A good deal of work on the aims of education is forward looking; all the aims/goals we have discussed in the previous chapter are about how the child is supposed to turn out as an adult. But children are not just adults-in-formation; childhood is itself a significant part of a person’s life, and the quality of a childhood is intrinsically important, independent of its consequences has emphasized this, and it is implicit, too; in practitioners’ concerns about matters like bullying and testing. Thus, we have already seen that the school environment is the most desirable in present society. It has become more extensive association than any other social agencies or institutions. With the celebrated trend of the legitimate knowledge, it does not result from free choice, but it comes from a fortuitous and inevitable meeting among subjects brought together on the basis of similar age and social conditions. In that respect it resembles political society. On the other hand, it is limited enough so that personal relations can crystallize.

This delicate relationship of school education with the society and its institutions has magnetized the whole attention of thinkers, philosophers, policy makers and of course sociologists and educationists where their thoughts and ideas are representing ‘school’ as a site of struggle. Whereas, in philosophical sense, education, it is believed is a journey inwards. It provides a scope to experience all the inherent information of the existential world. It emancipates the human being. With its various forms of knowledge, education offers a student to live all his experiences, transform him into a critical thinker, compel him to analyze the realities of the established world and inspire him to value the
aesthetic beauty of the living world. It helps a child to explore his abilities/talent and enhances his excellence to produce something productive and beneficial for the survival of his individuation and for the continuation of the society also. Education and other institutions are interdependent but at same time they are correlated in a society also. Change in one brings change in others. For instance, a family’s attitudes toward education will affect the child’s school experiences.

However, processes and structures of schools cater some specific functions to meet the demand of the society. These functions are the important purposes of education, especially in preparing the young to become members of society; they are at the root of functional discussions of education. Sociologists using the functional perspective see the survival of society at stake; if a society fails to train its members in the skills and knowledge necessary for perpetuating that society, order and social control will be compromised. Now modern society is gracefully accepting this dependency of school education and for the uninterrupting progress and development of society, educational system also inhabits the required changes and tries to produce the desired results. Indeed, with time and space the ideology of the society modulated accordingly and these ideas seek to transform society through a holistic pedagogic process; the school does not exist in vacuum: society acts on the individual and the institution through various agencies and avenues. The relationship between the individual and the institution with society is therefore dialectical in nature.

Main concern of Indian educational system arises with the diversification of the Indian society. Hence, with much diversity the establishment of inequalities can be seen in different forms in Indian society such as inequality of class, caste, gender, ethnicity etc. And at this point many social functionalists argued that some degree of inequality is inevitable in society because the most challenging positions required attracting the most talented individuals who must spend time and money educating themselves to fill these important roles. These theorists argue that schools are a part of a large system in which individuals who dedicate themselves would receive greater rewards of income and
prenige. Yet the observation of the present schooling clearly revealing the acceptance of this argument as the construction of the concepts; achievers and non achievers would be noticed inside and outside the school.

[I]

INTRODUCING OTHER SITES: HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS AND STRUCTURAL REALITIES

In Indian educational system, structural difference of schooling can be seen in terms of private and public schooling. ‘Public schools’ comes under the government authority where as ‘Private schools’ are autonomous in their authoritative nature. In terms of funding and functionality of Government schooling; public schools run by government and private schools manage their whole structure on their own. In this managerial structure of different schooling indirectly decide so many structural and cultural things of the processes of both types of schooling, such as fee structure, facilities, behavior of students and teachers etc. These structural differences of schools decide the individual character of schooling and how they are separately, perceiving education and how they are communicating and interacting with students in terms of education. This whole phenomenon of schooling processes of Indian educational system defines the changing perceptions of education and in terms of productive work they reflect that how schools are contributing to the society.

On the contrary conflict theorists challenge the functionalist assumptions that schools are ideologically and politically neutral and that schools operate based upon meritocracy, with each child able to achieve to the highest level of his her own ability. They argue that inequality is based on one’s position in the social system, not merit, and that schooling privileges some children and disadvantages others. In contrast to

---

functional theory, conflict theory assumes a tension in society created by the competing interests of individuals and groups. Conflict occurs even when teachers, students, parents, and administrators agree on the rules. Each group obeys the rules even though the rules are not in their best interests because they may not see alternatives or fear the consequences of not obeying. However, conflict theorists disagree on whether participants in the education system always conform or have no choices.

The foundation of conflict theory begins with Karl Marx, where he talked about the class conflict, in the frame of ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ to emphasize the inequalities and exploitations favoured by the capitalist society. Marx argued that schools create and maintain inequality by teaching students an ideology that serves the interests of the rich and instils in students a sense of “false consciousness.” That is, students in schools learn to accept the myth of meritocracy, that all have an equal chance of achieving. Those who buy into this ideology and fail often believe that their failure is due to their own shortcomings and lack of ability. Students learn into internalize their own positions in society and their lowly fates, thus accepting a ‘false consciousness’ and legitimizing the wealth and power of capitalists.

Basically, school education is majorly involved in the creation of the Indian society as we have already observed the dependency of Indian society over educational system for its growth, progress and development. To widening the horizon of educational aspirations, it’s necessary to give equal importance to private schools. Since, this difference between public and private schooling in some way is also representing the unequal character of Indian educational system. In this respect to make deeper understanding of school education, I visited some private schools of Delhi, which were in real sense eye opening observations. Therefore, in this sense this chapter is a continuation of the previous chapter, which tries to explain some different aspects of schooling and expanding vision of education. Laxman Public School, Deep Public School, Heritage Public School, Ganga International Public School (this school is indirectly a significant part of my research, as I have not visited the school as per se but the valuable interaction from the students of this school contributed to this work), Ryan International School are the important elements in this contribution.
Outside view of any private school (here I’m only referring to those Delhi Schools, that all affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education and followers of NCERT texts, which are part of my field) seems very attractive and eye-catching. From the exterior of the building to the interior of the classrooms, everything has been beautified creatively. Every school has covered larger geographical areas which have been wrapping up with huge wall boundaries and big entrance gates. The purpose of defining the periphery of the schools is of course a security reason of children and that confinement of schooling often indicates the institutionalization of schooling which draws specific boundaries with specific goals. Following the modernist European views of education all private schools are big followers of English language, from the medium of instruction, symbolic culture of the school to the general communication, supreme character of English language can be experienced. For instance, every school has a front desk that helps visitors in solving their queries (concerning to the school and students) and the front desk coordinators’/organizers’ ‘well-trained’ behavior represents the socio-cultural environment of the school which indicates the positioning of symbolic culture of the particular school. Trained and managerial behavioral patterns of school staffs dignified the value of school’s rules and regulations and presented them as a part of school culture.

