1.1 Institutional and social failure of higher education

The field of higher education in India has in recent times been besieged by a sense of crisis. This phenomenon is multifaceted and calls into question various aspects of higher education. These include, on the one hand, the aims and purposes of higher education, the relevance of what is taught and the disjunction between the kinds of education provided and the needs of society, the quality of the products of higher education, the survival and development of institutions of higher education; and on the other hand, the role of higher education in social change, its performance with respect to equity objectives, and the growth of the "educated-unemployed". The sense of crisis has thus served to highlight what may be termed the "institutional failure" of higher education as well as its "social failure".¹

Responding to this crisis demands action at the policy level as well as the level of individual institutions. This implies learning from the efforts of both mainstream and marginal institutions which were initiated to counter such "failure", or have responded to it. This study focusses on the lessons for institutional and macro-level policy action, offered by a mar-

¹ The higher education sector appears to be "in crisis throughout the world" (World Bank 1994: 1). However, this crisis refers primarily to the compression of education budgets and expenditures per student as a result of fiscal constraints on public funding. The financial crisis has been particularly severe in developing countries like India and has triggered off debate on not just the other problematic aspects like quality and equity, but fundamental issues like the roles of the State and the 'markets'.
original initiative designed to counter "social failure", and one which has attempted to respond to it.

The historical structuring of the Indian University system along the lines of the University of London's affiliating model, and its influence on independent India's educational development, have often been held responsible for the "sclerosis" and the mismatch between education and independent India's needs (Altbach 1993; Rudolph and Rudolph 1972; Ashby and Anderson 1966; Kirpal 1985: 24-26). Major efforts towards institutional reform have been made in the past; these have had some positive effect on the "margins", but have failed to reform the basic structure of the system (Altbach 1993). Thus, on the one hand, there are institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology and Management and certain Agricultural Universities, which are recognized as "quality" institutions. On the other hand, Universities offering general education, as institutions, have "entered the process of stagnation and decay, not least because of the total politicisation of academic life and loss of purpose in an institution whose basic aim is the pursuit of science and scholarship" (Beteille 1995: 563),\(^2\) (also see Narain 1985).

The politics of the language question in higher education (Jayaram 1993); the pressures for expanding the reach of higher education for students who "are not really in quest of higher education" (Chitnis 1985b: 213); the "qualification-inflation"

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2. Beteille uses the phrase "total politicisation", in the commonplace use of the term, to indicate political interference and blackmail, rather than political awareness and rational political participation.
ratchet — the worse the situation of the educated unemployed and the more useless educational certification, the stronger the pressures for an expansion of educational facilities — and the "diploma disease" (Dore 1976); the role of the examination system in "cooling off" (Clark 1985: 441-450) the aspirations of lower middle class students and the subversion of this role through strikes and mass copying (Zachariah 1993: 198-199); the doubting of the quality of the world's "third largest scientific and technical manpower" — all these are issues representative of the institutional failure of higher education.

Underpinning the growing concern about these issues in recent times is the financial crisis which has particularly affected state funding of the higher education sector. With India joining the ranks of countries undergoing macro-level stabilization of the economy and structural adjustment, policy making has shifted towards a readjustment of intra-sectoral priorities in favour of primary education (see Education in Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-1997), Government of India, New Delhi). Consequently, the growth and even survival of institutions of higher education have become important issues. Because of the increased pressure on financing higher education, institutional management and evaluative criteria like performance audits, accreditation, accountability, efficiency of resource use and mobilization of

3. The crises being faced by institutions of higher education have also attracted the attention of the popular media. See for instance Thapa, V. T., with Farzand Ahmed and Saritha Rai. Crippling Crunch. India Today, 31 December 1993; Singh, Amrik. Varsities must have internal funds. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 20 November 1993; Singh, Kanwaldeep. Panel to review higher study vital. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 17 August 1993.
resources from non-governmental sources are bound to assume greater importance than hitherto.  

Much has also been written about the less dramatic, but equally important, "social failure" of higher education which has occurred in spite of the fact that educational policy in independent India has been motivated by a concern for equity and the belief that education is an instrument for reducing social inequalities. Some of the aspects of this failure include:

(i) the systemic bias against the access of certain underprivileged sections of our society, like the scheduled castes and tribes, to higher education and the difficulties they face (Chanana 1993; Raza and Aggarwal 1991; Chitnis 1985a; Kirpal

4. The future directions towards different funding criteria and ensuring accountability of educational institutions are best exemplified by the recommendations of the Punnaya Committee report (University Grants Commission 1993a). Though this committee confined itself to Central universities, its recommendations are also relevant to state universities. Concern about the financial crisis in technical education is expressed clearly by the Report of the high power committee for mobilisation of additional resources for technical education, brought out by the All India Council for Technical Education in 1994. Under another initiative under the AICTE Act, 1987, accreditation by the National Board of Accreditation has been made compulsory for institutions of higher technical education. Accreditation in general higher education, under the National Accreditation and Assessment Council (of the University Grants Commission) has, however, been made voluntary.

5. The various Education Commissions have always seen education as a tool for social change. For instance, the Commission headed by Prof. D.S. Kothari (1964-66) asserted that for development to occur without violent revolution, and "even then it would still be necessary", education is the "one and one instrument only" which had to be used; (see Naik 1969). According to Prof. Nurul Hasan the purpose of education is "to bring about social transformation, to create greater equality among the people and facilitate our progress towards socialism" (NCERT 1972: 17).

6. The system of positive discrimination or affirmative action -- using education to promote social change -- through reservation of seats on the basis of caste and tribal status notwithstanding, equalization of educational opportunity is problematic (see Zachariah 1993). The issue is an extremely volatile one, and commands very visible political attention, especially when applied to professional education. Evidence is provided by the turmoil generated by the move to implement the recommendations of the Mandal Commission for reservations for the 'other backward classes' (Agrawal and Aggarwal 1991). The same attention has, however, not been focussed on the relatively "dull" issues of access to basic education and literacy and related equity concerns which affect the vast majority of the Indian population, as higher education does not. "Indeed, those who are in greatest need of elementary education are also... in a particularly weak position to translate their needs into coherent and effective political demands" (Dreze and Saran 1993: 75).
1978; Chalam 1990). This bias also needs to be understood in the context of a more fundamental social problem, which is the tolerance of "extreme injustices (such as, a vast majority of illiterates) while a minority benefit from a huge system of higher education" (Ghosh 1987: 16). The relationship between education and its social context is a very complex one, but gender inequality is a basic systemic factor which cuts across many other modes of inequality and contributes to the cumulative disadvantages to which women are subjected (Chanana 1993; Desai and Krishnaraj 1987; Seymour 1995). These result in the persistent "gender gap" noticed at all levels of education, primary as well as higher (Subbarao et al. 1994; King and Hill 1993).

The issue of systemic bias may also be related to the undermining of two value-choices which had sustained the educated elite during the first two decades of independent India: equality and secularism (Kumar 1987: 38-40). The undermining of equality was achieved through the use of "early selection as a strategy for nurturing the meritorious"; the role of education in the development of a secular society was just a matter of faith, since the internal processes of education -- the curriculum, pedagogy and culture of educational institutions, have never allowed education to be "particularly secular or secularizing".

(ii) The superfluity of graduates as evidenced by massive unemployment and under-employment has also been recognized as a symptom of this failure (Chitnis 1993). While it is clear that education and employment/unemployment are related, the manner in which they are related is not clear, and ironically, "when education-employment relations are not strong, it appears that the
relationship between education and unemployment is relatively very strong" (Tilak 1994: 134).

Regardless of the exact relationship between educational planning and economic planning, past trends indicate a high annual growth of 22.2 percent in the number of educated unemployed registered in the employment exchanges -- from 0.16 million in 1953 to 16.45 million in 1986 (ibid.: 136). Also, over the years, the waiting period for employment has increased. Employment increased at a slower rate of 2.2 percent per annum over the period 1951-1985 than the GDP growth of 3.76 percent per annum; this rate of growth of employment has barely managed to keep pace with population growth (Prakash and Chowdhury 1994: 151). Thus, education has grown at a much faster rate than employment. To this extent, it may have played a dubious role in absorbing a sizeable portion of the younger segments of the population which would otherwise have been ready to enter a very limited labour market (Chitnis 1985b: 213).

(iii) The relationship between education and socio-economic change in the Indian context has been an area of concern in educational debate (see Ghosh and Zachariah 1987; Rao 1985; Kamat 1985; Naik 1975b). While the official position, as noted earlier, sees education as an instrument of change, an assessment by sociologists studying "the specificities of social change in the contemporary period in a conflict paradigm" (Shukla and Kumar

7. This situation is not peculiar to India. Graduate unemployment, a type of external inefficiency, has afflicted most developing countries, especially in the 1980s (World Bank 1994: 20). The situation is expected to worsen in the future, given the economic stagnation and government policies which create, in the view of the World Bank, "labour market distortions" (ibid.: 21).
1985) would seem to indicate that education is in fact more "acted upon" because access to it is screened by inegalitarian social structures (Saldanha and Velaskar 1993).

Given the inequalities in social structures, it is feared that the recent pressures of structural adjustment on the economy may have a negative impact on the social sector (Prabhu 1994; Upendranadadh 1993) and result in a sacrifice of equity concerns, thus accentuating the "social failure" of higher education; (see Noss 1991, for a review of literature on education and structural adjustment). In addition, other problems have been noted in connection with the demands for a change in the important role the state has been playing in higher education till now. For instance, Tilak (1991, 1993) notes that in addition to the state's problems in coping with the pressures on higher education, "market failure" is also a possibility. That is, the private sector may respond only through demand-absorbing institutions and neglect difficult areas like underprivileged students and regions. It may also take up the "easier" tasks and leave the more expensive or difficult tasks like funding of basic research to the state.

