CHAPTER TWO

THEORIES OF CURRICULUM: REVIEW AND FRAMEWORK

The principles underlying Basic education -- learning from manual effort and intellectual labour -- contribute to the distinctive characteristics of the curricular practice of the vidya-piths. Though the main elements of the curriculum of the vidya-piths were first formulated in 1953 and seven revisions made since then, most of the original features -- including the division of educational content into humanities, science subjects and ancillaries; learning through labour on the fields and placements in farms or organizations, residential education etc. -- have been retained.

In this context, an attempt has been made in this chapter to review various theories of curriculum and curricular change, in order to develop a framework for the study of the key issues raised in chapter one: understanding the perceptions of the main stake-holder groups and identifying directions for future curriculum change.

2.1 Conceptions of the curriculum

A number of curriculum theorists (Tripp 1994; Goodson 1990; Grundy 1987) have emphasized the "multifaceted" nature of the concept of curriculum which is "constructed, negotiated and renegotiated at a variety of levels and in a variety of arenas"

1. The assumptions and practice of the Basic curriculum are not discussed here, since they have been covered in the previous chapter.
They highlight the difficulties inherent in dealing with this problematic term given the multitude of ways in which it has hitherto been used. These ways include (Tripp 1994: 1):

(a) a technicist approach which privileges its own definition;
(b) a pluralist approach to the definition of curriculum -- the definition varying according to the purpose which is to be accomplished;
(c) a practice-oriented conception which believes that searching for "a" definition of curriculum is a waste of time; and finally,
(d) the post-structuralist conception which places curriculum in a context of impossibility of meaning, implying that people make definitions in order to control the object of definition. The corollary of this last conception is that definitions are best avoided.

Such a variety in the ways of using the term "curriculum" has resulted in the "state of affairs reported on as well as the recurrent mood of those doing the reporting, . . . (appearing) . . . 'confused'" (Jackson 1992, quoted in Tripp 1994: 2). The multiplicity of ways in which "curriculum" has been used has, in turn, had repercussions on the "state of curriculum inquiry" itself (Reid 1992: 165-166). Firstly, the problem of "flight" is obvious: given the flexibility of a broad and inclusive conception of curriculum, it is easier to avoid confronting complex issues like what "ought to be" taught or whose knowledge is valid. Secondly, there is the problem of how 'inquirers' can maintain a credible stance, given that much of the knowledge
about the field appears to be in the hands of practitioners. These problems, according to Reid (1992: 176), indicate a need for consolidation of the experiences of alternative approaches in curriculum inquiry towards "a 'reconceived' tradition of curriculum inquiry with a distinct and coherent character".

The problematic status of the field of curriculum inquiry is also reflected in the contradictory answers, in introductory texts on the curriculum, to questions like what knowledge is worth teaching and how (Rogan and Luckowski 1990; Rogan 1991).

However, the lack of agreement on how "curriculum" is to be defined, the persistent problems of curriculum inquiry and the fragmentation of the field as evidenced by texts on the subject, indicate an urgent need for drawing certain boundaries around the field, since "lack of agreement about what curriculum is tends to render the term meaningless and the field . . . defenceless" (Tripp 1994: 2).

In drawing such boundaries it is necessary to achieve a balance between (i) a very exclusive understanding of curriculum, which limits it to a 'minimalist' written statement of what is to be learned (Johnson 1967), and (ii) an all-inclusive understanding of the entire teaching-learning process -- regardless of whether the learning takes place in the school or outside (Kerr 1968), which leaves the field of inquiry open to uncertainty regarding its nature and scope. A good place to begin, as most texts do, is the origin of the term "curriculum".

The word 'curriculum' derives from the Latin word 'currere', originally meaning the circuit of a race. In relation to education, the word may be taken to mean the 'path' or 'track' of a
course of study. Etymologically, therefore, curriculum means a "prescribed content" of study; not a syllabus or a statement of aims but an outline of the subject matter. However, the area of curriculum study and research has generally tended to focus on the objectives of teaching. This "objectives game" (Goodson 1990: 299), also loosely labelled the 'traditional' or technicist approach, derives from Ralph Tyler's influential *Basic principles of curriculum and instruction* (1949), which focusses on the "principles" of curriculum, in contrast to the question of curriculum as a 'problem' involving "imperfect choices and decisions made on the basis of defensible, and therefore challengeable, perceptions" (Kumar 1992: 1). Tyler (1949) listed the following, by now well-known, four basic elements of curriculum:

i) educational purposes a school seeks to attain;

ii) selection of experiences useful in reaching these purposes;

iii) organization of these learning experiences;

iv) evaluating effectiveness of these learning experiences.