Almost everyone agrees that quality education is about possibilities; about success in real life, discovering the child’s innate talent, excitement in learning new things, being a good human being and a contributing citizen. And almost everyone talks about it. However, not enough is being done about it. For most children, schooling is about being leashed not unleashed; about being constrained not un-fettered, about fearing failure not pursuing success; about role learning, not deep understanding; about isolation from community and not an engagement with it. As Mark Twain says, “I have never let my schooling interfere with my education.” this philosophy or deep meaning of education directly clinched upon present processes of schooling which actually established the superficial image of education and with their rules and regularity, schools force students to believe in that artificial image of education. But following the wordings of Mark Twain, ‘The Heritage School’ believes in ‘the experiential learning.’ The Heritage School has chosen the path of educating his children as opposed to just schooling them. By this,
Heritage School means that the larger meaning or goal of education does not restricted to the formation of schooling; while for them education is the foundation of life that keeps the wheels of progress and development running. Keeping this in mind, the school offers an impeccable quality education under critique conditions. It is the mélange of a wholesome educational programme that facilitates the child’s quest for knowledge, enhancing the quality of life and preparing them for the real world. These are the distinctive hallmark of a Heritan. The school owes its genesis to Shri N.C.Jain, the founding father, whose dynamic vision has lead to a futuristic approach towards education in accordance with the changing needs of the 21st century. They believe our endeavor is to help children develop to their fullest potential. A tremendous amount goes into physical, mental, cognitive teaching methodology steadily unfolds the child’s potential. The secret of entering the innocent mind of a child lies in the act of caring, giving essence of purity that a child possesses.

Similarly, Deep Public School is affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education, Delhi. It is just 2 kms. away from the city and has a state of art campus and pollution free beautiful environment. School emphasizes in promoting the rich and Indian cultural heritage and integrates it with modern education. Deep School believes this broadens the students’ horizon of knowledge. It enables them to develop into a complete and balanced personality. Keeping in view the Indian culture, its heritage and the concept of modern education, the couple Mr. V. J. Magdum and Adv. Mrs. Sonali V. Magdum laid the foundation stone of ‘Rajashree Foundation’. For the overall development of children, health and physical activities and art education are compulsory in the school curriculum. Which clearly highlighted through the infrastructural facilities provided by the school, for example; school has 200 meters track for skating and tracks for all the track events and a beautiful and large swimming tank is under construction with all facilities inside the campus. With these kinds of reflection shows that school does not over emphasized the academic excellence for the success mantra of students, as school understands the importance of other educational dimensions, for which they provide good facilities to children such as sports facilities and well equipped computer lab etc.
Children regardless of their age, class, race or background mostly are like a Note Book yet to be written upon. “The aim of education should be to build character human values enhance the learning capacity through technology and build up confidence among the children to face courageously the problems they might encounter in the future. Education is an endless journey through knowledge and enlightenment. Real education enhances the dignity of a human being and increases his self respect. It transforms our world into a better place to live in peace and communal harmony” says former Indian President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. Keeping these thoughts in mind, the principal of Ryan International School; Ms. Anju Uppal says that,

“we try to draw out the best in every child with a plethora of activities providing a galaxy of opportunities and help each and every child to blossom and to bloom with the intention to make them self disciplined and intellectually competent with spiritual, emotional, mental and moral growth. We strive to inculcate in the students the sense of secularism, nationalism, develop a sensitive heart and enlightened conscience. We shall spare no efforts to make the educational experience of our students meaningful and relevant to the socio-economic needs of the times and to equip our youthful changes to face the challenges of the future.”

The birth of Ryan International School Vasant Kunj took place on 3rd march 1991. Balance with nature has been maintained while designing the school building through landscaping of relief areas and using the space enclosed by different blocks for assembly as well as an open area auditorium. Today with their strong point, Ryan International School entered the Limca Book of Records for participation in their program “education through the lens”. Now, with their respected image, they have become as a ‘big’ name in the domain of school education. The school holds an excellent academic and co-curricular record and the students have created a niche for themselves in technical and educational institutions in India and abroad. To ensure the overall development of the child, the school has the following facilities: swimming pool, skating rink, auditorium, amphitheaters, state of the art labs, sports facilities and participation in international events.

2 Quoted in the Ryan International School’s prospectus.
RIS (Ryan International School) believes that every Ryanite is a “King in making”. So, keeping an eye on the overall development of students, school strives to incorporate all these technical transformation, to the best possible use. With a foresight into the future, we plan and allocate our sources accordingly. The challenge lies in utilizing the changing learning patterns with changes in methods of instruction coupled with technological advancements, to create an educational experience that will influence the all round development of students and uphold our commitment towards nation building. Again and again the emphasis of RIS gives on the overall development of a child, which includes moral, ethical, intellectual, cultural and emotional development. RIS claims that their teaching staff is highly qualified and selected as to promote each child in all developing personality, soul, and mind. The teachers are supposedly behaved patiently, to mould each child with proper care into ideal citizen. Teaching is tailored to the needs of the students by involving them in the learning process to interest. Some of the methods and techniques are as follows- role play, experimentation, projects and home activity.

