

Sen, Amartya

Deficiencies of primary education in India

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Amartya Sen

Deficiencies of Primary Education in India

Zusammenfassung und Vorbemerkungen: Amartya Sen hat aus einem Teil des Geldes, das er mit der Verleihung des Nobelpreises für Ökonomie 1998 erhielt, eine Stiftung namens Pratichi Trust¹ in Indien und Bangladesh gegründet. Die Ziele der Stiftung sind: Beseitigung des Analphabentums und der Unwissenheit, Aufhebung der Benachteiligung von Frauen und Sicherung einer gesundheitlichen Grundversorgung. Die Stiftung hat den ersten Bericht über den Zustand der Grundschulbildung 2002 vorgelegt. Die Untersuchung wurde zwar nur in drei Landkreisen (Districts) des Bundesstaates Westbengalen (WB) durchgeführt. Deshalb könnte man einerseits die Ergebnisse nicht einmal für WB als repräsentativ bezeichnen, so Sen, andererseits aber zeigen die Befunde Ähnlichkeiten mit den Untersuchungen von PROBE/Centre for Development Economics (1999). Insofern weisen die Ergebnisse auf den Gesamtzustand der Grundschulsituation in Indien hin. In seiner Einleitung zeigt der Autor, worin die zentralen Probleme der Grundschulbildung in Indien liegen und er macht konkrete Vorschläge, wie die Mängel beseitigt werden können. Wir drucken hier eine gekürzte und überarbeitete Fassung der Einleitung des Berichts (Sen 2002).²

Abstract: The author donated a part of his money from Nobel Prize, awarded to him 1998, to establish Pratichi Trust 1999 in India and Bangladesh. The general aim of the Trust is to work towards removal of illiteracy and ignorance, the lack of basic health care and gender-disparity. The Trust has presented a report on primary education, based on an empirical research in three districts of West Bengal. Though the results are not representative even for the federal state, there are some striking similarities with the results of other studies, writes Sen in introduction. We publish here a slightly abridged version of Sen's initiating article.

Primary Education in India suffers from many deficiencies. The paucity of financial resources is obviously a principal problem: there are not enough schools and the facilities available in the ones that exist are often very limited. But these are several other problems as well. A major difficulty lies in the weak institutional structure of primary schools. Extensive inefficiencies in operation in general are reinforced by particular inequities in the failure to provide fair opportunity to children from less privileged backgrounds. The difficulties are especially severe in bringing first generation school attenders into a sympathetic and equitable system of primary

education. Improving the operation and management of primary schools is a major challenge for the Indian society and economy (PROBE/Centre for Development Economics 1999; Drèze/Sen 1995; 2002).

The investigation reported has been confined to West Bengal – more specifically three districts in West Bengal. Even though the work of Pratichi Bhavan will not be confined to this state alone (indeed the intention is to tackle problems of school education in India as a whole, and even elsewhere in the developing world), the initial focus on West Bengal is related to thematic concerns, in addition to locational proximity.

First, there have been several imaginative moves by the Government of West Bengal in recent years to spread the net of school education more widely and firmly. An important example is the use of newly devised “Shishu Shiksha Kendras” (SSK)³. There have been somewhat similar moves elsewhere in the country, and undoubtedly more will come, so that the experience of West Bengal – its achievements and failures – should be of relevance not only within the state, but also elsewhere in India. There are also lessons from the experiences of other states (such as Kerala – and more recently – Madhya Pradesh) on which policy making in West Bengal can, in turn draw, and this will be among the subject matter of future reports of the Trust (and of Pratichi Bhavan). There is a great deal to be gained within India from learning from each other's successes and failures, and this applies as much to school education as to any other field.⁴

Second, West Bengal has a distinguished record in rural reorganization through institutional innovation, well illustrated by its leading role in land reform, and in advancing the functioning of panchayats⁵ (and more recently in the speedy implementation of women's leadership in a significant proportion of the panchayats). Schooling is quintessentially a feature of local governance, and it is particularly important, in this context, to examine not only what is being achieved, but also what barriers and drawbacks are holding things up, and making the initiatives and resources far less effective than the need be. If primary education in West Bengal is in a somewhat problematic state (as we argue it is), the political, social and economic resources of the state should allow speedy remedying, once the principal problems are clearly identified.