This approach has spawned a variety of definitions/descriptions of curriculum. Most of the emphasis, however, in contrast to Tyler's original formulation, has been on the first element, objectives. For instance, according to Hirst (1968), the curriculum needs a set of objectives to qualify as a rational activity and is defined as the programme of activities which will enable pupils attain these educational ends. Barrow (1984) modifies Hirst's definition to run as follows: "a programme of activities (by teachers and pupils) designed so that pupils will attain as far as possible certain educational and other schooling ends or objectives". For Pratt (1980), the curriculum is "an organized
set of formal educational and/or training intentions". Neagley and Evans (1967) include under curriculum "all planned experiences provided by the school to assist the pupils in attaining the designated learning outcomes to the best of their abilities". Johnson (1967) calls it "a structured series of intended learning outcomes"; Kerr (1968) lists the four areas covered by a theory of curriculum as objectives, knowledge, evaluation and school learning experiences and implies that the curriculum is the learning which is planned and guided by the school, carried on individually or in groups, inside or outside the school.

The "objectives" approach has been criticized for its assumptions of linearity and its reliance on behaviouristic conceptions of human beings and education. Goodson's main critique is that the focus of such an approach is "disembodied and decontextualised" (Goodson 1990: 305, emphasis in the original). Looking at education as an instrumental activity, it denies the concept of education as a process which has value in itself. (See Kelly, 1982: 99-108 for a critique of the objectives approach). Kelly (1982) argues for a process-model of planning which begins, not with a statement of objectives but with a specification of processes and procedures as the basis for the exercise of professional judgement by a teacher. Grundy's (1987) similar critique is implicit in the very title of her book: Curriculum: Product or praxis, which attacks the product or commodity or technicist approach to curriculum and explores an understanding of curriculum as praxis (in the Marxist, Freirean sense of the term).

Barrow (1984) provides a critical review of definitions which originate from a "technicist" or an instrumentalist and
behaviourist approach. Essentially the curriculum planners' task is seen with reference to the objectives of student learning. The task is to "provide teaching strategies, learning activities and evaluative devices, so that these selected objectives may be realized in the classroom" (Barrow and Milburn 1986: 66). The emphasis here is on the teacher as an implementor of the curriculum, assessing needs, designing objectives, strategies and tests. The difficulty with such an approach is that it "assumes that there are general skills in such curriculum making, an assumption far from proven" (ibid.: 66).

Thus, in summary, the usual approaches in curriculum theory and in the sociology of education, as well as in educational practice, treat the "principles, ideas and categories" preserved in and communicated by educational institutions, as neutral, objective and apolitical. These derive from an epistemology rooted in logical positivism, a vision of society that is essentially functionalist and consensus-oriented in its approach and a related understanding of the human individual that is primarily behaviouristic.

To elaborate a little: these approaches to curriculum theory are essentially technicist, universalizing (aiming at law-like generalizability, like the natural sciences), and non-sociological. They are products of the initial axiomatic alliance between the fields of education and psychology, both building upon the conception of a unitary, fundamental, a priori and, therefore, a-historical "human nature". They assume absolutes and ideals valid across time and space; an ideal learner, an ideal learning apparatus, an ideal product of a given curriculum, an
ideal curriculum and—by extension—an ideal way to formulate curricula across disciplines, i.e., the entire sub-field of curriculum design. As Apple (1982: 12) puts it, "for the major part of this century, education in general and the curriculum field in particular has devoted a good deal of its energy to the search for one specific thing . . . a general set of principles that would guide educational planning and evaluation. In large part, this has reduced itself to attempts at creating the most efficient method of doing curriculum work" (emphasis in the original).

Simultaneously, sociologists have paid attention to the social manifestations of the educational activity and to education as a social system. Emile Durkheim conceived of society as an organism, the parts intrinsically related to the whole and subordinate to it. Society, accordingly, stood in a somewhat god-like relationship to its individual members, the latter virtually existing for the maintenance and perpetuation of the former.

A Hobbesian view of essential human nature made Durkheim see the primary social problem as one of control, organization and discipline - its individual corollary being 'morality'. Education, therefore, for Durkheim, became the primary means of socialization - producing 'moral' members of society - and allocation and training of various human resources for various
roles in the economy. Education socializes by imparting common sets of norms and values to the younger generation, thus generating among the members of society a consensus on these matters. This is what Durkheim calls moral education. The 'objectives' and 'product' orientation of Durkheimian sociology forms the intellectual context for the similar orientation of the curriculum theorists mentioned above. In fact, one of the crucial characteristics of the positivist, behaviourist, functionalist approach, highlighted by Grundy (1987), is its technicist insistence on the input-output model of education. By paying no attention to process, this approach assumes the neutrality or transparency of the process which, in fact, is a conflictive, power-ridden one.

