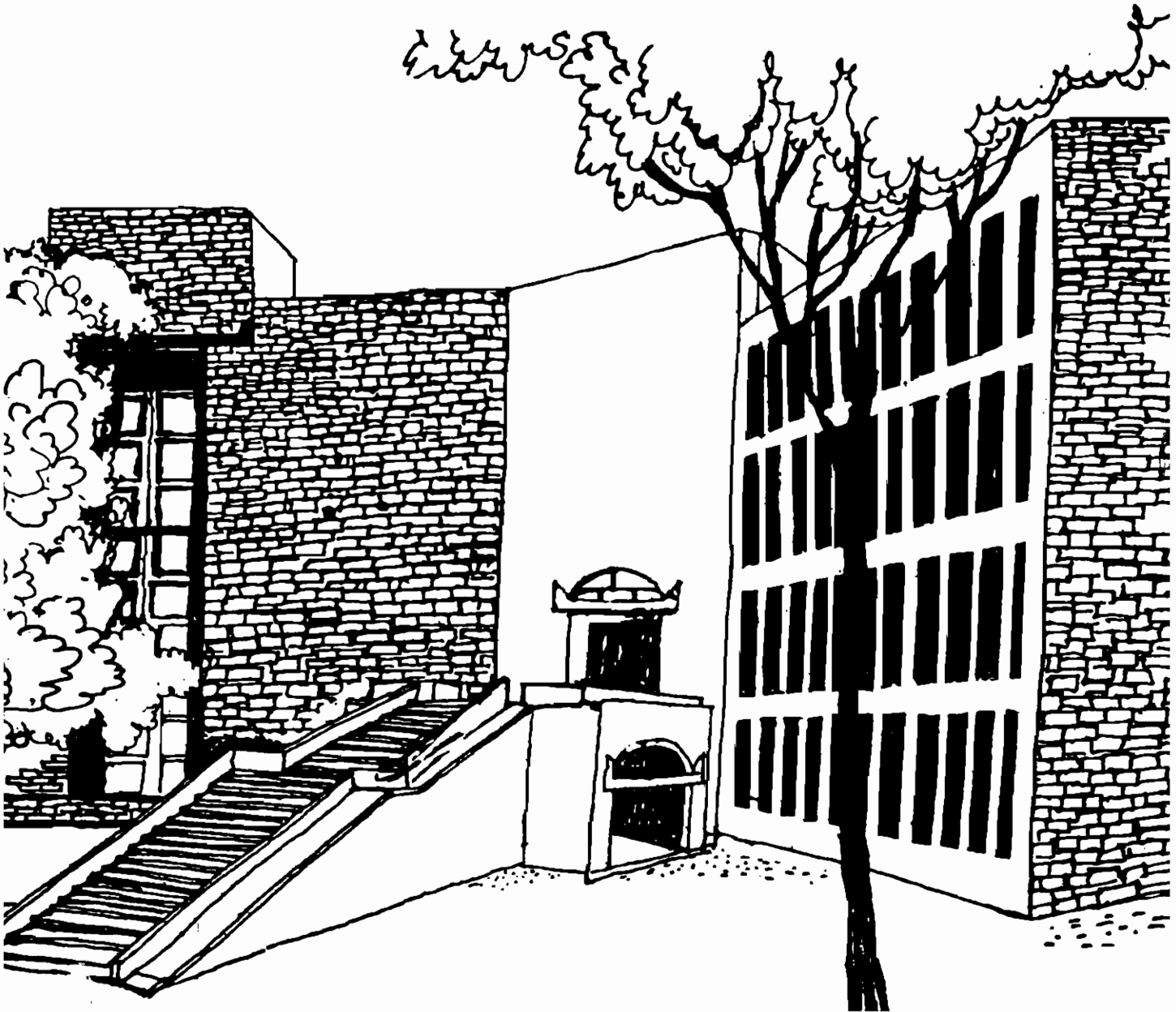# Working Paper

EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL ACTION
THE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME
IN SOCIAL MANAGEMENT

By

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W.P. No.1146
October 1993

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of the IIMA is to help faculty members to test
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pre-publication stage.

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AHMEDABAD - 380 015
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EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL ACTION
The Fellowship Programme in Social Management

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Abstract

The Fellowship Programme in Social Management, run by a nongovernmental organization, aims at training development workers. It can be located within the tradition of non-formal educational experiments which try to develop a `pedagogy of the oppressed'. The paper describes the model of education developed by the programme -- the pedagogical assumptions, the integration of theoretical knowledge and the affective elements of learning in the context of both the individual and the group, and the development of the curriculum. The paper concludes that such experiments, while not providing solutions to the problems of the formal educational system, open up dialogue on the creation of a democratic theory of education. Such a theory implies an open teacher-taught relationship, and highlights the need for reflective educational institutions. Finally, the paper stresses the need for a democratic system of education to promote academic excellence and social justice, from the primary level upwards.