There are significant indications of new initiatives in a number of different areas of governance in West Bengal at this time, and it is argued in this report that a powerful new

initiative is badly needed right now to reorganise primary schooling in this state. The focus of this report is specially on the identification of problem areas, and of lines of possible remedy. These findings and proposals will be further scrutinized in the work to follow.

The initial focus of our investigation has been on three districts of West Bengal: Birbhum, Medinipur and Puruliya. Schools were selected from villages in six randomly chosen blocks in each district. Altogether 18 primary schools (PS) were intensively studied, along with 17 Shishu Shiksha Kendras (SSK), six of each (PS and SSK) from each district (except for the district of Birbhum where it has been possible to study only five SSK so far). While it is clear that the findings are of general interest, it is important to emphasize that the sample size is quite small. Also the findings relate directly to the three districts only, in which the survey were conducted, and their significance for West Bengal as a whole is suggestive, rather than definitive. Furthermore, the choice of villages from the respective blocks was partly related to convenience, even though the blocks themselves were randomly chosen. *The fair degree of uniformity that we have found in the observations indicates that perhaps there is more of a basis for general conclusions here (at least at the suggestive level), but a general caution about the possibly unrepresentative nature of the findings must be borne in mind.*

Finance, salaries and class conditions

The low level of financial commitment to elementary education has been a perennial problem in India (Sen 1971; 1972; Drèze /Sen 1995; 2002 and).⁶ Even though there is much greater recognition now of the need for more funding for school education, the level of financial stringency is still quite severe. The recent boost in the salary of public servants (leaving far behind those who are served by the public servants, such as agricultural and industrial labourers) has included a very substantial rise in the remuneration of school teachers (as public servants), all over India. The primary school teachers in West Bengal now tend to get 5.000 Rs – 10.000 Rs⁷ per month, in the form of salary, dearness allowance and house

rent. This is an obvious cause for celebration at one level (indeed, I remember being personally involved, as a student at Presidency College fifty years ago, in agitations to raise the desperately low prevailing salaries of school teachers). On the other hand, the very big increases in recent years have also made school education vastly more expensive, making it much harder to offer regular school education to those who are still excluded from it.⁸

There is also an issue of class division here. Indeed, there is some evidence that the class barriers that deeply impair the delivery of school education to the underdogs of society may be further reinforced by the increase in economic and social distance between the teachers and children from the poorer (and less privileged) families, unless particular care is taken to address that divide through class-sensitive policies. This is one of the major issues that emerge from this report.

It is worth noting in this context that in comparison with the remuneration of 5.000 – 10.000 Rs per month that the primary school teachers get, the teachers in Shishu Shiksha Kendras are paid only 1.000 Rs a month. Even at that low remuneration level, SSKs still seem to be able to attract able and dedicated teachers, who – at least according to some evidence – seem less alienated from the least privileged children. While celebrating the enhanced remuneration of the primary school teachers, special attention has to be paid to the ways and means of enhancing the interests of primary education in general and of equity for the least privileged children in particular. It is particularly important to examine what may be justly expected of primary school teachers, taking into account their relative position in the class structure (particularly in the rural society), and their special responsibility in delivering primary education to children from disadvantaged backgrounds, across the barriers of our deeply divisive class structure.

Positive features: Parental interests, progress and innovations

I begin first with the good news. The inquiries indicate several reasons for gratification. First, in contrast with the much-discussed problem of low aspiration levels of parents from poor and illiterate families, the findings here suggest that the value of school education is widely appreciated across the board. Indeed, 96 percent of the respondents believed that boys should acquire elementary education, and 82 percent affirmed their belief that girls too should do the same. Going further, 84 percent believed that elementary education should be made compulsory; indeed none of the others expressed the opposite view – they were unable to answer the question firmly.⁹ *More education for children – for girls as well as boys – is sought by illiterate parents not only for economic reasons, but also as a part of necessary social change. We were struck by the reflective and mature nature of these aspira-*

tions. The bottleneck is almost entirely on the side of supply – not demand.

Second, in line with the findings in the National Sample Survey and in the recent (2001) Census, our enquiry found many newly established primary schools and SSKs, with evident expansion of opportunities for basic education. Things are definitely moving forward. The problem is not one of cranking up a stationery vehicle, but of making it go better and faster.