Parsonian structural functionalism in the United States of the 1950s, is a working out of Durkheim's conceptions. Most of the "objectives"-oriented curriculum theorists discussed above derive, consciously or implicitly, from psychological behaviourism on the one hand and Durkheimian-Parsonian sociology (which is itself behaviourist in its conception of human beings) on the other.

2. The similarity between Durkheim's two functions and the recent distinction between the hidden curriculum and the "open" curriculum may be noted. The difference is in the note of approbation. What Marxist critique unmasks as the hidden curriculum is for Durkheim and the functionalists one of the explicitly necessary functions of education.

3. See Giddens (1978: 71-79) for a commentary on Durkheim's writings on education, especially the linkages between his conceptions of 'moral conduct' and 'social change'. Durkheim has been criticized for assuming a congruence between culture and social structure, and for his emphasis on the integrative function of education. Others, for instance Basil Bernstein, have drawn on his work, including his work on religion, for analyzing educational systems. Bernstein (1971) explores the link between Durkheim's interpretation of social change and cultural change (movement from 'mechnical' towards 'organic' solidarity, and movement towards an 'integrated code' from a 'collected code').
Educational research in India, in general, and explorations in the sociology of education in particular, have "up until the 1980s . . . been marked by a strongly positivist and structural-functionalist guise" (Scrase 1993: 14). This has been the dominant approach to research and "discussion incorporating critical social theory [was] absent in the majority of [the] studies" (ibid.: 15). For instance, Dave and Dave (1991: 568) in the authoritative *Fourth survey of research in education* treat curriculum design as an activity which, in the context of educational development, "defines the scope of development in observable and measurable terms, indicates the content and teaching-learning strategies required for development and spells out modes, procedures, tools and techniques for assessing the development attained". This trend is also reflected in their analysis of the research done in the field of curriculum in India: of the "components" of the curriculum which have been studied, objectives account for 21.9 percent of the research done, teaching-learning for 29.3 percent and "all components" for 23 percent. Texts and general issues account for a relatively poor 7.4 percent and 3.4 percent respectively.

Anand and Buch (1991: 1346-1348), while discussing research on the curriculum in the field of higher education, highlight the relative importance given to a study of the mechanical organization of curriculum (for instance, the semester system) and the course content. The latter, however, is narrowly conceptualized, and consists mainly of matters related to the English language, indicative perhaps of what is considered worth researching.
Institutional objectives, teaching methodologies and evaluation, constitute the other important categories.

2.2 Critical, ‘reconceptualist’ approaches to curriculum

It is possible to see the general lack of a focus on "critical social theory" as a reason for the marginalization of research on rural education in general and rural higher education in particular, which in a larger scheme of stratification of knowledge (Young 1973), may be expected to rank lower in terms of social evaluation and rewards. What is of particular interest to the present study is the almost total lack of attention to curricular issues of rural and marginal institutions of higher education like the gram vidyapiths.4

If current research on curriculum is classified according to the areas of learning, "language curriculum" accounts for a sizeable 32.3 percent, whereas "work experience, vocational-technical education", which can be loosely interpreted as the category closest to the model of vidyapith education, accounts for only 7.4 percent (Dave and Dave 1991). (In addition, it should be noted that "work experience" relates to the school curriculum only.)

An examination of the review of the M. Phil.-level research (Kaul 1991: 1492-1494) does not indicate even one study of rele-

4. The initial ideas relating to the concept of the gram vidyapith are spelt out in Morgan (1951). See Bhatt et al. (1951) for an extended commentary on Morgan’s ideas. A committee on rural higher education (Government of India 1970), and a general article (Buch 1989) have drawn some attention to rural higher education and rural institutes. Otherwise, comments about gram vidyapiths are confined to in-house newsletters like Kodiyu (in Gujarati), brought out by Lok Bharati, Sanosara.
vance to the topic under study. However, a pioneering effort with respect to gram vidyapith education was made by Patel (1992) in an M. Phil. dissertation submitted to the Gujarat Vidyapeeth. Unfortunately, this exercise was restricted to compilation of information regarding the infrastructure available with the vidyapiths and student intake, through a postal survey. This also happens to be the only study to date on rural higher education, as practised by the gram vidyapiths of Gujarat.

Chanana (1991) highlights the role that a failure of the social change function of education can play in generating new and critical approaches in educational research. The inability of education to fulfill its promise of social change has prompted a shift of perspectives in the West, but in India, such shifts have been insignificant, except in the area of women's studies. There has been a "slight expansion in the dimensions covered by earlier studies. . . . This expansion did not introduce diversity in perspectives, problem areas and methodology in the Indian context" (ibid.: 118).