To summarize briefly, the context for the general social failure of higher education is provided by (a) the biases which are determined by inegalitarian social structures and the ideolo-

8. The negative experiences of the countries which underwent structural adjustment in the early 1980s resulted in the later strategies of "adjustment with a human face" (Cornia, Jolly and Stewart 1987), under which 'safety nets' were provided to take care of vulnerable sections of society. (See Rose 1995 for a cross-country study of negative effects on female enrollment.) Another outcome was the sector-adjustment and the more recent hybrid loans, under which loans are confined to specific sectors, or to specific sub-sectors of education, like primary education, or to specific inputs, like text books.
gies upholding them, and (b) the contribution of higher education to the phenomenon of "graduate unemployment". In the light of this social failure, it is interesting to note that there have been comparatively small, localized efforts on the margins of the formal higher education system, which have catered to the rural, socio-economically underprivileged sections of our society, and have attempted to educate for self-reliance, rather than formal-sector employment. One such initiative is the gram vidyapith movement of Gujarat, a network of vidyapiths or rural colleges, which has deliberately identified youth belonging to the rural, agricultural or labouring classes, and to socio-economically disadvantaged sections of society, as its main client group. The movement traces its origins to the influence of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of education -- *nai talim* or "Basic" Education.

1.2 The Gram Vidyapiths of Gujarat

The gram vidyapith movement derives its rationale from a perception of mainstream higher education as irrelevant to the majority of India's population and to village India, since it has been unable to rid itself of colonial influences and an emphasis on certification for bureaucratic jobs. The vidyapiths, therefore, aim at creating self-reliant, rural service-oriented graduates, who will undertake the tasks associated with rural transformation (Pancholi 1974: 144-157). There are 23 gram vidyapiths in Gujarat (see Appendix 1.1 for a list of gram vidyapiths and their locations). This study focusses on 19 of these vidyapiths, which are networked through an apex body, the *Gujarat Gram Vidyapith Samaj*. Among the better known of the gram vidyapiths
are Lok Bharati, Sanosara, established in 1953, and the Gandhi Vidyapith, Vedchi, started in 1967. The vidyapiths offer a three-year "Bachelor in Rural Studies" (BRS) programme. The programme of Lok Bharati, Sanosara, leads to a degree from Bhavnagar University, Gujarat, while the BRS programmes of the other institutions are recognized by the state government as equivalent to a three-year degree programme. The institutions offer one or more of the following curriculum streams: agriculture and animal husbandry, folk education, home science, dairy science and forestry. The pedagogy followed is based on the principles of 'Basic education', which attempt to integrate intellectual learning with learning through the practice of a craft. The total number of students who graduate from the 19 vidyapiths every year is about 1100.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Many of the vidyapiths have been involved, through their students, in the "Honey Bee" network's "Local Technology Survey Programme" conducted every year since 1990, during the summer vacations. The progress of this programme is reviewed, with the vidyapiths, once a year. During one such review meeting held in

9. Lok Bharati, Sanosara has recently (1994) initiated a Master's programme in rural studies.

10. "Honey Bee" is a network initiated by Prof. Anil K. Gupta, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, which aims at ensuring recognition of and rewards to grassroots innovators -- agriculturists, pastoralists, artisans, teachers etc. (See various issues of Honey Bee, the newsletter of the network.) The Local Technology Survey Programme aims at studying grassroots indigenous technological and institutional innovations, both traditional and contemporary, in agriculture, pastoralism, crafts etc. The gram vidyapith students are first trained in identifying "odd ball" innovators, who have, on their own, come up with solutions to problems affecting their day-to-day lives. The students then survey different villages of Gujarat. The innovations thus recorded are verified and transferred to a computerized data base.
mid-1992, the participating vidyapiths felt that the programme had contributed to a better appreciation, among the students, of creativity and innovation at the grassroots. However, in order to strengthen the vidyapith network, other areas of concern to the vidyapiths, needed to be researched. The major theme underlying these concerns was that the social change orientation of the movement, evolved as a counter-response to the social failure of mainstream higher education, was itself under pressure on account of certain institutional developments that echoed the dimensions of "institutional failure" of higher education in general. Learning to deal with these developments was seen as essential for retaining the rural and social development orientation. The present study was initiated in response to this concern.

To begin with, a workshop was organized for the Principals and Directors of the vidyapiths in March 1993, in order to identify in greater detail the concerns of the vidyapiths and to evolve certain guidelines for the research. Sixteen out of the 19 vidyapiths were represented at this workshop. The main outcome of the workshop was an articulation of a sense of "institutional crisis". The dimensions of this crisis included:
(a) an intuitive assessment that the curriculum needed re-orientation in order to make it more relevant to rural youth and responsive to emerging socio-economic trends;
(b) a sense of deviation from the aims and a perception that the value base of the education was being eroded;
(c) a feeling that the expansion of the movement needed to keep in mind the question of financial self-reliance and institutional viability;
(d) a realization that continuous training of teachers was necessary if the quality of the education provided had to be maintained and finally;

(e) the need to pay attention to "institution building" processes like periodic renewal of purpose, self-regulation and reaffirmation of the principle of institutional autonomy. (Proceedings of workshop of vidyapith principals and directors, 1993).

The need to re-orient the curriculum, the need to deal with the problems of growth and institutional viability, and upgradation of teachers were some of the areas identified for further action. While all these aspects are important, the present study is limited primarily to the first dimension listed above -- the question of re-orientation of the curriculum. Hence the problem undertaken by the present researcher for study is **curriculum innovation in rural institutions of higher education: the gram vidyapiths of Gujarat**, with a focus on identifying broad future curricular directions.

The curriculum re-orientation aspect of institutional reform is critical in that it impinges upon the processes of re-definition of the purposes of the gram vidyapith movement, building up the capabilities of the teaching community and linking emerging socio-economic trends with the kind of education most suited for the future. Therefore, while dealing with re-orientation of the curriculum, the study may also touch upon the other aspects of the "institutional failure" outlined above.
1.4 Research guidelines and objectives of the study

The vidyapiths which participated in the workshop held in March 1993 also suggested and agreed upon certain guidelines for the conduct of the research (Proceedings of workshop of vidyapith principals and directors, 1993):

1. Successful collaboration with institutions like vidyapiths, which are influenced strongly by a particular ideology, first requires an appreciation of their stress on certain values and educational goals. These include a focus on the rural and marginalized sections of society, developing an orientation towards rural service and producing self-reliant individuals.

2. A participatory mode of research, in which the various vidyapiths themselves were involved in some form of collaborative or action research would be appropriate, given the institution-building focus of the network of vidyapiths.

3. Since such a study was being undertaken for the first time, an exploratory focus was required.

Subsequently, discussions during meetings held with individual vidyapiths, and a second workshop conducted in July 1993, clarified the broad issues which the research would deal with. These issues were converted into the objectives of the first phase of the present study:

1. To identify the institutional and vidyapith curriculum-related policy factors which affect the curricular intent of the gram vidyapiths.

2. To study the responses to these factors, at the level of individual teachers, as well as at the level of the network of institutions, and to understand how institutional and historical
factors -- the ideological underpinnings of the gram vidyapiths, the pattern of growth, the institutional context within which the vidyapiths function -- have affected the responses.

3. To identify the teachers' perceptions about the orientation and directions the curriculum will have to take in the future.

4. To explore the teachers' perceptions regarding practical constraints to curriculum innovation arising from teaching loads, adequacy of time allotted to various subjects (mainly technical subjects) and present assessment and evaluation systems.

5. To identify weaknesses in existing teaching methodologies which may affect future curricular innovations.

6. (i) To understand the perceptions of alumni regarding the vidyapiths' performance in achievement of curricular aims.

(ii) To identify the key factors, which in the opinion of the alumni, affect the achievement of these aims.

(iii) To identify the dimensions of change, if necessary, in curricular goals.

7. To identify the perceptions of the alumni regarding the utility of the mix of pedagogic tools structured into the vidyapith model of education, with a view to understanding the tensions and opportunities in the application of these tools to achieve emerging curricular aims.

8. To obtain feedback from the alumni regarding the main directions that the curriculum should take in the future.

9. To develop a conceptual scheme of skills and areas of knowledge, related to future curricular directions, which may be used by the vidyapiths to plan for their own institutional development.
10. To develop a profile of the student intake into vidyapiths, in terms of Basic schooling background, economic status, sex and family occupational background.

11. To understand the influence of these personal variables on the admission choices or motivation of students to enter the vidyapith stream, the students’ perceptions about the aims of vidyapiths and the curricular expectations of students.

12. To develop a scheme of conceptual orientations regarding vidyapith education and preferred expectations which may be used by vidyapiths while reviewing student induction policies and for devising academic support mechanisms for students.

13. To identify the key perceptions of students regarding their future plans and options.

14. To obtain feedback on sources of learning and teaching methods in order to identify key elements for future curricular reorientation.

The second phase of the study built upon the first phase and had the following preliminary objective: to identify the recurrent themes that emerge from a consideration of the perceptions and opinions of the three major stake-holder groups (teachers, alumni and students) considered as a whole.