Like RIS LPS also believes in the overall development of the child. The school motto of LPS (Laxman Public School) - “Be Yourself” speaks the volume about the quality of education which the school imparts and the values stand for. Like above mentioned schools, LPS also believes in imparting Holistic Education to the students which will lead to the development of three H’s Head, Heart, and Hand, so that they could efficiently discharge their duties to themselves, to the community and to the nation as a whole. The school has received the International School Award (ISA) accredited by the British Council for successful integration of the international dimension activities into the School Curriculum. Late Shri Laxman Agarwal (Founder) LPS has the correct ambience for imparting education which is capable of bringing about a series of human enfoldment for a lifelong education. The massive red brick school plant is located in the green patch of the Hauz Khas Enclave and is surrounded by eight acres of land. The sprawling playfields and the encircling belts of trees, the well maintained lawns and gardens that enclose the school structure symbolize the school motto ‘BE YOURSELF’. School believes that to know what one should be doing in life is really to discover one’s own true self. Your real is not your physical appearance. It is in fact the real ‘you’ whom
you will find within yourself and who is with you in moments when nobody else may be with you. This real self is a part of your thoughts about yourself. It has a power. It can make you visualize and create new things. It is your inspiration in life. To develop academic excellence, the school offers a wide syllabus with careful planning and guidance, and this has enabled the student’s independent thinking and self expression. Group activities in the school inculcate in the students team spirit, feelings of patriotism and teach them values of sharing and caring. The ideals of quality and excellence, with emphasis on human values, commitment, discipline, help to mould the student to adopt a modern, progressive and international outlook with a secular nature. LPS claims that in our school, opportunity is given to each student to acquire the values and beliefs that will guide him/her throughout life. With the availability of tremendous facilities almost in every area, liberal curriculum and teachers great contribution school is providing students enough space to follow the motto of school in their lives.

Though ideology of every school describes that they all have a common goal; the development of child in every aspect which emphasize the real/actual meaning of education and its relevance. Even in the present neoliberal society, schools feel the need of moral and ethical education for the development of students. This philosophical aspect of school education offers many positive elements to the students but dilemma starts when philosophy seems far away from the reality of the schools. For instance, almost every school has a library with good facilities, they also have specific periods for library (this is apply for the junior section by which schools try to build up the habit of reading or spending time in library) but still they fail to incorporate the value of library and reading books. Today, most of the children do not have the habit of reading books or browsing different types of books. This pertaining trend favors the easy accessibility to internet information, which eventually controls their minds, creativity and even imagination. In that case children adopt the new meaning of education in terms of catering information, memorizing skill and presenting them in more fashionable ways that only required superior sources of information. By another example we can see the difference between philosophy and practicality such as almost in every school students are not allowed to bring more than twenty rupees as a pocket money and school canteens are not allowed to keep expensive and unhealthy food but if we see the emerging
popularity of soft drinks and junk food among students the degrees are high. For that matter, definitely only schools are not responsible because the family socialization also varies, as schools claim that we are not the rehabilitation centers to force the child to quit such habits, but my argument here is if school curriculum is build in such a way where a student actually develops a sensitivity to his/her own behavior through various activities and disciplinary knowledge(for instance; how these habits can be harmful for his health and for the society as well at the larger level.) then lesser probability of inexcusable habits can spread some positive light. Because, if a child, through the process of schooling, learns to value the supremacy of specific behavioral patterns of particular culture over the new emerging temptations and trends in that case it would not seem difficult to incorporate such habits into students’ behavior.

Despite the increasing domination of appearing new trends and adamantly promoting good habits in child, school where they overtly emphasize on equality as an ideology of the institution and a high sense of responsibility towards the society, inbuilt unequal structure of them actually promotes inequality almost in every sphere of the education. For example: if a student feels to expresses himself through Hindi poetry, then his popularity chart in the school is comparatively low to the English poet of the school. This language domination is prevalent in practicing various ways, along with this hierarchy of disciplinary knowledge where disciplines of sciences and commerce are celebrating the established authority over humanities and other soft disciplines; physical education, fine arts etc. Therefore, students actually experience the dualism in the process of learning where deriving the educational aspirations some succeeds or some fail.

However, schools favour this whole cycle of inequalities by reproducing the inequalities in the domain of cultural reproductions which can be easily seen in the work of Pierre Bourdieu. According to him, contrary to the belief that education builds new type of societies and brings social mobility, in class divided society education is not engaged in an act of radical transformation rather it reinforces and reproduces the existing order in all its inequalities, fragmentations and hierarchies. He debunks the belief that school is a neutral institution. In an unequal society many cultures exist but not all of them get equal representation in the domain of education.
Instead, it is the culture of the privileged classes that get better representation. When a child belonging to the working class joins the school, she or he finds that his culture is not represented and is repeatedly made to unlearn his cultural traits and acquire the cultural traits of the privileged bourgeois classes like reading classics, using abstract languages, for example: a child who can speak the language of the teacher’s “language” is likely to fare better in school than one who has not been exposed to the cultural capital of the schools and dominant groups in society. He also finds that the children of privileged backgrounds are more equipped to deal with school education as they already know of the legitimate knowledge through their family socialization. This is a form of symbolic violence that the child faces and from the beginning the competition is unseen which later contributes to their dropping out of school or failing. Further, he elaborates that there are two types of language patterns - the bourgeois parlance (ornamental presentation, literary style of writing, abstract language etc.) and working class pattern (moves from particular to particular) and at school level and the university level the bourgeois parlance is accepted and celebrated. The children of working class find it difficult to master and so they drop out or experienced the anxieties as a failure.

[II]

SUCCESS AND FAILURE: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

Today the world is totally ‘fragmented’ or ‘discrete’. It is because of fragmentation inherent in the modernist world view, conflict, confusion and struggle for peace can be observed. For example, a person who comes from a wealthy family/ upper middle class family, habitual to experience every comfort of life from ‘labeled’ schooling to ‘branded’ cinemas for entertainment, continued his studies in a good-famous college of his choice and finally leading his life successfully with high packaging of salary. But after all these exposures of comforts that person is not satisfied and happy, taking his present life as a tragic phase, continuously struggling with inner conflicts and searching for love and peace. And often, he finds himself as a failure in this process. This story is not only about Manav, a ‘successful engineer in a renowned company’ but now

---

increasing demands of psychiatrists, augmentation of broken relationships and daily news about murders/killings and suicides among youngsters clearly indicating the inner struggle and confusion. For these situations many reasons are responsible but here, my query is that if ‘good education’ allows a person to become a good human being, gives space to relish the freedom and inspire to achieve his dreams then after succeeding those dreams how can one feel detached not only from the society but from himself also.

