchayat*, the list was similar. Development works dominated, and the resolution of local conflicts was placed as a secondary. *Panchayat* members' role in general dispute resolution, however, was seen as increasingly redundant because "nowadays people are very advanced, they know that they can go to the police and sort things out themselves" (G1), and so their role was restricted to resolving disputes arising out of their specific functions and responsibilities. The V-2 GP like V-1, received a budget of Rs. 2.5-3 lakhs, and although there were no fixed lines of expenditure within the broad heads of water, electricity and maintenance works, were committed to spending 20% of their *panchayat* grant on social welfare activities. In addition to providing free books to SC/ST children (grade 8 to BA), the GP had provided funds to the *anganwadi* (state-run crèche) for fuel wood and rent, and had sponsored study tours for children. However, M15, the headmaster of V-2 HPS, complained that when requests were made for funds to construct a '*Guru Bhavan*' or residential quarters for teachers, the *panchayat* always said that funds were insufficient.

One of the most important 'discretionary' functions of *Gram Panchayats* was the identification of beneficiaries for the various development schemes that targeted people or

households below the poverty-line. This process of identification was not without its own tensions and politics. The tensions entered at two levels: firstly, which villages within the *Gram Panchayat* would benefit for schemes where only a few candidates could be selected each year (i.e. the housing scheme where only 18 households per GP could be selected, averaging 1.5 households per village in V-2 GP which has 12 villages). The phenomena of the GP HQ village monopolising resources for its own development has been commented on elsewhere (Datta 1998, Saxena 1994), but was evident in the case of V-1, where GP funds had been used to build up three institutions, as noted above, all in V-1 itself. Selection of villages was often done on a rotational basis, with selected villages benefiting in one year, and others the next. The second source of tension was then the identification of individual beneficiaries within villages. Although the criteria for households below the poverty line was fixed by bankers for schemes such as the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), the individual beneficiaries (stipulated as 10 per village) had to be selected by the *Gram Panchayat* through the *Gram Sabha*[121] (the bi-annual meeting of all villagers in the GP), which created disputes over selection if some individuals felt they had been overlooked.

The lack of financial autonomy in terms of the conditions laid upon funds received by *panchayats* is matched by the pre-determined expenditures that *panchayats* are expected to undertake. Decentralised elected area governments usually employ their own staffs of administrators and professional specialists (Smith 1990), but not in India. Elected representatives do not recruit their own personnel but are provided with support staff seconded from the district or block administration. The financial implications of this are the high salaries that *panchayats* must continue to pay a provincialised administrative system, with little or no control over the conditions and terms of recruitment (Girglani 1994). For instance, GPs bear the costs of administration including payment of the salary of the secretary. Administrative expenses (including payment of salary for the Secretary) are meant to come out of the revenue collected, but when there is shortfall, these expenses are taken out of the *panchayat* fund provided by the ZP.[122]

[121]G1 and G2 felt that process by which the *Gram Sabha* was involved in the selection of beneficiaries increased the conflict and resulted in unnecessary wrangling and felt that decisions over such matters should be left to the GP itself. However T1 disagreed with that view, arguing that the importance of the *Gram Sabha* was that it ensured public vetting and was a guarantee against the GP President becoming an autocrat, despite the resentment of the GP members.

[122]Interview with G4.

7.4. *Panchayats*, administrators and the negotiation of power

The lack of discretionary funds available to ZPs undermines their authority vis-à-vis administrators and constrains their ability to exert control over them in keeping with their formal functions. Mukherjee and Bandopadhyay note the impact this has had on the relationship between administrators and ZPs in West Bengal, where:

> So long as the ZPs received substantial untied grants, the
> district heads of the line departments swarmed around them
> to get supplementary funds for their pet schemes. With that
> source virtually gone, things have changed. Attendance now
> is irregular and willing co-operation wanting, especially
> from the engineering departments.
>
> (1994:221)

Working within a pre-determined administrative system has meant that the *panchayats* enter with a disadvantage - what Mukherjee and Bandopadhyay refer to as the lack of administrative 'weaponry' to handle bureaucrats, given their horizontal entry into a 'vertical jungle' (1994:222). However, I argue that ZPs draw on a variety of political weapons to negotiate their relationships with administrators. This sub-section looks at the various ways in which *panchayats* and administrators carve out their working relationship in the absence of clear guidelines and signals that indicate where control lies, and the ways in which ZP members re-assert their political identities in the absence of support for their management roles. Although the material drawn is not specifically about education, it has implications for the prospect of synergy between *panchayats* and the state in the coproduction of educational reform.

7.4.1 Complaint mechanisms and the exertion of control

The only paths open to ZP members for taking action against administrators were either to complain or pass on complaints from constituency members regarding teacher absenteeism or non-performance to the administrators, or, failing official action, to complain to the Chief Executive Officer of the ZP, an IAS officer. Although the option of moving the courts exists, it had never been used in the district. A third mechanism open to *the Panchayati Raj* Institutions (PRI) was the *Lokayuktha* or the 'people's court', that has recently been legislated into existence, and acts as a tribunal for citizen complaints against the state. However, no complaint had been filed by the ZP with the *Lokayuktha* as most matters got cleared up at the level of the CEO and never quite reached the point of legal

action.[123] The most effective channel open to the ZPs, however, was to create pressure on administration by passing resolutions and orders in their General Body meetings. In particular, this was the case with issues relating to the recruitment and selection of teachers, as will be seen later.