Based on this analysis, two experiments in curriculum innovation were undertaken. The first innovation, initiated at the Mahila Gram Vidyapith, Nardipur, with the aim of linking the issues of gender, sustainability and people’s knowledge in curriculum innovation, had the following objectives:
1. To review the Dairy Science curriculum in order to identify key areas for curriculum enrichment and the role of indigenous or people’s knowledge in the curriculum.

2. To redesign the Project Work course of the third year B.R.S. programme and implement it over two years.

   (i) To derive a list of field work projects aimed at studying indigenous practices in the area of dairy husbandry.

   (ii) To develop and impart to students field work methods suitable for studying people’s practices.

   (iii) To guide, with the assistance of vidyapith staff and other experts, the field work and preparation of dissertations by all the students of two batches of students.

3. To analyze the dissertations in order to identify teaching material relevant to the concept of sustainable development, and to list possible areas for follow up action by future students.

4. To assess the importance of learning from people’s practices and sustainable development, in the context of vidyapith education, as an organizing framework for curriculum innovation.

The second innovation explored, with the collaboration of Sabar Gram Vidyapith, Sonasan, the feasibility of strengthening the socio-technical entrepreneurship aspect of the curriculum which had been indicated during the first phase of the study as an important future direction. This part of the study had the following objectives:

1. To explore, in the specific context of the historical development of Basic education, Work Experience and Socially Useful Productive Work, the relationship between vocationalization, self-employment and entrepreneurship in vidyapith education.
2. To examine the role of skills, qualities and appropriate risk assurance mechanisms in a scheme for entrepreneurship education.

3. To develop a set of recommendations regarding strategies for teaching entrepreneurship in vidyapiths.

4. To derive the new dimensions of knowledge and skills that such a shift would call for, and to identify the nature of institutional preparation, in terms of teacher skill development, infrastructural requirements and networking, that would be required to attempt this shift.

Finally, from an overall perspective of the vidyapiths' experience, an attempt is made to derive implications for policy reform and for educational institutions seeking to counter the "social failure" of the education system.

1.5 Limitations of the study

The gram vidyapiths occupy a very small and marginal niche in the formal higher education sector, and to that extent their attempts to deal with the sense of the institutional crisis they face, may not provide solutions to all the problems of higher education. However, the focus of this study is on learning from marginal initiatives which have attempted to counter the social failure of higher education. Thus, though this study’s boundaries are limited to the issue of the re-orientation of the

11. The huge system of higher education includes more than 207 universities (including deemed universities) and 5334 colleges of general education and 989 institutions of professional education, with a total enrollment in 1992-93 of about 44,00,000 (Government of India 1994: 279-280).
vidyapith curriculum, the outcomes may have wider implications -- in terms of the curricular imperatives identified, the capacity-building efforts that such imperatives demand, the role of higher education institutions with respect to equity and social justice objectives, and the changing relationships of institutions of higher education with the various stake-holder groups, including the State.

While a broad-based selection of the participating teachers and alumni was possible, the sample of students was limited to only one batch, due to constraints of time.

The alumni who responded were all male, with one exception. In addition, about 45 percent of the alumni with salaried employment are in educational institutions. According to vidyapith experts, only about a third of the alumni in salaried employment would belong to educational institutions.

While the curricular innovation at the Mahila Gram Vidyapith, Nardipur could be repeated once, the initiative on entrepreneurship education could not be extended into a trial course or experiment due to constraints of time and resources. However, a few interested vidyapiths may undertake research on their own.

1.6 Outline of the study

The philosophical underpinnings of the gram vidyapith model of education and its historical development are discussed in the rest of this chapter. The efforts of the gram vidyapiths themselves to build up a network of their own are also described. The formal vidyapith curriculum is also discussed in this chapter.
Various theories of curriculum are reviewed in chapter two, in order to derive an understanding of curriculum, appropriate for the study of the vidyapiths' educational practice. The conceptual framework for the study is then presented. The methodological framework of the study and the methods of data collection employed are described in chapter three.

The perceptions of three groups of stake-holders -- teachers, students and alumni -- about the curriculum and suitable future directions are analyzed in chapter four, in order to identify the challenges facing a process of curriculum reform. These challenges provide the rationale for the experimental initiatives undertaken as part of this study, which are reported in chapter five. The initiatives include an experimental curricular project underpinned by the themes of gender equity and sustainable development, undertaken at the Mahila Gram Vidyapith, Nardipur, and an examination of the enterprise imperative, implemented at the Sabar Gram Vidyapith, Sonasan. Finally, in chapter six, an attempt is made to derive implications for policy reform and for educational institutions seeking to counter the "social failure" of the education system in the broader context of educational reform.
1.7 The 'Basic' education philosophy and vidyapith practice

The gram vidyapiths of Gujarat derive their educational practice from Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of education — nai talim or "Basic" Education, which attempts to integrate intellectual learning and learning through the practice of a craft. The theory — an extremely self-conscious one — and the social philosophy underpinning the curricular practice of the gram vidyapiths may be positioned in a specific historical and social context, namely the experience of colonial rule in India and the dynamics of the freedom struggle. While this context has specifically influenced the initiation and development of the vidyapiths, it has had a more pervasive influence on the attempts, in independent India, to re-orient education and to influence what is "worth learning".12

The experience of colonial rule has emphasized the role of the 'enlightened outsider' in selecting and shaping what is considered 'valid' knowledge (Kumar 1991).13 This emphasis, very much alive in the present formal education system, has led to a devaluation of the skills and knowledge of the 'people' or 'the masses', by interpreting material poverty as proof of cultural...
weakness and decadence. A 'weak' or 'deficient' culture, in the eyes of the 'enlightened outsider', could not be the epistemological basis for an instrument of social change like education. The result, therefore, was a progressive dissociation of the curriculum from the students' everyday life. The identification between the educated property-holding Indian and the British was cemented by the common perception of the 'masses' as ignorant and illiterate because of their moral and cultural decadence. Therefore, "none of the skills, crafts, arts and knowledge that the illiterate masses possessed could impress the educated Indians, including teachers, as being worth learning. These forms of culture became symbols of ignorance and decadence and, as such, became irrelevant to education" (Kumar 1991: 15). In contrast, the form, content and assumptions of the 'enlightened outsider' (the British), alien and irrelevant to the mass of the Indian population, became the educational norm.

At the same time, the colonial period also witnessed a struggle over the field of education during the independence movement. The value-orientations that underpinned educational debates at this time have been identified as a set of three quests -- for justice, for identity and for 'progress' (Kumar 1991). The justice orientation demanded educational opportunities for the downtrodden, without focussing on colonial injustices or questioning the colonial educational model. The quest for self-

14. This aspect of the colonial legacy harks back to Calvinist theology which saw material poverty as a manifestation of original sin and predestination to eternal damnation. Ashis Nandy's *Intimate enemy* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983) highlights the way in which Calvinist Protestantism enabled the colonizers to create ideological homologies between the "incorrigible native" and the "reprobate child", both needing 'correction' and 'education'.

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identity took the form of a confrontation with the colonial model and system through an emphasis on 'Indian'/ classical/ 'high' culture and a religio-cultural revival, through the shedding of foreign associations. This cultural revivalism, unfortunately, only achieved the entrenchment of a sanskritised Hindi in large parts of India as a symbol of a liberated identity, and a slowing down of the spread of mass literacy. The third quest, progress, was often equated by many leaders of the nationalist movement with the European model of industrialization.

All three orientations left hierarchical social structures intact and were, therefore, rejected by Mahatma Gandhi. His critique of colonial education and its devaluation of the knowledge of the masses, and his misgivings about the value-orientations underpinning the responses to this education have also to be placed in the context of his criticism of Western civilization and its development model. The latter has been discussed elsewhere. In the context of this critique, Gandhiji wanted to see colonial as well as revivalist education give way to a system which would help India create an alternative concept of progress which basically demanded development of the political and institutional capacities of the people, the masses, -- in other words, social restructuring -- before launching out on material growth.

His scheme of education, presented first during a meeting of educationists at the Marwari School in Wardha in 1937, was popularly called 'Basic Education' (nai talim or new education).

15. Gandhiji's critique of modern industrialization as spelt out in his newspaper columns from South Africa during 1908 -- Hind Swaraj, (Gandhi [1939] 1990), outlines his fundamental mission.
'Basic education' talked mainly of school education for which seven years were to be set aside as the minimum necessary period (Kripalani 1957: 62-63). It was implemented as an experimental programme in different states but had almost disappeared from the national scene by the 1960s. Gujarat is one state, however, which even today boasts of about 600 'Basic schools', primary, secondary and higher secondary schools which practice the philosophy of 'nai talim'. The 'Basic' model is the foundation for the model of higher education adopted by the gram vidyapiths. The following sections, therefore, briefly examine the theoretical underpinnings of the curricular intent of Basic Education, and the reasons for the model's general failure to become a viable alternative to the educational systems that have developed in independent India.

1.7.1 Basic education: origins and curricular intent

Gandhiji's experience of relief work during a famine in Orissa convinced him that work and not charity was needed to retain and enhance self respect. This insight was translated into one of the fundamental principles of Basic education. The valorization of work may have also been influenced by an early reading of Ruskin's Unto this last. Gandhiji summarizes Ruskin's message in terms of the equality of value of different kinds of labour and the valorization of a life of labour -- whether it is tilling the soil or undertaking an artisanal vocation. In addition, Gandhiji drew upon his early South African experiences with the Phoenix and Tolstoy farms in the first decade of this century, and on the experiences within the various ashram schools set up.
by his followers in Gujarat. These experiences led Gandhiji to move from an exclusive focus on teaching a productive craft (work for its own sake) to "work" as a medium of learning since "he sensed that the children (in the ashram schools) soon got tired of manual training, and thought that they had been deprived of literary training" (Salamatullah 1989: 13).  