Therefore, education is also responsible for the occurrences of such incidents in the present Indian society. Education is a social product by which a child learns to connect his own experiences with the outer world. For instance, in the preparations for the school’s annual function, all school children and teachers work together as a team, for a time being they all have one motive i.e. representing the school with a ‘good image’. In this respect, every individual’s contribution holds the equal amount of significance whether somebody is doing back stage work or somebody is representing the school on stage by hosting the program. Through these cultural practices of schools, pupils learn to work in a team, somebody explores his leadership quality or while making the advertisement posters; a science student realizes his talent in calligraphy, a literature student who assign to maintain the accounts for the program starts valuing his accountability, while relaxing in between of the preparations, a sociology student begins to enjoy his singing talent and so on. In all these ‘informal’ activities nobody is getting rewards and tagged as a failure whereas they are enjoying their freedom in thoughts as well as in actions. Because of the relatedness of individuals’ acts and choices of actions, they can experience the joy of learning. My appeal is, when an individual like ‘Manav’ is unconsciously limited his talent on the name of functionality of an organization then he actually confined himself in boundaries where it’s difficult to breath in that environment and it directly affects him personally and professionally.

With the encouragements of sensibility for community, collective conscience and inner awakening, by promoting rewards and ranking system school also appreciates individuals’ efforts and talents but at the same time the curriculum supports the structure of inequality as well. Therefore, with these symbols such as getting rewards in the form of victory trophy, appreciation certificates, holding the positions on the notice board etc.
certain assumptions are usually associated within the classrooms and/or schools, which influence the individual’s decisions on the bases of the receiving benefits. Though these symbols are automatically develop the desired expectations of the schools from students and that to the bases of selection and allocation of students. This leads to the notion of success and failure among students, by which students face many difficulties to understand their own emotions and feelings about themselves.

The schools create the symbolic structure that influences how individuals make sense of the reality and interact with others. Official school positions such as president of the student council, lower level reader, or athlete can become important elements of a students’ self which labelled and tracked students with success and failure in school. And it signifies the future of the particular students in the outer world. The processes of labelling by assigning students in academic/ non academic tracks and ability groups serve to reproduce inequalities in society. The point is that schools are powerful institutions, and interactions within them heavily influence how children think about themselves and their futures.

For example; Geetanjali a student of Laxman Public School, just cleared her 10th class Boards examination now has began her journey with commerce discipline. She generally feels enthusiastic about watching advertisements and documentaries. She says,

“ I feel that good advertisement actually helps to promote a product, like; advertisements of soft drinks, cosmetics, food products like Saffola oil, Bournvieta, Vodafone, Airtel, Idea connections etc. I really like to watch ‘Vodafone Zoo Zoo’s advertisements. The creative and imaginative skill behind advertisement always made me think that if somebody asks to promote a product through advertisement then how I will present it. So, my mind always works on that creativity by which my friend circle gets easily targeted. Therefore, I am usually engaged in every creative activity of the school. On the question of why she has opting commerce then she replied that many reasons are responsible behind my decision, as my good marks and the perceptions of the parents that commerce can provide me good opportunities, as I have already planned that I will go for MBA and probably then I will choose advertisement field as for specialization. For now I have to bear the burden of commerce. I really do not like accounts and statistics
but cannot help it because I do not have any other alternative. On the note of success and failure; sometimes I really feel as if I am a failure because I belong to a simple middle class family, who cannot take risk while in opting optional subjects/ courses. I have to have a secure future, so in that case I need to take some cautious steps towards my future plan and I am actually doing that. Advertisement, singing and dancing all are still considered as side subjects which are good to develop your personality traits but besides that everybody suggest that be serious about your ‘future’ first. At this point, only when I am compromising with my actual talent, for me it’s a failure, now I am putting my extra efforts and hard work in that discipline which is only a need in real sense for my survival and I am trying to search my happiness and success in it.”

This thought provoking narration of her, clearly indicating the ‘risk factor’ in the vocation especially for middle class of India. It’s true that these days with Globalization, Liberalization, many new professions/ occupations have came into limelight and students are also interested in taking them. These are; BPOs, Mass Communications, Fashion World (which includes designing, modelling) etc. Their glamorous character and attractive modes of benefits are also capturing the attention of students. But the popularity graphs of some courses are still high in comparison to these courses. Reasons are vary; as courses like engineering, medicines and teaching, are traditionally ‘respected professions’ which are also able to provide security and prosperity. Like, a home science student of Laxman Public School, Nivedita, and 12th class student wants to be an interior designer but she says that

“I come from an orthodox family, where these professions are considered to be risky in terms of economical security. So my parents are suggesting, actually almost forcing me to do teaching after B.A. because my mother says that ‘teaching’ as a profession is an easy and manageable profession with the family life of a female individual. As I am just entering into college life, I still have a scope to pursue my parents’ dreams and then probably can lead my life on my own terms. She says one of my English teachers always suggested/ encourages us to live freely and learn to take our responsibilities. But some students like me are not even allowed to express our thoughts and ideas or you can say we do not find enough space to express ourselves in terms of
occupations. Many times I scored bad marks, felt humiliated in front of my classmates, got punished on many issues but never felt these boundaries like before. Sometimes, I feel suffocated, as my dreams are about to shattered.

In this respect Mrs. Nirmala Chaudhary, a mother of 10th class student of Gangaram International School, expressed her views on education and its significance in the present scenario. She says:

“\textit{I have observed that my daughter is never interested in studies, often she flunked. In starting, I thought may be because of our family environment, as my husband’s family/congenial family is joint in nature and pursuing family business where education in comparison to money has less value or you can say that education for them is considered as a way to earn only money and mostly our children studied only because they think it’s necessary to have school education at least for minimum understanding. But personally I feel that education is necessary for every child whether they want to pursue it as a professional career or not. So, I used to scold her quite often, forced her to study but nothing could worked out well. Ultimately, on the suggestions of family members and relatives, we decided to send her to the Gangaram International Boarding School where she passed with good marks. And on her report day, along with the academic excellence teachers were appreciating her singing ability very much. Obviously, we were quite impressed and surprised also that how did it happen? Then after meeting her western music teacher, we realized that she has mainly interested in western vocal music and she is really good. Her teacher, Mrs. Madhu (Science teacher) was saying that “before joining this school, she never got a chance to express her talent, she had been always forced to do what she never liked, and automatically she lost her interest almost in everything, started hating studies. But now she has able to express herself freely, people are appreciating her also. She has started valuing herself and now she has become courageous to explore herself in every field whether it’s academic or non-academic”. So, after talking to her (mother says), now even we also want her to pursue her interested field but her father is suggesting that simultaneously look for other alternatives also, as we cannot rely only on music for her future. But yes for now, I and my daughter are enjoying her success.}
In continuation, Vaishali Chaudhary (daughter of Mrs. Chaudhary) says that

“Now I feel relaxed as everybody is seeing some hope in me. Otherwise I was a declared ‘failure’ child. I used to feel irritated and furious. Often, I throw tantrums on everything from food habits to studies. Generally, whenever results come, a comparison between me and my brother created a chaotic scene in my family, because my brother was amongst toppers and I was even worried for my passing marks. My family in real sense worried about me. But today it seems as if some kind of miracle happened to me. Now everybody waits for my vacation, my father proudly says that my daughter sings very good English songs and she is good in academics also. It is surprising but true that now I am much healthier than earlier. All together my parents feel proud of me. I know that still there is no certainty about my future and still I am just an average scorer but still that stability, peace and happiness convert my life into a successful life.”