In contrast to this general situation, a change towards a critical analysis of educational inequality as a reflection of inegalitarian social structures becomes evident in studies by Saldanha (1989), Kumar (1989, 1991) Acharya (1985), Thapan (1991) and Scrase (1993). These studies, many of them related to curriculum issues and textbook analysis, have brought into focus an alternative approach to educational research in general, and curriculum studies in particular. Before describing the features of this critical approach to curriculum theory, it may be useful to sketch its sociological-theory context first.
What are usually called conflict theories in sociology (the theories of Marx and Weber and all their later incarnations) are in a peculiar position. Marxist epistemology, in many respects is positivist. However, Marxist theory's view of human nature is rather Rousseauistic as opposed to the Hobbesian pessimism of Parsons and Durkheim. In addition, society is seen as conflict and class ridden. Power is governed by the inequitable distribution of resources. The central problem for Marxist theories of society is not social control obtained through consensus, but class-division, conflict and injustice. The consensus required by Parsonian theory is seen as ideological legitimation of the domination of the ruling groups. Most importantly Marxist social analysis and its theory of the modes of production provides a rooting in historical movement and offers a theory of social change. In contrast, structural functionalism provides only a theory of stability and social maintenance.

Education, in terms of Marxist theory, is an element of the superstructure of the social formation, ultimately determined by the economic base and, in turn functioning to maintain the economic-politico-social status quo. The positivist epistemology of classical Marxism leads to a position very similar to Parsonian functionalism; education reproduces and maintains the existing social formation. Unlike functionalism, however, Marxism's fundamental perception of an unjust, oppressive and conflictual status quo, enables it to attach a negative value to the control and maintenance function so important for Durkheim and Parsons; and to see "consensus" as a forced or manipulated "consensus"
concealing an unequal economic and power structure. "Unlike sociological functionalism, where order is assumed and deviance from that order is problematic, Marxist and Neo-Marxist analyses signal something else. . . . Rather than a functional coherence where all things work relatively smoothly to maintain a basically unchanging social order, these analyses point to 'the contested, reproduction of society's fundamental relations, which enables society to reproduce itself again, but only in the form of a dominant and subordinate (i.e., antagonistic, not functional) social order'" (Apple 1982: 14).

The notions of alienated labour and human creativity lead to a concept of praxis -- of human agency which, alongside the development of the economic forces and relations of production, becomes the motive force of social change in the direction of a just and equitable social order.

Education theory and curriculum theory of Marxist inspiration initially tended to lay an overwhelming stress on the reproduction and social maintenance consequences of existing educational systems (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, Willis 1977, Apple 1979). Robinson (1994) also indicates that this emphasis had the methodological consequence of focussing on macro-level systems through sweeping generalizations which left little scope for specific identification of weak spots for corrective action. The result was a certain pessimism, a sense of the overwhelming power of structures and complete helplessness of the human beings trapped in them. This led to an awareness, on the one hand, of the need to turn from macro generalizations to the examination of micro situations, and, on the other, of the need to recognize and
explore the role of human agency and resistance within existing structures; in curriculum terminology to move away from the administrator’s curriculum in order to focus on what teachers and students might make of it. (Apple, whose early work, *Ideology and curriculum* (1979), emphasizes the role of curriculum in reproducing social structures, explains his own move, in *Education and power* (1982: 23-24), towards a more agency-oriented approach in terms of the school as a productive, as well as reproductive, apparatus.

This recognition is explicitly analyzed in Robinson (1994) and is evident in the work of researchers like Grundy, and in methodological studies like Carr and Kemmis (1986). The methodological emphasis of Grundy, and Carr and Kemmis on action research, as well as Raymond Morrow’s *Critical theory and methodology* deriving from the work of Habermas, also imply an intrinsic connection between radical approaches to education and curriculum and certain kinds of research methodology. These developments inflect and complement the positivist epistemology of classical Marxism with the hermeneutic and critical-constructivist sociology of knowledge approaches.

These critical theory perspectives also draw upon Weberian sociology and its analysis of stratification based on factors other than economic ones as well as Weber’s study of the role of the bureaucracy.

In summary, what distinguishes the radical approach to society, education and curriculum is its conflictual model of society and its ultimate emancipatory aim of education for social justice which does not necessarily underlie all constructivist,
micro-level inquiry concerned with the creation and negotiation of meaning.

The radical approaches sketched above, provide the context within which one may place the alternative approaches to curriculum generally labelled the "reconceptualist". These approaches usually draw upon Marxist and Weberian theory (at the macro-social level of analysis) and from the sociology of knowledge of, for instance, Mannheim and Berger and Luckmann (at the micro-level of analysis). However, their attitudes to existing social systems differ considerably, in the extent of their radicalness -- ranging from pure hermeneutic analysis of meaning creation/negotiation for its own sake to explicitly political commitments to social transformation.