The centrality of learning through a 'continuous craft' is a crucial element of the "teachers' dimension" within Gandhiji's curricular plan.  

The first curriculum plan, which was drawn up by the Zakir Hussain Committee, following the Wardha Conference—

16. The implementation of Gandhiji's ideas on education in the ashrams set up by social workers like Thakkarbapa, Indulal Yagnik and Jugatram Dave in Sarbhon, Mirakedi, Bardoli and Vedchi villages of Gujarat provided material for the Wardha Conference (Joshi 1989: 88). It must be noted that these ashrams were aimed at educating tribal children. The "tribal question" had engaged many social reformers, including those of Gandhian inspiration. The Gandhian workers who went into remote tribal areas are credited with establishing the first concrete steps for formal education of tribal youth in Gujarat (see Joshi 1989). These social workers had a broader agenda of social reform and believed they were turning out workers who would act as "leaven to raise the lump" (Mahadev Desai, quoted in Hardiman (1987) 1995: 8), the "lump", rather derogatorily, referring to the tribals. This negative aspect of the relationship between the "upper"-caste Gandhian social reformers and the people they set out to reform, is reflected in historical accounts written by the reformers which deny the tribals any role of subject (ibid.: 6-8).

17. The emphasis on learning through a craft has parallels with the "life-centred", "progressive" approach to education of John Dewey. Dewey believed that learning should take place around adult occupations. For him, the curriculum problem was "how much can be given to a child that is really worth his while to get, in knowledge of the world about him, of the forces in the world, of historical and social growth, and in capacity to express himself in a variety of artistic forms" (quoted in Tanner 1991: 101). His curriculum had two dimensions to it, the child's side (activities) and the teacher's side (logically organized subject matter). The child's side encapsulated a psychological aspect of the curriculum not related to methods of instruction: every subject was to relate to the child's real experiences; how to build on this so that the adults' knowledge of the subject could also be integrated, was the instructional question. Occupations were vehicles for linking the two dimensions. Gandhiji perhaps placed greater emphasis on the "teacher's dimension", but within the context of learning by doing, he insisted on a "purposeful" and "central" craft.

18. This emphasis in Gandhiji's educational philosophy, also closely linked to his stress on the dignity of labour, stands in sharp contrast to the Western and Indian classical traditions in education with their insistent valorization of the mental/ intellectual life over the manual/ menial. Both traditions have been the vehicles of sharply stratified social orders. In contrast, Gandhiji's was a blueprint for universal elementary education, which unfortunately, turned into education "for other people's children".

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ence, focussed on three aspects: the craft, the social environment of children and their natural environment. That is, teachers themselves should look at the educational possibilities of the craft and of daily incidents: they should be able to 'correlate' common actions with their learning and educational value.\textsuperscript{19}

The curriculum plan combined those subjects which "naturally belong together", into fields of studies like social studies and general science. Each subject had "units", which bore a close relationship to life. For example, in general science, some of the units were food, water and fire. The teacher was supposed to weave these into the life experiences of the children and come up with a set of "learning experiences". These learning experiences had to be graded according to the maturity levels of the children.

Significantly, the initial curricular plan that was proposed was not meant to be a blue-print, valid forever. "The curriculum is meant to reflect the pattern of life -- a carefully selected pattern, and since life itself is changing . . . the curriculum cannot possibly be regarded as immutable" (Salamatullah 1989: 16). This curriculum was seen to be too academic and the Hindustani Talimi Sangh prepared a syllabus of a more "practical nature" in 1946 (Solanki 1958: 153). The State of Bombay prepared its own syllabus and other bodies made similar efforts. (See Solanki 1958, for a detailed treatment of the concept of correlation and its application).

\textsuperscript{19} Shri Mansukhlal Salla, in a private discussion, elaborated this idea to mean what Gandhiji said about correlating one's own action with its effects. These effects are on the self, society and very importantly, nature.
Gandhiji also went to the extent of placing the economic value of the craft at the base of the experiential learning (Ramanathan 1962: 21-22). Thus, apart from the pedagogical value of the central craft in the curriculum, Gandhiji justified its introduction in terms of the principle of 'self sufficiency'; the question of self-sufficiency was related to the issue of maintaining autonomy from the State in order to avoid (a) being dictated to, (b) becoming an unmanageable burden on the State's finances.

1.7.2 The 'failure' of Basic education

The Indian National Congress came into power in several provinces in 1937. Soon after, in 1938, the Hindustani Talimi Sangh was created as an apex body to implement the Wardha Conference's resolutions. It adopted a two-pronged strategy: it introduced Basic education, on an experimental basis, through the provincial education departments in the United Provinces, Central Provinces, Bihar, Bombay and Orissa; secondly it introduced Basic education through private institutions like Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Poona and Andhra Jatiya Kalashala, Machilipatnam.

However, World War II intervened, and in spite of the post-war rhetoric about expanding the scope of Basic education (for instance, the pronouncements of the two Committees set up by the Central Advisory Board of Education under the chairmanship of B.G. Kher), it soon became obvious that Basic education, as an alternative form of education, was disappearing from the national
scene. Rhetorical support for the idea of Basic Education is also evident from its mention in the first three Five-year Plans. The Education Commission (1964-66), headed by Prof. D.S. Kothari, is credited with ending official discussion of Basic Education -- in spite of its praise for the idea -- by its proposals for elementary education and its concept of "Work Experience" (Salamatullah 1989; Joshi 1989). The Commission described Work Experience as "essentially similar" to the "revolutionary experiment" of Basic Education; as a redefinition of Gandhiji's educational thought "in terms of society launched on the road to industrialization" (quoted in Aggarwal 1993: 178). The Review Committee on the Curriculum for the Ten-Year School (Government of India 1979: section 3.2) further modified the concept of Work Experience into "Socially Useful Productive Work".

To summarize briefly, official discussion on the need for Basic Education, and the practice of Basic Education itself, had almost disappeared by the mid-1960s. The All India Nai Talim Conference held in 1972 reported that all Basic schools in Bihar had become "ordinary" schools as of March that year, and that the Basic teacher training institutes in Madhya Pradesh had reverted to the traditional model, though Basic Education was still visible in Gujarat (Nai Talim Samiti 1972). The Basic schools in Gujarat have survived and number about 600 today (1995). The main reason for the survival of this experiment in Gujarat, according to veterans in this field, is the positive coalition between educationists and the political establishment:

In contrast to the communities and individuals who set up various educational institutions in the 19th and early 20th centuries in Northern India, the people who
established Basic education institutions in Gujarat had the interests of the neglected poor in mind. There was also a commitment to train second-generation leaders. Very often, the educationists also became politicians who could ensure political support by appealing to the moral duty of the State, since many of the Basic education schools were in backward areas like tribal districts. Regardless of the principle of self-sufficiency, these educationists could and did ensure a flow of subsidies to Basic education institutions, (Mansukhlal Salla, interview, May 15, 1993).

This positive coalition of forces between institution builders who had the interests of the poor in mind and the political leadership, and the support of the leadership of the Khadi village industry bodies (Nai Talim Sangh 1972) may have been peculiar to the state of Gujarat. However, it should be remembered that even within this state, Basic education exists as a marginalized stream.

Discussion on the general failure of the Basic education model dates back to its origins. From its very inception the model has been subject to criticism. Doubts have been expressed regarding (a) the merits of self-supporting schools versus the orthodox belief that school education should be funded by the State; (b) the ethical implications of making children work, and (c) the feasibility of the idea. The Sargent Report, 1944, while endorsing the principle of learning through activity could not support "the view that education at any stage and particularly in the lowest stages can or should be expected to pay for itself through the sale of articles produced by the pupils"

20. There are at present (1994-1995) 33,327 schools in Gujarat, catering to classes one to seven. These schools account for a total enrollment of 7.47 million, (Primary education statistics (in Gujarati), Department of Education, Government of Gujarat, 1995).

21. Gandhi (1951), Section V contains Gandhiji's replies to the initial criticisms of his plan.
The Central Advisory Board of Education saw the need to clarify the concept of 'Basic education' since it had been "interpreted and sometimes misinterpreted, in a variety of ways". This confusion arose because there were many "groups" of practitioners (Salamatullah 1989: 28): the orthodox Gandhian followers stressed the self-sufficiency principle of the Basic model. A second group "tolerated" the craft and a third group treated craft as a creative activity and ignored the "productive" dimension of the craft altogether.

The Assessment Committee on Basic Education, 1956, was a response to the problems in the implementation of the model which had already become apparent by then. It noted that the Basic education clusters were getting isolated, "instead of compact areas affecting and vitalizing the remaining areas, what has happened in practice is that the larger areas of non-Basic schools have adversely affected and weakened the morale of the Basic patches" (quoted in Kurrien 1983: 82).

