

# Primary Education in the Tonk District of Rajasthan

## A Report

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**DIGANTAR**

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## 1.0 Introduction

Tonk is a somewhat forgotten district. It is not linked by a railway network and it is usually 'bye-passed' on the way to Ranthambhor National Park in Sawai Madhopur district or Kota. There is no major industry in the district and in all the critical indicators it is below the state average. In the Human Development Report of Rajasthan, 2002, Tonk was ranked twenty-first out of thirty-two districts. However, in all its backwardness, the district, especially the township, has a cultural flavour of its own. Tonk is known for being the only *Nawabiyat* in the area.

One of the major challenges in education in the area, like in other parts of the state, is universalisation of education especially for the girl child and other socially deprived communities.

This chapter outlines the educational history of the district, proceeds to present the current status of education in Tonk, identifies the central issues in Tonk, lists out a set of indicators both in education and education management and finally makes some suggestions for people who are interested in the education of the district.

## 2.0 Historical Background

Historically, Tonk is known as the one state in the Rajputana that had Muslim rulers as opposed to Muslim minorities as was the case in the other princely states. The recent history of Tonk begins with a soldier, Amir Khan (reign 1817-34) seeking his fortune<sup>1</sup>. He left home at the age of 20 to offer his services to De Boigne, then recruiting forces for the Scindia army. Rejected because of his youth, he worked with the rulers in Delhi, Jodhpur, Baroda and Bhopal. In 1798, Amir Khan was approached by Jaswant Rao Holkar with the offer of equal sharing in conquests and plunders. This arrangement continued till 1804 when Holkar was defeated by the East India Company. In exchange for quelling the rebellion in Holkar's army, Amir Khan was granted the districts of Piwara and Tonk.

*Amir Khan is acknowledged as the first Nawab of Tonk.* He made Tonk his seat of governance. Amir Khan's descendents ruled over Tonk till 1948. In all, there were five rulers in this period. Each Nawab brought about some unique changes to Tonk. In this section we attempt to trace the educational history.

During the reign of Amir Khan, education was in the private domain and took the form of *maktabs* and *pathshalas*. **The oldest school was established near Motibagh by Maulana Khaliq-ul Rehman** under the reign of the founding Nawab Amir Khan. Under his successor, 14 similar schools were opened in different parts of Tonk town. Two private schools for advanced education in Arabic and Persian were also opened. The state supported these ventures by awarding *Jagirs* to selected teachers in the *maktabs*.

There were similar parallel institutions for Hindu boys. Besides these formal schools, the *Maulvis* and *Pandits* also held private classes at their residences. It was through these local initiatives that the study of Urdu, Persian, Arabic, Hindi and Sanskrit on traditional lines was being promoted. There was, however, no educational facility for girls until much later.

Education on 'western lines' is a relatively recent phenomenon and was introduced under the reign of the fourth Nawab, Ibrahim Ali Khan in 1870. It was initiated with the opening of a primary school that taught English as well as Arabian and Persian. Though the school was meant primarily for Muslim boys, it could attract very few of them and even 15 years later, in

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<sup>1</sup> PC Mathur (ed), (1996) Social and Economic Dynamics of Rajasthan Politics, Between old and new: modernisation or marginalisation of the princely state of Tonk, 1765-1947; B Hooja, pp 46-75

1885, it had many more Hindu boys. (A *maktab* attached to every mosque may have contributed to this low enrolment.) The presence of a large number of Hindu boys enrolled in the school resulted in the introduction of Hindi in the school. At the same time, efforts to introduce or continue with the teaching of English were also aborted, when, despite the services of a Headmaster brought in from the United Provinces (modern Uttar Pradesh), to popularise English, failed.

In 1884, 2 more schools were opened, the Central high School and the Noble School, the latter for the sons of the rich. In the same year, two smaller schools were also opened.

**Education for girls began formally in 1885** with the opening of 4 schools in different parts of Tonk town. The total enrolment here was 100. Seven years later, 2 more similar schools were opened.

By 1892, Tonk city had 898 students enrolled, 762 boys and 136 girls. According to the Annual Administration Report of 1904-05, there were 15 institutions under the state management of which 10 were in Tonk, including the 5 institutions for girls where English was taught.

The Tonk Central High school prepared students for the entrance examination of Allahabad University and the Munshi and Maulvi examinations of Punjab University. This practice was discontinued in 1906-07 when only students from Oriental College were eligible for these qualifications.

In all the state managed educational institutes, primary education was free. There were several modifications made over the years and by 1931, the primary schools covered a four year course and middle schools continued for six years. At High School level there were options for Geography, Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, Urdu and Hindi.

In 1907-08, the control of the schools was transferred from the Revenue member to the Headmaster, Durbar High School, who was authorised to make inspection visits. The High schools at the time were affiliated to the UP Board and the middle schools prepared their students for the Rajputana Middle Schools Examination. These were significant arrangements to link the state's educational system with the United Provinces as well as the Rajputana and in raising standards. The Annual Report of 1930-31 however reported that '*education is at a low ebb in the state. There is no inspection staff and the existing teaching staff is inefficient and low paid*'.

It was another decade, when in 1941, a post of Inspector of Schools was created and other functionaries placed under him. A physical instructor was also employed and some Adult Education Centres opened.

In addition to the regular schools, there were 31 religious schools, 23 for boys and 8 for girls. Apart from this, there were 4 state-aided private schools.

<p>It is however noteworthy, that while Urdu was the official language there was no compulsion to learn Urdu. English had been introduced and there were some opportunities to learn Hindi and Sanskrit in the state aided and state managed institutions.</p>
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Till the mid thirties, there were no facilities for higher education through colleges/ universities. Educational facilities were concentrated in the state capital and not widespread.

We could conclude that the rulers of Tonk were somewhat concerned about education to make arrangements but not overly concerned with the universalisation across the state. The policy of the state towards teaching of languages comes across as a liberal one, as learning of Urdu or Farsi, which were state languages, was not compulsory. The state also made

arrangements for teaching of Hindi or Sanskrit as well, though not on the same scale as Urdu and Farsi. Judging by the spread of educational facilities, it would seem that education for all was not an issue with them, which looking at the general trends at that time, comes as no surprise.

### 3.0 Current Educational Status

This section examines the current situation of education and educational facilities in the district. It begins with looking at the current literacy rates and population of children who should be enrolled in elementary schools in the district. It also attempts to estimate the financial resources available for elementary education in the district before presenting the situation of schools in terms of infrastructure. Finally, it looks at the availability of teachers in the district.

#### Population and School Age Children

The population of Tonk as per the 2001 census is 12,11,671 with almost 80 per cent of the population in the rural areas and 48 per cent of the population comprising women.

**Table: Tonk Population, Panchayat Samiti wise, 2001**

Panchayat Samiti	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Toda Rai Singh	10,979	10,238	21,217	56,442	53,689	110,131	67,421	63,927	131,348
Uniara	5,571	5,263	10,834	69,146	63,363	132,509	74,717	68,626	143,343
Deoli	10,799	9,227	20,026	87,592	81,679	169,271	98,391	90,906	189,297
Tonk	70,255	65,434	135,689	105,759	98,603	204,362	176,014	164,037	340,051
Niwai	18,578	19,464	38,042	86,153	79,145	165,298	104,731	98,609	203,340
Malpura	14,162	13,198	27,360	91,000	85,932	176,932	105,162	99,130	204,292
Total	130,344	122,824	253,168	496,092	462,411	958,503	626,436	585,235	1,211,671

Source: Census, 2001, *zila sankhyakeeya rooprekha, 2003, Tonk, Economics and Statistics Directorate, GoR*

**Table: Population 2001 and 2004, Panchayat Samiti wise**

Panchayat Samiti	Growth rate	Total Popn 2001	Total Popn 2004	Population SC 2001	Population SC 2004	Population ST 2001	Population ST 2004
Toda	2.01	131,348	1,39,142	25,534	27,049	9,016	9,551
Uniara	1.72	143,343	1,54,094	23,691	25,468	36,814	39,575
Deoli	1.93	189,297	2,02,067	36,197	38,639	37,652	40,192
Tonk	3.53	340,051	3,64,058	67,330	72,083	23,273	24,916
Niwai	3.69	203,340	2,18,335	41,708	44,784	32,245	34,623
Malpura	1.57	204,292	21,5079	38,624	40,663	6,891	7,255
Total		1,211,671	12,92,775	2,33,084	2,48,686	1,45,891	1,56,112

Source: Population extrapolated based on the decadal growth rate given in the 2001 census.

**Table: Population 2004, Panchayat Samiti wise**

Panchayat Samiti	Total Popn '04	6-10 yrs	11-14 yrs	SC Popn '04	6-11 yrs	11-14 yrs	ST Popn 2004	6-11 yrs	11-14 yrs
Toda	1,39,142	22,402	11,688	27,049	4,355	568	9,551	1,538	802
Uniara	1,54,094	24,809	12,944	25,468	4,100	535	39,575	6,372	3,324
Deoli	2,02,067	32,553	16,974	38,639	6,221	811	40,192	6,471	3,376
Tonk	3,64,058	58,613	30,581	72,083	11,605	1,514	24,916	4,011	2,093
Niwai	2,18,335	35,152	18,340	44,784	7,210	940	34,623	5,574	2,908
Malpura	2,15,079	34,628	18,067	40,663	6,547	854	7,255	1,168	609
Total	12,92,775	2,08,157	1,08,594	2,48,686	40,038	5,222	1,56,112	25,134	13,113

**Note:** The population for 2004 has been extrapolated based on the growth rate for each Panchayat Samiti according to the 2001 census. The percentage of the population in both the age groups is based on the Social and Cultural Tables, 1991 Census and in consultation with Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur. The Social and Cultural Tables for 2001 have not yet been published. We have considered 16.1 per cent of the population to be between the ages of 6 to 10 and 8.4 per cent of the population to be between the ages of 11 to 14.