Before proceeding to discuss recent developments of the reconceptualist kind in curriculum theory, it may be instructive -- in view of this study's focus on a curriculum of Gandhian inspiration -- to look at the turn-of-the-century philosopher, John Dewey. Dewey's conceptions of education in general and the curriculum in particular, appear to stand somewhere midway between the two extremes of the reconceptualist approaches indicated above. Dewey's ideas were motivated primarily by his perception of the irrelevance of contemporary school curricula to the lives of children and of the disjunction between the mechanical instruction that the child received in school and its lived experience in the family and society milieu of Dewey's time. His alternative revolved around two crucial insights: (i) the essentially ethical and moral nature of all education that is really education and (ii) the use of productive occupations as the core
of any curriculum with the academic matter to be built around it. The second point was discussed in chapter one. We turn, therefore, to Dewey’s awareness of the ethical nature of education. Dewey’s ethical theory called psychological ethics "‘the discussion of conduct in relation to the agent’" and social ethics "the discussion of conduct in ‘relation to the conditions of action’ or situation" (Giarelli and Chamblis 1989: 92). These two dimensions of ethics, have their educational counterparts in the nature of the child and the nature of the curriculum. Educational development, therefore (ibid.: 92-93),

‘does not mean just getting something out of the mind. It is a development of experience and into experience that is really wanted’. If the child grows into experience, there is development of experience: from the standpoint of the child, the subject matters function in such a way that the child grows, develops, fulfills itself in experience and by experience; from the standpoint of the curriculum certain subject matter is now taken into the experience of the child, which is a way of saying that the curriculum grows . . . by including the child’s experience.

Thus Dewey’s answer to the problem of irrelevance of existing educational curricula is to replicate life situations in the school so that child, teacher and curriculum interact in a specific situation that enables all three to feed into each other and grow. Similarly, his comments on the relationship between research and the educational activity indicate that "‘no conclusion of scientific research can be converted into an immediate rule of educational art’" (ibid.: 94). At the most, the findings of such research can be taken as directing attention to certain areas of specific educational contexts. It becomes evident from the above that unlike the proponents of the "objectives game", Dewey declines to see education as a means to an extraneous end.
Education rather, is itself defined as an ethical activity which dialectically links the student and the world in a process of mutual growth. Many of these elements recur in the reactions of the reconceptualists against the Tylerian influence.

We now turn to these latter. A point of origin may be located in the United States in the dissatisfaction with the conception of instruction as ideologically neutral (Pinar 1975, 1988; Jackson 1968). This approach sought a shift in the understanding of instruction -- from a neutral conception of instruction as rooted in general psychological explanations of how the human mind learns or how teaching is done best, towards a more contextualized understanding of instruction, that is asking how and why particular groups of children learn the things they learn, or how to teach in a socially differentiated milieu (for instance Willis 1977).

This work has been extended by theorists deriving their inspiration from critical trends in the sociology of knowledge (Apple 1979, 1982; Aronowitz and Giroux 1985; Giroux 1989; Kumar 1989, 1992). The latter approach sees the "forms of curricular knowledge . . . as potential mechanisms of socio-economic selection and control" (Apple 1979: 155). It, therefore, focuses necessarily on prior questions. Whose knowledge? Why is it taught to this group in this way? How does it function in the connections between cultural power and the control of modes of production and distribution? These questions precede those usually asked about levels of achievement, levels of success and failure. The study of curriculum -- what is valid knowledge (Bernstein 1971) -- and the grounds for its selection and eval-
uation, become part of a larger question and a possible means through which to examine the cultural and economic reproduction of inequality. Such an approach leads directly to a critical questioning of the assumptions about knowledge, human beings, society and the emphasis on consensus and neutrality.

Thus, Eggleston (1977) distinguishes between the 'received' and the 'reflexive ideological' perspectives on curriculum. The former, which is compatible with an instrumentalist view of curriculum, derives from a 'given' or a priori view of knowledge. From 'stocking up' the individual with "appropriate facts and skills", the focus shifts, in the 'reflexive' perspective, to the sociological context in which knowledge is generated and is to be placed (Eggleston 1977: 13): curriculum is "concerned with the presentation of knowledge; and involves a pattern of learning experiences, both instrumental and expressive, designed to enable it to be received by students within the school. This pattern of learning experiences is one that responds to the societal view of nature, distribution and availability of knowledge and is, therefore, subject to change". He then augments his definition (ibid.: 20) by calling it "a body of learning experiences responding to a societal view of knowledge that may not always be fully expressed or even fully accepted by teachers or students".