The critical sociology formulated by Freire (1972, 1973), Illich (1973), Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), Giroux (1989) and Kumar (1989, 1991) has enabled a re-examination of the relationship between education and society. Such a critique of the earlier classical and liberal trends in education explores the linkages between "knowledge, culture and power on the one hand, and schooling and the issue of control on the other".[1] This trend has inspired many nonformal educational experiments in India which seek to develop a "pedagogy of the oppressed". Concomitant with this development has been the growing need for social change workers who would correspond to the "transformative intel-

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1. S. Aronowitz and H. Giroux (1985), quoted in R.C. Heredia
    (1993) pg.5.

lectuals" of Giroux. Given that the existing formal educational system is not geared to producing such people,[2] many nonformal educational experiments have tried to `train' committed individuals passing out of the formal educational systems. However, most of these attempts are short-term in nature and partial in their curricular scope. The Fellowship Programme in Social Management (FPSM) undertaken by the Behavioural Science Centre (BSC), a nongovernmental organisation based in Ahmedabad, Gujarat is an attempt to provide in-depth training to people opting for development work. This case study describes the development of the FPSM and analyses the implications of its pedagogy and curriculum for education. The following section provides an overview of the programme and its origins. The succeeding sections deal with the aims and objectives of the FPSM; its pedagogy and method; its content; evaluation systems; and the new directions taken by the programme. The final section draws some implications for education in general.

1.0 Origins and Overview:

The FPSM was started in 1982,[3] initially with the collaboration of the St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad. The BSC, by then, had acquired considerable expertise in the use of education for the development of rural groups. This experience, aided by the

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2. It must be noted that the formal education system does conduct
    degree courses in social work. However, the education provided
    is rooted in the traditions which have been critiqued by the
    radical or critical sociology referred to earlier.

3. The FPSM takes in about six to ten people every year; till now
    it has trained more than 80 people.

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academic skills of some members of the College staff was the-orized into a pedagogy for social action. Owing to its origins in a specific area of development experience, the FPSM developed an emphasis on understanding certain kinds of oppressive structures rather than others. In particular, its pedagogy evolved out of the attempts to counteract the psychological and social -- and later, the economic -- effects of the caste system on dalit communities, using the overall understanding of the work of Paulo Freire.

A chronological overview of the programme from this point in time provides a break-up into roughly three stages:

a)   Beginning through experimentation (1982-1985)

b)   Consolidation -- which also saw the beginning of ex-plicit theorizing on the basis of the first few years of experience with the programme (1986-1990)

c)   New directions, with the initiation of a second, paral-lel FPSM using Gujarati as the medium of instruction. (Till then English had been the sole medium of instruction).

At its inception the FPSM was visualized as a two-year course, the first year emphasizing theoretical learning inter-spersed with brief periods of field work; the second year concen-trating on field work interspersed with regular periods of re-flection.

1.1 Participants:

Owing to the nature of the training it imparts, the FPSM has been targeted towards two kinds of participants:

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a) Experienced development workers who have already spent time in the field and feel the need to arrive at some clarity about their work and themselves. They have usually been older persons, often members of Catholic religious congregations who have a specific field task to return to. For them, the FPSM becomes virtually a one year programme.

b) Fresh college graduates with some commitment and inclination towards development work.

In terms of class, caste, creed, sex, native region, most of the FPSM batches have been heterogeneous groups, and have therefore functioned as microcosms of Indian society in general.

2.0: **Aim**:

2.1: **Understanding interaction of realities of self and society**:

The programme aims to produce development workers by helping the participants "perceive (understand) social reality and themselves more clearly so as to enable them to transform those realities" (Annual Report, 1988). The fundamental assumption underlying this aim may be stated roughly as follows: the realities of both, the self (of the participant) and society outside the self, are created through the interaction of these two entities, and are, for the most part, unjust, oppressive realities. To be able to transform this situation of oppression and injustice into a human and just reality, the self must first liberate itself from what constrains and blocks its own inner freedom (before being able to undertake any action to transform social reality).

2.2: Integrating theoretical knowledge and affective elements of learning:

Breaking this down into a set of concrete objectives/tasks, a brochure prepared for the FPSM in 1987 defines the integration of cognitive and affective elements of learning in the following terms:

(i) to provide a sound theoretical basis which will enable the participant:

-- to understand the socio-economic and political reality of India,
-- to grasp the complexity of the development process,
-- to analyze the various strategies for development at the macro and, especially, at the micro levels.

(ii) to help the participant internalize theory, that is, to initiate and sustain a process where the participant:

-- checks his or her past understanding with the new theory,
-- contrasts past experience with the implications of new approaches and facts,
-- challenges personal motivations and values,
-- arrives at a personal synthesis between the cognitive and the affective, on the one hand, and between these two and the behavioural, on the other.