Many explanations have been put forward for the failure of Basic education. Naik (1975c: 27, 1975a, 1975b) cites non-acceptance of the model by the classes in power, as well as opposition from the masses who wanted to imitate the upper classes; technical problems related to the question of "craft"; and the higher costs of Basic education, as the reasons for the failure of the model. Salamatullah (1989) while not denying the administrative causes for the failure of the model, identifies the "root cause of the failure . . . [as] our social structure. . . . In a class society, premium is placed on theoretical knowledge in the school curriculum" (ibid.: 44-46).
The most systematic and comprehensive critique comes from Kurrien (1983) who focuses on the 'conceptual inappropriateness' of the model, as far as its application to universal elementary education is concerned, and on the non-acceptance of the model, not by elites, but by the masses. Most recently, Myron Weiner (1993: 11-12) has criticized the Gandhian education model for failing to mention the need to make elementary "education compulsory for, as J.P. Naik wrote, 'the idea of compulsion in any form was repugnant to Gandhian philosophy'". There is also an implied charge of the questionability of the ethics of seeing an educational programme for children also as "a financial programme to make schools partially self-supporting".

On the other hand, Kumar (1991) focuses on the more radical features of the model as the reasons for its marginalization. Basic education wanted a "transformation of the concept of worthwhile knowledge underlying education" (ibid.: 171). By proposing to introduce crafts, which in the traditional order of things were the domain of the 'lower' castes and 'untouchables', it tried to replace the literacy, literature and mathematical sciences combine which symbolized the views of education held by the traditionally dominant groups in society. Also, the focus on an education to revitalize village economy and to serve the interests of rural learners could not be appreciated by people oriented towards a different world view.

In an incisive talk broadcast by All India Radio in 1953 (Government of India 1954), Ashadevi Aryanayakam questioned the rhetoric about acceptance of Basic education (ibid.: 76):

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Our leaders and our administrators... have not accepted basic education, if the test of acceptance is whether they accept it as good education for their own children. The true picture [is] that of class education: one set of schools supported or aided by national funds for the children of privileged and basic schools for the children of the underprivileged, in villages and towns... Basic schools... become "poor schools" and basic education which was envisaged by the originator as the "silent spearhead for a juster social order in which there is no unnatural division between 'haves' and 'have-nots'" -- loses all significance.

Such criticism is all the more relevant when we consider one of the most under-played aspects of Basic education: its promotion of the concept of the neighbourhood school. The Basic School was meant to be a "common school for all children in a given locality, irrespective of social class or caste" (Salamatullah 1989: 47). This idea has never been popular in educational debate. In addition, the Basic plan did not depart from the traditional view of the teacher as a morally superior being, a guru, who in the environment of an ashram shala, set an example to be followed. In this sense, it did not seek a change in the traditional pedagogical relationship. However, the teacher was given a great deal of autonomy in curricular matters, and this very importantly, aimed at reversing the increasingly oppressive bureaucratic and state control over the content of education. In the final analysis, one realizes, the State -- especially since it believed in a radically different model of development for

22. This perhaps explains the paradoxical insistence of the Conference of Basic National Education held at Poona in 1939 that craftsmen need not be associated as "teachers". Rather, regular teachers needed to be trained in the crafts so as to "exploit the educational possibilities of the scheme" (Salamatullah 1989: 22).
India -- managed to marginalize the Gandhian plan of education, through explanations like lack of funds, administrative failure and so on while not being able to marginalize Gandhiji the moral force.

The Basic model has also been criticized on ethical grounds with respect to the role of "work" in the education of children. The essence of the philosophy behind the model is the belief that children can develop, through the practice of a craft, competencies to live life. We may break up the concept of learning through a craft into two components (keeping in mind the fact that Basic education was conceived essentially in relation to the schooling of children between five and fourteen years of age):

i) The notion of learning through activity which has been studied and endorsed by educationists like Froebel, Montessori, Dewey, as well as the developmental theories of Piaget.

23. It is interesting to note that while Kumar sees the state as marginalizing the Gandhian model, Kurrien's critique of State policy on primary education is precisely that the State held on to various versions of the Basic Education approach in spite of everything that statistics, financial feasibility and various experts had to say to the contrary. It is this, according to Kurrien, that is responsible for the present sorry state of primary education in India.

24. It is also interesting to note the parallels with the recent Zimbabwean experience with the "Education with Production" (EWP) project, announced soon after independence in 1980. Its goals were fostering self-reliance in students through exposing them to practical work, integrating academic and technical learning, eroding class distinctions by reducing distinctions between manual and mental labour, and promoting group work in place of individualism and competitiveness. It was tried on a pilot scale in seven schools. The programme failed in achieving its intent, but the continued use of the EWP rhetoric in official policy documents indicates a "defensive radicalism", yet another instrument of "compensatory legitimation" (see Jansen 1990). The newly-independent Indian state, as noted earlier, did embark on the rhetoric of Basic Education; however, the demand for a radical conception of education came not from the masses, but from the freedom fighter-educationists associated with the Gandhian pattern of education, who could translate the demand into a "legitimation crisis" of the State. The present day State, in fact, given the failure on the universalization of elementary education front, and the increasing visibility of issues of "education for all", faces such a crisis. One may then expect radical and "innovative" experiments similar to the Basic model to be supported, on an experimental scale, as "compensatory legitimation".
ii) The aim of making schools self-supporting through the sale of the goods produced by the children.

This latter was logically consistent with Gandhiji's purpose of keeping education independent of a State which would explicitly adopt the Western development model. However, it was questionable on grounds of both, economic common sense and ethics. From the purely economic point of view, as Kurrien (1983) has pointed out, it could not be expected that immature children would be able to produce goods of either competitive quality and marketability or in sufficiently large quantities. On ethical grounds, it may be claimed that every child has the child's fundamental right to a childhood, that is, a period of learning and play unconstrained by economic considerations. An educational system which gears its learning-by-activity to economic goals is not only likely to defeat the primary purpose of learning, but may also become exploitative. The line between activity for its own sake and activity for an economic goal, is a thin one. It is possible to say, however, that the former would tend to reduce or eliminate fear of failure and, therefore, encourage learning and creativity. The multiple interpretations of the role of "work", as noted earlier while referring to the work of the Assessment Committee on Basic Education (1956), created perhaps the most significant conceptual tension within the model of Basic education, about which its practitioners could not arrive at a working consensus.

In conclusion, it may be said that the crucial features which distinguish the curricular intent of Basic education from
that of the formal mainstream system of education, derive from
the radical, alternative model of development which Gandhiji
visualized for India and his rejection of the mainstream colonial
model.

Nandy (1992) has highlighted some dimensions of Gandhiji’s
critique of the modern West. Gandhiji’s rejection of the modern
West focussed primarily on its "secular scientific
worldview . . . [which] promises ‘true’ knowledge and the control
and predictability which goes with such knowledge, only when a
person (1) isolates or splits off his cognition from his feelings
and ethics and (2) when he partitions himself off from the sub-
jects of his enquiry emotionally". Many features of modern life
like the "emphasis on a negotiable, market-oriented concept of
equality and the totally instrumental, non-sacramental concept of
nature" may be seen as the "indirect expression of this aspect
of modern science and its attempt to become universal by
being . . . amoral and dispassionate" (Nandy 1992: 130-131).
Alongside the ideology of this kind of science, Gandhiji rejected
the ideology of modern technology (i.e., technocracy) which
produces a "mechanomorphic concept of society" and derives social
priorities from it. "To such a society the humanness of man is an
embarrassment" (ibid.: 135). In contrast, Gandhiji used "plural
concepts of science and technology" judging technology not only
by what it did but by what it symbolized, treating proper tech-
nology as part of his social and political programmes. Hence, the
so-called "oddities" like his emphasis on the charkha. Hence too
his emphasis on learning through a craft and understanding its
scientific principles.

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In contrast to the splits (mentioned above) required by modern science, Gandhiji emphasized the integration of fact and value, cognition and feeling, 'subject' and object, learner and environment, the human being and nature — an emphasis which was the foundation of his notion of *ahimsa* (Parekh 1989: 155). In contrast to the absolute and objective truth and knowledge claims of modern scientism, Gandhiji emphasized the contexuality and relativity of all human knowledge (*ibid.*: 156). These aims and assumptions underlay the formulation of Basic education. It is such a radically alternative vision that various post-modern, environmentalist and politically-conscious groups in the West advocate today as humane and sustainable.

One of the major contradictions within the model of Basic education noted earlier was its position with regard to "work" combined with the question of the relationship of work to the self-sufficiency of the institutional arrangements. The criticisms of the model on this count would cease to apply at the level of higher education where the students are mature adults. They would, therefore, be capable of contributing to the 'productive work' of the educational institution, perhaps learning and creating under economic compulsions, and of deriving satisfaction from achieved self-sufficiency.25 The next section focuses on the extension of the Gandhian model to the field of higher education, specifically the gram vidyapiths.

25. If Basic education, as originally conceived, had been restricted to higher education, it might have been more fruitful. As noted earlier, the question of self-reliance within the sector of higher education has emerged as a serious issue in the 1990s with budgetary support from the State declining, and financial instability threatening the very survival of institutions of higher education.
1.7.3 Basic education model in rural higher education

The University Education Commission (1948-49), with Dr. S. Radhakrishnan as its Chairman, was the first important step that newly-independent India took with regard to directing higher education. Among its many recommendations was an endorsement of the idea of Rural Universities. It identified four "great traditions" which such initiatives could build upon — agriculture, medicine, business and scholarship. It also identified the possible dilemma of a Rural University: "It would modernize agriculture, but must work with farmers, often with men burdened by ignorance, credulity and conservatism, while they possess the wisdom of ages" (quoted in Vashist and Vohra 1991: 46). One may not agree with such a stereotypical understanding of the "farmer" which negates the knowledge and inventive potential of the masses, an understanding that Gandhiji opposed through Basic education. But the Commission served to highlight the need for extending higher education to rural areas; it even identified "new professions" which rural Universities could develop — for instance food processing technology, ocean products technology, rural industrial counselling (ibid.: 43).