The media played an important role, however, in documenting and reporting the interactions between ZP members and administrators, providing the former with immense support in their battles against the latter. Crook and Manor (1994) who found that the process of democratic decentralisation in Karnataka has been vastly aided by the growth and power of local newspapers corroborate this finding. For instance the Indian Express (5/7/97) reported in some detail the clash between the DDPI and ZP members at the ZP General Body meeting of 3.7.97 over the DDPI's transfer of 232 teachers from existing schools to new schools[124] without the consent of the ZP. News items referring to the lack of schools, or schools needing repairs were also fairly frequent.

The use of extreme measures, and a fair amount of theatrics were other political tools wielded by *panchayat* members. The newspaper account of the clash in the General Body meeting (cited above) also reported that Z2 had "said he told the Minister that instead of humiliating the ZP members it would be better to abolish the *panchayat* system altogether." Z2 had also staged a hunger strike in the state capital, before the house of the Deputy Chief Minister of the State, protesting the state government's refusal to let the ZP carry over funds amounting to Rs. 5.7 crore (Rs. 57 million) that had lapsed from the previous financial year. As this sum of money had not been utilised for, amongst others, recruitment of teachers, Z2 was locked in a tussle to get the money back for the ZP:

> ...I told them that once the CM, MLAs and everybody accept on the floor that it is a ZP fund of so and so district, *it is now our property.*
>
> (my emphasis)

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[123]Interview with Z1. He noted that the only case that almost reached the *Lokayuktha* was one of fraud in the mechanical engineering sub-division of the Engineering Department. The ZP took concerted action, formed a committee, carried out an investigation and failing official response, decided to file a complaint with the *Lokayuktha*. However, the CEO intervened and the case was closed.

[124]These new schools were those sanctioned under DPEP, of which the DDPI is the main administrator in charge. Although separate funds exist for the recruitment of teachers to new DPEP schools, the process had been expedited by poaching teachers from existing schools to fill up the new posts.

7.4.2 Hostility and contempt

Blatant hostility and the hurling of accusations and counter-accusations marked tussles over the 'ownership' of funds and power. With administrators providing the interface between the ZP and the implementation of development programmes, the control over administrators was critical, and yet an area in which the ZP's powers were severely restricted on an operational basis. The hostility and distrust between the two camps also gave rise to ZP members' contempt for administrators. Z1 claimed that the main issue was one of getting administrators to work:

> The ZP should have powers to take action against teachers,
> officials because even the officials themselves have become
> spoiled, they don't go to the field, and they don't even care.
> If you ask them they say something or the other. But even
> though we know this, we cannot take any action on them

Boundaries were placed on the activities of ZP members and they faced non-co-operation from administrators even when attempting to resolve their problems of administration, as Z1 noted. First, he claimed, efforts to raise the issue of vacant government positions were met by the response that "it is a state government problem. You can't enter into it". Secondly, he noted that despite inviting administrators to place their problems before the ZPs at meetings, the administrators did not respond:

> That's why I say to every official I meet, whatever your
> problems are, place them before the meeting, but no one
> does that. They only give us abuse because we are members,
> but if the work hasn't been done, what are their problems?
> Place them before the meeting, if we can't solve it at least it
> can be forwarded to the state government, but until today not
> one person from the Department has written to us with their
> problems

While the member noted wryly that the lack of response was probably motivated by the administrators' concern that "if the solution is found they will have to go and work", a more fundamental source of the problem seems to lie in the conflict between members and administrators in terms of respect and trust. Z2 noted that to consider elections as a sign of decentralisation was a mere 'gimmick':

> "Very few people have courtesy or willingness towards us.
> But I don't say it is wrong. It is human nature, tendency,

because we are the only competitors for them ... They don't want to see us grow... we are competitors for them"

The view from the other side, the administrators, unsurprisingly, was that court cases and threats of legal action were used by *panchayat* members to harass administrators, often using sensitive laws such as the Protection of Civil Rights Act (PCR),[125] to level accusations of casteism against government administrators. A1, a Brahmin, complained strongly about the potential for harassment:

> Nowadays officers are taken to court for the smallest of reasons if they don't succumb to pressure. Recently an official was arrested under the PCR, which is non-bailable. Tomorrow if I turn down petitioners they can just say that I said something casteist and put me in jail. The official who was charged managed to get a stay order in Bangalore...[but] we have to spend a lot of time dealing with charges of corruption and casteism

A1's complaints against the ZP extended to claims of harassment and rudeness,[126] the mirror image of ZP complaints about the lack of respect shown them by administrators. For instance he claimed that the chairperson of one of the *taluka panchayats*, a Scheduled Caste woman and a former vegetable vendor, refused to sign documents unless payment was made to her, claiming that she needed to be compensated for her loss of earnings. He claimed that this happened even at the level of VECs set up by the Education Department under DPEP, where certain members refused to co-operate and sign documents unless they were paid the sum of Rs. 20/- or so per document. He further claimed that a ZP member, a former nurse, threatened to 'ruin his prestige' unless he co-operated with her. It may not be a coincidence that the examples of members' misbehaviour cited by the administrator were of women, and one a Scheduled Caste vegetable vendor at that. Much of the resentment against ZP members stemmed from the relative 'ordinariness' of elected representatives, and often their relative lack of education.   However, A1 was careful to qualify his criticism with the observation that the "ZP is a good knife badly used", so as not to appear to be against the system of local government per se.

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[125] The reference to the Protection of Civil Rights Act is actually a reference to a criminal law that has since been superseded by a new law, the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act (1989). Both acts are targeted at atrocities perpetrated by specifically higher castes against lower castes, ranging from name-calling to bonded labour and violent crimes. Although the later act is more wide-ranging and comprehensive in focus, the older act still remains on the statute books. Administrative instructions have been issued to ensure that the later law is the one followed. A1's reference is thus to the older law. I am grateful to Siraj Sait, Senior Lecturer in Law at the University of East London, and former state public prosecutor on civil rights in Tamil Nadu for this information.