According to the 2001 census, the male literacy for Tonk district is 71.25 per cent, which is higher than the national average but lower than the state average. The female literacy is 32.30 per cent that is much lower than both the state and the national average. The overall literacy is 52.39 per cent that is again lower than both the state and national averages. The growth rate of urban literacy is among the lowest in Tonk.

**Table: Literacy rates**

Sr No	Area	Male	Female	Total
1	Tonk	71.25	32.30	52.39
2	Rajasthan	76.46	44.34	61.09
3	India	75.85	54.16	65.38
Panchayat Samitiwise Distribution of Literacy				
1	Toda	74.53	35.48	55.43
2	Uniara	70.2	24.69	48.29
3	Deoli	69.48	28.51	49.76
4	Tonk	70.91	34.05	53.11
5	Niwai	74.27	37.36	56.3
6	Malpura	69.16	31.08	50.66
7	Total	71.25	32.30	52.39

Source: Census, 2001

**Table: Panchayat Samiti wise Distribution of Literacy, 2000**

Sr No	Panchayat Samiti	Literacy in 15-35 age group			Population in 6-14 age group in Formal Schools		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	Toda	85.63	40.81	65.94	90.42	64.11	78.86
2	Uniara	80.31	24.78	55.20	91.65	55.47	75.49
3	Deoli	85.00	39.19	64.69	90.99	58.27	76.21
4	Tonk	78.72	25.46	54.66	88.85	54.31	73.53
5	Niwai	81.62	31.3	59.3	90.74	58.09	76.30
6	Malpura	78.28	33.42	58.02	89.73	63.52	78.08

Source: Educational Development Index – Rajasthan, Hemlata Joshi, Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur, University Book House, Jaipur

The literacy rates of the district and the panchayat samitis indicate that while literacy in general has grown tremendously over the years, literacy among women continues to be much

lower than that of men. In the 15 to 35 age group, the literacy of women in all the six blocks is less than 50 per cent whereas it is more than 75 per cent for men. **If we look at the population of 6 to 14 year olds enrolled in formal schools, the education of the girl child continues to emerge as an issue that needs attention. In all the blocks, almost 90 per cent of the boys are enrolled but the highest enrolment for girls is only 64 per cent in Toda Rai Singh i.e. in the best-case scenario, only two thirds of the girls are enrolled in formal schools.** The situation is particularly sensitive in Uniara, Devli, Tonk and Niwai where the enrolment of school going girls is just over 50 per cent, even though the situation in the remaining 2 blocks is not particularly better. One of the key indicators of human development i.e. the social status of women would naturally be reflected in enrolment of girls.

### Kinds of Schools

There are several kinds of schooling options available in the district. It is not a simple matter of government and non-government educational options. Within each large category there are several sub-categories of schools. The state government offers at least five distinct kinds of schooling options. There are some options, which are different but do not quite fall into a separate category of their own. The non-government option while clubbed loosely as private schools also have categories like aided schools, unaided schools and recognised schools.

The largest number of schools still however fall into the category of formal government schools be they primary schools managed by the Panchayat Samiti, Upper Primary Schools managed by the Department of Elementary Education or the Shikshakarmi schools (that are managed by the Shikshakarmi Board but have now acquired quasi-government status) or the Rajiv Gandhi Schools opened under the Education Guarantee Scheme of the Central Government. There are also a large number of alternative schools under the District Primary Education Programme. Alternative Schools also take on different forms – there are four hourly Alternative Schools, six hourly Alternative Schools. The difference between the two is only in terms of the number of hours for which the schools run. Apart from this, there are Shikshamitr schools that were initiated after the Shiksha Darpan survey. These schools run for 2 years and aim to integrate children into the mainstream schools. DPEP is also running a similar bridge course, but for three months with similar objectives. This bridge course continued for two years from 2002 to 2004. Finally there is a mobile school in a bus. The bus travels to 4-5 selected spots in the city with teachers for the out-of-school street children. The bus remains parked in one place for approximately 90 minutes. It is staffed with 2 para teachers. The various schooling options could be summarised as:

**Table: Schooling Options in Tonk, as on July 31, 2004**

No.	Schooling Option	Toda	Uniara	Deoli	Tonk	Niwai	Malpura	Total
<b>Formal Schools</b>								
1	Government Primary School	85	99	108	141	134	107	674
2	Government Upper Primary School	49	47	56	91	63	58	364
3	Rajiv Gandhi Schools	25	74	28	48	67	70	318
4	Shikshakarmi Schools	2	0	0	14	16	23	55
5	Sanskrit Nideshalaya Primary and Upper Primary Schools	5	1	1	7	4	5	23
	Total	166	221	193	301	284	263	1434

Non Formal Schools								
6	Shikshamitr	Scheme discontinued this academic year						
7	Madrassa	1	11*	2	33	5	17	69
8	Alternative School (6 hourly)	8	18	46	42	54	26	194
9	Alternative School (4 hourly)	18	14	49	63	22	29	195
10	Bridge Course	Discontinued this academic year						
11	Chal Vidyalaya	0	0	0	1	0	0	1**
12	Bal Shramik	1	4	0	7	7	1	20
	Total							
Source: DEO Office, Tonk; DPEP Tonk * managed by the Wakf board								
** The Chal Vidyalaya has been discontinued since December 13, 2004								

As is said above and indicated by the table, there are several schooling options available in the state. These however seem like administrative solutions in response to educational or sociological problems. For example – an ‘Alternative School for 4 hours or 6 hours’ for children who are either drop-outs or have never enrolled; a Shikshakarmi School where there was no school or a mobile school for street children.

**The seemingly different options create an illusion of flexibility, since options, flexibility and suitability to different populations of children are positive words in the present day educational discourse, they are all used here. However, an analysis reveals that, pedagogically, all are unsatisfactory. In terms of attitudes to the child, textbooks, methodology of teaching and content, all are very similar. The ‘flexibility’ is utilized in diluting the notion of school and teachers. This is reflected in almost all facets of the school, school infrastructure, time spent in school by the children, teacher education, teachers salary and TLM.**

Each new ‘option’ touches a new low in the provision of education. Also it is the poor<sup>2</sup> who go to the poorer schools in these respects.

**The principle of flexibility to reach the unreached, then becomes an instrument of discrimination when interpreted in economic and administrative terms. Flexibility can reach the unreached with quality education only if it is interpreted in terms of pedagogy and curriculum.**

So what does it make education to be? A simple matter of learning the three R’s or is it a process that prepares citizens to participate in a democracy remains unanswered. The Rajasthan Human Development Report 2002 states, ‘Education for democracy has to aim to empower citizens with critical abilities, interest and courage to make their voices loud and reasonable enough to the extent that they cannot be ignored. Of course, productive skills have to be a necessary part of the package but they alone cannot hold centre stage. *It is a fundamental duty of a democratic state to educate all its citizens suitably for the above-mentioned purpose*’. (Italics added) The report goes on to add that, ‘education is seen purely in terms of economic investment. Availability of resources and economic returns become the most important considerations. Returns from education should be seen not only in economic terms but enhanced abilities of people to participate in democratic processes’.

It is therefore difficult to consider these different kinds of schools as real schooling options. The major differences lie in the management of the schools. The source of funds is different; the method of teacher selection varies, as does the monitoring of their work. The schools

<sup>2</sup> Poor, here refers to economically and socially weaker groups.

follow the same curriculum, textbooks and more or less the same approach. The method of dealing with the textbooks is also more or less the same. The quality of schooling that they offer is also not very different from each other<sup>3</sup>. The shortsighted response would then be to opt for the cheaper option, as the 'output' is the same. That argument, however, rests on the fact that callous neglect of the schooling system that renders it inefficient and using this act of omission to justify further dilution. This we feel would only lead to increasing deterioration of government education systems, depletion of educational resources and destruction of the teaching profession. We now need to decide what is desirable education.

### **Funding for education – availability, sources and usage**

There are more than one source of funds for education in the district. There are funds primarily from the Central Government, State Government and the World Bank under a variety of schemes. Estimating the amount of funds for elementary education has been extremely difficult. There does not seem to be any one place where this information is readily available. Compounding the problem are the various routes that the flow of funds follow. In some schemes and heads the money is routed through the Office of District Education Officer while in others it goes directly to Office of the Block Education Officer. Prima facie it would seem that once a list of all the possible schemes prepared, one would be able to compile the information. Unfortunately, it did not quite work that way. Financial information is not available in one place and neither was it readily available. Sometimes it seemed that conditions also worked against us with festivals, municipal elections, *Prashasan gaon ki ore* and finally Panchayat elections impeding data collection.

### **Enrolment**

The following enrolment figures (see annex for detailed enrolment tables) have been compiled based on the records of the District Education Office and District Primary Education Office. This includes the enrolment of formal government schools (Panchayat Samiti and Department of Elementary Education Schools), Rajiv Gandhi Schools, Shikshakarmi schools, Sanskrit Nideshalaya, Alternative schools and Madarsas. Shikshakarmi schools run in Tonk, Toda Rai Singh, Malpura and Niwai but not in Uniara and Deoli. The enrolment data for 2002-03, 2003-04 also includes the data from Shikshamitr and Bridge Course, which were discontinued after this time period. This does not include the enrolment of private schools, as there is practically no record of the enrolment in these schools. (There is no record of the number of private schools either.) **The most telling statement of the enrolment collection exercise has been made by a government functionary who was helping the team in data collection and it was 'aapko to kayamat tak bhi sahi enrolment nahin milega'** roughly translated as 'you will not get the correct enrolment data till the end of the world or the day of reckoning'!! Nevertheless, we have tried to compile the enrolment figures from various sources. We have also compared the enrolment figures with that of the population figures to estimate the percentage of population in school.