The work of the Commission also had an impact on post-Basic education. For instance, Lok Bharati was established as a post-Basic rural institution of higher education in 1953. As a follow-up of the Commission’s recommendations, the Government appointed

26 Dr. Arthur E. Morgan, one of the members of the Commission, played an important role in bringing to the fore the issue of rural higher education. See Morgan (1951).
the "Committee on Higher Education for Rural Areas" in 1954 (Government of India 1955). This Committee recommended a three-year diploma course in rural studies and a series of certificate courses. More importantly, (a) it endorsed the concept of "useful work" to be undertaken by the students (including jobs which would help needy students pay for their education), (b) it visualized strong linkages between rural development and higher education through the "extension" services that the institutes were supposed to establish. 27 One of the practical recommendations of the Committee was the selection of five or six existing institutions for conversion into "Rural Institutes" which would be funded by the state. This was immediately implemented, and out of 27 institutions which applied, ten were selected (Buch 1989). These included Lok Bharati, Sanosara and other institutions like Gandhigram, Madurai. Thus, initially at least, the Central Government's commitment to promoting higher education through the mechanism of rural institutes resulted in financial allocations to these experimental institutes.

However, the expansion of these institutes needed support from the state governments, which was not forthcoming. For instance, the University Grants Commission recommended in 1966 that three of the rural institutes be converted into deemed Universities. But the proposal fell through since the state governments refused to accept financial responsibility. In an effort to review the status of the rural institutes and to work out their

27. The concept of "extension" -- from "the laboratory to the land" was becoming fashionable around this time. In addition, the community development approach to rural reconstruction was also becoming an important official initiative.
future, the Government appointed the "Committee on Rural Higher Education" in November 1967 (Government of India 1970). This Committee undertook a critical appraisal of the institutes and pointed out the deficiencies in the physical infrastructure which were hampering the curricular intentions. In addition, the Committee expressed concern over the "employability" of the graduates and recommended that new courses be started only after a proper market survey of employment opportunities. However, the Committee also noted the difficulties in sustaining the financial viability of these institutes and recommended that they be affiliated to Universities -- a new one to be set up for the purpose, the Jawaharlal Nehru University or existing state Universities. Within a couple of years of the submission of the report, in 1972, the Central Government withdrew from the scheme, leading Buch (1989: 183) to suspect its commitment to strengthening these experimental institutes: "the Government of India had avoided a national dialogue on . . . rural higher education".

Lok Bharati was pointed out as a success story by the Committee. The credibility that Lok Bharati had already established enabled it, while the discussions on the future of the Rural Institutes were on, to secure affiliation with Saurashtra University, Gujarat in 1968. The roots of this credibility may be traced to the educational principles which the founder of the institution, Shri Nanabhai Bhatt, had institutionalized (Kumudbhai Thakar, interview, May 17, 1993).

28. This Committee had six members, of whom four, including the Chairman Shri G. Ramachandran, had extensive experience of rural institutes and the Basic model of education.
Lok Bharati was established by the well-known educationist of Gujarat, Shri Nanalal Bhatt (1883-1961). Shri Bhatt, who worked as a Professor of History and Economics in Bhavnagar town in the early part of this century, felt that the formal education system, of which he was part, did not mould the students' characters. He, therefore, established a boarding school for boys in 1910 in Bhavnagar and later expanded it into a high school. Shri Bhatt and his colleagues were influenced at this time by many educational innovations of the West like the Montessori and the Dalton Plan experiments. After Gandhiji's return to India, Shri Bhatt and his colleagues came to be influenced by Gandhian principles and practices. The educational principles on which Shri Bhatt ran his school (Bhatt [1954] 1992: 124-125, translated from Gujarati) anticipated many of the principles of the Wardha Plan:

1. Inculcate sense of responsibility in the students by letting them be free and spontaneous.

2. No punishments or rewards and hence no fear or greed.

3. Freedom from the tyranny of examinations.

4. Student-centered educational plans.

5. Mother tongue as medium of instruction.

6. Centrality of crafts in the educational process.

7. Importance of fine arts in education.

8. Games, tours, discussions, plays and additional reading are as important as the regular subjects in the curriculum.


10. The "national" character of the institution has to be maintained by keeping it autonomous of state control.


12. Teachers trained in educational methods.

13. Promote human relationships between the teacher and the taught.

14. The institution should prepare its own texts.

15. Teaching should draw on the sciences of psychology and pedagogy.
Influenced by Gandhiji’s call to serve the villages, Shri Bhatt moved to a village, Amla where he established the ‘Gram Dakshinamoorti’ school in 1938. He was soon joined by two people dedicated to education, Shri Manubhai Pancholi and Shri Mulshankar Bhatt. Shri Nanalal Bhatt did not initially know what kind of educational system was suitable to rural needs. It was his belief that "one has to jump, only then will the way be clear", and his faith — "a clear conscience within, and God above" (N.P. Buch, interview, September 16, 1993) — which saw the school through its initial problems. He chose to implement the Basic pattern of education. The innovation Shri Bhatt and his colleagues introduced was to develop agriculture and animal husbandry as the Basic crafts in Gram Dakshinamoorti. In a significant move, the words ‘Lok Shala’, meaning ‘folk school’ were added to the name of the school in order to identify it with the cause of rural transformation. Many private donors took care of the expenses in the initial years.

29. *Gram*, in Gujarati, means village. Dakshinamoorti refers to the child form of Lord Shiva and symbolizes the innate goodness of children — the child as an image of God.

30. Agriculture and animal husbandry had been suggested as crafts suitable for adoption by the Basic Education system by the Zakir Husain Committee earlier.

The deliberations of the University Education Commission (1948-1949) and the discussions on the rural institutes also resulted in the experiences of the Danish Folk High Schools and Agricultural Schools becoming better known by the time Lok Bharati was started. These Folk High Schools, inspired by the philosophy of N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872), have had a longer history and a wider impact than the gram vidyapiths of Gujarat. The Folk High School movement is claimed to have strengthened democracy in Denmark (Rørdam 1980: 7). The first Folk High School was started at Rodding in 1844. By 1864, there were 15 schools, "very different from each other, from the Bjornbaak type of school with examinations for solid secondary education and political awakening to the Kold type of Christian-national revivalist school" (ibid.: 43). The Agricultural Schools date back to 1867. They attempted to combine elements of high school and agricultural education. After 1970, the High Schools and agricultural schools drew apart and in 1971, the Association of Folk High Schools in Denmark was set up in place of the Association of High Schools and Agricultural Schools (ibid.: 170).
In 1953, Lok Bharati was founded as an institution of rural higher education with the motto:

*Avidyaya mrityum teertva
Vidyaya amritam ashnute* 31

Since then Lok Bharati has been offering its Bachelor’s Programme in Rural Studies. Till 1968, Lok Bharati certified the successful students with the title of ‘graduate’ which was recognized by the state government for employment purposes. In that year, Lok Bharati was affiliated to Saurashtra University and was treated as the ‘Rural Faculty’ of the University. In 1978, the University Grants Commission declared Lok Bharati an autonomous college, giving it autonomy to decide on student entry conditions, syllabus, teaching methods and conduct of examinations. However, in practice, Lok Bharati has been modifying its syllabus over the years, regardless of official recognition of its autonomous nature. For instance, the Agriculture/Animal Husbandry and Folk Education syllabus was first formulated in 1953, but seven revisions have been made since — in 1954, 1955, 1956, 1958, 1962, 1980 and 1985-86 (Thakar 1991: 9).

In spite of its positive impact, the experience of Lok Bharati did not lead to the establishment of another vidyapith until 1967, when the second gram vidyapith was established at

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31. This motto is derived from the Kathopanishad. "The person who knows *vidya* (humanities) and *avidya* (technical knowledge) uses *avidya* to overcome *mrityu* — the sadness of death, and can achieve *amrit* — peace of mind" (Pancholi 1974: 178, translated from Gujarati). Buch (1992: 18-19) recalls Shri Nanabhai Bhatt’s explanation in the following words: "Man needs food, clothes, and shelter to live. . . . But human beings, over and above satisfying their needs, have to learn to feel consciously indebted to society at large on which they have to depend for all their physical needs. . . . *Avidya* is the labour and skill needed to earn his bread . . . and *vidya* is the conscious feeling of indebtedness to society translated into action whenever needed".
Vedchi, a place associated with a well-known Gandhian, Shri Jugatram Dave. Ironically, it was during that year that the Committee on Rural Higher Education was appointed. This Committee, as noted earlier, highlighted the difficulties inherent in establishing the financial viability of rural institutes. The third vidyapith, Saraswati Gram Vidyapith, Samoda was started in 1969 and the Mangal Bharati Vidyapith, Bahadarpur in 1970. The 1980s saw rapid expansion of the gram vidyapith movement, and by 1991, all the 19 vidyapiths which form the vidyapith network, were in place. All these vidyapiths follow the Lok Bharati curriculum pattern. In the next section, the effects of the expansion of the vidyapith movement on various aspects of the formal curriculum are discussed. A financial assistance package that the government evolved in 1980-81 is cited as a major spur for this rapid growth. Along with the funding, certain norms of functioning were also prescribed. These developments, and the resulting tensions, are examined from the point of view of what implications they have for the process of curriculum review.