[126] A1 cited several examples of insults he had received, including being called a 'Brahmin pimp'. The level of insults traded is clearly not for the faint-hearted. Battle lines are particularly drawn on caste lines, and the rise of local Dalit

Limited powers in relation to their functions meant that *panchayat* members had to adopt strategies to get their work done which were time-consuming and required persistence:

> "Of course, nothing will happen if it is asked for on that day and forgotten. If repeated efforts are made, and if we go behind them constantly, fruitful results will come."
> (T1)

> "If you give it [complaint] orally, then nobody pays any attention. You have to write it"

Other examples provided by him and cited in this chapter also corroborate the kind of persistent action that is required for some action to be taken by administrators.

The need for persistent action in achieving any progress on matters raised in *panchayat* meetings at all levels has two important implications: a) the amount of time required to participate effectively in *panchayat* institutions in order to make a difference, and (b) the limitations this was likely to impose on attracting representation from poorer groups of the population. While the reservations policy had in effect resulted in candidates from different backward groups (including women) being represented on *panchayats*, the kind of work required for real change to take place in the functioning of systems could be a disincentive to effective participation. While the ZP members with most time to contribute were the headquarter-based professionals and landlords, other members would have either the disadvantage of living too far away from the headquarters to be able to apply effective pressure on administrators to address their local problems, or be too occupied with their livelihood needs to be able to devote the time required to see resolutions through to fruition.

Remuneration for *panchayat* members was also insufficient to compensate for poorer members' time, and possibly resulted in some *panchayat* members making demands for compensation from administrators, as alleged by A1 above. GP members get Rs. 15 per meeting, TP members Rs. 25 per meeting, and ZP members Rs. 50 per meeting. While the Minister for *Panchayati Raj* in the State had reportedly[127] announced the introduction of a salary for TP members (Rs. 500) and ZP members (Rs. 1000) and Rs. 50 and Rs. 100

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movements and political groupings was a cause for concern for upper-caste administrators, especially with the Protection of Civil Rights Act mentioned earlier.

[127]Interview with T1.

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respectively for meeting attendance, that promise had not been implemented. But for *panchayat* members such as T1 who himself owned large amounts of land and was fairly well off, the money was mere extra 'pocket money': "We don't collect our money, [we] might as well collect a lumpsum and spend it on a party".

The fact that many of the women or SC/ST members were often illiterate was cited as the main reason for the lack of respect shown to them, as evident in this interaction with G8, where the President was a woman filling a reserved post:

> Q: What about women's participation [in the GP]?
> A: It's good. The women attend meetings.
> Q: What about the President?
> A: She's very strong (laughter). Why don't you interview her and ask her about the *panchayat*, about what she has done?
> Q: She's not strong then?
> A: She doesn't know anything. She just sits there. She can barely write her name and only knows three syllables. She can't even write "V-1".
> Q: What do you feel about the post being reserved for women?
> A: It's a good thing to bring women forward, [but] at least the right women should be selected. She has so many powers to deal with officials, attend meetings, put the case of the village forward - but she can't do anything. It's a wasted post, at least the president should be literate.
> Q: Wasn't there anyone else?
> A: This is a SC + female reserved post, no one else qualifies for the post. There aren't any appropriate women. The only other SC woman I can think of is her elder sister (more laughter).

7.4.3 Shifting sands: the distribution of power and patronage

Underlying the distribution of authority and responsibility is the embedded issue of power and patronage. For the *Panchayati* members, their entry into governance and development meant treading on two prior entrenched territories: the political territory of the state government legislators (Members of Legislative Assembly, or MLA) and the administrative territory of the district bureaucracy. The territory of the MLAs included winning over constituents' support for electoral purposes and the territory of the administrators was based on wresting control over resources. *Panchayat* members, particularly at the ZP level, were engaged in tussles over both people and resources, given that their own political prospects depended on forming critical relationships in these areas.

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Election into the ZP often served as a springboard to the arena of state politics. Five members of the ZP had contested elections and become MLAs in the State Assembly. This made participation in ZP an "investment for politics" (Z2), given the chance it afforded members with larger political horizons in mind, to canvas support from grassroots constituencies. In fact, the chance to serve the development needs of their constituencies, an explicit goal of ZP participation, meant that ZP members often had a greater chance of staying in touch with their constituents and serving their needs than MLAs whose focus was on state-level governance, somewhat removed from the immediacy of district politics and development. Z2 noted: "Every man from my constituency knows whether I am good, bad, wicked, spendthrift ... and that is the investment", which, he felt, gave MLAs cause for worry, often making them hostile to ZP members.

The tussle for status between ZP members and MLAs played itself out in demands made by ZP members for greater recognition and powers, commensurate with those enjoyed by MLAs. In August 1997, a newspaper report outlined some of the demands made by ZP members at an all-district state-level meeting held in the district headquarters on the 6th for greater status: that ZP Presidents and their vice-presidents be granted the status of Minister and Deputy Minister, respectively; and that they be given discretionary funds to deal with emergency cases like MLAs (Indian Express, 7.8.97). The complaint voiced at the meeting was that despite the fact that ZP chiefs were executive heads of the *panchayat* system, their powers had been eroded through the three-tier system.[128] In addition, ZP chiefs demanded placement on boards and Committees like the Hyderabad-Karnataka Development Board on which MLAs and even MPs found representation. ZP resentment of the positions occupied by MPs and MLAs on local bodies such as District Planning Boards, which are 'superbodies' created over the heads of the *panchayats* is not surprising. Observers like Girglani (1994) had predicted as early as 1994 that the granting of discretionary constituency development funds for MPs and MLAs was likely to provide an alternative source of patronage which would create a conflict with the legitimate electoral responsibility of *panchayat* members, and that the denial of discretionary funds to *panchayat* members was likely to cause resentment.