Indeed, in line with the great interest of families in having their children educated, we found that in our sample only three percent of children in the age group 6 – 11 were never enrolled in either a school or a Sishu Sikhsa Kendra. Impressively enough, 96 percent of children in that age group were, in fact, enrolled in either of these educational institutions (with three percent never enrolled and one percent dropped out). The real problems arise elsewhere, *in particular in the low level of actual attendance in schools and in the low quality of education received* (on which more presently).

Third, despite the fact that we persistently heard complaints, from parent and from other members of the community, about the functioning of primary schools in general and about the irresponsibility of teachers in particular, we encountered, in the course of our inquiry, a great many teachers who were clearly committed to their work and very concerned to find ways and means of improving the performance of schools. There is a fund of dedication and goodwill there that can be better utilized if the sense of dedication felt by some teachers can be extended to others and if the prevailing arrangements for teachers-parents relations can be very substantially improved.

Fourth, the dedication of the teachers in the Sishu Shiksha Kendras was frequently praised, and it is easy to see *these women teachers very often treat the young children almost as members of their own family*. In providing a caring atmosphere and efficient work through mobilizing a neglected and previously unutilised resource, the SSKs stand out as great achievers at extremely little cost. Even though the whole relation between primary schools and the SSKs must be scrutinized more fully (as will be presently discussed), there is clear evidence that this innovation has opened up an important new possibility.

Evidence of serious deficiencies

Despite these positive features, the overall picture of primary education that emerges from our inquiry is rather disturbing. First, only 41 percent parents said that they were 'satisfied' with the work of the teachers in primary schools. The proportion of satisfaction is higher with SSKs, viz. 54 percent, but is still rather low. Among those who did not say that they were satisfied, a substantial proportion in each case confessed to being positively 'dissatisfied' with the teachers' performance. Even if we agree to take in our stride the nine percent of parents who said they are positively 'dissatisfied' with the work of the SSK teachers (a grumbling rate below ten percent may be hard to avoid, among us Bengalis, if I am any judge), we can hardly ignore the fact that nearly a quarter of

the parents (24 percent) are firmly 'dissatisfied' with the performance of primary school teachers. Furthermore, whatever may be the tendency to grumble, the fact that the 'dissatisfaction' rate is nearly three times regarding primary school teachers compared with SSK educators must indicate a very serious reason to be worried about the working of primary schools.

Second, on the day of the visit by the researchers, only half of the registered students (51 percent to be exact) were found to be present in the school. Again, the ratio was significantly higher for the SSKs, even though that number too (64 percent) was less than what could be expected on the basis of likely incidence of natural causes of absence, such as illness.

Third, no less distressing is the fact that on the day of our visit, we found 14 percent of the SSK teachers themselves being absent, and *the ratio of absenteeism of primary school teachers was a more alarming 20 percent.* Despite the existence of a great many dedicated teachers, there is clearly some substance in the frequently aired complaint, which we often heard from the parents, that teachers quite often do not show up. This is, of course particularly distressing when the school has only one or two teachers, since even the safety of the children can be in doubt.

Reliance on private tuition

There is perhaps no better an indicator of the under-performance of primary schools than the use of private tuition on which most students – whoever can afford it – seem to rely. The role of private tuition as a filler of a serious gap is brought out by a comparison of achievement which we were able to make. We examined 34 children from classes three and four in primary schools, of whom 20 took private tuition and 14 did not. *The percentage of children who could write their names proved to be 80 percent for those taking tuition, whereas the ratio was only seven percent for those who did not have the benefit of being privately tutored. We may well ask: what, then, do they learn in school?*

Overall, 45 percent of the children in the schools surveyed take private tuition, and we found firm evidence that those who did not were primarily prevented by penury, rather than being (except in very few cases) adequately satisfied by what they get from the schools. As may be expected, the proportion opting for private tuition is considerably lower for students in private schools compared with those in state schools. Obviously, part of the 'pay off' of spending money on private schools takes the form of saving the alternative cost of private tuition.

In effect, successful primary education has ceased to be free, and this is nothing less than a violation of a basic right guaranteed by the Constitution. It is also an immensely discriminating system, in which the foundational principle of equal entitlement to primary education is violated, against the interest of children from the poorer and less privileged families.

The reach of class divisions

If the need for private tuition shows the inefficiency of the primary schooling system, and its differential use reveals the pattern of inequality related to class and affluence, there are also other features that we observed which bring out the inefficiency and the inequity of the ongoing arrangements.