1.9 Expansion of the vidyapith network, the state, and self-regulation

The gram vidyapiths are run by non-profit, non-governmental public charities registered under the Trusts and Societies’ registration Acts. Most of these organizations ventured into rural higher education after a long experience with Basic school

32 Such registration is usually essential for receiving state funds. Most privately-managed educational institutions are registered as non-profit trusts or societies.
education. The state had always supported their activities like residential *ashram shalas* and rural development projects. Lok Bharati, by virtue of its Rural Institute status in the 1960s, was also supported by state funds. However, state funding was seen in the 1960s and 70s as playing only a supportive role in the fund generation efforts of the various trusts (K. Thakar, interview, March 13, 1993).

Around the late 1970s, many Basic schools started complaining that students passing out of their schools were finding it difficult to pursue higher studies. Their school curriculum was oriented towards agriculture since it followed the Basic education model; also, the medium of education was Gujarati. These factors, the schools believed, worked against the admission of their students into mainstream institutions. They, therefore, felt it was necessary to increase the number of gram vidyapiths, which would be more responsive to students from the Basic education stream. Finance was seen as a major constraint limiting the establishment of new colleges. The government was, therefore, approached for assistance. In 1981, the state government came up with a financial assistance package, covering salaries and overheads. This package was widely perceived as "liberal" and it gave the signal to many educational trusts to enter gram vidyapith education (M. S. Patel, personal communication, April 1993).

33. For instance, Gram Bharati, Amnapur was started in 1985, but the parent trust had established a Basic secondary school in 1959, a primary school in 1961 and a higher secondary school in 1979. Similarly, Lok Niketan, Ratanpur, which was established in 1987, built upon the trust’s experience of running educational institutions since 1981 in 14 villages of Banaskantha district, Gujarat. On the other hand, a few vidyapiths like Sabar Gram Vidyapith, Sonasan, have had to start from scratch. Only an initial fund of Rs. 40,00,000 from the district cooperative structures enabled this vidyapith to begin.
Thus, paradoxically, while one of the original principles of the Basic education system was self-reliance, in practice the gram vidyapiths have come to rely on state funds for their financial viability. In fact, as noted above, state funds may have helped in increasing the number of new vidyapiths. However, with such funds becoming scarce, the government has withheld recognition from new vidyapiths and has indicated an intention to reduce its share of the salary package to around 90 percent (K. Thakar, interview, July 5, 1994). The share of the government is expected to decrease further in the coming years and generation of internal resources is now a major concern of all the vidyapiths. The vidyapiths should aim "to generate at least 50 percent of total funds internally within the next three years" (K. Thakar, interview, March 13, 1993). The older vidyapiths, who have had some experience of a degree of self-reliance, will find this transition easier while the new ones, who have yet to stabilize, may find it difficult. At the moment, the government treats all vidyapiths, old and new, equally as far as the proportion of state funding is concerned.

When the state funds an institution, it arrogates to itself the responsibility for evolving rules and regulations for employee welfare, in order to play the protective role expected of it. Accordingly, in 1985, a set of rules was framed laying down the staffing pattern and in 1987, regulations for the staff of vidyapiths were formulated. These regulations have multiplied over the years, so that salary grades, additional benefits, leave norms etc., are now laid down for the vidyapiths to follow. This
has resulted in the "younger teaching staff relying more on these service conditions, whereas the ‘elders’ are self-motivated people who follow their own norms", (Rameshbhai Patel, personal communication, April 1993).

While the state has assumed an important role in the financing of vidyapiths and in administrative matters like service regulations, it has not directly influenced the content of vidyapith education. Interviews with state education department officials indicate a paradoxical attitude. While the gram vidyapith movement in itself is perceived as a "marginal" and perhaps "unimportant" model of education, its presence in Mahatma Gandhi’s home state must be ensured. This stance of the state may be explained in terms of the "compensatory legitimation" approach noted earlier in this chapter.

However, with a view to formalizing a mechanism for advising on matters related to Basic education, the government constituted a Gujarat Basic Education Board in October 1990, on the lines of the Higher Education Board, in order to advise on the problems faced by Basic schools (primary, secondary and higher secondary), primary and graduate Basic education teacher training centres and gram vidyapiths. This Board is in the nature of an advisory body. In addition to the issues referred to it by the government, the Board also considers matters referred to it by the vidyapiths. For instance, some of the issues which the Board is expected to examine include the perception of certain senior Directors that the new vidyapiths compromise on certain ‘non-negotiables’ like wearing khadi; the feeling among the older vidyapiths that students of some new vidyapiths, though less prepared than the students of well-established vidyapiths, obtain higher marks and
hence are at an advantage during employment selection procedures. However, the advisory character of the Board is perceived as being of little help in practice in guiding the gram vidyapith movement. Many of the Vidyapith Directors would prefer a statutory Board with more powers to ensure that new vidyapiths remain faithful to the concept and principles of rural-oriented Basic education. The State government seems reluctant to move in this direction.34

To summarize: while the initial moves to increase the number of vidyapiths were made by established leaders in the ‘Basic education’ movement, the state has played an important role in the rapid expansion of the movement, through its financial assistance, a somewhat ironic comment on the Gandhian principle of self-sufficiency and autonomy. Reflecting on the positives and negatives of such an expansion, one of the pioneers of Basic education, Shri Manubhai Pancholi, is self-critical about the lack of attention to institution-building processes in the early stages of the expansion, (interview, September 23, 1993):

The expansion has its positive aspects. But the negative aspects are worrying. Some vidyapiths are doing excellent work. But not all people who entered vidyapith education came in with an understanding of the goals of vidyapith education. Politicians wanted to start vidyapiths. And the government encouraged them. In a way, the government is responsible for the 100 per cent salary grant and the consequent expansion. We are trying to do something. The options are clear. Some vidyapiths may have to close down. I keep telling a few others to affiliate with the University system or to join the higher secondary school system. A few more will not make any difference to those systems.

34. K. Thakar, private communication. A statutory Board, it is feared, may become too "powerful" and independent.
Similar sentiments are also expressed by other senior leaders of the movement. Underlying these sentiments is a concern for maintaining the core values and principles of Basic education, and for evolving certain norms of functioning which ensure the long-term viability of the institutional network. The establishment of an apex body, the Gujarat Gram Vidyapith Samaj, was an attempt to provide a forum through which such appropriate internal norms governing all vidyapiths could be institutionalized.

**Gujarat Gram Vidyapith Samaj (GGVS)**

As the number of gram vidyapiths started increasing, older vidyapiths like Lok Bharati took the initiative, in late 1985, to organize an informal group of all the Principals and Directors of the vidyapiths. This group met once in three months, with different vidyapiths taking turns to host the meetings. Initially, this forum dealt with administrative and staff service problems, but since 1988, its focus has been on educational issues:

a) A 3-day annual gathering of all the teaching and non-teaching staff of all vidyapiths, with different vidyapiths taking turns at playing host. Topics discussed include the Basic curriculum, extension, community life, role of manual labour etc.

b) Student exchange programmes between the vidyapiths. Five to ten students from each vidyapith get to spend five days in another institution. (This initiative has been implemented regularly.)

c) Teacher meetings for professional improvement.

The informal group took the name of the Gujarat Gram Vidyapith Samaj (GGVS) in 1990. It now refers any administrative problems brought up before it to the Basic Education Board which was formed in October 1990. All the vidyapiths belonging to the
GGVS follow the pattern of education evolved by Lok Bharati. This curricular pattern is discussed in the next section.

1.10 The gram vidyapith pattern of education

For purposes of this section a descriptive and analytical model of the curriculum proposed by Eraut (1990: 544) has been used to describe the vidyapith curriculum. The model may be visualized as a pyramid with the apex forming the stated or inferred aims and the four points of the base representing the objectives, subject matter, assessment procedures and teaching/learning processes (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1
Descriptive model of curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Connected to apex by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Processes, skills, competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aspirations/ expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student intake</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject matter</td>
<td>Value, relevance, meaningfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>selection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sequencing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Certification, progression, differentiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tests/assignments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marking processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching/learning</td>
<td>Views of teaching and learning, attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>methods</td>
<td>and relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>placements/community life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on Eraut (1990: 544).
Objectives and student intake

1. Lok Bharati has always aimed at providing a rural orientation to students through a curriculum designed to integrate theoretical learning with practical farm work (Thakar 1991: 65-68). The students are drawn mostly from rural, farming backgrounds. Agriculture and animal husbandry are treated as the central crafts through which education is to take place. (In addition, Folk Education, Forestry, Dairy Science and Home Science have been introduced as other streams.) The trained students are expected to be 'self-starters' who will engage in rural reconstruction.

2. Student intake and admission systems:

Each vidyapith admits on an average about 50 to 60 students every year. The average annual number of applications and admissions between 1989 and 1991 are presented in Table 1.2.

35. 'Folk education' is a literal translation of the Gujarati Lok shikshan. In practice, it approximates to what is called 'extension education'. As noted earlier, the Committee on Higher Education for Rural Areas (1954) had attempted to link rural development with higher education, through the concept of 'laboratory to land' extension. Also the influence of the Danish Folk Schools is directly evident in the initiation of this curriculum stream.