Administrators, on the other hand, continued to be responsible for all administration and implementation, though they were called to account by the ZP at the General Body meetings. While Z1 commented on the laxity of the administrators in monitoring and

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[128]Prior to the 73rd constitutional Amendment, the Karnataka *Panchayat* system had only an official two-tier executive system, with powers concentrated at district and *mandal* (intermediate) levels.

evaluating programmes, he recognised however the constraints placed on administrators, who since the advent of *Panchayati Raj*, had experienced a vast increase in the number of meetings that they had to attend. He noted that A1 had become "immersed in administration" to the point that he was never to be found in his office.[129] This led to a General Body resolution passed by the ZP recommending that every district officer must spend five days of every month in his office, fixed so that the public and the *panchayat* members could gain access to them to air complaints and enable them to concentrate on important work like the management of teachers: "Till today [A1] has not met anyone. Every time you ask, he has gone to Bangalore, he has gone to meetings, he has gone to court" (Z1).

A1, however, blamed the increase in meetings on the existence of the ZP, claiming that participation in 'irrelevant meetings' such as the "Standing Committee, Purchase Committees" only served to enable ZP members to "show that they can control the officials". He insisted that by exerting their control over administrators, ZP members failed to let him get on with dealing with practical matters, ultimately allowing errant teachers to get away with malpractices. For example, he claimed that the practice of teachers subcontracting their jobs out to 'proxy' teachers could not be stopped, partly because villagers colluded with teachers to provide a cover up, but also because the teachers were safe in the knowledge that he would not follow up cases because "the teacher knows ... [I] ... won't come because 20 out of 30 days [I] am sitting in meetings."

On the one hand, ZP members faced a tussle over ownership of funds, the rightful property of the ZP under law. On the other hand, their short-term political tenures meant that their sense of ownership, which encourages a long-term relationship, could be insufficiently developed leading to the adoption of very pragmatic and circumscribed views of what they can in reality achieve as ZP members. The ongoing game of politics at the local level meant that chairs were to be vacated if the occupants did not have the capacity, speed, and agility to survive the endless circles of elections and local constituency development. The drawback to the process of democratic governance is the short-termism of ZP tenure, particularly for members of Standing Committees, and the President whose tenure is 20 months. This was the view of Z2, the President, himself:

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[129]Which I personally experienced in the course of trying and failing on numerous accounts to fix an appointment to interview him. In addition to routine district administration chores, A1's critical role in DPEP meant that he had a separate accountability to the DPEP line office in the state capital and had monthly meetings in the state capital to attend.

> A little problem is there, with shortage of period, because we
> get nervous. Whatever we do what is the point I say, I am
> going early. After 2-3 months, just after one year [of the
> term], that starts pinching. So that is one psychological
> weakness. When I am prepared to go after 20 months, why
> should I think up to the last moment? Why should I worry?
> This is not my father's property!

The implicit link between powers or authority over administrators and the legitimacy of the *panchayat* members' own position as elected people's representatives is clearly perceived by the *panchayat* members interviewed. However, the vulnerability of their own political positions, caused both by their short tenures, pressures from competing politicians and from administrators whose powers they had eroded, meant that ZP members played a very difficult political game.

7.5. Conclusions

Developing common cause between state and user in education through democratically elected local government has tremendous potential for advancing the goal of UPE. However, this chapter concludes with the findings that the 'common cause' is limited by various institutional factors. First, ZPs are limited in their actions because of the dual nature of their role, which encompasses both political and administrative compulsions. Thus they are often motivated by concerns related to political survival, given their lack of financial authority, which shape their activities in relation to education in specific ways. I do not consider the political compulsions of ZP action to be necessarily a negative factor, especially where ZPs are driven to place pressures on teachers who may otherwise be let off lightly, particularly by the village communities within which they teach. However, I would argue that if political compulsions are the primary motivating factor for ZPs, this might limit their interest to a few specific concerns.

Second, I argue that *Gram Panchayats* are limited by their perceived and real lack of formal authority and funds, which leads them to see a very small or non-existent role in relation to education. This is particularly so in the context of the establishment of VECs, of which the GP members interviewed were members. However, their relations with other actors in the district influence the institutional identities of both ZPs and GPs. In the case of ZPs, their relations with administrators are embedded in relations of hostility based on caste and gender.

The see-saw between centralisation and decentralised planning in the case reviewed has resulted in the *panchayats* serving as platforms for claiming accountability from administrators, but not necessarily providing them with the basis from which to plan locally on the basis of local needs. This continues to reduce space for *panchayats* to serve as representatives of excluded populations.

Chapter 8: Conclusions: Coproducing universal education in a context of social exclusion

8.0. The Policy Challenge Revisited

The policy challenge that the thesis sets out to investigate is framed within the policy developments that have taken place in India in the 1990s. The achievement of Universal Elementary Education or UEE has been a long-standing policy goal in India, but without the adequate investment of resources in, or commitment to, its achievement. With renewed donor interest in universal enrolments and attendance in primary education, in particular, the Indian state has also begun to focus on the means through which universal primary education can be achieved. With the formulation of the District Primary Education Programme or DPEP, many new strands in state policy and implementation suggest themselves as a framework within which the achievement of policy goals can be assessed. This thesis has focused on three in particular. First, is the commitment to equality, necessary for universalisation. Second, is the commitment to local planning and the involvement of community organisations, both formal and informal, in mobilisation around UPE. Third, a more innovative and responsive education administration, that can respond not just to the flexibility demanded of localised contextual planning, but also to new relationships with decentralised bodies, particularly *Panchayati Raj* Institutions (PRIs).