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<sup>3</sup> Refer to 'Not Much to Choose Between' *A look at the quality of schools in rural Rajasthan*, Study Commissioned by CARE, India, Digantar, August 2004

**Table: Gross Enrolment Rate, Primary and Upper Primary, 2004**

Panchayat Samiti	Total Popn 2004	6-10 yrs	Primary Enrolment	Gross Enrolment Rate	11-14 yrs	Upper Primary Enrolment	Gross Enrolment Rate
Toda	1,39,142	22,402	37,389	167	11,688	9,143	78
Uniara	1,54,094	24,809	26,528	107	12,944	5,035	39
Deoli	2,02,067	32,553	33,146	102	16,974	6,544	39
Tonk	3,64,058	58,613	62,904	107	30,581	10,151	33
Niwai	2,18,335	35,152	28,278	80	18,340	4,822	26
Malpura	21,5079	34,628	26,191	76	18,067	3,914	22
Total	12,92,775	2,08,137	2,14,436	103	1,08,593	39,609	36

**Note:** The population for 2004 has been extrapolated based on the growth rate for each Panchayat Samiti according to the 2001 census. The percentage of the population in both the age groups is based on the Social and Cultural Tables, 1991 Census and in consultation with Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur. The Social and Cultural Tables for 2001 have not yet been published. We have considered 16.1 per cent of the population to be between the ages of 6 to 10 and 8.4 per cent of the population to be between the ages of 11 to 14.

**Table: Total Gross Enrolment Rate, 2004**

Panchayat Samiti	Total Popn 2004	6-14 yrs	Total Enrolment (I-VIII)	Gross Enrolment Rate
Toda	1,39,142	34,090	46,532	136
Uniara	1,54,094	37,753	31,563	84
Deoli	2,02,067	49,506	39,690	80
Tonk	3,64,058	89,194	73,055	82
Niwai	2,18,335	53,492	33,100	62
Malpura	21,5079	52,694	30,105	57
Total	12,92,775	316,730	254,045	80

We have compared the current enrolment i.e. for the academic year 2004-05 with the population of 2004 to obtain the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER). The gross enrolment rate for primary schools for the district as a whole is 103 per cent. There is considerable variation in the GERs of the Panchayat Samitis with Toda indicating a GER of 167 and Malpura a GER of 76. As has emerged as a pattern over the past years, the GERs take a plunge when we look at the upper primary figures. The GER for the upper primary level for the entire district is 36. Again, there is considerable variation in the GERs across Panchayat Samitis. There is consistency in trends when we compare with the GERs for the primary schools. Toda has the highest GER at 167 and Malpura the lowest at 22. When we look at the combined figures i.e. the total GER for primary and upper primary levels, then the GER for the district is 80 with Toda showing the highest GER at 136 and the Malpura the lowest at 57.

The GER is considered to be an indicator of the enrolment percentage. Since the enrolment is compared with an extrapolated population figure, the GER, at best is an indicator. A GER of over a 100 is also considered acceptable as enrolment numbers also include children who are less than six years of age and over fourteen years of age. Having said that, it is however difficult to explain a GER of 167 in Tonk or 76 in Malpura.

### **Retention and Dropout – Primary Level**

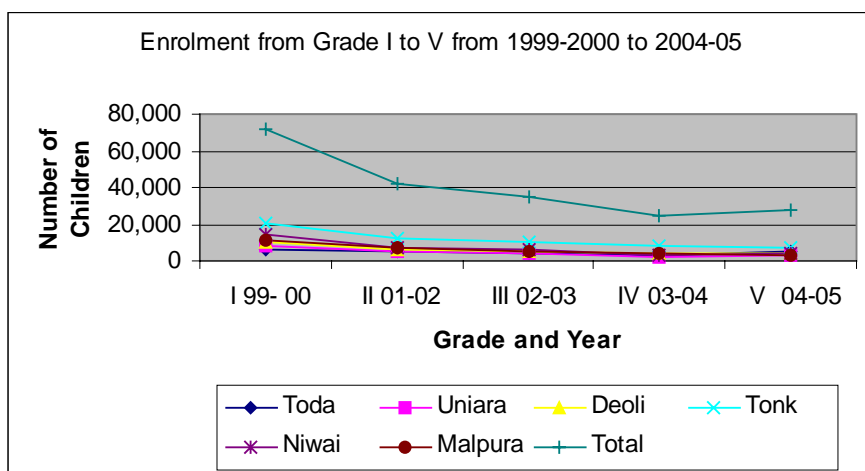
We are all aware that enrolment in a school is only the beginning of successful universalisation of elementary education. The next step and more important thing is to keep the children in school. There are several factors that contribute to keeping children in school. That is however not the focus of this section. In this section, we try to compare the retention and dropout rates of children from classes I to V. We have tried to find out the enrolment and retention in each class i.e. every year as well as retention and dropout rates from class I to III, IV and V.

**Table: Drop and Retention Rates**

Panchayat Samiti	2001-02				2002-03			2003-04			2004-05								
	Enrolment I, 2000	Enrolment II	Retention Rate	Drop out Rate	Enrolment III	Retention Rate	Drop out Rate	Enrolment IV	Retention Rate	Drop out Rate	Enrolment in V	Retention Rate	Drop out Rate	Retention from I - III	Drop out from I - III	Retention from I-IV	Drop out from I-IV	Retention from I - V	Drop out from I-V
Toda	6578	4779	73	27	3632	76	24	2910	80	20	5423	186	-86	55	45	44	56	82	18
Uniara	7772	5173	67	33	3888	75	25	1897	49	51	3535	186	-86	50	50	24	76	45	55
Deoli	10612	6397	60	40	5279	83	17	4314	82	18	4225	98	2	50	50	41	59	40	60
Tonk	20838	11844	56	43	10286	87	13	7744	76	25	6688	86	13	49	51	37	63	32	68
Niwai	14517	6793	46	53	6272	92	8	3194	51	50	4121	129	-29	43	57	22	78	28	72
Malpura	11108	6848	62	38	5401	79	21	4559	84	16	3228	71	29	49	51	41	59	29	71
Total	71425	41834	59	41	34758	83	17	24618	71	30	27220	111	-11	47	51	34	66	38	62

The retention rate from class I to II itself are not in a very healthy position in most of the Panchayat Samitis. The highest retention rate is in Toda Rai Singh at 73 per cent, in Uniara, Deoli and Malpura they hover around 60 per cent and a worrying 56 and 46 per cent in Tonk and Newai. This indicates that in the best case scenario more than a quarter of children drop out at the first stage in primary schooling and in the worst case scenario, almost half the children drop out either at the end of or during class I. (Here, we need to take in account the unrealistic GER of 167 in Toda). **Obviously, this indicates the need to do something more than pravesh utsav's to keep children in school.** These kinds of figures continue till these children reach class IV or 2003-04; this was the year that DPEP ran several bridge courses with the objective of enrolling children so that they could be sent to mainstream schools. This is reflected in the data of 2004-05 that show a negative drop-out rate.

This drop out and retention rates also indicate that the retention from class I to IV i.e. prior to the bridge course were all less than 50 per cent. In real terms this means that less than half the children who are enrolled in class I complete class IV. The situation however changes with the introduction of bridge courses. This was not the case in all the Panchayat Samitis and Deoli, Tonk and Newai continued to show a positive, albeit reduced drop-out rate.



### Retention and Dropout – Upper Primary Level

The dropout and retention rates of the upper primary level indicate that the children who manage to reach the upper do continue at least till the class VIII level. What is however

difficult to explain at this stage is the retention rates of 218, 162 and 104 per cent. The DPEP office was reluctant to make this data available to us as they themselves could not figure out these inconsistencies. One suggested reason has been the conduction of Bridge Courses in 2003-04 – that may be sufficient reason to explain the inflation at the primary level but not at the upper primary level. Another possible explanation for the inflated enrolment rate in the upper primary level could be the influx of children from private schools. This is only a possibility and needs to be explored further.

**Table: Drop-out and Retention Rates (Upper Primary Schools)**

Panchayat Samiti	2002-03	2003-04			2004-05				
	Enrolment VI	Enrolment VII	Retention Rate	Drop Out Rate	Enrolment VIII	Retention Rate	Drop Out Rate	Retention from VI to VIII	Dropout from VI to VIII
Toda	2046	1954	96	4	4258	218	-118	208	-108
Uniara	1670	879	53	47	1426	162	-62	85	15
Deoli	3143	2767	88	12	1643	59	41	52	48
Tonk	4813	3833	80	20	2943	77	23	61	39
Niwai	2629	1238	47	53	1228	99	1	47	53
Malpura	1449	1278	88	12	974	76	24	67	33
Total	15750	11949	76	24	12472	104	-4	79	21

### Out of School Children

In continuation with their efforts to universalise education, the state government initiated a new Child Tracking System in 2002. The objective of this system was to identify out of school children in three categories<sup>4</sup> – first the new admissions i.e. children who were six years of age and ready for school that year or new entrants to the schools; second, children who had once been enrolled in school and had later dropped out of school; and the third category comprised those children who were more than six years old and had never been enrolled in school; they were generally considered to be beyond the school going age. A record was also kept of the schools into which the children had enrolled. This system was supposed to help the department to their efforts during enrolment drives.

If we analyse this data for the past year i.e. 2004-05, it seems clear that the system has achieved maximum success in getting the youngest children to school. They were able to enrol 91 per cent of the six-year-old children. In the other two categories of drop-out children and the never enrolled, the success rate of enrolment was 31 per cent and 33 per cent respectively. The schooling system selected for each group also showed a clear pattern. For each category of children, targets were specified for their 'destination schooling system'. The target was to send almost 75 per cent of the six year olds to Formal Government Primary Schools. Most of the dropouts, 47 per cent and the never enrolled children, 37 per cent were targeted for the EGS schools. The assumption here seems to be that these children did not stay or enrol in school chiefly because of the distance they had to travel to reach school. With the introduction of the EGS and new schools opened in school-less habitations, it was assumed that these children would go to school. **The poor success rate in both these categories indicate that there are clearly other reasons, apart from distance that keep these children away from school.**

<sup>4</sup> The government records define the three categories as new admissions – essentially meaning 6 year old children ready for school or new entrants to school; drop outs – children who were enrolled at some point but no longer in school and never enrolled i.e. children who are older than six years but who never enrolled in school and therefore always out of the schooling system.