The aim of education and associated meaning of success and failure is little different to the 11th class student of Ryan International School, named Akriti. In her views she explained that,

“From what I understand, the aim to educate a child is to make him independent and pave way for his success at a later stage of his life. Education starts at a very young age. Parents ‘educate’ the child to hold his spoon properly, eat with his mouth shut, chew a lot while eating, brush before going to bed, have a bath everyday etc. This is very important in the development road of a child. The second stage of education comes when the child is enrolled in a school. Initially, the teacher teaches him the most basic things. How to hold his pencil, how to write seven like a ‘7’ and not ‘L’, not to be greedy and open his Tiffin before recess, these are some of the things taught in the more initial phase of school. Now a child grows up, he becomes a ‘teenager’. This is the hardest time for him. He is reluctant to follow the rules, does not listen to his teacher, and is confused in what he wants. He knows that what he is being told is the right thing but he refuses to follow it because ‘it’s not cool!’”

Let me illustrate my understanding of inspirational education by giving my own example. My name is Aakriti. I am 16 years old and I study in class 11 in one of the most
prestigious school of Delhi: Ryan International School. I passed my class 10 with a 94.6%. This according to me is not success at education. My teachers think they succeeded at educating me since I got such ‘good marks’. Yes I did. And I’m not saying that I am not proud of it because I really am but I don’t think my marks determine just yet that I have got a good education. Hailing from a small city, where the best schools are very inferior, everyone automatically seems to assume that I am receiving the best education.

Further she explains, “What education is to me?” 3 years back, I fell on my face on the basketball court. It was a cemented court so I was injured very badly. It was our school’s ‘Inter House Matches’ and my house needed me. Injuries are very common in a game like Basketball. I got a bruise on my left knee. It was bleeding. I went out of the court, put ‘betadin’ on it, got it bandaged and went to play the match again. We lost that game. The next to next morning, we had another match. My injury was much better; at least I thought it to be. I played the first two quarters in ease. During the halftime my senior asked me, “Aakriti, are you fine?”

“Yeah, why do you ask?”

“Your face looks like someone is torturing you.”

I scoffed and said that I was completely fine. Who was I kidding? My knee was in total agony. It felt like really small people were inside my knee and was continuously poking me. It aggravated in the third quarter. Five minutes were left for the third quarter to get over. I couldn’t take it anymore. [We were leading the score 8-6 (quite a low scoring match)] I asked my senior for a ‘time-out’. I went and sat where the ‘bench’ of my team was seated. “Yes, I am not fine”. I told her before she could say ‘I knew it’. My coach came to me and said the most inspiring words to me. “Miss Yellow (as he liked to call me), the team can play without you. You are not Michael Jordan. Don’t stay under the delusion that they can’t do it without you. But right now, if you go there and play, you will prove to yourself that you are strong, both from inside and outside. Don’t give up. This is what teamwork is. You don’t play for yourself, you play for others.”
Those were by far the most stirring words anyone had said to me. I got up and told my coach that I would play the last quarter. My knee kept troubling me. Every time I attempted a jump shot or a layup, it hurt me. Then I decided what best I could do to help my team register a win (against the mighty house we were playing) and not aggravate my injury further: PASS. And that’s exactly what I did. As soon as I got the ball, I dribbled a bit and passed it to the person nearest to the basket. There were quite a few mis-passes. But at the rate at which I was passing, statistically they must have been 5%. They were all kinds of passes: long passes, short passes, crossover passes. I have never played like such a team player. I kept passing and my friend(s) kept shooting. We went on to win the match 22-18. I went to my coach and he just put his hand on my head and said ‘Shaabaash (well done)’. I was awarded the ‘most valuable player’. I learnt so many things that day. How to never give up, not be selfish, to be strong, to be a team-player and to have the one thing that lacked most in me that time; WILL POWER. This according to me is ‘education’ and I think this can be defined as ‘success in school education’. Obviously there is a lot more to learn but when I learnt these things at the age of 13, I think I haven’t done so badly.

Above narrations of students enlighten us about the importance of school education and its role in the development of children. School education, as a secondary socialization provides larger place to pupils for their growth and progress. Through school experiences they create their own parameters and develop their attitudes towards life accordingly. For instance, for a nursery child scoring a BIG STAR on the alphabetical exercise is a success, big applause of the whole class on his/her poetry recitation is a big achievement, for a primary student, if a teacher displayed child’s collage creation on the class room wall is a victory, appreciation for the good handwriting is a memorable moment for him and many more experiences force them to internalize the meaning of success. But at the senior educational level conversion occurs and the definition of success or failure equalizes to the scores/marks. Therefore, dreams, desires and hopes bracketed themselves and multiply with final scores of a child, this equation of a life shows the possibilities for a child’s bright future. This explanation is not merely showing the struggle of social realities in the neo-liberal India but it is indicating
towards the necessity to understand the relationship between theory and practice, philosophy and technology and of course concern and connectivity.

In terms of teachers’ views students’ scenario of education is changing. As Miss Aditi, a foreign language teacher of Laxman Public School expressed her views, by saying that, “Success and Failure are very relative terms. But success has often been misunderstood as being just one thing in school education: hitting on the right grades. And of course, Failure as it’s opposite. Everyone knows that Success is accomplishing a goal, a set target, but the caretakers of education in this country have misunderstood that this ‘goal’ is just one single universal goal: of winning the race. (First position in class, School topper, college topper, gold medalist, state topper, All India Rank, there just seems to be no end to it!)

As far as I remember, as a student I didn’t even worry much about getting marks to be successful. In my mind percentage and success were not connected. The hunt for percent was to fit into a few expectations, to be part of an intelligent scholarly group. My friend was scoring well, what if I score badly and I get gradually cut out of my ‘friends-circle’. I was the head girl. What if I disappoint my teachers who thought me to be worthy enough of taking this prestigious responsibility?