"The attainment of these objectives presupposes a concept of knowledge which is not generally accepted by the formal system of education. The acquisition of knowledge or the process of `learning' implies, therefore, that it cannot be conceived either as a purely cognitive process where logical rigour is the only condition for its acquisition and development or as mainly the result of an intuitive process, an affective empathy with the external world. Theoretical and affective elements act together to shape what we learn, what we accept as true, and what we reject as false" (FPSM Brochure, n.d. pgs. 3-4).

2.3: Internalization of learning:

The Annual Report of 1985-87 elaborates on the purposes and mode of functioning of this process of internalization which is probably the most fundamental feature that distinguishes the FPSM from the existing system of formal education.

The objectives of this component of the programme are:

- to ensure that the theoretical understanding does not remain at a purely cognitive level but touches other areas in the participant's personality and leads him to meaningful action.
- to increase the participant's awareness regarding his own limitations and strengths, so that the former can be handled effectively or minimized while the latter are enhanced.
- to gain a practical understanding of how groups function; this results in greater awareness of various issues like the individual's identity in a group, forms of leadership, active and passive presence, factionalism and power struggles, etc.; this understanding of groups helps the participants to deal with group formation at the village level.

At this level, a new set of pedagogical principles begins to operate:

-- the typical unequal relationship between teacher and student is abandoned; in a group all become teachers and learners and power is more equally distributed; from a dual interaction between teacher and students, the group moves into a multiple and hence richer interaction among individuals;

-- vicarious learning, that is, learning through the experience of others reflecting similar situations in the self, multiplies the occasions for self-awareness and accelerates the process of learning;

-- an atmosphere of attentive listening and dialogue is created; the self-respect, confidence and, ultimately, the power of each individual are increased; this strengthens the possibility of purposeful action.

3.0: Pedagogy and Method:

3.1: Assumptions:

Looking at the process of internalization has already led us to touch upon some pedagogical considerations. A description of the theoretical underpinnings of the approach (Annual Report 1989-90, pgs 33-35) places it against the background of three of the most influential Western pedagogical models -- the classical, the liberal and the radical. The FPSM's beginnings and its first

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pedagogical model were heavily dependent on the radical tradition, especially on Freire. Later, the critique of knowledge undertaken by Berger on the one hand and Foucault on the other influenced the understanding of the relationship between knowledge and power expressed in the concept of ideology. As a first approximation one can say that the FPSM's pedagogy rests on three fundamental assumptions:

(i)   The self is a slave to egoism and prejudices. There is violence and oppression in the world around. The two phenomena are linked to each other, learning is a process of transformation = liberation of the self and of the reality around. This double process must occur synchronically.

(ii)   Experience is the road to knowledge. Learning about poverty and development can take place by going into the reality of the poor and is acquired by reflecting on that experience, and by acting on it.

(iii)   Reality is complex and changing. Learning results from a holistic approach, that is, from a desire to analyze and study not only what is immediately useful or practical but what is helpful in unlocking the reasons and assumptions underlying facts and events. Education must deal not only with the empirically particular and concrete but also with the universal. Education must teach how to express the understanding of the particular in a universally conceptual form so that maps or reality are available to many.

3.2: Types of learning:

The pedagogy of the FPSM distinguishes between two types of learning:

Integrational or holistic learning

This type of learning takes place as the result of a complex set of forces, theoretical inputs, new experiences from the environment and an on-going reflection process. It is characterized by the production of `meaning' for the subject.  It also determines to a great extent the kind and the `quality' of actions taken by the subject.

Skill-oriented learning

This type of learning refers to the process of acquiring very specific manual or intellectual skills. Though more than mere skill, a `critical temper' is acquired through a rigorous process of observation and testing. This type of learning requires the assimilation of a given set of rules and practices and excellence is achieved through learning-by-doing.

It may be useful to explain in more detail how these pedagogical assumptions and the two types of learning have been integrated into the actual course. The following diagram, Figure 1, (from the Annual Report, 1989-1990, pg.35) explains the interaction between the three main learning processes (`components of learning') and the role played by the individual and the group. One may even understand integrational or holistic learning to be the result of two movements: (i) moving vertically up and down from A to C and from C to A; and (ii) shifting horizontally from
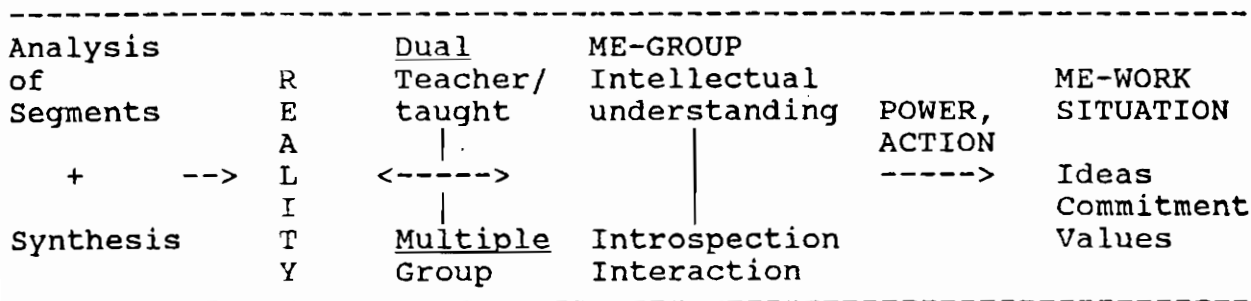
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individual to group learning.