First, the differential use of private tuition, in fact, compounds a more structural problem, to wit, the difficulty of children from poorer and often illiterate families to make good use of schooling facilities because of the lack of an established educational tradition within the family, and because of the inability of those parents to guide the children with homework and supplementary preparation. In fact, precisely those children who have the greatest difficulty in making use of the general teaching in primary schools (because of the absence of the facility of home support) are able to make least use of the regrettable necessity of private tuition. The class-based disadvantage is, thus, further intensified by the ineffectiveness of school education.

Second, we encountered some disturbing evidence that primary school teachers often show much less regard for the interests of children from poorer and lower caste backgrounds. We observed much greater teacher absenteeism in schools with a majority of children from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes¹⁰ (75 percent), compared with other schools (33 percent). Also, in some schools with children from 'lowly' families, the teachers, on a regular basis, do not take classes on certain days of the week (in one case, 'no classes on Saturdays and Mondays'), and sometimes the hours are arbitrarily reduced (in one case the teacher arrives at 11.30 am and leaves at 1.30 pm). There is clearly less fear of effective censure when the children come from a disadvantaged background. The teachers seem to see themselves, in many cases, as belonging to a different class altogether from the much poorer parents of many of their students.

Third, this point relates to another: a much lower involvement of parents from disadvantaged backgrounds in parent-teacher-meetings, and their severe under-representation in the Village Education Committees. Those who need most that their 'voices' be heard, lack that power fairly comprehensively. The oppressive class system of the Indian society extends well into the field of school education.

When we add to this the cases we encountered of the teachers' speaking disparagingly about the habits (often eating habits) of the Scheduled Tribe families, there is an immensely disquieting picture that emerges. Further, in one school among the 18 we investigated, we were surprised to find that Scheduled Tribe students were made to sit separately from the others. Given the great stride that West Bengal has made in countering class divisions (through land reforms and panchayats), the persistence – indeed intensification – of class barriers in the schooling system must be a matter of particular shame. Again, I must note that we did also encounter many individual teachers who were strongly committed to reach across the class barriers, and who were also very aware that their high salaries in addition to their educational achievements already put them at a social distance from many – often most – of their students. But the overall picture of the

oppressive role of class divisions in school education is quite appalling.

Policy modifications

There are many policy issues which seem to need serious and urgent attention at this time.

Teacher absenteeism

The high incidence of teacher absenteeism and other forms of neglect cannot be countered just through moral exhortation. Institutional collaboration would be needed in this. The teachers' unions have been very successful in pressing for the rights of the teachers in different fields (varying from prompt payment of salaries to desired transfers), but given their pivotal role in the sphere of social interaction, there is an urgent need for a fresh approach to unionism. Unlike the SSK teachers, who get only a fraction of what primary school teachers get, the PS teachers earn a comparatively substantial remuneration (and also receive it with impressive regularity, unlike the SSK teachers whose emoluments can come, we were told, rather sporadically). There is a strong case for the acceptance of much greater responsibility by school teachers as an occupation group, including the unions that represent them.

School inspection

The system of school inspection seems to have fallen into disuse or very irregular use. Many of the schools we visited had not been inspected even once in the preceding year, and we learned from the Chairman of a District Primary Education Council that some schools have not been visited even once in two or three years. When we talked with School Inspectors, we found some sense of despair and also some evidence of a fear of teachers and their unions. The inspection system needs a major overhaul.

Private tuition

The evil of private tuition must be uncompromisingly overcome. While this cannot be achieved overnight, given the low quality of school teaching, it has to be borne in mind that the safety valve of private tutoring – available to the more wealthy children from more powerful families – makes the teachers less concerned about not getting enough done in school and about the discontent of children from more affluent – and more influential – parts of the society.

One evil breeds another, and the equity of private tuition not only reflects the inefficiency of the school system, it also helps to reinforce that inefficiency. Perhaps the strongest argument for banning private tuition lies in the recognition that its presence makes the more influential – and richer – parents less concerned about the quality of normal schooling (since they can always arrange extra teaching for their own children with the help of private tutors). If private tuition becomes unavailable, the more powerful families will become more dependent on the schools for the education of their children (as the poorer – and less influential – families already are), and the likely pressure that this may generate on the

running of schools may well be critically important for their efficient functioning.