Despite many of the drawbacks associated with education planning and management discussed in Chapter 1, these shifts suggest the need to integrate the interests and preferences of households presently excluded from education, with the reorientation of community organisations towards serving the collective interest, and the interests and capacity of state institutions to innovate and be flexible. The development of a framework for understanding how competing and conflicting interests may be integrated can help to identify what the challenges and opportunities are for the achievement of UPE.

In India, there is strong evidence that there are persistent patterns of exclusion of certain groups like Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and women, which have been reproduced systematically. Thus a starting-point for any new attempt to achieve UPE must begin from the perspectives of the excluded, and from analyses of the underpinning

factors. The relationship between households and education participation is a complex one, and hence addressing the exclusion of specific groups of children requires constant investigation within different contexts studied. I further argue that, as education investment decisions are embedded in wider sets of concerns relating to social risk, economic uncertainty, and the evaluations of returns that are specific to the socio-economic positions of different households, analysis of these decisions must look more widely at the life-worlds of excluded households. Responses are required not to tackle the fact of 'non-participation', but to address the wider processes through which the world of school appears remote to those who have been deprived of its benefits.

The challenge of stimulating community action around the provision of services relates to two particular concerns: ensuring the representation of the excluded households in the process of community action, and, in particular, stimulating the interests of different village members around the value of collective action in relation to education. Both these challenges require assessing the different ways in which value can be constructed in relation to education, and how community members thus draw boundaries around the role they can play in collectively working towards UPE. A related issue links to the concern that in India, community organisations tend to be those formed by the state, such as VECs and *panchayats*. Hence the functioning of these community organisations is shaped by both the expectations and roles defined by the state as well as the prior histories of community action and the extent of representation that has been achieved. For community-level action to enable the achievement of universal education, its own internal processes must be able to create space for the voices of those excluded. Local hierarchies, politics of patronage and histories of dominance by one set of 'leaders' shape the extent to which actions based on the perspectives of educationally excluded households can emerge. Assessing histories of community action in relation to education is necessary for evaluating prospects for community organisations serving as representatives of the collective interest.

The ability of the state to innovate rests on its own rather dismal record, which can only be challenged by a serious attempt to reform, both in relation to the clarity of policy briefs as well as in the ability of administrators to be responsive and flexible. Innovations suggested within DPEP as well as the NPE 1986 and its subsequent revisions provide a framework within which prospects for reform in the implementation of policy innovations can be assessed. The actions of implementors charged with the responsibility for enacting the new state agenda in education thus become an important site of investigation. In

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particular, the ability to interpret the complex juxtaposition of universalism, on the one hand, with the recognition of diversity in social contexts and individual circumstance, on the other, places a great responsibility on local administrators. Being sensitive to difference while balancing the demands for achievement of universal education within a short time span requires local administrators to act on their discretion, and to make judgements that facilitate universal education. Given that policy frameworks are at best vague and at worst contradictory in specifying or suggesting how this is to be achieved, adminstrators' discretion is shaped almost solely by local relationships and judgements based on personal history.

The embeddedness of different actors within different social relationships also influences institutional functioning. Actors who inhabit formal institutions shape their identity out of a complex combination of their personal affiliations and their institutional roles. An investigation of prospects for co-operation in producing universal outcomes in primary education requires that different actors recognise and value the importance of challenging patterns of exclusion. The challenge to exclusion, however, cannot arise without the active participation of those who are excluded in re-shaping the terms of their inclusion. Thus, parameters such as representation, consultation, and the recognition of agency and voice are necessary for the achievement of universal primary education. Extending this point further, the articulation of different preferences then raises the challenge of the selection of response. If universalism implies the certainty of a world-view (that investing in education is beneficial and must be a household priority), then how can responses to different investment strategies based on different perceptions of uncertainty and risk be crafted? Chapter 1 juxtaposed the parallel track approach of Non Formal Education with the debate on making education a fundamental constitutional right, as a means of discussing the kinds of tensions associated with promoting universalism in a context of diversity and differentiation.

8.1. The theoretical challenge revisited

A selected body of literature on coproduction was used to develop a framework to address the challenge of producing UPE in a context of social exclusion. In particular, the idea of coproduction provides a critical perspective on the distinction commonly used in Indian policy and in some of the literature between 'supply' and 'demand', associating the former solely with the state, and the latter solely with households. The supply-demand metaphor

is descriptively useful when distinctions are made between the actions of these different institutions and their actors, but it is *conceptually* limiting for the analytical purpose of studying the interactions of these different actors at the interface of production.

While the concept of coproduction is a useful framework for analysing and assessing the prospects for constructing UPE[130], several *limitations* and *silences* were identified, which if addressed could strengthen the applicability of the coproduction framework to contexts of social exclusion. First, Chapter 2 identified the limitations of coproduction in its emphasis on constructability at the expense of a rigorous analysis of patterns of exclusion, and at the expense of differentiating sufficiently between different types of goods and services. It was argued that household or individual investment patterns in a mixed good such as education are stimulated by factors other than those that stimulate state investment. Thus the value of education can be constructed in different ways, with individual lifeworlds and aspirations embedded in wider economic processes such as livelihoods, and social norms, including those of gender. Hence household decisions cannot be read as private decisions, which I argue is the limitation of the Rates of Return to Education (RORE) approach that analyses private investment in education in terms of economic cost-benefit alone.