I am currently teaching foreign language as a compulsory but non-credit course to students. I see them as a bunch of unpunctual, unresponsive non-serious students not worrying a bit about grades and hence not giving it the required dedication. And I personally blame how much success in life has been linked with grades. This thought has been instilled in them at a subconscious level since kindergarten. Foreign language can be fun. It pushes your creative side of the mind working in a similar way as ‘sharpening your axe’, so that you can work efficiently some more. In long term it trains the mind to be analytical. But they no more understand the significance. “If its non-credit, why study for it?”

School education is based on the four pillars of imparting knowledge (humorously, all four being graded on a score of 100). Undoubtedly, it definitely is an integral part of success but it is not the most essential factor. There is something else, an
'X Factor’, that helps a man succeed, a kind of wisdom, a sense to make the right choices in life, choose the right values above lucrative vices such as competition, jealousy, greed, pride, inferiority and pressure. And unfortunately, the current system of education in the name of “success” is unconsciously promoting these vices.

But on the other hand, there are these other aspects of school education that teach more things through ways that cannot be judged on grades. Education is not confined to a classroom. Starting from waiting for the school bus or making to the school on time, to coming back and managing your day in a way to be able to complete the homework, school life teaches many a things that shape a successful man. Promptness, punctuality, hygiene, compatibility, sense of sharing (and caring), hard work, management skills are things that are not taught through books and are not judged on a 100 point grade scale but nevertheless are taught in the same school life moulding a child in a very discreet way into the blue-print of a successful human being.

As Max Weber emphasizes that the primary activity of the schools is to teach particular ‘status cultures’. Within the school there are ‘insiders’ whose status culture Weber believes, is reinforced through the school experiences, and ‘outsiders’ who face barriers to success in school. As we apply these ideas to school systems today to explain the notion of success and failure his theory become evident. His theory deals with conflict, domination, and status groups struggling for wealth, power and status in society. Education is used by individuals and society as a means to attain desired ends. Relating this to Karl Marx’s writings on the conflict theory, education produces a disciplined labor force for military, political, or other areas of control and exploitation by the elite group membership; and power derived from positions in government or other organizations.

While explaining the larger societal explanation Bowles and Gintis also take a more macro view of schools, particularly as schools function to reproduce inequality and create class and power differences in societies. They argue that schools reproduce capitalist society through the students’ selection and allocation processes that create hierarchies within societies, socializing students into these hierarchies of power and domination, and legitimizing the hierarchies by claiming they are based on merits. Following the assumption of Marx, they argue that school structure is based on the needs
and standards of the dominant capitalist group in society and thus serves the purpose of that group. Students both bring into and take away different cultural competencies.

In the terms of a student from Ryan International School, Anirudh (12th class, science student), describes that education cannot be merely to the job of providing degrees. The aim of education is the knowledge not of facts but of values. Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or self confidence. It has produced a vast population able to read but unable to distinguish what is worth reading, an easy prey to sensations and cheap appeals. Education must be value based and it must be part of school curriculum in schools. But value education still remains distant dream. The results are disastrous. The young students in schools and colleges are going astray. Moreover the larger sections of students are being simply reduced to walking computers. Whereas others have became white collared brutes. Both ways the development is lopsided. It is the age of neo-consumerism. Unfortunately morals and minds of youth are guided by forces of market. Material prosperity has become the only aim of life. Pragmatism and not the principles is the guiding factor of life. The emperors of the future have to be the emperors of the mind.

Education in schools suffers from many drawbacks. It does not lead to an all round development of personality. Physical education in schools has not received its due attention and importance. Education is confined to academics. At present we are living in a country where even a score of 95% does not guarantees admission in most sought after universities one of them namely being Delhi University. It seems as if only top scorers are able to fetch seats at good institutions. In the long run of liberalization we have shifted our focus from the aim of education and success. We have forgotten the real aim of success of education and moreover now simply associate it with mere number of scores. Even Fran Lebowitz said that if you are truly serious about preparing your child for the future then don’t teach him to subtract instead teach him to deduct. These lines have a wider perspective of meaning which one might often fail to understand. Further it highlights upon the meaning and aim of education and thus connects the former and latter with beautiful strings of words. Moreover if ‘a’ is success in life then ‘a=x+y+z’ where ‘x’ and ‘y’ are playing and being happy respectively whereas ‘z’ is education.
It therefore, gives a conclusion that education is merely a small part of success though being an integral one, but an individual cannot simply rely only on education to become a successful being. Success cannot simply be closed under the curves of high scores and big degrees moreover it won’t be false to say that one can be successful only if he is morally satisfied apart from large earnings and building huge empires. Even if a person is able to fulfill his daily basic needs it does not mean that he has to be more successful to be happier. Neglectful attitude of the school authorities and parents along with other educational institutions towards moral upliftment of students had resulted upon such consequences where numbers play big games neglecting other important factors. This attitude is responsible for such story condition of the present times. Even sports and games are via media of national unity and national solidarity. Inter state tournaments foster a spirit of brotherhood and co-operation. Sports and games make us physically and mentally strong. After all a healthy mind lives in a healthy body. Therefore, even sports must get due recognition in educational institution as education should not be confined to academics alone. Sports must be a compulsory subject at various basic levels. Modus operandi for educational institutions is so much responsible on merit that even children commit suicide due to such pressures. Students have to undergo various farce during their time spent in educational institutions which is not fair. So let us to be able to keep our educational institutions as the temples of learning as only this can reduce the frequency of failures.

Yet, students’ expressions of distance and distaste for the academic undertaking created serious distress and frustration for their teachers. A few determined and skilled individuals were able to reduce or mitigate these patterns through imagination and force of character within the parameters of the common script. Some, equally dedicated, tried hard but were unable to do so. Some teachers simply blamed the difficulty of teaching on students; they considered those they worked with intellectually or morally deficient. They wished they had students “like the old days” or they wished they taught in their idealized conception of a “better” school: a magnet school, a suburban school or a school in a different kind of suburb where families cared more about education. Many teachers seem to use such blame to protect their own imperiled sense of craft. Even among teachers who did not reject students as unworthy, the overwhelming majority did not expect to tailor
the institution or the learning to the students, but assumed that they must tailor the students to the institution.