The West Bengal government has already taken a firm initiative in prohibiting private tuition by school teachers, and this has to be accompanied by moves that make private tuition redundant. The evil takes the form not only of 'double emoluments' earned by teachers in charging their own students for private tuition outside the class (more common, it appears, in secondary schools than in primary ones), but also that of extreme ineffectiveness of school education which makes private tuition a 'regrettable necessity' (this applies extensively to primary schools as well, even when the private tutoring is done by persons other than the respective teachers themselves). This is, again, a matter for serious consultation and collaborative action involving the teachers, their unions, the educational planners and the rather despairing and somewhat terrified tribe of School Inspectors.

Parents-teachers committees

One way of adding to the incentive system in schooling would be to give more legal power to the parents-teachers committees, even perhaps making the renewal of school appropriations conditional on their approval. Since the parents-teachers committees are typically specific to particular schools, in contrast with Village Education Committees (which have a less specialized domain), the case for a fresh beginning by substantial broadening of the role of parents-teachers committees in the operation of specific schools is particularly worth considering. For effectiveness, there would also be a need to establish firm guidelines on the representation of parents from different class backgrounds, and also some insistence on approvals being made in actual meetings of parents-teachers committees rather than in fictitious ones.

The parents-teachers committees have not, of course, played any such role in the past. But there is a constructive possibility here, with fresh empowerment of parents, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds. This may appear to be too radical a move to be implementable straightaway, but our findings strongly suggest the urgent case for a positive move of this kind. The existing primary school system is crying out for a radical reform.

Success of female teachers

One of the observations that emerges very clearly from this investigation is the comparatively greater success of female teachers over male teachers. The women teachers distinguished themselves not only in the SSKs, but also in the primary schools. In fact, 83 percent of the parents of children in primary schools, in our sample across the three districts, agreed that 'female teachers are more caring'. In making policy reforms this diagnosis of comparative success would have to be borne in mind.

Lack of facilities

The lack of facilities in the primary schools is a problem in many cases. One of the schools we studied had no building at all, and eight of them had two classrooms to accommodate four classes with an inescapable need for displacement. Shortage of funding is still a problem for a number of schools.

Lack of facilities in SSKs

The lack of facilities is particularly acute for the Sishu Sikhsha Kendras. Even though the SSKs are, in many ways, very cost effective and also quite successful (at least comparatively speaking), the differences in facilities between the primary schools and the SSKs are a matter for concern, not just on the part of the SSK teachers themselves (several of them were vocal on this subject). Since the lower salary is part of the rationale of the SSK system, and it does mobilize resources that would not be otherwise used, it is particularly important to remove, as far as possible, the comparative neglect of the non-salary-based needs of SSKs. This includes the irregularity in remunerating the teachers, the absence of facilities for students (they get only a textbook grant, but none of the other benefits that come with being a primary school student), the lack of facilities for teaching at the location of the SSK themselves, the absence of mid-day meals or other forms of feeding (we even found some cases in which a child was not being transferred for fear of losing the food ration...), and so on. Children of SSKs get only free books, whereas primary school pupils get dry food rations as well as free books, and also free uniforms for girl students from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The SSKs are a success, but they can be more successful at a little extra expense, in a way that serves the interest of the children (providing food certainly would do in many different ways).

'Mid-day meals'

There is a strong case for making the so-called 'mid-day meals' real mid-day meals. This was one of the recommendations made in our preliminary report that was released to the press in Kolkata on 10th November 2001, and since then the Supreme Court itself has demanded that this be done. Like in much of the rest of India, *the prevailing system of 'mid-day meals' in West Bengal has nothing to do with either mid-day or with a meal*; indeed they do not even involve any cooking. A ration of three kg of uncooked rice is given to students attending school regularly (taking 80 percent attendance as a cut off), but there is much abuse of the system (not unlike what we know from the experience of other such practices elsewhere).