36. More than 80 percent of the vidyapiths offer only the Agriculture stream. The Van Seva Gram Vidyapith is the only one offering the forestry stream; Sagan Mahila and Ambarharati vidyapiths offer home science courses and the Mahila Gram Vidyapith, Nardipur offers the dairy science and home science streams. Lok Bharati offers folk education in addition to agriculture and animal husbandry. The others offer only the agriculture/animal husbandry stream.
### Table 1.2

Student applications and admissions, by sex and stream

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>Applied</th>
<th></th>
<th>Admitted</th>
<th></th>
<th>Percent admitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>3091</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>3267</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home science</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1092</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>1294</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4183</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>4787</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


While the ratio of applications to admissions is approximately 4.5:1, in about 15 per cent of the vidyapiths, the number of applications received over the three-year period was less than the number of seats available and in another 10 per cent the ratio was almost 1:1 (Mohanbhai S. Patel, personal communication, August 1993). Well-established institutions like Lok Bharati, however, attract applications to the tune of about 10 to 12 times their capacity. The criteria for admission include performance in (a) the higher secondary examinations, with different vidyapiths giving weightages ranging from 30 to 60 per cent; (b) a written entrance test, which carries a weightage of 30 to 40 per cent and (c) an interview whose weightage ranges from 10 to 30 per cent.

The vidyapiths are bound to follow statutory norms laid down by the government regarding reservations for candidates from the Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Socially and
Economically Backward Classes (SEBC). These are 7 per cent for SC, 14 per cent for ST (21 per cent for vidyapiths in tribal areas) and 10 per cent for SEBC (14 per cent for vidyapiths in designated backward areas). The proportion of applications received from these three categories, and the proportion of students from these categories in the total admissions are approximately 12 per cent in the case of SC and 22 per cent each for ST and SEBC categories (Patel 1992).

3. **Male to Female Admission Ratio:**

While about 13 per cent of the applications are from women, they form 23 per cent of the total number of admissions (see Table 1.2 above). However, about 40 per cent of the total number of women admitted are in the 'Home Science' stream, for which, significantly enough, not a single male has applied. This is perhaps a reflection of the gendered identity of subjects like Home Science. Women also stand a better chance of being admitted in the non-agricultural streams like dairy science and folk education (Table 1.2).

**Subject matter**

1. **Learning through manual labour performed on the farms of the vidyapiths or in farmers' fields, and through placements:**

Valorization of manual labour and the skills of those caste groups which have occupied the 'lower' rungs in the traditional hierarchy of the *jati* system has been an important aspect of the philosophy of vidyapith education. Such an approach may be seen as a fundamental attempt to invert the order of what is considered worth learning. True to this principle, the vidyapiths place a strong emphasis on the dignity of labour and on learning by
working on campus and farms (Buch 1992). The 'learning from labour' component of the curriculum is structured as follows:

(a) A first year (FY) male student has to put in at least 300 hours of on-campus labour work and a first year female student has to put in 250 hours. Students of the other two years have to put in an annual total of 350 hours (in the case of males) or 300 hours (in the case of females). Out of this labour, at least 200 hours for second year (SY) students and 175 hours for third year (TY) students have to be on the college campus.

The method of application of these norms is as important as the work itself. For instance, the 350 hours are to be completed in a block of seven weeks. Thus the student puts in 50 hours every week or roughly about 7 hours per day. The aim is to make the student put in a full day's labour at a time and not just one or two hours a day throughout the year. Any public relief work undertaken by the students during natural calamities or disasters can substitute for on-campus labour.\(^{37}\)

(b) The off-campus labour work of the SYs takes place through work camps with farmer families and that of TYs through a 3-month intensive training placement. The students attend a tribal area familiarization camp in the first year, and a 10-day village camp and a 2-week stay at a farmer's house during the second year.

(c) The three months set aside for placement in a village, a Basic education institute (teaching and management) and in

\(^{37}\) On account of practical difficulties, however, certain vidyapiths spread out the labour component over a longer period. In certain vidyapiths, areas of specialization of the vidyapiths are integrated with the labour that is expected from the students. For instance, in Sabar Gram Vidyapith, horticultural work constitutes a major portion of the labour that students put in.
institutions like dairies, panchayats or Agricultural Universities are structured as follows (Table 1.3):

Table 1.3

Pattern of student placements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream/ Main subject</th>
<th>Placement (in months)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agronomy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy Science (Dairies) (Farms)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panchayat/ Cooperative (Cooperatives) (Banks)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horticulture</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folk education</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on discussions with vidyapith principals.

2. Structuring of subjects:

Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Stream

As indicated above, about 80 per cent of the vidyapiths offer only this stream and more than two-thirds of the students admitted go into this stream. Therefore, given its importance, this section will look into aspects of the curriculum of this stream.  

38 Appendix 1.2 presents the subjects taught over the three years of study, and the specific objectives of the techni-

38 Most of the information has been obtained through discussions with teachers and from the prescribed syllabus. It must be noted that the agriculture stream is being used here only for illustrative purposes.
cal subjects. The subjects may be classified into three categories, which apply to all streams: (a) Humanities, (b) Science and Technical subjects, and (c) Ancillary subjects.

The humanities have always found an important place in the vidyapith curriculum, starting from the first trial syllabus formulated by Lok Bharati in 1953 (Thakar 1991; Buch 1992; Lok Bharati 1958, 1963). This category includes, among other subjects, Hindi and Gujarati languages, Indian Culture, World Religions and Political Thought. The inclusion of these subjects in the vidyapith curriculum is a result of the influence on the founders of the Western liberal tradition in education (M. Pancholi, interview, September 23, 1993).

The broad structure of the technical subjects has also followed the pattern laid out in the early curricular documents (Lok Bharati 1963). In addition to the prescribed technical subjects, the students have to choose a specialization, popularly called the "main subject", at the beginning of the second year. Examples of main subjects are agronomy, animal husbandry and horticulture. The main subject accounts for two-thirds of the total number of marks allotted to the technical subjects in the third year of study. The subjects to be offered as specializations are usually determined by the availability of competent staff in the various vidyapiths, and often only a few subjects are offered under this head.

The relative importance, (in terms of percentage of marks), attached to the three categories of subjects is presented in Table 1.4.
Table 1.4

Relative importance of subject categories (percentages of total marks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancillary</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on regulations laid down in Saurashtra University (1986).

3. Teachers as formulators of curriculum:

This is a principle valued highly by the veterans of the vidyapith movement. Even the vidyapiths not following the original syllabus framed by Lok Bharati -- those which offer the home science and dairy science streams -- have also structured or revised the curriculum on their own. This autonomy extends to student evaluation.

Assessment

The teacher-as-evaluator principle has been adopted by all the vidyapiths. Continuous and "all-round" evaluation (Thakar 1991) of students is a guiding principle. The principle that the teacher who actually teaches a student should also evaluate the student is in consonance with the broader thrust towards the 'autonomy' of the teacher. Following the Biblical saying, 'the tree is known by its fruit', Lok Bharati, on the occasion of the birth centenary of its founder, Shri Nanabhai Bhatt, asked some
of its graduates to provide a personalized account of what the institution means to them. These accounts have been published as a series of booklets, appropriately titled *Jhaad na paarkha fal par thi*.39

Some of the regulations relating to assessment, compiled from discussions with vidyapith principals and teachers, are presented below:

(i) The Vidyapiths have the autonomy to conduct all examinations, except that of the major subject of the third year, which is conducted by the University. (This applies only to Lok Bharati, which is affiliated to the Bhavnagar University. In practice, Lok Bharati itself, as the Rural Faculty of the university, conducts the examinations. Other vidyapiths conduct their own examinations.) The autonomy also extends to formulation of the curriculum.

(ii) Detailed guidelines have been laid down by Lok Bharati for the grading of students and classification of results. Essentially, marks are converted into grades and grades into units/points. These guidelines have been adopted by the other vidyapiths.

(iii) Two kinds of evaluation are undertaken: a) annual examination and, b) internal evaluation, each carrying 50 percent of the marks. The internal evaluation is distributed as follows:

39. *Jhaad na paarkha fal par thi*. Nos. 1 to 21. Sanosara: Lok Bharati Prakashan, 1983. The title may be translated as "know the tree by its fruit", and is a reflection of the influence of the Sermon on the Mount noted earlier: "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt bring forth good fruit. . . . Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt.7: 18, 20).
* 40 per cent for terminal tests
* 20 per cent each for two mid-term tests
* 20 per cent for general performance and attendance.
* The final overall grading attaches a 20 per cent weightage to the first year performance, 20 percent to the second year performance and 60 percent to the performance in the third year.

**Teaching/learning**

1. The principle of compulsory residential education derives from the Basic education philosophy; teachers and students live together on campus, in the spirit of the guru-shishya tradition. Learning from community life and a disciplined ordering of the day’s work are important features. This ordering takes the form of detailed planning of the hours of the day -- from getting up at 5.30 in the morning to going to bed at 10.30 at night.

2. Compulsory wearing of khadi is seen as a symbol of rural reconstruction.

3. A mix of teaching methods is emphasized: the methods used include lectures, demonstrations, practical instruction, field work, supervised study, group discussions, questions and answers, surveys and projects, problem solving exercises, tours, camps and term papers. In addition, in what is perhaps unique in the Indian higher education system, the third year BRS students (under-graduates) are expected to write a dissertation on a topic related to the main subject they have opted for.

4. Student participation in the running of cooperative stores and biogas plants situated on the campus, is compulsory.

The foregoing general account of the origin and development of the gram vidyapith curriculum and related aspects, are placed within the general context of theorizing about the nature of the curriculum and curricular practices, in the next chapter.