**Table: Out of School Children, October 2004, Tonk**

New Admissions								Drop out Children							
FGPS		AS		EGS		Others		FGPS		AS		EGS		Others	
A	R	A	R	A	R	A	R	A	R	A	R	A	R	A	R
17624	288	2370	177	964	79	1420	1297	2117	127	453	192	225	4006	0	1935
79 %		11 %		4 %		6 %		75%		16 %		8 %			
Target 24460 Total Achievement 22378 Total Remaining 2082								Target 9055 Total Achievement 2795 Total Remaining 6260							
Never Enrolled Children								FGPS – Formal Government Primary School; AS – Alternative School; EGS – Education Guarantee Scheme Centre; A – Achievement i.e. Children enrolled; R – Remaining children to be enrolled  Source: DPEP, Tonk							
FGPS		AS		EGS		Others									
A	R	A	R	A	R	A	R								
616	0	86	0	60	813	0	383								
80 %		11 %		8 %											
Target 2307 Total Achievement 762 Total Remaining 1545															

If we compare number of children out of school ( $24,460+9,055+2,307 = 35,822$ ) against the population of children between the ages of 6 to 14 year olds in the year 2004, which is 2,89,582 (refer to table of population), then 12.3 per cent of the population of the relevant age group is out of school. This indicates a healthy enrolment of 90 per cent, if we assume the enrolment data to be reliable, but we should not forget that in real terms it means that almost 36,000 children are out of school.

The Child Tracking System has also compiled the information into separate social groups. For the first time, we see data being collated for minorities as a group. The trends for the earlier analysis continue here with the highest success rates being in the children who are six years old and over 90 per cent of the target achieved in this category and the figures for the other two categories hovering around 30 per cent. The differences within the communities are however noticeable. The enrolments are the highest in ST and lowest in SC and Minorities. They tend to be higher for boys than for girls except in four cases where more girls have been enrolled. These are dropouts in minorities and the general group and in the OBC and general in the never enrolled category.

**Table: Details of Un-enrolled Children, Tonk, October 2004**

	SC			ST			OBC			Minorities		
	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T
<b>New admissions (6 year old)</b>												
T	3219	3046	6265	1819	1688	3507	5792	5556	11348	606	580	1186
A	2768	2638	5406	1700	1539	3239	5545	5296	10841	484	436	920
%	86	87	86	93	91	92	96	95	95	80	75	78
<b>Dropout Children</b>												
T	969	1752	2721	460	1159	1619	1190	2227	3417	158	252	410
A	320	525	845	201	381	582	398	715	1113	27	61	88
%	33	30	31	44	33	36	33	32	33	17	24	21
<b>Never Enrolled Children</b>												
T	203	479	682	92	342	434	288	638	926	50	113	163
A	72	137	209	42	121	163	86	250	338	9	17	26
%	35	29	31	46	35	38	30	39	37	18	15	16
Source: DPEP, Tonk												

	General			Total		
	B	G	T	B	G	T
<b>New admissions (6 year old)</b>						
T	1157	997	2154	12593	11867	24460
A	1058	914	1972	1211	1130	2341
%	91	92	92	92	91	91
<b>Dropout Children</b>						
T	216	346	562	2993	5736	8729
A	60	107	167	1006	1789	2795
%	28	31	30	34	31	30
<b>Never Enrolled Children</b>						
T	40	62	102	673	1634	2307
A	9	17	26	220	542	762
%	23	27	25	32	33	33
Source: DPEP, Tonk						

### Infrastructure

Infrastructure here is seen through a few critical indicators. It is also difficult to comment on the adequacy of the available infrastructure in the absence of any parameters defining minimal levels. That will be an exercise in itself because people's opinion on 'minimum infrastructure' is extremely variable. Nevertheless, if we define infrastructure as a school having a building with adequate classrooms, office space, a boundary wall, toilets and drinking water, then it seems that in a majority of the cases these minimum basics are available. What the data does not however reveal is the adequacy of the building, state of the building and other facilities and their maintenance.

The data also indicates that it takes time for the facilities to get built as the older schooling system seem to have arrangements for water, toilet and boundary wall but very few of the EGS schools have arrangements for a toilet and none of them have a facility for drinking water and boundary wall.

The data also does not provide information on the other infrastructural needs of a school, like playground, sports equipment and library. **It seems that these things have ceased to be part of the vision of the school in the planners mind.**

**Impressions from field visits indicate that there is a lot that can be done to improve the infrastructure available especially in rural schools. What this does point to is the need to define the minimum standards that are essential before calling an entity a school.**

The details of the state of infrastructure are:

**Table: Physical Infrastructure in Tonk**

	School Type	No of Schools	Facilities Available							
			Building	Without bldg	Class-rooms	Principal's room	Toilet	Drinking Water	Boundary Wall	Ramp
1	Upper Primary School	319	312	7	1686	298	274	281	204	20
2	Primary School	715	691	24	1805	479	680	633	307	10
3	Rajeev Gandhi Schools	339	282	57	564	282	14	0	0	0
4	Shikshak armi	62	52	10	101	25	968 *	0	0	0
	Total	1435	1337	98	4156	5084	1936	914	511	30

Source: Zila Sandarsh Yojna, 2003-04, Office of the District Education Officer, Tonk  
 \* This is obviously a mistake that has been printed in the Zila Sandarsh Yojna

### Teachers

The largest number of employees in the Department of Education are the teachers. It cannot be said often enough that the teachers are the mainstay of any educational intervention. The teachers therefore need to be selected carefully, trained well and be given the required academic support so that they remain a motivated group.

It is probably closer to the truth to say that few of these criteria are being met and that too partially. It is true that there is a system for selection and in-service training. There is also an attempt made to monitor the progress of the teachers through the system of inspections. There is however a shortage of academic support at the district.

There are essentially two kinds of teachers, the third grade teachers who can be either with the Panchyati Raj or with Department of Elementary Education. A third teacher needs to have passed class XII and have undergone the STC. The seconds grade teachers need to be at least graduates or a Shiksha Shastri (in case of a Sanskrit Teacher) with B Ed degrees. They are employed with the Department of Elementary Education. Apart from these there are the Physical Training Instructors (PTI) who need to have completed their Diploma in Physical Education.

In the past few years there has been an additional category added, that of para teachers. Para teachers are different things to different people. To the vast number of unemployed teachers, they are an opening to more secure government employment, to the community they are another teacher or an option to get somebody from the community employed and sometimes, a young man/woman they feel will be a better teachers, some educationists see them either as an effort to reach out to the children while others see them as a dilution in the seriousness of teaching, the government sees them as a cheaper option to regular teachers and something that raises the TPR to more respectable levels and politicians see them as possible vote banks. At the moment, the ratio of third grade teaches to para teachers is approximately 6:1. There is bound to be a change in this ratio, given the frequent changes in policies. **A major threat with having a large staff of inadequately qualified and untrained staff that is poorly supported and poorly paid is that it leads to a decrease in the quality of education provided and creates a cadre of ineffective and unmotivated staff, and more importantly, listless and unhappy children.**

**The intense and direct connection between the status of teachers and status of children gets lost somewhere and children; the principal actors are lost in the jungle of 'bad' education.**

As far as the number of teachers are concerned, there are only 12 per cent vacancies as indicated by the number of proposed positions and vacancies and only 2 per cent vacant positions as against the proposed positions in case of para teachers.

The TPR ratio if we add all the teachers and parateachers<sup>5</sup> (but not the PTI) and compare with the enrolment of primary and upper primary it is 1:55. The government aims to have a TPR of 1:40

**Table: Status of Teachers, September 2004**

	Panchayat Samiti	Dept of Elementary Education									Panchayat Raj			Sanskrit Nideshalaya		
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade			3 <sup>rd</sup> grade			PTI			3 <sup>rd</sup> grade			Teachers		
		P	A	V	P	A	V	P	A	V	P	A	V	P	A	V
1	Toda	55	43	12	240	184	56	41	38	3	263	254	9			
2	Uniara	54	53	1	233	168	65	43	29	14	308	261	47			
3	Deoli	75	63	12	324	277	47	47	36	11	352	336	16			
4	Tonk	101	96	5	523	440	83	71	58	13	432	409	23			
5	Niwai	76	58	18	317	248	69	51	40	11	386	335	51			
6	Malpura	68	61	7	324	291	33	49	49	0	356	350	6			
	Total	429	374	55	1961	1608	353	302	250	52	2097	1945	152	76	62	14*

Source: Office of the District Education Officer, Tonk (Panchayat Samiti wise break up were not available for Sanskrit Nideshalaya Schools)  
P = Proposed number of teachers, A = Appointed, V = Vacant positions

**Table: Status of Parateachers, September 2004**

	Panchayat Samiti	Para Teachers											
		SS			Addl SS			FPT			PPTI		
		P	A	V	P	A	V	P	A	V	P	A	V
1	Toda	25	24	1	0	0	0	31	25	6	0	0	0
2	Uniara	79	79	0	13	12	1	33	30	3	12	10	2
3	Deoli	32	30	2	12	10	2	40	37	3	6	3	3
4	Tonk	51	51	0	7	5	2	50	47	3	1	1	0
5	Niwai	71	69	2	13	11	2	41	39	2	7	4	3
6	Malpura	77	76	1	10	9	1	36	36	0	0	0	0
	Total	335	329	6	55	47	8	231	214	17	26	18	8

Source: Office of the District Education Officer,, Tonk  
P = Proposed number of teachers, A = Appointed, V = Vacant positions

We would have liked to present and analyse the educational profile of the teachers but unfortunately, this data was not available till the time of writing the report.

To understand the in-service support provided to teachers, we also tried to understand the functioning of the District Institute of Educational Training (DIET). The DIET has two main functions – pre-service training and in-service training. The pre-service training comprises the STC which was discontinued for some time but began again last year. The in-service training is largely guided by the training needs identified by the SCERT. DIET has seven departments, each responsible for a separate function. Most of these departments are understaffed.