Second and related to the above, the existing literature on coproduction starts with the question of 'who produces what?' in the context of identifying the most constructive way to develop synergy between the actions of different actors. However, I argue that the starting point for specifying production relationships in education is 'what is it that is to be produced?' While the coproduction framework emphasises 'shared orientations', I argue that it *assumes* their prior existence, whereas consensus on the value of a good which has private characteristics cannot be taken for granted. The definition of the value of any good is shaped by complex social and economic factors, as argued, and hence there will be multiple definitions of 'what is it that has to be produced?' in any given community. Further limitations identified relate to the insufficient attention to *processes* of production, and the insufficient specification of the goals of different production processes. Identifying different interests in relation to a good or service enables specification of production relationships that are necessary to achieve coproduction.

Third, it was argued that the constructability hypothesis relies on a concept of productive social capital that emphasises positive elements of social norms, those that promote trust

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[130] A discussion on the reasons why coproduction was considered to be useful for this thesis can be found on page 28 of this thesis.

and co-operation, at the expense of those which reinforce exclusion and disadvantage. Rather than rely on this deterministic concept of productive social capital, I argued, following Bourdieu, that a concept of social capital needs to take into account unequal endowments and highlights the role of social processes in reproducing specific hierarchies, inequalities and endowments. While the latter use of the concept of social capital continues to emphasise endowments, it does not reduce social capital to the Putnam paradox (Robinson and White 1997) of 'them as has, gets' (Putnam 1993), but argues for a more nuanced analysis of the factors and processes that are likely to constrain as well as promote constructability.

The reliance on formal institutional mechanisms for promoting the state's role in constructability raised further two concerns: the excessive 'statism' implicit in the constructability hypothesis, and the conceptualisation of the state in terms of formal incentives, contracts and mechanisms, while underplaying the interaction between state actors and their publics. This interaction is specifically based on norms that enable administrators to categorise their publics in different ways and leads to the formation of specific alliances between elite members of villages and administrators. Administrators' actions are also likely to be shaped by institutional agendas, their awareness of support from within their organisation for taking up innovative activities, and their own capacity for responding to diverse challenges.

8.2. Exclusion, UPE and coproduction in a rural district

The policy and theoretical questions above were applied in the research to a micro-level study of production of education services in a northern district of Karnataka, India. Two villages with Higher Primary Schools (grades 1-7) were studied. Thus exclusion from schooling was defined through identifying reasons why children were in or out of school, through a survey of parents and interviews with a small sample of parents of 6-12 year old children. Although issues relating to the supply of schooling, such as inputs into the quality of education, are fundamental elements of the production equation, in this thesis the focus was particularly on social and economic factors underpinning exclusion from schooling.

Chapter 4 establishes that exclusion from schooling arises from complex factors that range from wider social and economic concerns to characteristics associated with individual

children arising both out of children's agency or parental evaluation of their aptitude. However, I argue that exclusion from schooling is not necessarily imposed by external actors such as the school or teacher, but can also be viewed as parental choice, albeit within a limited range of options, to maximise household welfare. A view of exclusion that recognises the variety of factors that contribute towards its reproduction also emphasises the importance of flexibility, process and range of inputs in the responses that are designed to challenge it.

The somewhat surprising finding that the school with better facilities had lower participation than the school with poorly maintained facilities, gave rise to the conclusion that economic factors, more than supply-related factors, play a strong role in explaining education exclusion in the area. This finding contradicts other studies, which argue that supply of schooling is the most critical variable explaining why children are pushed out of school (Bhatty 1998a and 1998b). The chapter concludes that excluded households evaluate their prospects of earning returns from education based on their perceptions of economic opportunity, and the extent to which their social position enables them to achieve economic goals. That parents ascribe value to education is clearly established, although the ways in which they act on that ascription varies between households. A significant factor in both villages is the large percentage of first generation learners which indicates two important issues: first, that there is an increase in education participation across generations; second, that attention paid to this generation of learners should be a critical element of policy as they are vulnerable to the pushes and pulls of conflicting incentives for education.

Chapter 5 analyses the actions of implementors working at the interface between policy goals of UPE and excluded households and their ability to interpret and act on possible tensions between universalism and diversity. The chapter makes several analytical observations based on observation of events, discussions with administrators on specific events, and using adminstrators' narratives as the overall discursive frame for the exploration of administrators' actions. First, it was argued that administrators have a range of views on reasons for education non-participation, ranging from sympathetic to unsympathetic. These views translated in interesting ways into discussions of what was possible or not. For example views on the importance of children's work translated into diverse views on whether non-formal education could be acceptable or not. While Weiner (1991) makes a similar point based on his interviews, I use this evidence not to argue, as he does, that it indicates the power of elites to shape opportunities, but that the lack of

coherent policy guidelines, and the complexities of coproducing education, results in administrators using their personal views to shape the state agenda in the field. Further, administrators carve out their own discretionary space in the absence of powers granted to them in the recognition they are actors in a position to understand and report back on the needs and requirements of local populations. In the absence of clear guidelines and insufficient support, district administrators also distance themselves from taking on responsibility for the achievement of UPE in diverse ways.

Developing institutional mechanisms and incentives for re-orienting the actions of administrators towards being more responsive and flexible is essential, as Tendler and Freedheim show in their case-study of health care in northern Brazil. In the Indian case-study, the compulsions of achieving universal outcomes while balancing the different needs of different groups warrant both institutional reform as well a clear reformulation of policy in recognition of the central importance of understanding underpinning patterns of exclusion.