This perspective also raises the question of the "value-ladenness" of curriculum and of curriculum theory (Barrow 1990), as well as research methods in the social sciences in general. The different questions relating to how inquiry into curriculum should be conducted, what concerns are to be addressed, involve value commitments. In contrast to a common perception that these
judgments of value are subjective and arbitrary, what is essential is to have a clearly stated conception of education with which these values should be consistent. "If the centrality of values is not recognized, we are doomed to the bizarre situation in which theorists assert the efficacy of principles in a vacuum -- as if there were proper ways to design a curriculum, regardless of who it is for and what particular purpose it is supposed to achieve" (Barrow 1990: 117).

The critical perspectives on curriculum, by considering the sociological contexts in which knowledge is to placed, and by focussing on the "value-ladenness" of the curriculum explicitate certain fundamental assumptions they make -- that education is a political act; that educators cannot separate the activity of education from "unequally responsive institutional arrangements and the forms of consciousness that dominate . . . societies" (Apple 1979: 1). Implicitly defining curriculum as the "overt and covert knowledge taught in" educational institutions (what he also calls the "curriculum" and the "hidden curriculum"), Apple uses Gramsci's concept of hegemony to analyze the dialectical relationship between curriculum and "the kinds of normative and conceptual consciousness 'required' by a stratified society" (ibid.: 2). Hegemony is defined as "an organised assemblage of meanings and practices" which "saturates" society to such an extent that it constitutes in the words of Raymond Williams, 'the limit of common-sense for most people'" (ibid.: 4-5). This concept enables us to see schools, colleges etc., as politically implicated institutions which select and disseminate socially legitimate knowledge.
They do this by: (a) technicizing knowledge: reducing it to a set of skills governed by considerations of efficiency and (b) claiming objectivity for knowledge and neutrality for the educational activity. This is done by means of crucial categories (knowledge forms) through which we relate to others and approach and evaluate social practices: the vision of 'science' and the commitment to the abstract individual. The third element to be "situated" (after institutions and knowledge forms) is the educator her/himself as political being: where do I stand?

Thus, such an act of situating is guided by a vision of social and economic justice which implies a restructuring of institutions. This vision, in order to be effective, however, must take account of the fact that the language of hegemonic saturation and reproduction of the social order, which has been used above may obscure the notion of on-going and significant resistance to such power, from peasants, tribals, women, the scheduled castes and other subaltern groups. It is this struggle that provides the actuality upon which innovation and concrete action can be based.

Such a social-justice perspective implies that one must study the curriculum in use within an institution, instead of making input-output studies of achievement. One must not take it for granted that curricular knowledge is neutral. This is especially important since many of the concepts associated with the "objective" understanding of curriculum, for instance curriculum design, are concerned with "how to" -- with an ideal set of steps claimed to be scientific -- by which to arrive at certain
ends, no matter what the subject matter or discipline, who the teachers or pupils, or what the socio-economic and cultural context. Advocates of the radical tendency in curriculum study like Apple (1979), Eggleston (1977), Kumar (1992), Inglis (1985) and others, highlight the dangers of the complacency and rigidity generated by such claims.

One implication of a perspective which sees education not as ". . . a product like cars or bread, but a selection and organization of the available knowledge at a particular time, which involves conscious and unconscious choices" (Young 1973: 343), is the influence of historical situations on the development of the curriculum. Williams (1961), in the historical context of Britain, associates four ideologies with different curricular policies: the liberal with the focus on the 'educated man', the bourgeois with professional education and education as a means to social power, the democratic with improving access to all sections, and the proletarian with student choice, participation etc. Depending on the relative strengths of the groups associated with the four ideologies, curricular selections will vary over time. Such a perspective helps in interpreting curricular changes.

From a different perspective, Bernstein (1971), explains the relationships between curriculum (what counts as valid knowledge), pedagogy (what counts as valid transmission of knowledge) and evaluation (valid realization of this knowledge on the part of the taught) through the concepts of classification and framing. A third concept which interlocks with these is boundary strength. Classification refers to the degree of boundary main-
tenance between the content units of a curriculum. It is strong when the contents are well insulated from each other and weak when the boundaries are blurred. Classification identifies the basic structure of the curriculum.

The concept of frame determines the structure of pedagogy and refers to the strength of the boundary between what may and what may not be transmitted in the pedagogical relationship. It thus refers to the range of options available to the teacher and the taught in the control over the selection, organization and pacing of knowledge acquisition. Weak framing and weak classification lead to a more open educational system, what Bernstein terms the integrated code; strong framing and strong classification lead to the collected code.