<sup>5</sup> Total enrolment - 214436+39609 = 254045; Total teachers – 374+1608+1945+329+47+214+62 = 4579

These departments are:

1. In Service Training, Forums, Innovations and Coordination
2. Work Experience
3. Curriculum Development and Monitoring and Evaluation
4. District Resource Unit
5. Educational Technology
6. Programmes and Management
7. Pre Service Teacher Education

SCERT informs DIET about the number of training programmes that they have to implement in that financial year and DIET essentially prepares the timetable. There is no separate exercise to determine training needs. The training also does not flow from interactions with teachers. The guiding force behind the selection of training is the previous training attended by the teacher. The aim is to have every teacher attend at least one refresher programme once in five years.

*The training programmes do not seem popular with the teachers.* DIET staff feels that the location of the DIET (5 kms outside the town) and lack of boarding and lodging arrangements on campus are largely responsible for this state of affairs. If we look at the proposed training programmes and workshops, we see that in 2001-02, they could organise only half of the proposed training programmes; the situation has improved considerably over the past two years, mainly because the proposed number of training programmes has been reduced.

**Table: DIET – Training Programmes and Workshops**

Year	Proposed Programmes		Organised Programmes				Proposed Participants		Actual Participants			
	T	W	T	%	W	%	T	W	T	%	W	%
2001-02	80	28	41	51	11	39	3340	847	607	18	205	24
2002-03	55	30	49	89	23	77	1580	650	917	58	346	53
2003-04	51	16	43	84	16	100	1840	430	680	37	213	50

T – Training W – Workshops

The table above indicates the low participation in these programmes. There is obviously more than one reason for this. With our limited interaction with DIET, it is not possible to comment in greater detail on this and also beyond the scope of the particular exercise.

Another indicator of the sub-optimal functioning of the Tonk DIET is the utilisation of the budget. Each year SCERT allocates Rs 8 lacs to the DIET. We were informed in the past three years the utilisation has not exceeded Rs 1.4 lacs i.e. 17.5 per cent.

### Learning Levels

The ideal situation to assess learning levels is of course an assessment of a well drawn out sample of children in the district. This should, preferably, be through well-designed tests that assess not just the content of what the children have learnt in school but the understanding and application of concepts that they have learnt. This was obviously beyond the scope of the present exercise. We have, therefore, used the available data that of class VIII examinations to try and assess the achievement level of children.

Despite the absence of primary data, we can, judging by the other districts<sup>6</sup> for which studies are available indicate the low level of academic achievement. We can say with some amount of certainty that the results of similar tests in Tonk will be comparable to those in other parts of the state.

**Table: Result of Class VIII Board Examination, 2001-02 to 2003-04**

Year	Schools	Candidates								
		Registered			Absent/NSO			Appeared		
		B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T
2002	Govt. School	6611	2249	8860	61	07	68	6550	2242	8792
	%	75	25		90	10		74	26	
	Non Govt School	2677	1006	3683	18	2	20	2659	1004	3663
	%	73	27		90	10		73	27	
	Private School	277	131	408	15	5	20	262	126	288
	%	68	32		75	25		68	32	
	Total	9565	3386	12951	94	14	108	9471	3372	12743
	%	74	26		87	13		74	26	
2003	Govt. School	7765	2462	10227	44	19	63	7721	2443	10164
	%	76	24		70	30		76	24	
	Non Govt School	3084	1140	4224	18	5	23	3066	1135	4201
	%	73	27		78	22		73	27	
	Private School	283	132	415	17	11	28	266	121	387
	%	68	32		61	39		69	31	
	Total	11132	3734	14866	79	35	114	11053	3699	14752
	%	75	25		69	31		75	25	
2004	Govt. School	7778	2808	10586	35	1	36	7743	2807	10550
	%	73	27		97	3		73	27	
	Non Govt School	3643	1333	4976	14	1	15	3629	1332	4961
	%	73	27		93	7		73	27	
	Private School	376	208	584	4	0	4	372	208	580
	%	64	36		100	0		64	36	
	Total	11797	4349	16146	53	2	55	11744	4347	16091
	%	73	27		96	4		73	27	

There seems to be almost a constant pattern in the past three years. Out of all the children who register for the class VIII examination, approximately three quarters are boys and the remaining girls. This is obviously the pattern in the number of students who appeared for the examination. It is however noteworthy, that in all the cases, many more boys do not appear for the examinations. One conclusion that we can draw is that when girls reach that level either they themselves are more serious about their work or they obviously have more supportive families.

The results indicate that the percentage of children who are passing the class VIII exam has fallen from 75 per cent in 2002 and 2003 to 68 per cent in 2004. The pass percentage figures are the lowest for the private schools. This is noteworthy as the private schools are supposed to equip the children to perform well in the examinations. A majority of the children seem to pass their exams with over 50 per cent marks. The number of III<sup>rd</sup> divisions is the smallest in each category for both boys and girls.

<sup>6</sup> Refer to 'Not Much to Choose Between' *A look at the quality of schools in rural Rajasthan*, Study Commissioned by CARE, India, Digantar, August 2004

If we look at the figures for the children who did not pass in all the subjects i.e. they received supplementaries in one or more than one subject, then there are many more boys than girls in this category. In almost every case, of the total supplementaries, three quarters of the cases were boys.

One conclusion that can be drawn on the basis of the results that while the number of girls who register for the examination is much lower than boys, they are more serious about appearing for their examination and generally perform better. The details of the results are in the following table.

**Table: Result of Class VIII Board Examination, 2001-02 to 2003-04 Contd.**

Year	Schools	Passed Candidates								Total passed	Supplementary			Failed
		Boys				Girls					B	G	T	
		I	II	III	T	I	II	III	T	No				
2002	Govt. School	2446	2027	386	4859	925	614	120	1659	6518	1244	424	1668	606
	%	50	42	8		56	37	7		74	75	25		26
	Non Govt School	1628	525	110	2263	753	129	27	909	3172	269	70	339	50
	%	72	23	5		83	14	3		86	79	21		14
	Private School	38	43	12	93	20	21	5	46	139	64	26	90	159
	%	41	46	13		43	46	11		48	71	29		52
	Total	4112	2595	508	7215	1698	764	152	2614	9829	1577	520	2097	815
	%	57	36	7		65	29	6		76	75	25		24
2003	Govt. School	2687	2224	585	5496	876	716	160	1752	7248	1225	460	1685	1289
	%	49	40	11		50	41	9		71	73	27		29
	Non Govt School	1963	569	165	2697	848	161	37	1046	3743	228	53	281	192
	%	73	21	6		81	15	4		89	81	19		11
	Private School	50	54	15	119	19	24	6	49	168	46	26	72	147
	%	42	45	13		39	49	12		40	64	36		60
	Total	4700	2847	765	8312	1743	901	203	2847	11159	1499	539	2038	1628
%	57	34	9		61	32	7		75	74	26		25	
2004	Govt. School	2306	2309	568	5183	982	794	138	1914	7097	1699	561	2260	1049
	%	44	45	58		51	41	7		67	75	25		33
	Non Govt School	2236	760	130	3126	977	175	34	1186	4312	321	109	430	221
	%	72	24	13		82	15	3		87	75	25		13
	Private School	48	59	12	119	39	33	8	80	199	95	50	145	236
	%	40	50	10		49	41	10		34	66	34		66
	Total	4590	3128	710	8428	1998	1002	180	3180	11608	2115	720	2835	1506
%	54	37	8		63	32	6		68	75	25		32	

**Disparity:** We would like to have assessed disparity on three counts – gender, social group and location i.e. rural or urban for differences in enrolment, retention, achievement and composition of teachers. This is however difficult given the availability of data. It is possible

to assess it for some social groups like the SC and ST but not possible for minority groups like Muslims as such data on minorities has not been collected separately. We have therefore tried to assess disparity wherever the availability of data has permitted us to do so.

**Table: Comparison of SC/ST enrolment, 2004**

Panchayat Samiti	Enrolment SC	Population SC	% Enrolment	Enrolment ST	Population ST	% Enrolment
Toda	5,838	31,168	18.73	1,851	6,559	28.22
Uniara	5,734	34,517	16.61	8,767	7,844	111.77
Deoli	8,447	45,263	18.66	8,785	8,655	101.50
Tonk	15,360	81,549	18.84	5,304	16,147	32.85
Newai	8,209	48,907	16.78	7,672	10,032	76.48
Malpura	6,972	48,718	14.31	1,463	9,109	16.06
Total	50,560	290,122	17.43	33,842	58,346	58.00

The above table compares the number of children belonging to SC and ST enrolled in classes I to VIII with the population of children between the ages of 6 to 14 years. The enrolment of children in all the Panchayat Samitis is less than 20 per cent which clearly demarcates both SC and ST as a vulnerable group that needs to be worked with. The enrolment situation of ST children is good in Uniara and Deoli but worrying in all the other Panchayat Samitis particularly Toda, Tonk and Malpura.

Education especially retention of girls is an issue that emerges in discussion with district officials and school teachers.