Chapter 6 investigated the role of Village Education Committees (VECs) as the community interface between states and households. I argue that VEC members distance themselves from promoting UPE, as they consider household non-investment in education to be the outcome of essentially private decisions, regardless of their own views on non-participation or the importance of education. Distancing is achieved through two principal means: through an empathetic understanding of the lifeworlds of cultivators, or through the dismissal of non-participation as the decisions of 'unaware' parents. VECs are, however, better placed to work towards maintenance of the school building and monitoring the attendance of teachers, in itself a critical role.

The villages studied displayed different capacities for playing an active role in UPE. Variables identified highlighted the importance of both endowments (the prior history of collective organisation) and opportunities for constructability (the role of key external catalysts). However, even where prior endowments may facilitate constructive community activity, I distinguish between villages on the grounds of the extent of representation achieved. Community action defined and executed by a critical but small group of actors representing the interest of the large body of the village, however benevolent, is unlikely to be based on the perspectives of the excluded. Even where representation is stipulated by the state through the norms of membership in VECs, equality of status and voice are hard to achieve.

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Chapter 7 analysed the role of *panchayat* organisations in taking on the responsibility for local planning, one of the principal roles envisaged for them in their establishment. I argue that in conformity with the national experience, *panchayats* at all levels in the fieldwork district are constrained by the limitations of their financial authority, and by their need to work in concert with administrators who are not necessarily welcoming of their involvement in matters traditionally considered the administrators' domain. I also argue that in the absence of sufficient authority to make policy decisions at the district and sub-district levels, *Zilla Panchayat* members shape their actions in relation to education in terms of considerations of political survival. This leads them to focus on issues relating to the quality of education, particularly on the role of teachers.

The constraints on the active functioning of *panchayats* is a symptom of wider issues relating to decentralisation and devolution in India, and not restricted to the education sector alone. The strengthening of *Panchayati Raj* Institutions (PRIs), given their potential to shape the developmental fortunes of districts, is a matter of importance that has been emphasised widely in the Indian literature (see articles in Mukherjee ed. 1994, Mathew 1999). In relation to UPE, though, issues relating to the representation of the voices of the excluded still continue to be an important consideration, and power issues are still likely to shape the interaction between village communities and their representatives in the *panchayats*.

This thesis concludes with the following observations relating to the achievement of UPE and the coproduction framework.

Ultimately, the contention of this thesis is that consensus on the value of education and co-operation between different groups of actors cannot be imposed, but can only be encouraged through affirming different preferences and accommodating them in the short-term, while in the longer-term addressing wider issues of the quality of education, the economic prospects of poor villagers, and the development of social processes that encourage representation and participation of the excluded. For this to take place, several shifts have to accompany the recognition of exclusion and diversity. First, the way in which education is presented as a good or service has to be couched less in terms of 'personal worth' and more in terms of addressing the priorities and preferences of households for whom investment in education may not appear economically or rational or socially viable.

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Second, to analyse the priorities and preferences of households requires commitment to bringing diverse stakeholders together, creating enabling spaces for the articulation of concerns and constraints on the part of the excluded, which includes designing the process to fit their time and 'voice' constraints. Creating spaces for the voices of excluded to be heard both within the community and by the state will also enable households to move from being located within concerns for their own survival towards assessing their roles in acting in the wider public interest, which is served by an educated, informed and active civil society. However, material obstacles to the full participation of all children in school cannot be underestimated. Education cannot act as a 'magic bullet' that eliminates all processes of differentiation, exclusion and material deprivation, and complementary inputs are required to ensure that its full effects are enjoyed (Levin and Kelley 1994). Strengthening state responses on all fronts, from providing irrigation to enforcing minimum wage legislation and land reform (Ramachandran et al.1997, Dreze and Sen 1999) is likely to provide a meaningful context for investment in education.

The application of the coproduction framework to the case of education has been instructive on several counts. First it has exposed the difficulties of applying an existing framework, concepts of which have been developed most rigorously to the production of CPR, to a mixed good. The difficulty of specifying production processes in relation to education arises from the multiple meanings that can be attached to education and the processes of transformation it effects. Because education is a form of capital that has vast inter-generational effects, a combination of both individual and social factors and circumstances are likely to shape the relationship between user and good. To facilitate the shift of investment decisions from private interest towards public or collective good, requires addressing factors that range across the continuum. This sets up the challenge for the production of services, particularly for state and administration.

Second, the reliance on the role of the state in constructing positive welfare outcomes through reorientation of the processes through which services are produced, has exposed an array of limitations in relation to how the actions of the state and its agents may be analysed. While the importance of formal incentives, contracts and other mechanisms for enforcing and regulating co-operation are important, the existence of endowments of mistrust, contempt for certain choices (such as not educating children), and social distance in the relationships between local administrators and their publics demands a careful rethinking of the challenge of state reform. Thus the thesis has argued for the importance

of going beyond the analysis of productive social capital, to a wider diagnosis of what the underlying patterns of exclusion and inclusion are in a given social context.

Third, and most important is the importance of recognising unequal endowments and designing production systems from the perspective of those least endowed and most excluded. Patterns of exclusion are dynamic and the ends and means of production processes will dynamically change to accommodate changes in household circumstances and investment choices. Thus building an analysis of exclusion into the design of systems and services needs to be an acknowledged aspect of the coproduction framework if its applicability to diverse contexts and different goods is to be valid. Otherwise, the silence of the coproduction framework on social exclusion limits its usefulness to the analysis of coproduction of UPE in India.