Figure 1: FPSM's PEDAGOGY

Components of Learning Process	Goal content	Instrument-Medium	
		Individual	Group
A. Theoretical Discourse	Understanding critically paradigms, models theories, assumptions UNIVERSAL	Private reading and writing. summaries and analysis of books	Student expositions in class seminars
	Conceptualizing and preparing actualised maps of reality		
B. Experiencing reality	Understanding micro reality of poor/ village /individual community CONCRETE	Field work based on being rather than doing	Sharing field work experiences
	Communicating with poor: individuals and groups	Personal reflection with guide	Case-studies
C. Self and Other - awareness	Discovering personal strengths and blocks	Personal reflection with tutor	Periodic group reviews
	Understanding group behaviour patterns		Occasional camps, group dynamics
	Developing non-manipulative behaviour		

3.3: **Process of education:**

Bearing this in mind, the process which the learner is meant

to undergo may be visualised through the following diagram: (from

Figure 2: Process of education

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-------------------------------------------------------------------
Analysis              Dual      ME-GROUP
of            R       Teacher/  Intellectual                ME-WORK
Segments      E       taught    understanding    POWER,     SITUATION
              A       | .                |        ACTION
   +     -->  L       <----->            |        ----->    Ideas
              I       |                  |                  Commitment
Synthesis     T       Multiple  Introspection               Values
              Y       Group     Interaction
-------------------------------------------------------------------
```

Explanatory Note:

-    The external reality is communicated through an analysis
into segments which are then synthesized again into a whole.
-    At the theoretical level of intellectual understanding this
takes place through a teacher/taught relationship. Learning at
the level of the inner (personal/group) reality takes place
through a relationship of equality in which all are teachers and
taught.
-    Within me and the group there is reciprocity between the
learning that takes place at the intellectual (theoretical) and
that which takes place at the feeling (introspective) level.
-    This composite learning leads to a choice of action which
modifies, in the long run, the interaction between each individu-
al and his or her work situation.

The pedagogy of the FPSM as it has been described here,

remains substantially the same today.

4.0 **Curriculum:**

The foregoing section has already touched upon the FPSM

method and some very general aspects of the content. The follow-

ing gives details specifically of the content of the theoretical

module as it was visualized and consolidated between 1985 and

1988. The first four years had seen a somewhat ad_hoc evolution

of course content, depending largely on the availability of

teaching staff and the availability of specific reading material.

From 1986 onwards, apart from reference books, the FPSM staff

themselves began to generate teaching material through research papers and text book material.

The FPSM theoretical content was seen in terms of a tripartite division into basic, core and workshop courses. The last group of courses focussed on the learning of specific skills. Similarly, the basic courses in economics and sociology were aimed at clarifying the fundamental concepts of these two disciplines and at acquainting the participants with the most important perspectives, so as to provide them with the necessary background to follow the core courses.

Basic   **courses:**

1. Sociology

--   Understanding man and society: human practice and the construction of social life.
--   Kinship, social stratification and caste.
--   The sociology of knowledge, religion, education and culture.
--   General acquaintance with studies of Indian villages, tribal society and various movements of social change.
--   Approaches to sociology: the conflict approach and Marxian sociology; the consensus approach and functionalism.

2. Economics

--   Growth and Development; measures of national income, relative and absolute poverty and growth in post-independence India.
--   Demand, supply, price determination, elasticity and production, role of technological and institutional factors in determining agricultural productivity; land reforms and the green revolution.
--   Perfect competition, monopoly and oligopoly; capital and labour intensive techniques, main problems of Indian industry; stagnation, capacity utilization and recent Government industry policy.
--   Consumption and investment expenditure, the regulatory function of the government; monetary and fiscal policy in India
--   Main approaches: Marxian economics (value, surplus value and historical materialism); capitalism and trans-national corporations; socialist economies; central planning and the market.

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Core Courses:

1. Underdevelopment and poverty in historical perspective:

-- Mercantilism, the development of capitalism, Imperialism and colonialism.
-- Dependency theory and its application to Africa and Latin America.
-- The colonial experience in India: Socio-cultural and economic effects.
-- The National movement and political economy of India after 1947

2. Structural Nature of Poverty and its Effects:

-- Economic aspect: entitlement approach, unequal control over the surplus, urban bias and the emerging elite classes.
-- Social aspect: caste and communalism,
-- Psycho-social aspect: the process of de-humanization (Freire).
-- Political aspect: classes, masses and the State.

3. The Process of Development:

-- Meaning and approaches.
-- Role of state-sponsored programmes and their evaluation.
-- The voluntary sector: rationale and types of intervention.
-- Political and mass movements.

4. Organizations for Development:

-- Elements of organizational behaviour.
-- Planning, monitoring and evaluation; project preparation and formulation.
-- Organizing the poor; cooperatives and other types of organisations; participation.

Workshop Courses:

-- Law and development
-- Gender and development
-- Water management
-- Basic statistical analysis
-- Office management
-- Writing and communication skills

The academic year 1990-91, which also saw the introduction of the course with Gujarati as the medium of instruction, brought some drastic changes to the shape of the theory module of the FPSM. This will be explained in detail below, in the section on new directions.