Indeed, the key philosophical question raised by Plato’s teacher and mentor Socrates is effectively the educational question of how best for human beings to live their lives—more specifically, of how the young might be educated for positive living. It is well known that in the course of addressing this issue, Socrates took to task the educational philosophy of ancient Greek sophists—in a way that remains highly relevant to contemporary concerns. For although the sophists held (broadly) that the good life consisted of the pursuit of virtue or excellence—they appear largely to have construed such excellence in the non moral terms of worldly success. The truly excellent or enviable human agent would be he/she who had achieved great wealth, honor, and influence in the eyes of his peers. In consequence, only those arts or skills that conduced to the achievement of such success could be held to have much if any educational value.

In short, rhetoric— as in popular modern psychology manuals could help the practitioner to win friends and influence people. In the dialogues, Gorgias⁴ and others are fairly explicit that this is all that really matters about rhetoric: from this viewpoint, the sincerity or truth of fine words are of little account so long as personal advantage is effectively secured. It is this self seeking view of “education” that Socrates challenges, arguing that lives of fulfilled ambition on the heels of finely worded deceit could not be regarded as virtuous or excellent lives— at least in terms of his own more moral conception of virtue. For Socrates, far from being excellent and admirable, the lives of materially prosperous or sensually sated but vicious tyrants are benighted and contemptible: no reasonable person recognizing the moral wretchedness or poverty of such lives could so want to live. For Socrates, the chief virtue of excellence is wisdom, the main goal of which is self knowledge in the light of truth; hence, insofar as rhetoric is largely indifferent to the pursuit of truth, it can serve no genuine educational end. In this light, Plato’s Socrates sets a new, morally visionary educational agenda: since genuine virtue is nothing less than the wisdom of self knowledge, the educational worth of any

branch of study or learning resides not in its practical utility but in its contribution to the promotion of wisdom.

Education, however, is a constant reorganizing or restructuring of experiences\(^5\) both points are subsumed under the idea that our lives go better through our awareness of connections among aspects of our experiences, or as Dewey so often puts it, through the expansion and deepening of “meanings”. Increased awareness enables forms of appreciation that matter intrinsically to us and also promote interventions that help us realize antecedent goals (as well as sometimes prompting us to change our aims). These expressive views of individuals (all belonging to the different generations and professions) highlight the real/actual significance of education as a transforming way of a child’s life. These narrations define that knowledge believes what is true for good reasons. To impart knowledge, one must cultivate the ability to embrace truths for good reasons. Students are overly impressed by the fact that their teachers have certain beliefs, and they are motivated to embrace such beliefs for that reason alone. In the perceptions of teacher by education they basically mean that, ‘*we want to teach them how to deal with information they receive, not how to manipulate that information in the service of some antecedently determined conclusion.*’ Here, the question arises that how can mere belief necessitate a desire? Believing something good is one thing; desiring it is something else. Because beliefs and desires seem logically independent having a certain set of beliefs does not entail having the particular desires.

For instance, if ‘Nivedita’ believes in the logical side of science that simply does not mean that her interests/desires lie into the disciplines of ‘sciences’. Of course that power of reasoning and logical ability do not limit her only to the disciplinary knowledge, therefore she can experience them in her daily life which actually entails a learner towards the creation of beliefs and desires. At this point, Graham Oddie argues that *beliefs without desires are powerless to motivate.*\(^6\) A person may well have a contingent independent desire to do what he believes to be good and once he becomes acquainted with a good he may, contingently, be motivated to pursue it. But no mere

---


belief, in isolation from such an antecedent desire, can motivate. That sits more easily with the frequent gap between what values we espouse and how we actually behave.

In this respect my interaction with Ashmit a 9th class student of Heritage Public School throw some light on children’s understanding of education. I met him in the sports period. He was sitting quietly and observing his friends when they were doing skating. He was passing some cheerful remarks. He was laughing, making fun of his friends but did not participating in the game. I went to him and asked, ‘So you are not the part of skating group?’ he very casually replied, “No! I am not because I cannot do it, I have a leg problem.” Then from an hour of discussion he expressed his views on many issues and shared his experiences also. He said for me education is a way to become an independent being especially economically independent. Because despite the interest in sports, I cannot excel my talent in sports, naturally academics are the option. So I always tries to give my hundred percent in it. In continuation, he described that how writing of short stories has converted into a passion and now he wants to be a writer. He says that from childhood, because of my health problem, I rarely stepped out from the protective surroundings of family and few friends from my class. For sharing things I used to be dependent on my mother but there were some hidden emotions and anxieties, which I could, not able to share them with anyone. And my mother understood it very well, so on an occasion she gifted me a diary and suggested to write everyday one page, by saying that it will help you in improving your writing skill and command over English language. From that day onwards it becomes a habit, now even I have many friends, have become outward nature person but still I cannot sleep without entering a daily entry in my dairy. Earlier, it was simply writing a whole day routine with few emotional reflections but now my writing style has improved in a sense of creativity. These days often I express myself through poetry; sometimes I sketched down on a page of my diary. Often, I write my imaginative thoughts in a story form. My participation through these stories in school competition, I got appreciation from teachers and students and those appreciations actually boost up my confidence also. Now everybody knows me as a story maker and teller. Thus I also feel that I am good in it. So, it should be taken as a suitable career option by me.
Besides the professional aspect of education, the pedagogy of school not only enhances pupil’s informative knowledge but it also encourages human to live with the happiness through collective spirit, liberation, and reasoning. In real terms education cannot be equated with the professional training. It has a wider meaning with the larger purpose. It is not merely for the human survival but it is about the survival with the significance; significance of societal values, norms and culture by which a human being transformed into a social being. But in the sphere of the societal inequalities that larger meaning/ goal of education is slowly declining. As Paulo Friere emphasized the pedagogy of the oppressed- the pedagogy that will enable the oppressed to overcome the dilemma, which will show them the road to salvation and will eventually make liberation possible. In his work, he highlighted the ‘culture of silence’ and ‘absenteeism of dialogic processes. For him, education is not reducible to a mechanical method of instruction. School learning is not about the delivering the informative and employable skill packages while its about the journey inwards through the dialogic education. For this matter he gave importance to the teacher-taught relationship where teacher transform his/her knowledge to the pupils through the dialogic process. In this regard, he signifies the development of the critical learning in the students where they feel free to question any kind of authoritative knowledge as a part of learning. This freedom of learning is lacking in the neoliberal economy of India. Therefore, students experience lots of difficulties while constructing the understanding of the social realities and its linkage with the outer world. And to overcome from this problematic dogma of schooling, he wants dialogic education as an important element of the revolutionary school practice.