Appendix 1: List of acronyms

AEO	Assistant Education Officer
BEO	Block Education Officer
BGVS	Bharatiya Gyan Vigyan Samiti
BRC	Block Resource Centre
CABE	Central Advisory Board of Education
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CM	Chief Minister
CPI	Commissioner, Public Instruction
CPR	Common Property Resource
CSS	Centrally Sponsored Scheme
DDPI	Deputy Director, Public Instruction
DFID	Department for International Development
DIET	District Institute of Education and Training
DLRC	District Level Recruitment Committee
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme
DSERT	Department of Secondary Education, Research and Training
DWCD	Department for Women and Child Development
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
FC	Forward Caste
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GOI	Government of India
GP	Gram Panchayat
HPS	Higher Primary School
IAS	Indian Administrative Service
IAY	Indira Awas Yojana
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Scheme
IRDP	Integrated Rural Development Programme
JRY	Jawahar Rozgar Yojana
LGA	Local Government Authority
LPS	Lower Primary School
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
MIS	Management Information System

MLA	Member, Legislative Assembly
MLL	Minimum Levels of Learning
MS	Mahila Samakhya
NCERT	National Council for Education Research and Training
NFE	Non Formal Education
NPE	National Policy on Education
NRE	National Resolution on Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OBB	Operation Black Board
OBC	Other Backward Castes
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
PTA	Primary Teachers Association
RORE	Rates of Return to Education
SBC	School Betterment Committee
SC	Scheduled Castes
SPD	State Project Director
SSLC	Secondary School Leaving Certificate
ST	Scheduled Tribes
TLC	Total Literacy Campaign
TP	Taluka Panchayat
UEE	Universal Elementary Education
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UPE	Universal Primary Education
VEC	Village Education Committee
WDR	World Development Report
ZP	Zilla Panchayat

Appendix 2: Format for semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the different actors indicated in tables 22-26 in Chapters 4-7. Below are reproduced the basic parameters used in the interviews, although the interviews usually took off from these questions and developed in very diverse directions, as was intended. The mix of questions reflects the research approach, which built from the specific to the wider discussion of meanings and perceptions.

Parents:

- Personal information – number of children, whether in school, occupation
- Parents' education, reasons for non-participation in school
- Memories of what school was like in their childhood
- Reasons for sending/not sending children to school
- Regularity of children's attendance
- Division of labour within the household
- Work of children
- Interaction with teachers
- Knowledge about the VEC
- Knowledge and participation in the *panchayat* public meeting (*gram sabha*)
- Extent of exposure and travel outside village
- Livelihood options in the village and beyond for the family (existing and potential)
- Knowledge about DPEP
- Interaction with DPEP processes – *kalajatha*, microplanning, meetings with officials
- Views on the importance of education
- Knowledge about the regularity of teachers' attendance
- Number of times visited the school/met the teacher
- Plans for children's futures
- Participation in group activities – savings and credit, women's group, youth club etc.
- Views on the benefits of education
- Views on the importance of incentives
- Views on why others did/did not send children to school

Administrators:

- Description of job duties, length of time in job, previous work experience
- Views on the most pressing problem facing education achievement in the district

- Views on solutions to the problems of education mentioned
- Views on DPEP, and achievement of targets
- Views on education and its importance *for their rural populations*
- What education has meant for them personally
- Interactions with villagers, regularity of visits
- Method of planning used in workplace
- Views on job responsibilities, extent of support for activities planned, ability to achieve work plans as determined
- Amount of travel planned in a month
- Extent of authority held for decision-making in job

In addition, in many of the interviews, which took place over a long period of time, discussions would centre on events I had come across, or things I had seen or experienced, which provided a starting-point for the interviews.

Village Education Committees

- Personal details
- Date and process of joining VEC
- Educational status and background
- Reasons for interest in education
- Views on the education levels in the village
- Views on how to improve participation
- Views on the effectiveness of the VEC
- Attendance of VEC meetings
- Analysis of decisions taken in VECs
- Relationship with parents who have not sent children to school
- Relationships with administrators
- Views on future of education in village
- Views on teachers' performance

Panchayats, Zilla and Gram

- Member's name, background
- Reasons for standing for election
- Priorities for the ZP/GP
- Views on education participation in the district
- Views on what can be done to resolve problems identified

- Responsibilities for education
- Issues taken up in *panchayat* meetings
- Financial authority to take decisions
- Relationship with administrators
- Future plans and aspirations, vision for the district

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Appendix 3: Field work timetable

Period	Activity	Time spent	Location
November 1996	Visit to Bangalore; meeting with DPEP State Project Office and Mahila Samakhya State Project office to discuss proposed study	One Week	Bangalore
December 1996	Preliminary visit to district; discussions with officials, visits to some villages including V-2, identification of blocks to be studied, recruitment of research assistant	Two weeks	District/Blocks/ Villages
January 1997	Setting up of fieldwork with research assistant incl. Transport arrangements and accommodation in villages	Two weeks	District HQ
January — February 1997	Phase 1: Research in B-2. Qualitative interviews carried out with random sample of households with some or all children out of school. Interviews with VEC members, school staff and *Gram Panchayat* members ◆ Residential visit to *Tanda* N (see p.195, footnote 98) ◆ Residential visit to V-2 ◆ Visits to B-2 block offices	Two weeks Four weeks	B-2
March	Break from research on personal grounds		
April	Visit to U.K. to write up preliminary findings and meet supervisors		
May	Phase 1 (contd.): Qualitative research in B-1 ◆ Residential stay in V-1	Four weeks	B-2
June 1997	Phase 3: Research with administrators	Four weeks	District HQ
July 1997	Phase 4: Household Surveys (door-to-door)	Three weeks	V-1 and V-2
August 1997	Phase 5: Research with *Zilla Panchayat* members Return visits to V-1 and V-2 to finalise data collection	One Week Two weeks	District HQ B-1 and B-2
September 1997	Return to district HQ for interviews with administrators	Two weeks	District HQ

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