On the other hand, except for one major change, the method of instruction has remained virtually constant. Up to 1990, as stated in the introduction above, the FPSM was a two-year programme in which the second year was devoted entirely to field work. Therefore, the field work component during the first year, was limited to two four-day exposure stays during the first term, and a one-month project during the second term. However, since many of the participants of these batches did not stay on for the second year, it was not really possible to monitor their learning from the interaction of theory and field experience. In addition, it was also felt that the inexperienced participants were not learning as effectively as they might because of insufficient field exposure. Since 1990, therefore, both FPSM programmes (the English and the Gujarati) have had a much larger field-work component during the first year, i.e., three weeks of theory alternating with three weeks of field work. The latter does not mean three weeks at a stretch in the field. The participants return to the Centre on weekends for writing and reflection. This weekly reflection process -- individually and as a group -- focuses on the participant's learning in relation to the village people and to her/himself against the background of the theory studied during the foregoing three weeks. The learning process, therefore, moves from the abstract to the concrete which, in turn, reinforces the abstract. More recently, it has been felt that it may be preferable to reverse the order and place the field-work component prior to the theory. The assumption is that this would enable the participants to assimilate the field reali-

ty without any preconceived theoretical baggage, the shock of the experience also sensitizing them emotionally. This would leave them open to abstract theory which would enable them to make sense of raw experience. This alternative method has not been put into practice yet.

Instruction methods during theoretical study may include occasional lectures; but on the whole the programme emphasizes the tutorial system. Most of the material is covered through discussions and seminars requiring guided personal study which takes into consideration each student's needs and abilities. The case study is an essential tool because, like the field experience, it presents the participants with real situations for analysis. This method promotes active student participation rather than passive assimilation. It helps the participants learn to weigh and evaluate facts, half facts, opinions and ideas, to analyze problems and formulate concrete conclusions for action. The participants are also encouraged to prepare case studies based on their own experiences in the field. One major result of the increase in the field-work component and consequent time constraints, has been a considerable reduction in complex writing tasks.

5.0 Evaluation Systems:

Before saying anything about evaluation, it is necessary to clarify that the FPSM has deliberately chosen to place itself outside the formal educational system, and under the umbrella of an NGO. It offers no degree or diploma and is not officially

recognized by the Government or by any Indian University [4]. This has been necessary in order to maintain a certain ethos and to inculcate certain values -- healthy cooperation rather than rivalry and dysfunctional competition, humanness and commitment rather than purely intellectual excellence. The effort is to maintain a balance between confidence-building and rigorous academic standards, and it has sometimes been necessary to sacrifice the latter to the former. (In parenthesis, it must be said that most of the FPSM students are selected for their commitment and willingness to work, rather than for academic/ intellectual qualifications and capability. Many of them, in fact, enter the programme with a lot of fear and inhibitions and with little self-confidence). Evaluation of learning, therefore, is an ongoing process throughout the year; it is individualized, and the participant attempts to improve upon her/ his own performance. There is no system of examinations, grading or ranking. The focus is upon the nature of the learning achieved in relation to the participant's own personal formation and to the future work she/ he wants to engage in.

5.1 Feedback from students:

In April 1991, a four-day convention of the FPSM batches from 1985 to 1990 was held. The aim of this meeting was to ascertain the continuing relevance of the FPSM to the work of these people in the field and to provide an environment of mutual

4. However, two of the alumni, who wished to pursue development studies, have had their FPSM participation recognised as equivalent to a post-graduate programme by the IDS, Sussex and the ISS, The Hague.

support in which people might be able to discuss their work, share their problems, clarify their confusions and articulate their frustrations. As it turned out during the actual course of the sessions, the latter purpose assumed priority. The relevance of the FPSM had to be gauged in a somewhat second-hand indirect way. The following is a condensed account of the discussions of that meeting:

The focus of the convention was on meaning: the sources of meaning and the blocks that exist to the creation of such meaning. Among the sources identified were:

a)   Identity or one's view of oneself;

b)   Interpersonal relationships; What is the self? What is the other? What is a relationship ? In the context of the oppressed, what is empowerment? What is organization?

Following from the above, blocks to a realization of the meaning in one's life and work were discussed:

a)   Identity problems and a sense of split resulting from experiences of non-acceptance and oppression: for instance, I think I am a human, but society has told me that women, dalits etc. are less than human. To emerge from this is a two-stage process:

-     one has to come to an acceptance of oneself as a woman etc.

-     one has to be able to accept oneself and the other as parts of an oppressive structure.

An identity problem specific to the development worker is the split between `insider' and `outsider'. The fact that the development worker with all his/ her efforts at assimilation will always, in the final analysis, remain an outsider to the group he or she works with, is very often difficult to accept.