#### 4.0 Issues in Tonk

- **Growth of education in urban areas:** Rajasthan has marched ahead in literacy by achieving literacy rate of 61.03 percent in 2001 as against 38.55 in 1991. Rajasthan has got a distinction in achieving the highest decadal difference of literacy rate of 22.48 among the other states of India

Best Performers (Urban)		Worst Performers (Urban)	
District	Literacy rate	District	Literacy rate
Udaipur	86.19	Jalor	66.33
Banswara	64.80	Dhaultpur	67.48
Alwar	82.27	Nagaur	69.47
Ajmer	81.63	Tonk	69.57
Chittorgarh	81.01	Karauli	70.22
Source: Census of India, 2001			

The census compares the growth rate in all the districts in urban areas and rural areas. Growth rate of education is generally found to be higher in urban areas as compared to rural areas. The growth rate in rural areas is comparable to the other rural areas of the state. The growth of education in urban Tonk is among the five lowest in the entire state. This needs to be analysed with the fact that the Muslim population is also amongst the highest in Urban Tonk. There may not be a direct correlation but this issue needs to be explored further when identifying vulnerable groups in the district. 22 per cent in Rajasthan

- **Girls education:** As mentioned in the section on disparity, the education of girls emerges as an issue in discussions. It also emerges as an issue in the documents prepared by the

office of the district education officer in the district. Discussions indicate the problem to be particularly acute in socially disadvantaged groups like Scheduled Castes and Muslims. Poverty is cited as the main reason for this as girls are involved in activities like *bidi* making, weaving that are household or cottage industries in Tonk<sup>7</sup> town. Education for girls is seen as ‘*unnecessary*’ for girls in rural areas and their contribution to household chores considered more important. At the class VIII level, where the children appear for an examination conducted by the Rajasthan Board, out of the total number of children registered for the examination, only 25 to 35 per cent are girls and the remaining boys. This figure is increasing over the years but the gap is still wide. Though there is not much difference when we compare the results between girls and boys. (Details in section on Academic Achievements)

Despite the fact that girls education has been flagged as an issue in almost every document and several measures like waiving fee, providing books and uniform taken; the enrolment and more importantly the retention of girls in schools, especially at the upper primary and secondary level remains an issue. Maybe, we need to take notice of what some members of the community feel and say that education does not have much relevance to their lives; that education does not lead to any major change. This is a pointer towards the kind and quality of education being provided in all our schools. **If education does not lead to greater awareness, greater confidence in self and greater control over one’s life, then obviously it will be rejected and the continuing high drop out rates are an indication of that.**

- **Madradas and Secular Education:** There is a recent introduction where a para teacher under the Rajiv Gandhi Pathshala is placed in madrasa to impart secular education. There are sections of the community who have welcomed the move and apparently the madarasas with a Rajiv Gandhi para teacher are more popular than regular madarasas (“*quam ko aur kya chhhiye – deeni taleem or padhai – dono tereh ki taleem mil jaaye to baat hi kya hai*”) or (‘what else does the community want – religious and secular education – if both kinds are received, it is excellent’)

This model of religious and secular education being provided together in a religious place needs to be explored further. One also needs to find out the quality of religious education being imparted and the quality of secular education being imparted. A further area of exploration is whether girls are included in this secular-religious model of instruction. The policy makers need to be very clear about the aims of such mixed models as well as the problem they are trying to address before venturing into these areas.

- **Low motivation:** This has come across as a constant feature all throughout the fieldwork and all the interactions, beginning from DEO office, DPEP office permeating to the schools and teachers. The staff does not come across as a group of people engaged in universalising high quality elementary education in the district but as a group of people who are primarily concerned with their domestic life and their job is only a source of livelihood. There is nothing undesirable about the government functionaries leading a domestic life but then the critical minimum requirements of the job that they have taken up should be fulfilled as a priority.

During our discussions the underlying impression one got was that the domestic life was at priority even during the short time (11.30 a.m. to 4 or 4.30 p.m.) that they spent in office. One gentleman told us that he could not meet us because it was the time of the

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<sup>7</sup> Tonk is a major centre for bidi production even though it is not a centre for tobacco or tendu leaf production. Contractors come from other parts of the state to have bidis prepared.

*navratra* and therefore he was fasting; another functionary told us that they were leaving early (at 3 p.m.) as it was *ramzaan* month and they had to go and prepare the meal! After fixing an appointment with one official, one waited for him to finish signing travel vouchers for the month of July in November, after carefully comparing with the days that he had indeed travelled to the field.

#### Scenes from the DEO Office

There is a *Baiji* (office assistant) who is appointed in the office. On the day of our visit, we saw her sitting outside the office and cleaning a huge heap of spinach. It seems that it is part of her unofficial job description to buy vegetables and clean them for the senior officials of the department. This is how she spends 2-3 hours almost everyday.

It is not that we encountered active resistance in acquiring the data or information that we needed, it was more like an unwillingness to part with information available and/or either

#### Waqht Guzar Jaata Hai

While looking for some files on the desk of the person who responsible for making data available, one saw some “Urdu Digests” – basically magazines that have stories and household tips. On asking about their content, one received a sheepish “*waqt guzar jaata hai*” (it passes time away). This from someone who says that it is difficult to compile data for paucity of time.

compile the information or make the files available. On more than one occasion *we were told that there were several such exercises conducted over the years, essentially doubting the efficacy and utility of this one as well.* On more than one occasion, one had to sift through papers in their files to find the data that we needed.

The most disturbing fact was the complete lack of academic discussion in the office

amongst the staff. The topics discussed ranged from the futility of exercises such as the HDR, the frequent and unreasonable demands for “up-to-date” data by the state government, the futility of interventions in improving the education and of course their domestic sagas. There was no evidence of this being a motivated group working for a purpose either through speech or action. It was a pure case of dependence on the job for economic survival and the job responsibilities a necessary evil.

#### Exercises in Data Collection

We needed some information from the Statistical Assistant in the DEO’s office. At 11 a.m. we were told that the information would be ready when we returned from the DPEP office at 2.30 p.m. At 3 p.m. he informed us that he was actually on leave but had been especially called to office because of some urgent papers and he could not give us the desired information, as he did not have his key! He suggested that we meet him during our next visit. On our next visit he had to go somewhere and asked his assistant to help us. The assistant had taken charge on the same day and did not know anything about the files. He nevertheless cooperated and we were able to get the information.

Looking at the situation through another perspective, one feels that the situation is not surprising given the low levels of involvement of the district level officials in the decision-making. In the words of one official, ‘*hum decision nahin lete hain, hume to upar se budget sanction ho kar aata hai, uska upyog karte hain*’(we do not decide, we get a sanctioned amount that we implement). This does not make them direct stakeholders of the district level plan and may explain the low levels of motivation.

On the flip side, there has to be adequate preparation at the district level in terms of capabilities before greater responsibilities can be passed on. These have to be in terms of better abilities in academic planning, management, resources, atmosphere in the work place as well as general atmosphere in society.

- **Decentralisation** – The DEO and his staff insist that all they get is a ‘sanctioned amount’ and they have to implement the schemes. They insist that they are not involved in the

planning process at all. On being asked whether they participate in any meetings that take place for the planning or the decision of strategy, they answered in the negative.

There is the question of the capability and orientation of the DEO office staff that needs to be addressed here. The DEO and most of his staff in the non-accounts positions are essentially schoolteachers who have been promoted. Their experience and orientation is towards classroom teaching. It is difficult for them to conceive and think through strategies for the entire district. Nor do they receive any training or support in this transition from teacher to educational planner and implementer. The only body for training in the district is DIET and this is not an area of intervention for them. In fact, at the district level, there exist departments for educational planning, curriculum development, teacher training, educational research, textbook development and academic support for the teachers in the DIET. It would still be difficult to say that these capacities do indeed exist at the district level. If decentralisation has to happen at the district level then all these capacities need to be available at the district level.

- **Capacities and attitudes of teachers:** As mentioned earlier, teachers are central to the functioning of schools. This implies that their capacities and attitudes are also equally important in the functioning of schools. There are enough studies conducted in India and elsewhere to support the fact that the capacities and attitudes of teachers do indeed affect children's attendance, academic achievement and classroom processes. There are two often-quoted studies conducted by the Teacher Training College, United Kingdom titled, 'Effective Teachers of Literacy' and 'Effective Teachers of Numeracy'. These studies indicate that teachers who are better read teach better and their children do indeed learn more and also that teachers who believe that the children they are teaching can learn, do indeed learn better.

Visits to schools and discussions with teachers in Tonk and studies in other parts of Rajasthan indicate that the teachers almost never prepare to teach, they rarely if ever read any books let alone academic journals or books once they begin teaching and as a group they are biased against vulnerable groups that includes SC, ST, minorities, rural children and children of uneducated parents. These are the children who need most help in school. Despite absence of primary data from Tonk, we can say with conviction that the teachers attitudes are partially if not significantly responsible for the poor status of education in these groups.

This can be illustrated through some examples. As part of our fieldwork, we stopped at a few schools. The first was a large primary school about 20 kms from Tonk on the roadside. This was also a pay centre for the teachers. It had a staff of six, including one head teacher. All the teachers were women. It had an enrolment of 210 children. On the day that we were there, the teachers rushed in at around 10:15 and after expressing surprise on seeing us there, began the assembly. There were 34 children present in the assembly and there were a few there who looked too young to be enrolled in the primary school. The teachers said that the groundnut picking season had affected the attendance and added that of those 34 present during assembly many children would not return after they went for lunch.

About 7 kms ahead there was another school, a Rajiv Gandhi Pathshala. This school was about 2 kms away from the road and closer to the Banas river. The teacher was a young man from the village who had been trained under part of the para teacher scheme. 70 children were enrolled in this school and the attendance on that day was over 60. The children were sitting in three groups in the sun as it was cold inside the classroom. Most of them seemed to be working. The teacher also seemed to share an affectionate

relationship with the children. We asked the teacher if the groundnut season affected the attendance here and he replied in the negative. All the children also come back after lunch. He said that he had told the parents that they should ensure that they knew where their children were as the village was close to the river and they should be either be in school or at home or in the fields and not wandering about. He has also made it a rule that if the parents need to take the child away in the middle of a working today then they should come and pick up the child.

These are only two examples from the field and it is not difficult to come across several other similar situations. It compels us to reflect on what really impacts the attendance of children – the groundnut season or the willingness to teach on the part of teachers. It needs to be added that it is a complete flux and cannot be understood in a binary way.

- **Monitoring:** Monitoring of staff and programmes both are issue. The method for the first seems to be through School Inspectors and now the BRC/CRC staff under DPEP and for the second, data obtained from the Panchayat Samitis. We were told ‘unofficially’ by the DEO office that every time they are asked for data or any information, they are almost never able to collect it from the Panchayat Samitis on time. They simply extrapolate it based on the previous figures and send them. This is the reason why the data never tallies. The form that data is asked in also varies so that comparison across years is difficult.