It will cost only a little more to provide actual mid-day meals, which will (1) contribute greatly to the nutrition of the children, (2) much enhance school attendance, and (3) also reduce the abuse and corruption typically associated with the distribution of dry rations, which are more easily fungible. We found some evidence of poorer children, who often have to survive on one meal a day, being generally in bad health, and also unable to do school work properly because of under-nutrition and hunger. Nutritional supplementation is not only important in itself (India has a higher incidence of child undernourishment than most other regions in the world, including Sub-Saharan Africa), but it will also effectively complement the effectiveness of school education. Also, the incentive effects of the provision of actual mid-day meals (rather than something that is merely 'called' that) can be quite important for the attendance of children (as mentioned earlier, *we found only 51 percent of the registered children actually in the school on the days we visited them*).¹¹

A concluding remark

Even though the coverage of our present study is regionally restricted the uniformity of the problems that are identified suggests that the schooling system in West Bengal is ready for some radical reform. There is an urgent need for taking class divisions more seriously and also insisting on the exercise of responsibility by public servants who serve the underdogs of society. The overarching rights of children from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds. The changes needed, while radical, should be much in conformity with the commitment that has already been shown in other fields in West Bengal, including land reform and local governance.

There have been substantial pay-offs from recent innovations, particularly the introduction of Sishu Shiksha Kendras, where the costs are lower and the effectiveness apparently greater. However, the students receive far less support in the SSKs than in primary schools, and some of these gaps can be reduced, without overturning the cost effectiveness of SSKs. The reliance on SSKs should not reduce the recognition of the urgency of reforming and enhancing the main avenue of primary education, viz. primary schools.

Free education has ceased to be a right of all children, particularly because of the artificially generated need for private tuition. The prevalence of this evil practice reveals the inefficiency of basic school work as well as the inequity of delivering adequate education only to those who can pay for it. This problem is present in many other parts of India as well, and the solutions that are worked out in West Bengal should be of great interest and relevance to the rest of the country also.

Increasing efficiency as well as equity in the use of resources in primary education is important as the need for expanding the overall resource allocation in favour of primary education. A radically enhanced set of commitments is needed from the primary teachers, who no longer receive exploitative wages. Responsibility goes with reward, and it is critically important for the teachers not to form a new privileged class who stand at a great social and economic distance from the children whom they teach. Solidarity is partly a matter of political and moral commitment, but also correlate of institutional arrangements, and it is necessary to examine both. Our findings, preliminary as they are, point firmly to some central issues that need to be addressed with some urgency for the delivery of primary education in West Bengal.

Annotations

- 1 Pratichi = (literally) The West (Asit Datta).
- 2 By courtesy of the PRATICHI-Trust we print an abridged version of the introduction to the Pratichi-Report – Rana, Kumar/Rafique, Abdur/Sengupta, Amrita (Pratichi Research Team: The Pratichi Education Report. The Delivery of Primary Education: A Study in West Bengal. Delhi: TLM Books (128 pages, \$ 5,00). Copies of the report can be obtained directly from the publishers. Orders can be sent to A-708, Anand Lok, Mayur Vihar 1, Delhi-110091. Telephone/Fax: 0091-11 22752375; bookshop@littlemag.com.
- 3 Shishu Vikas Kendra = (literally) Child Education Centre (Asit Datta).
- 4 The importance of learning from the rich variety of experiences within India is one of the principal themes of the studies jointly conducted by Dreze/Sen 1995; 1996; 2002.
- 5 Panchayat = Village Parliament (Asit Datta).

6 On this see also the papers by Jean Drèze and Haris Gazdar, V.K. Ramachandran, Sunil Sengupta In: Drèze/Sen 1996.

7 Exchange rate (Juli 2004) Euro to Rupees: 1 EUR = 64 Rs; Purchasing power: 1 EUR = 3 Rs (Asit Datta).

8 For a comparative international perspective on this see Mehrotra/Buckland 2001.

9 These findings are very similar to what has been found elsewhere in India; see particularly PROBE/Centre for Development Economics 1999.

10 Scheduled Casts (SC)/Scheduled Tribes (ST) = special communities regarded to be backward. As such they get according to the Indian Constitution certain privileges e.g. 25% of all seats are reserved for these groups in all public institutions (Asit Datta).

11 The additional food needed for this purpose should not be an insurmountable barrier. Indeed, for a country with more than 60 million tonnes of food in public stocks (without an adequately reasoned justification), there are also more ambitious schemes that could be devised. This is one of the subjects covered in my Nehru Lecture, given on 13th November 2001, in New Delhi (on 'Class in India'), and in an essay published in the Little Magazine., December 2001. The additional fiscal burden on the States is a more immediately relevant issue, but again not beyond the realm of feasibility.

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