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b)   Interpersonal relationships: When do relationships become blocks? It depends on how I relate to the other:

-    vertically, in terms of superior/ inferior; in which case I remain circumscribed within my ego and distanced from the other.

-    horizontally, on terms of equality and an expanding aware-ness of the self and other. Society prescribes and prefabricates certain relationships. Very often, the choice is between the vertical and horizontal options presented above.

In the upshot, it was clear that nearly all the participants had found the FPSM relevant in the very crucial area of their own identity and their commitment to the task of working towards greater humanness and less unjust social structures.

6.0 New Directions:

6.1 Move towards Gujarati medium

Up to the academic year 1990-1991, the FPSM had focussed on catering to an all-India cross-section of applicants and used only English as the medium of instruction. This emphasis was also supported by the fact that most of the theoretical material available was in English. However, this was a handicap in the FPSM's efforts to cater to people in Gujarat, and so a Gujarati-medium FPSM was started. A deliberate decision was taken to restrict admissions to members of the scheduled castes and tribes. The Gujarati-medium FPSM batches, therefore, have been homogeneous groups unlike most of the English medium batches. Even in terms of age and experience, these participants have been young post-graduates. While doing away with the advantages of

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diversity, this homogeneity has had its own value.

This course has had incorporated into it a specific skill-oriented course to learn the English language. It is aimed at enabling the participants to read and understand relevant theoretical material in English. If we recall that the Gujarati medium FPSM is specifically targeted to dalit participants, competence in English also becomes a tool for empowerment.

A major consequence of the Gujarati medium course has been the generation of course material in Gujarati, largely through translation (these include Ashis Nandy's The Intimate Enemy and Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed), but also through papers produced by the students themselves.

6.2 Changes in basic and workshop courses:

The extension of the field work component described earlier meant that the theoretical components had to be compressed, rearranged, divided into modules and scheduled to alternate with periods of field-work, throughout the year. This also entailed a certain amount of cutting and paring. In practice, the workshop courses were eliminated completely. Writing skills were assumed to be a necessary by-product of all the theoretical learning.

Turning from the workshop to the basic courses, these have been dropped as independent entities, but essential parts have been reshaped and merged into the existing modules. As it stands today, the theoretical component logically comprises two parts:

a) Understanding reality (self and social structures and the two in interaction, leading to an understanding of the impact of these structures on the human psyche)

b) Action based on this understanding:

Figure 3: Revised Theoretical Component

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A.    Understanding reality      - Self
                                 - Social structures
      - Economic/Environment   |
      - Caste                  | Impact on    human psyche
      - Gender                 | ----------> (theory of ideology)


B.    Action based on this understanding:

      - Nature and process of development/ sustainability
      - Organization for development
      - Project planning and writing
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This paring down has resulted in reduced emphasis on the historical dimension of social structures, current macro-level trends at both the national and international levels and on understanding political structures as well as specific issues like religious fundamentalism.

6.3 **Internship model of the English course**

The English-medium course, side by side, has evolved an alternative `internship' study model for participants with a certain level of intellectual maturity and experience.   Its salient features may be identified as follows:

a.   Specific individualized designing of course (by tutor and participant) to suit the participant's needs.

b.   Heavy dependence on individual guided reading and writing, with discussions once or twice a week.

c.   Participation in short-term camps/ courses of NGOs.

d.   On-going regular group dynamics sessions.

e.   Field work, (based on need).

7.0 Implications for Education:

The pedagogical assumptions, the evolution of the curriculum and the new directions described above are underpinned by the aim of the FPSM to produce "transformative" development workers. This aim is shared by many such educational programmes undertaken outside the formal educational system. These are small-scale efforts: the number of students is small, it is easier to experiment with curriculum and pedagogy and it is possible to invest relatively more resources in student development. However, they also raise certain larger issues in the context of `democratic education' (Gutmann, 1987).

7.1 Integrated code: towards democracy and critical thinking

Bernstein (1971) considers formal education as being realized through three message systems: 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). Assuming that the selection and transmission of educational knowledge is mirrored in the distribution of power and the consequent social control exercised, the relationships between the latter two elements can be explained through the concepts of classification and framing. A third concept which interlocks with these is that of boundary strength. Classification refers to the degree of boundary maintenance between the content units of a curriculum. It is strong when the contents are well insulated from each other by strong boundaries and it is weak when the boundaries are blurred. Classification identifies the basic structure of the curriculum. The concept of

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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. Frame 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 what Bernstein terms the integrated code; strong framing and strong classification lead to the collected code. The integrated code, which is less teacher/ subject-centred, allows a more open educational system. The value of programmes such as the FPSM lies in demonstrating the practice of weak classification and framing,[5] and in promoting debate on the `ideal of democratic education (Gutmann, 1987, pg. 288).