The other day at the same place I met another student from Heritage Public School. In the interactive session with Shashank, a 12th class student, my journey as a researcher took a different turn altogether when he says that sometimes even for a student’s situation whether it’s considered as achiever or non-achiever is a teacher’s responsibility. Like, just take my example before joining this school, till 5th standard, I studied in a Hindi medium school of Gaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. My family roots are in a village of U.P. but with the shift of my father’s business, we moved to Delhi and since then, I am studying here only. In the beginning my school experiences were very problematic and horrible, because for the simple reason- I belonged to a Hindi medium
school. My command over English language was very poor both in writing and speaking. So, I rarely interacted with my classmates, and put questions in the class. I felt as if I do not know anything or whatever I learnt in the former school that was worthless. Earlier everybody knows me as an intelligent boy but in Heritage school I was struggling to even solve my basic queries. Every day when my mother woke me up for the school, I started crying in the bathroom but could not able to share those anxieties with any member of my family, as they all used to think that I am an intelligent child. I felt hesitant while participating in any of the school’s literary activities. In class, I was always in the fear that Oh! God, what happen if teacher would ask me to give an answer? So, I always tried to hide myself some way or the other way or I used to pretend that I understand everything whatever she’s trying to convey us. That continued at least for a year, though somehow I managed to pass in that class but yes even till today when I recall all those memories, they horrify me.

Presently, the situation is actually shocking as after my 12th, I am planning to do ‘Journalism’ (in English language). And the whole credit goes to my English teacher; Mrs. Ratna. I remember my first encounter with her as a teacher. At that day when she entered into the class, I was already shivering because I knew whoever comes he/she definitely asks for the formal introduction and students in that first class, all tried very hard in posing their first good impression. Similarly, even I prepared some lines for the formal introduction but surprisingly she simply introduced herself as our English teacher and in the next moment only she started teaching us our first chapter. All students’ faces were expressing some natural weirdness but on my part I was happy from inside and tried to pretend that I am also surprise by her way of approaching students. Drama did not last for long, as mid of her teaching, she simply point five students in the class and asked them to make a presentation on their favourite author or novel in the next class which (the presentation) will pass on everybody with various different themes. Tragic thing was that I was amongst those five students ‘as first day presenters’. I remember, her announcement simply ruined my whole day as I was thinking about the alternatives to quit. Finally, I quit by sending the application for health leave and feeling a bit relieved, thinking that she will not ask me again for that stupid presentation. But, sadly, I was wrong. Next day when she entered in the class first thing she asked any child absent
today? Everybody shouts: No, Ma’am. She asked O.K. then please stand up those students who were absent yesterday. I and another classmate of mine stood up and I was murmuring the health excuse but by not asking for the excuse again she gave us a shock. Then she said that “ok whatever the reason was to not making the yesterday presentation, I am simply not bothered and as a punishment you both are going to present a thematic presentation on every Monday at least for a month and if you plan to quit it again then it will extend for a year. So choice is yours.” I was almost in tears. As I was mainly bother about my image in front of the whole class. Thus, I did not have any alternative but to make presentations and finally I did it also. May be those were not so good presentations but at the same time not so bad also. And in the last presentation, my teacher appreciated me and after class some bright students of my class came to me and appreciated me also. At that moment that recognition was the great achievement for me. Therefore, gradually that fear of a ‘bad student’ automatically disappeared and again like my earlier days I started working hard in my studies. Yes of course, I had to struggle a lot in the learning of English language but at least after those few presentations I was hopeful and enthusiastic about myself. In these all long years, the constant encouragement of Mrs. Ratna infuses positive attitude towards life, which actually helped me to feel alive. For now, this is the success for me.

Though, all narratives pose many arguments in the course of school education and in the relation of constructing the notions of success and failure. In a result, we can say that the knowledge which students ideally acquire in their education prepares them for understanding the connections within experience, whether centered on natural or social phenomena; gives them methods for pursuing further inquiry and addressing value conflicts; and simultaneously develops them as individuals and as citizens, since any meaningful trajectory for a life will be one that involves joint action, and indeed, joint efforts to improve the culture. The goal is not information per se, but, rather knowledge that is significant and organized patterns that contribute to perspective and understanding in orienting thought and action. With the dominative character of informative knowledge even those in favor of students’ memorizing lists of information agree that educators shouldn’t aim at having students acquire only isolated bits of information. Students, therefore, should understand the meaning and significance of the knowledge they acquire.
It might seem evident that education should aim at truth; truth of self realization. By which a learner experiences the ‘dialogue even in silence’, have interaction with air waves, water waves, chirping birds, gushing sound of leaves etc. School education loses its vitality when a student of the ‘Economics discipline’ finds difficult to understand the relevance of share market and its existence in Indian economy and a literature student does not feel the need to participate in a cultural program of ‘school’ or even ‘cultural programs’ seem so insignificant to him.

We cannot deny the fact that education today is closely associated with meritocracy: the idea that inequality of outcomes is justified as long as the competition for those outcomes is fair and rewards some combination of talent and effort. The principal of educational equality does the work of ensuring that, despite unequal social starting points, children have equal opportunities to develop the talents that the competitions are structured to reward. But there is something wrong if some children have much better chances of getting jobs to which high wages are attached because they got superior chances to develop their talents. In this inequality frame the struggle to hold the brightest opportunities of life education becomes a pursuit of certificate and also a safeguard against the fear of failure. Therefore, once school life has started the serious life of a child has begun and with rules and regulation, started the alteration of happiness. In this pursuit, we (policy makers, educational thinkers, sociologists, educational institutions, parents and students) all need the regular and positive intervention in the domain of education which is important to improve the quality of students’ lives as well as for the development of the country also.

The rhythm of my work will be continued in the next chapter also where I try to explore depth of the meaning of success and failure. Basically, following chapter will be the reflection of my sociological engagement with selected narratives (as a methodological aspect of my thesis I selected eight students’ narrations in a detail form) which is keeping my quest and queries of educational dilemmas alive, and compelling me to visualize some hidden or unexplored structures of success and failure in school education.

*************************************