While the integrated code allows a more open educational system, the manner of integration is crucial; it 'refers minimally to the subordination of previously insulated subjects or courses to some relational idea which blurs the boundary between subjects' (Bernstein 1971: 209). In other words, the relational idea is a perspective on lived experience through which the various 'disciplines' are taught. These concepts are particularly useful in explaining curricular changes in a historical context.

The 'strong' framing ethic in Indian society, rooted in its cultural traditions, is well known. The oft-cited instance of Ekalavya sacrificing his thumb on the orders of Guru Dronacharya
reinforces the ideal of obedience expected of pupils.\(^5\) The au-
thority of the teacher is unquestionable. In the more recent
context of colonial India, Krishna Kumar discusses the transfor-
mation of a teacher -- meek and 'powerless' in society -- into a
'dictator' in the classroom (Kumar 1990). In short, the peda-
gogical norm is for the teacher to question and for the student
to answer. This is not merely a question-answer interaction. It
constitutes an exercise of power in which the teacher tests
whether the student can reproduce what has been 'taught' in the
precise form in which it has been 'taught'.

In addition, State control over education has been a feature
of the Indian education system, as is evident from the series of
official committees and Commissions which have sought to define
what needs to be taught and how education has to be structured.
(See for instance, Aggarwal (1993); Patra (1987) and Agrawal and
Aggarwal (1994) for extracts from important reports.)

Therefore, understanding the theory of the state underlying
analyses of education is important for interpreting the conclu-
sions that are drawn regarding educational problems like inequal-
ities in access and achievement. Carnoy (1992: 144-159) describes
the various theories of the state and their role in understanding
educational problems. The theory of the "peripheral" state--the
present-day theory of the Liberal state--continues in the tradi-
tion of the philosophy of the individual driving the economy and
the state. This theory pervades the application of neoclassical
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5. This (traditional) interpretation, however, occludes the fact that the thumb sacrifice was
required in order to prevent a tribal from undertaking an activity -- in which he even outshone
Arjuna -- that was an exclusive Kshatriya preserve.
economics to education (the "human capital" approaches). The theory of the "instrumental" state sees the latter as a class state serving to reproduce social inequality.

The "autonomous" state theories—the "contested" and "institutional" states—appear to be more relevant to understanding educational policy-making in India. Bardhan (1986) analyzes the coalition of forces—industry, rich agriculturists and the "white-collars" (bureaucracy)—in terms of the shaping of the state by contestations over economic power. In the contested state, the state provides not only the financial commitment for optimizing social investment, but also arbitrates between the pressures for reproduction from dominant groups and the pressures for improved access from the citizenry, through its own mechanisms—the judiciary, for instance—6—and policies which it derives on the basis of its own perception of the public good (Carnoy 1992: 150).

The narrower sense in which the term "curriculum" is used identifies it with the framework of a particular institution and the teachers and students who form part of it. However, a broader perspective constitutes "curriculum" as an arena or "contested terrain" in which different interests which control and shape the state try to "impose" their conception of what is valid knowledge; [see Arno (1994) for an illuminating account of

6. Such intervention has been more visible in the area of professional (medical and engineering) education fee policies rather than curriculum. For instance, the judgement of the Supreme Court in the Mohini Jain versus the State of Karnataka case (July 1992), which held capitation fees unconstitutional, and the February 1993 judgement in the case of J.P. Unnikrishnan and others versus the State of Andhra Pradesh, which allowed the norm of 50 percent of seats as payment seats, are examples where judicial interventions have had direct and important consequences for policy.
recent developments in Nicaragua]. This is most evident in the fierce contestation of the specific content of different subjects: witness for instance the debate on recent politically-motivated attempts to rewrite history textbooks in certain states of India.\footnote{See special issue of \textit{Seminar}, No. 400, December 1992. Also see Kumar (1991, 1992) for critical comments on the evolution of the discourse on the curriculum in India.}

Returning to the fourth ideology in Williams's scheme referred to earlier, the 'proletarian', it is possible to see the influence of the critical sociology formulated by Freire (1972, 1973), Illich (1973), on the curriculum of nonformal educational experiments in India which seek to develop a "pedagogy of the oppressed", outside the formal education system. Such innovations have been partial, with very little influence on the curricula of formal systems. They also support Young's almost pessimistic conclusions that given the relationship between distribution of power and organization of knowledge, most curricular innovations may be expected to be of two kinds: (a) "modifications of existing academic curricula which maintain existing social evaluations of knowledge" and (b) "innovations which disregard the social evaluations implicit in academic curricula, but only because their availability is restricted to less able pupils" (Young 1973: 357).