7.2 Relational ideas: towards an integrated code

While the integrated code allows a more open educational system, the manner of integration is crucial; it `refers minimally to the <u>subordination</u> of previously insulated subjects or courses to some <u>relational</u> idea which blurs the boundary between subjects'[6]. In other words, the relational idea is a perspective on lived experience through which the various `disciplines' are taught. While the description of the evolution of the contents provided earlier indicates a weak classification, this by itself does not necessarily allow new relational ideas to reconstitute

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5. Bernstein's schema applies to entire societies -- for instance, the English code, the `Continental' code etc. However, the concepts do lend themselves as tools for application to specific instances of curricular practice.

6. R.Bernstein (1971), pg.209.

boundaries. For instance, the core courses of Underdevelopment, Structural Nature of Poverty, Processes of Development and Organisations for development build on the basic disciplines of economics and sociology through the perspective of imperialism, neocolonialism and dependency theories. However, recent developments in the understanding of social change call for an examination of the `multiple crises' that afflict South Asian societies; some of the facets of this set of crises are: a) "Natural Resource Conflicts and the Crisis of Survival" b) "Gender Conflicts - From Declining Status to Femicide" and c) "Community Identity and Social Conflicts"[7].

The concern over the non-sustainability of current paths of development has been widely expressed, forcing us to consider the ecological perspective, which qualifies as a relational idea. The articulation of this idea with the socio-economic perspective indicated in the case is an area for further study and operationalisation. This paper will not deal with this issue further except to indicate that an ecological perspective, which has to take into account questions of biodiversity, survival of people at the margins -- high ecological risk areas, and people's knowledge[8], has to be explored further. The process of curriculum development in the FPSM has, however, examined the issue of gender equity in a patriarchal system in greater detail.

7.2.1   **Gender as a relational idea:**

Gender and Development was one of the early workshop courses

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7. Harsh Sethi (1991), pgs. 81-115.

8. See for instance Anil K. Gupta (1991, 1992).

which was dropped later. In its place, a separate module on gender was introduced. One of the very first students of the course, Mona Mehta (B. Nee, H. Heimgaertner and Mona Mehta, 1989) pointed out that the analytical models being used (for instance, Freire or Marxian sociology), emphasized mutually exclusive groups like classes, nations etc. without recognizing either the specificity of gender oppression or the inadequacy of these models when applied to gender. "The historical perspective is very valuable for analyzing reality as well as for understanding the social roots of inequality and oppression.. (It) enables a different view of history, i.e., a history from the perspective of the exploited peoples. However, ... while it makes visible the role of the exploited classes in history, most history excludes women... Thus, it is necessary for any historical analysis to first accept the class, race and gender bias of historical sources and then reconstruct history from a perspective which accords equal significance to all actors in history".[9] They also analyze the inadequacies of Freire's approach, which considers the duality of the oppressed and oppressor as an `external class division', and is hence unable to articulate the oppression of women as members of a class and sex.

The FPSM has progressively incorporated gender as a relational idea in the framework of its courses. Its experience indicates that the starting point of such a working in is to treat the perspective initially as itself a separate discipline or course. For instance, while it may be argued that in the

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9. B. Nee, H. Heimgaertner and Mona Mehta (1989), pg. 17-19.

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context of agriculture curriculum sustainability is a view which should permeate all courses, the starting point of curricular reform may have to be a course on sustainable agriculture.

7.3 Weak framing and critical thinking:

The `strong' framing ethic in our society is well recognized. Perhaps the roots are cultural. The oft-cited instance of Ekalavya sacrificing his thumb on the orders of Guru Dronacharya reinforces the ideal of obedience expected of pupils. The authority of the teacher is unquestionable. In the more recent context Krishna Kumar discusses the transformation of a teacher -- meek and `powerless' in society -- into a `dictator' in the classroom.[10] In short, the pedagogical 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'.

However, `evidence of adults exercising critical thought is one of the chief things we look for when assessing the democratic health of a society'[11]; `not to encourage the development of critical capacities is inherently anti-democratic'[12]. Is such a project possible in the face of the resistance which is to be expected from the individuals and vested interests from both within, and outside the educational system? Experiments such as

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10. Krishna Kumar (1990).

11. Stephen D. Brookfield (1987), pg 66.

12. ibid, pg.68.

the present case study indicate points vulnerable to change.

7.3.1   Teacher-taught relationship:

The section on the Aims and Objectives of the case under discussion focussed on what was termed `the process of internalization' and described the attempts to rework the power equation implied in the teacher-taught relationship. Such attempts demand the establishment of specific mechanisms for reflection on the problems that arise during the process of establishing a more equal teacher-taught relationship. In practice, this may take the shape of group reflections of the teachers and the taught to discuss the process of education (the `Periodic Group Reviews and Occasional Camps' indicated in Figure 1). In addition, certain other aspects not touched upon in the case, like selection and training of teachers for such programmes influence the establishment of a democratic teacher-taught relationship.