These are meant to be academic support staff and are meant to go to the schools, talk to the teachers, conduct classroom observations, identify areas where the teachers need help and provide the teachers the required academic support. In practice, this does not often happen. School visits, more often than not are treated like inspections and the issues discussed are administrative and rarely academic.

One could also consider DPEP interventions in Kerala<sup>8</sup> where the BRC and CRC have emerged as being quite effective in bringing academic discussions to the school.

## **5.0 Role of the Education Department**

**Educational Administration<sup>9</sup>:** The Education Department in Rajasthan was established shortly after independence in 1949. Since then there have been several changes according to the needs and educational reforms that have taken place over the years. A major change has been the shifting of responsibility of rural education to the Zila Parishad. The Upper primary schools have however been transferred back to the Department of Elementary Education.

Educational Administration is organised at two levels – the state level and the district level. The overall charge vests with the Education Minister (Primary and Secondary) who is assisted by an Education Secretary, the Executive Head of the department. The Minister for Rural Development and Panchyati Raj looks after primary education in rural areas.

The Education Secretary is responsible for policy formulation, planning, programming, budgeting of education, coordination between different directorates, the work related to appointments, promotions and transfer of senior officers of the department.

Apart from this, there are separate specialised state level directorates to look after the work of primary and secondary education, college education, languages and Sanskrit education.

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<sup>8</sup> Please see ‘Pedagogical Innovations in Kerala – a study of DPEP’, Digantar for Directorate for Elementary Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, 2002

<sup>9</sup> This section draws from “ Educational Administration in Rajasthan’, Baldev Mahajan, TS Tyagi, Shanta Agarwal, NIEPA, Vikas Publishing House, 1996 and discussions with District level officials in DoE, DPEP and Sanskrit Nideshalaya.

Primary and Upper Primary education are managed by the Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education. It is headed by a Director.

At the district level, the District Education Officer, who now also heads the District Primary Education Programme, with the help of other staff is responsible for the smooth functioning of educational administration at the district level. They keep in touch with all educational institutions and get different types of information from educational institutions collected. Their work is supervised by the Director (Primary and Secondary Education). District Education Officers have powers to supervise educational institutions, transfer powers in respect of grade II and grade III teachers, Lower Division Clerks and Category D employees, maintenance of leave records of heads of secondary and higher secondary schools, supervision of non- formal and adult education centres, preparation of district education budget and preparation and implementation of the district educational plan.

The Director holds meetings with the divisional heads and the DEOs to ascertain their views on different topics. At the district level, there is a forum of heads of institutions with the provision of two meetings per year for consultation on finance, discipline, implementation and improvement in the education standard. Besides this, there are teachers associations of various categories of teachers.

It seems that a rudimentary structure to evolve an educational plan in the district exists. What is questionable is the effectiveness of this structure, moreso when the DEO of the district says that they have no role in any planning process and that they are basically an implementing agency. Inadequate capacities and absence of quality academic support at the district seem to contribute to this state of affairs as well. This once again points towards the need to create capacities relating educational understanding and educational management at the district level.

To sum up we can say that there is a potential in the existing structure for greater decentralisation at the district level, which can take place only if there is also adequate support available. If responsibilities are thrust on people without adequate preparation in terms of space for decision-making, trust and resources, then the tendency for the structure to either malfunction or collapse is fairly high.

## **6.0 Indicators in education**

The indicators in the education sector can be divided into two categories, those that are concerned with education and those that indicate the status of education management. The indicators of education are meant to assess the health of the education intervention and the status of education in the district. Most of this information should be available in the field itself. A good indicator should be one that is easily obtained and provides useful information. The following list is not an exhaustive one but a suggestive one. The policy makers should add or subtract to this list according to what best suits their needs. These indicators are meant to supplement the school visits and not become a substitute for them.

**Indicators in education**

1. Out of school children
2. Enrolment of children in vulnerable groups
3. Retention of children in vulnerable groups
4. Drop out of children in vulnerable groups
5. Academic achievement of children in vulnerable groups
6. Teacher Pupil Ratio
7. Comparison between Private Schools and Government Schools in terms of:
  - Enrolment
  - TPR
  - Teacher Absenteeism
  - Attendance of Children
  - Academic Achievement Levels of Learners
8. Training of teachers - numbers, topics, usage, facilities
9. Ratio of teachers: para teachers
10. Educational qualification of para teachers over the years
11. Percentage of para teachers regularised
12. NFE arrangements: schools
13. Infrastructure in schools

**Indicators in education management**

1. Involvement in planning – level of decentralisation in the hierarchy
2. Ease of getting information
3. Number of schemes or “windows” and their comparability i.e. the gaps between the ‘lowest’ and ‘highest’ option.
4. Establishment of minimum conditions for schools
5. Agitations of school teachers, especially para teachers
6. Availability of funds for education
7. Amount spent per child

**7.0 Conclusions and Suggestions**

UNDP, the Government of Rajasthan and ARAVALI set about undertaking an analysis of the education situation in Rajasthan and evolve a smaller unit for planning. The district of Tonk on a pilot base was taken up as this unit.

For a district level Human Development Report it is important that the key district officials be involved in the entire process and the ideas that emerge are ones that the people in the district share and own up to and then are committed to undertake action to help improve the situation and that they are trusted, given space and resources.

Digantar has perhaps taken only the first step of the process. This report has gathered all possible data and is presenting an overview of the educational situation in the district. Owing to the terms of reference given to us, this has not been a very participatory exercise and is based essentially on secondary data that is available in the district. Digantar would have liked to approach the issue a little differently and base the HDR on “information” collected through a participatory process through a series of discussions rather than base it on “cold data” extracted from dusty files.

A lot has been said on data-based planning – especially in the education sector where it seems to be beneficial for all concerned to overstate facts. (167 % enrolment in a block in the district). This report has also suffered on account of these facts and figures and the inherent limitations of data based exercises. We have, however, also felt that perhaps this is a good starting point for improvement. There is but one mechanism that the government uses for planning and that is based on an age-old methodology based on hierarchical collection of data (as being different from information). This report by Digantar is thus making the first few steps for a change in the way things are done but does so by overlapping the first few steps with the existing system.

The interpretation of data that we have undertaken is again not something really new. The issues are definitely not new – but for the sake of the new reader we will state them afresh. There are perhaps a few dozen reports and a number of papers done on the education situation in Rajasthan. Each of these has made recommendations. Many have been accepted – but most have for some reason been ignored. We believe that one of the most crucial things that planners have to do is to re-read many of these reports and draw out the lessons and conclusions.

The HDR attempts to acquaint the planners with concepts and understanding that goes beyond basic data. It is thus considered to be a more evolved method of planning. But the bare fact is that capacities for district level planning are thus far non-existent. These capacities are fairly underdeveloped at the state level as well. An HDR based planning approach will have to at some point take this fact into consideration as well.

As we approached writing this report, we were again faced with the task of challenging viewpoints and questioning government policies. In interacting with the functionaries of the Department of Education, DPEP and associated bodies, we were a step further and found ourselves discussing several important issues and often asking questions that were valid but unfortunately tended to put those answering in a difficult situation. These questions are not new and nor are we the first group of researchers to be asking these questions. This usually lead to an uncomfortable situation for the government functionaries. This situation is worsened when the reports of those discussions are circulated and it does tend to lead to a feeling of hostility towards researchers as a group.

We accept that it may have happened in this case as well. We are conscious that some of the issues that we raise will cause uneasiness to a few people. We would, however, like to clarify that our objective is not to belittle anyone’s efforts but to face the issues squarely and begin to deal with them. Our agenda is very clear. We hope that this report, and others that we do, will help further the cause of quality education for all children.

The following paragraphs attempt to present the situation as we found them. We have also indicated in the adjoining boxes, some changes that we feel might help planners.

An important aspect that we came across was on education is actually seen and perceived by the key officials at the district level. A meeting of these officials at the district level just does not have the scope to go beyond data crunching and scheme review. This group comprises the

collector, the zila pramukh, the project director of the DRDA, the DEO, the chief planning officer, the district heads of all the various “schemes” being undertaken by the government. None of these are even partially inclined to grapple with quality issues and perhaps never in the history of a district level meeting on education has the discussion moved to quality issues in any serious manner. The district level team has neither the capacity nor the inclination to actually undertake a discussion of such an order. But the truth also is that they are not even expected to. All assessments, plans and “thinking” is done at the State level based on data that is called for from the districts. Not surprisingly, the staff at the district level are expert data collectors but still live in the early eighties as almost all the data that they compile and re-compile is in carefully hand drawn tables with four carbon copies. No wonder making changes is really difficult and therefore often the original “work” gets passed of as the latest one.

Assuming that focus on planning has to be based on data compiled, there is a clear need to evolve that system at the district level. Though there has been an input made on this front in terms of a few computers having reached the district level, the capacities to actually use this facility continues to be non-existent. The computer is accompanied by a data-entry operator and this data-entry operator is far removed from the education field and in effect it is the same carefully hand-drawn table that he/she “enters” or “computerizes” often using a calculator to make the calculations.

Officials at the district level need to be oriented to think academically. They need support in areas of academic planning, in management and administration of education. Most importantly, they need a supportive environment where they are trusted; they have freedom to work and the required resources to work. This is obviously not going to happen in a short time. Maybe, one can begin in a small way and the district given the responsibility to plan a small intervention to begin with. This would *have to be after* ensuring that adequate support - both academic and administrative was available to them. Following the results of the experiment, decentralising could move ahead. Alternatively, a mixed model tried out where some areas that relate to conditions in the field are with the district and other policy matters remain with the state. For example, the district should be free to decide areas of training for teachers, strategies to involve vulnerable groups and girls.

*Education management at the district level has to be accompanied by research, monitoring, evaluation and support. The managers however are people who have received no training in undertaking such a job but who have been promoted to the position and are essentially school- teachers.* Inputs at the district level are really critical for this staff set. Somewhere missing in the large goal of universalisation of education is the absence of a good Human and Institutional Development Plan. This plan must be one that recognises the reality of the staff undertaking this task, recognises the limitations of their skill sets and is geared to providing this support. This becomes even more critical when there are so many different schemes and ideas floating around and each is expected to provide a specific solution to a specific problem. Asked at the district level or at the village level there is little understanding of the differences and the need for the different approaches.