2.3 Review and summary

To summarize briefly and conclude what has been said above, the dominant and popular approach to the field of curriculum

\footnote{7. See special issue of \textit{Seminar}, No. 400, December 1992. Also see Kumar (1991, 1992) for critical comments on the evolution of the discourse on the curriculum in India.}
inquiry is to focus on the "objectives" of teaching or the "educational purposes of the school". It is rooted in a functionalist consensus model of society, a behaviourist, rather pessimistic view of the individual and a positivist scientific view of what constitutes knowledge. This approach has had its share of criticism, primarily on account of the behaviourist assumptions it makes and its faith in decontextualized learning.

The "reconceptualist" alternative to curriculum inquiry and approaches deriving from critical trends in the sociology of knowledge have, on the other hand, highlighted the relationship between (i) the selection and transmission of "valid" knowledge and (ii) the unequal power structures, and the institutional arrangements that they entail, in society.

What is common to both approaches, however, is a recognition of the curriculum as something which has to do with the what that has to be learned. The "objectives" approach focuses on the "preparation" or "design" of the "what" for the institutional arrangements within education -- an official curriculum agenda for schools in society. It also privileges the role of the teacher as an implementor of curriculum over that of creator. By implication, it tends to reflect the administrative set-up's perceptions about curriculum.

The radical perspectives, in contrast, have focussed on the "what" that, at a macro-level, is the result of particular selections and organizations of knowledge determined by the distribution of power in society; and at the micro-level, is the 'what' that is actually learned, learning outcomes that often bear little resemblance to the "what" that is actually taught.

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That is, these perspectives have brought into focus the agenda teachers bring into a teaching-learning situation, the interactions between teachers and pupils, the material socio-economic backgrounds and aspirations of pupils and the mediating factors represented by the school and its "hidden" curriculum. They have highlighted the teacher as a more active "adapter" of the curriculum and have also allowed more agency to pupils, who make sense of the "what" during the actual enactment of the curriculum. Such an allocation of agency functions to teachers and pupils leads us to a crucial formulation which will help answer the question raised earlier regarding drawing boundaries to the field of inquiry: "the school (official) curriculum is merely one of a number of different curricula, and that other kinds of curricula exist for teachers, learners..." (Tripp 1994: 7, emphasis in the original). The implication is that different understandings or "cuts" of curricula are possible, depending on the answers to the following aspects of curriculum issues: who creates and controls the curriculum (interests), when is the curriculum created (context) and, how is it encoded (medium)? Thus, we may have the administration's, the teacher's and the learner's curricula; the prospective, the enacted and retrospective curricula; and the intended, implicit and meta curricula.8

8. A similar conception is indicated by Goodson (1990: 305): "what we require is a combined approach: a focus on the construction of prescriptive curricula and policy coupled with an analysis of the negotiations and realization of that prescribed curriculum focussing on the essentially dialectical relationship of the two".
Following from this conception of curricula, Tripp (1994: 17-22) offers definitions of curricula: the official curriculum is "a written document [stating] the syllabus planned by the school for learning by its pupils, and the teaching-learning methods to be employed . . .". Such a curriculum is usually composed of a core, a common and a specialist sub-curricula. The teachers' curriculum is made up of the "prospective, enacted and retrospective curricula; these will include teachers' selection from, addition to, and adoption, adaptation and interpretation of the administration's, the learner's, and the implicit and meta-curricula". The learner's curriculum is "what the learner tries to learn; it is more intended and enacted than planned, as it tends to be produced by what learners decide to select from what is offered to them, particularly by the teachers' curriculum".

The above is an understanding of 'curricula' on the basis of who produces them. A process approach is also possible, by using when and how curricula are produced, as criteria. For instance, we may have the prospective, enacted or retrospective curriculum; or an "implicit" curriculum and a "meta-curriculum". The following figure (Figure 2.1), adapted from Tripp (1994: 15), brings together the administration's, the teacher's and the learner's curriculum, and the changes in them at different stages of the teaching-learning process.
Figure 2.1
Conceptions of curricula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prospective Curriculum</th>
<th>Enacted Curriculum</th>
<th>Retrospective Curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(prior to teaching)</td>
<td>(during teaching)</td>
<td>(subsequent to teaching)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: Major transformations
Lesser degrees of influence

Source: Adapted from Tripp (1994: 15)
One implication of such an approach is that since "it is people who have interests, . . . [it] can shift power from 'the system' as a whole to individuals and groups" (ibid.: 28). For instance, rather than asking what the roles of teachers and pupils are in the curriculum, one may look at what 'their curricula' are. Another implication is that it is possible to examine the congruences and conflicts between the different curricula, so that it is possible to evolve a reasonable degree of consensus on the what that has to be learned, and how it is to be learned. Yet another implication, which also applies to the methodological framework of this study, is the need to consider the viewpoints of various stake-holder groups like the students, teachers, alumni and administration or managements of educational institutions.