7.4 Teaching and institutional `curriculum':

We had earlier stated that a weak classification by itself does not necessarily allow new relational ideas to reconstitute boundaries. Related to this issue is the possibility that the ethos of the educational institution conducting the programme may impose limits on the degree to which the rearrangement of the formal `educational' curriculum is possible. Working for change at the institutional level may, therefore, be necessary to start a process of reflection on the `institutional curriculum'. In other words, while reflection on improving the efficiency of educational delivery is important, double-loop learning (C. Argyris and D. Schon, 1978) is essential to build a learning organization. This is perhaps one of the most neglected area in

educational institution-building.

A dilemma often faced in programmes such as the FPSM in the selection of teachers is the trade-off between the need for specialization or expertise and the `generalist' conception of teachers. In fact, an overemphasis on teacher-taught equality might lead to de-emphasizing expertise and specialization and to a search for people who can do a bit of everything. In the long run, this tells on the levels of academic rigour and standards.

7.5 Academic excellence and social deprivation:

It may be worthwhile to highlight again some of the FPSM's assumptions about learners and learning and then focus upon a recurrent dilemma of the programme.

The focus of the FPSM is primarily upon the learner as human person. Like the communities for whom the programme trains workers, this trainee too is a product of unjust social structures. This person too, in some respect or other, is disadvantaged - in fact, is often selected specifically because she/he belongs to a deprived community. This person too needs empowerment. The learning which goes on in the FPSM is a process of awareness and empowerment for someone who has hitherto been deprived because of the standards by which society judges and evaluates people as persons or non-persons. It is only when this awareness and empowerment and consequent inward freeing take place that the person will be able to reach out to those more deprived than her/himself. Consequently, one of the concerns of the FPSM is to provide a non-threatening, non-competitive learning environment; in addition to a selection procedure that emphasizes quali-

ties like commitment and openness to change, that explicitly opposes evaluating the person as a human being in terms of her/his intellectual attainments.

At the same time, the FPSM is committed to learning in the fullest sense with all its implications of personality growth and acting upon what has been learnt. It is committed to academic rigour and intensive working hours, complex tasks of reading, writing and class-room seminars, and the inculcation of a questioning cast of mind.

In practice, however, it is often necessary to make compromises with the second in order to sustain the first. It may be, therefore, that academic excellence and intellectual rigour are also luxuries which, on the whole, only the economically and socially advantaged and therefore confident elite can afford. Or perhaps we need a formal education system which can elicit and foster in childhood precisely those qualities which, at the moment, the FPSM has to build at the post-graduate level. If the spade work were done from childhood onwards, programmes like the FPSM might have less deprivation and inhibition to deal with and intellectual excellence would not then be such a scarce commodity.

Conclusions:

The FPSM is an educational experiment conducted in the tradition of `critical sociology', outside the framework of the formal educational system. Such experiments by themselves do not necessarily provide solutions to all the ills of the formal system. Their value lies in that they open up the possibility of

engaging in debate with the dominant educational system on the promotion of a `democratic theory' of education. If the aim of education is to promote critical thinking and openness, in other words, a democratic way of life, it follows that the teacher-taught relationship must be one of a more or less egalitarian give and take. The means cannot be divorced from the ends. It follows from this, that the educational institution itself sustain an ethos of continual learning, ie., that the institution have in-built systems for upgrading itself and reflecting on its own practice. One final indirect lesson to be drawn from the FPSM experience is the urgent need to reform our primary levels of education in order to build in the students a base of confidence and academic commitment to take the place of the deprivation and inhibition that exists at present.

In a chapter titled `Learning to be Backward', Krishna Kumar (1989), describes an incident in which a teacher of `history' asks a tribal student a question regarding tantricism and tribal culture described in a prescribed text. The student is in a double-bind situation -- any answer he gives will reinforce the stereotype of an adivasi as a `backward'. His `success' as a student of the history lesson will confirm his `backwardness' as a tribal and his `failure' to answer the question will confirm his `backwardness' as a student. Thus, present curricular practices usually make the so-called backwards internalize symbols of `backward' behaviour. In such a situation where the school curricula reflect the ideological and cultural visions of only certain groups, reform of the pedagogical relationship is both crucial and difficult. A teacher, who for instance, is unaware of

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social reality and structures of domination, and believes in the cultural explanations of poverty and `backwardness', would just reinforce the internalization of so-called backward behaviour. Therefore, preparation of teachers or teacher training initiatives will have to address this issue, especially since a society like ours has attempted to solve the almost intractable issues of social injustice and inequality through affirmative action in the educational system.

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