These differences and this understanding reflects on how the staff actually view their own jobs and their approach to their work. When the approach and the understanding becomes casual so does their work. And this is an extremely difficult position from where to begin undertaking a really ambitious plan for universalisation. Unfortunately, the casual approach has already done a lot of damage.

Former planners had attempted to address the issue of academic capacity and support through the provision of the DIETs at the district level. Though we have not done a detailed assessment of the Tonk DIET in this study, it is definitely one issue that needs to be given

serious thought. Drawing from our experience of having worked closely with these institutions in the past, we know that managerially and academically these are on the decline. Going by the size of the task we have on hand it is critical that we revive these institutions – or alternatively redesign the organisational and institutional structure for a support institution at the district level. This clearly emerges from this study and from similar ones done in the past. Some important parameters for this institution must however be kept in mind. They have to become more dynamic and responsive to the existing situation of education. Assessment of training needs for teachers, evolving training modules and then conducting them – these are all elements that are missing.

Further on training, it appears that the process has become rather mechanised with the SCERT becoming the guiding light for the DIETs and more or less controlling what they do, how they do it and when they do it. The idea of district level planning for education would imply that there is thinking happening

at the district level – not just a follow up of plans and implementation. The DIETs are currently undertaking programmes on the guidelines provided by the SCERT. These are mainly for in-service teachers. There are practically no programmes, which are undertaken for teachers, based on understanding their situation in that particular district.

In the case of Tonk, the DIET is situated far from any habitation, without facilities for either staying or eating and all trainees who come there are expected to fend for them selves as they get trained. So in a group where the motivation is already low, the systems make it even more difficult for them to actually improve their skills. And the numbers we are talking of are again really

Teacher education seems to be a stagnant area; its content methodology, relevance and effectiveness are all in need of serious review and revitalisation.

Educational research is mostly confined to collection of various kinds of statistical data and occasional achievement tests. Any attempt to understand educational processes, change and development of frameworks that may generate better insights into our socio-cultural processes are rather feeble and ineffective.

Academic institutions that generate educational knowledge and build theoretical background are usually far removed from educational practice. This has created an unreasonable and unhealthy theory-practice dichotomy.

DIET is an institution meant to take on several of these roles. Situations in the field indicate the need for the reorganisation of the DIET. DIET needs to be strengthened and developed as an institution engaged in improving the quality of education in the district. DIET could focus on:

- Providing academic and training support
- Working on curriculum and pedagogy
- Pre-service and in-service training
- Educational research
- Pedagogical research
- Pedagogical innovation

Some might argue that these are the defined roles of the DIET, but an analysis of the work of the DIET indicates that it is inadequate and needs a clear vision and strengthening before it can become a vibrant centre of educational research and support.

There is need for a complete orientation of both pre-service and in-service training. The current trainings are a discredit. Young people join these courses in the hope of a job and employed teachers come to these courses, as there is no option but to attend.

There is a need to design programmes that generate bright thought and idealism in young minds. We need to move from a ‘guide-book’ based approach to an authentic reading material approach; from an examination oriented one to a learning oriented one. This implies reorganisation of curriculum and selection of appropriate course material.

The student teachers need to be well-equipped with abilities to run better schools. Some possibilities are a decent campus life, close interaction with interested faculty, good self-learning academic programmes and development of abilities to deal with the world. This should be accompanied with opportunities for genuine practice teaching – maybe through a school run by a strengthened DIET.

large.

The recent induction of para-teachers as part of the EGS has increased these numbers even further. The capacities at the district level, however, to handle this pressure just do not exist – both in terms of the infrastructure and in terms of the capabilities. More so when it comes to training of para-teachers who have got into the job under prepared and still need to be provided high levels of inputs and support to equip them suitably as teachers.

But where does all this actually lead to?

The government has been talking about high levels of enrolment and the last census also shows an increase in the literacy levels in the state. Perhaps it should lead to more of that. But is that all that we should be aiming for?

An analysis of the Tonk data that we have compiled as part of the study shows that enrolment (assuming it is reliable) is now near 90 per cent. It seems that all the different approaches combined together have led to these impressive figures. Thus from the face of it would seem that the major battle seems to have been won – and perhaps it has. There is a greater propensity for parents to send their children

Tonk has many schools. It also has many kinds of schools. Yet, it would be difficult to come up with a definition for a 'typical school'. There are variations in pedagogy, infrastructure, management and sources of funds.

What is needed is the setting up of norms or minimum conditions that define a school. It should also be mandatory for private schools to follow these norms.

It is only then that we will be able to move towards providing equitable educational opportunities for all children.

to school than it was before and the increased access (whatever the scheme) has contributed to this happening. But when this data is compared with the dropout data there is clearly cause for concern. This essentially reflects the mindset of the education department as a whole. The main task of the education department at one point of time was to increase enrolment into schools – and they continue to be influenced by that aspect. The department has to realise that the focus need no longer be restricted to that aspect alone. The movement towards school is now unstoppable and children will now definitely be sent to school. Enrolment data thus makes no sense to planners anymore.

**What however is critical is the drop-out data.** The drop-out data and an increase in this figure and the reducing number of children actually crossing class 5 after enrolling is the major cause for focus for the planners. The good part is that we no longer have to deal with issues that were external to us anymore – faiths, beliefs, religions, and minority approaches which formed part of the focus of work when addressing the enrolment issue are no longer the issues that we must deal with. The issues that we have to deal with are within our area of influence and control.

The focus has to be on quality. Throughout the study we were not able to get any evidence that this was a critical issue in educational management in the district. It appears that the education department is just not being able to make this change in its mindset. As mentioned before, the casual approach to education has resulted in poor quality of education. Even enrolment will once again become a problem if we are not able to focus enough on this aspect.

Reduced quality leads naturally to reduced interest in children and their parents and ultimately to drop-outs and questioning of the system which is providing the education.

From our analysis it seems necessary for the government to revisit the diversity of approaches that it has and actually rationalise them to just a few. The need for different approaches is appreciated but we cannot afford to have diversity for the sake of diversity – especially when

a more important value in education – “quality” seems to be the one that is suffering. We understand also the political element which has led to the addition of more and more models and though it is heartening to note that education is getting a lot of political focus, it is also important to shield it from whimsical approaches and political expediency.

An entire new development is taking place in the education scenario and seems to be taking over from where the government system seems to be failing. The increase in the number of private schools is a clear indicator of everything that seems to be going wrong in the government schools. Poor attendance of the teachers and poor achievement levels in the children are two aspects that private schools have done fairly well on. Despite the fact that the capacities of the teachers in the private schools are questionable, despite the fact that they are paid far less than government schoolteachers, the academic levels of children in private schools compare rather favourably to those in government schools, though both leave much to be desired.

Willy-nilly this seems to be an acceptable trend for the government. There is no control mechanism that they are putting into place and if it continues the way it is, it is unlikely that the government will be able to put anything into place. So in addition to all the concern on quality that the government has to focus on for their own schools the role will also expand to ensure that certain minimum standards are maintained in the private schools.

It is also critical for the government to understand that it cannot let the private sector take over. There are still many communities which require a lot of input and encouragement and there are also many areas which are poorly represented in terms of the existence of schools. The government cannot escape looking at these issues.

Another critical area is that of school infrastructure. Perhaps the infrastructure in Tonk ranks lowest as compared to any other district. We don't seem to have arrived at a common set of standards for what our schools should look like. From unventilated two roomers to broken down 20 room buildings there are a few that are in a really respectable condition and which classify as being school worthy. Sanitation facilities are more or less absent and equipment that makes a school a school is non-existent. Financing these schools is a critical element of policy which needs to be addressed.

For district level planning however, here lies another challenge. The ability to be able to regulate, monitor and balance out the existence of government and private schools to be able to cover the populations is something that will perhaps have to be undertaken at the district level. For this however, there will need to be a better understanding of how these systems fit together and can coexist. And more importantly an understanding of the larger needs and special concerns of education at the district level.

For any sector, when it comes to developing feasible and workable plans, there are three aspects that have to be taken into consideration – Policy, Standards and Capacity Building.

In the section above we have touched all three aspects. A more detailed study would have enabled us to explore the issues more in depth. However, it appears quite clear that a lot more preparation needs to be done for a true district level planning exercise even though the idea per se is really desirable. At the district level, it is possible to go in for a more process oriented planning. Something that takes into consideration the concerns and the ideas of the stakeholders.

This report should be seen as the starting point for initiating a debate and discussion and NOT be seen as the final product. It is our suggestion that this report be translated into Hindi, circulated widely in the district and a series of seminars and discussion forums be convened under the auspices of the DEO and the CPO. These two functionaries should be supported by

a team of professionals drawn from the education fraternity and from the management side. A comprehensive planning process which engages the people concerned academically and managerially will yield a more appropriate plan and one which is do-able and owned by the people who have to implement it.

It goes without saying that capacity enhancement of key people is a critical precondition for this to happen and will have to be undertaken if we are keen to approach a decentralized planning process and take the idea of the Education – HDR forward.

**A few considerations (Taking off from Tonk)**

- Girl's education is umbilically linked to the socio-economic status of women in a particular society. It is a circular situation and can be best addresses through a 'living web' approach, in which many matrices are dealt with simultaneously. And so, education of adolescents as well as women are not to be left out. A fragmented, isolated manner will not help. The social development of girls and women can not be considered outside the purview of 'education'.
- What is the criteria of literacy?
  - Being able to sign one's name;
  - Precariously perched on relajose into illiteracy;

A rough and ready definition is required, which will elicit the actual picture.

- Training in data collection is required. Number crunching is not the aim. Authenticity and credibility is what is needed. Micro-samples can be taken at the district level and reliable data gathered.