



**Secondary Research on the Status of Secondary Education in
Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh and Sambalpur, Orissa
1 June – 31 July 2011**

1. Overview

The objective of this research was a situation analysis of secondary education scenario in Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh and Sambalpur, Orissa and recommend focus areas of intervention for the Kusuma Trust UK (The Trust). The research methods included a review of reports and information on secondary education in both districts and holding one-day consultations in each district. Through planned discussions and group work, the consultations reviewed district trends and collected inputs from participating stakeholder organisations on relevant secondary education issues.

2. Background

Secondary education in India is organised in two tiers. Secondary schools provide education for students aged 14 to 15 years for Classes 9 to 10. Senior secondary schools provide education for students aged 16 to 17 years for Classes 11 to 12. The system has government schools, government-aided schools, private schools, schools run by religious institutions and open schools, which deliver distance learning.

Secondary education is at a crossroads. The country's rapidly growing economy has increased the need for students to complete secondary schooling but the current system is not meeting this demand. Unlike elementary education, there is a dearth of policy, resources and defined National and State government responsibilities for secondary education.

Two important initiatives that have made a significant impact on secondary education are the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA). The NCF advocates for a shift from rote memory to conceptual understanding, synthesis and application. The RMSA is committed to universalising quality education at the secondary and senior secondary levels.

Although the number of secondary schools has increased, enrolment figures remain low. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), which shows total enrolment as a percentage of the total population in the relevant age group for Classes 9 to 12 was only 40 per cent in 2004-2005. In September 2004, the GER for Classes 9 to 10 was 51 per cent, and for Classes 11-12 it was 28 per cent.

Access to secondary education is highly inequitable across different socio-economic groups. Children living in remote rural locations face long journeys to and from school and girls are often dissuaded from continuing their education beyond Class 8. Most schools lack facilities and struggle to teach students effectively because of poorly qualified teachers, a heavy out-dated curriculum and no teaching training materials.

3. Hardoi

There are 377 secondary schools in Hardoi, including government, government-aided and non-aided schools. All schools are recognised by the Uttar Pradesh Board of Secondary Education. The literacy rate is lowest among girls, the rural population, minorities and Scheduled Castes – which make up a large proportion of the district.

4. Sambalpur

In Sambalpur, there are 214 secondary schools, including government, government-aided, block-aided and self-financing schools, which are managed by the Department of School and Mass Education, and the Tribal Welfare Department of the State Government. These schools use the curriculum of the Orissa Board of Secondary Education and support 30,000 students – 60 per cent of whom come from rural areas. There is one teacher training college in Sambalpur with the capacity to train 100 teachers, which accommodates the needs of four districts.

5. Problems to be Addressed

The most common problems found in both districts were:

- a) the inefficient provision and use of funds;
- b) the lack of trained teachers;
- c) poor teacher training;
- d) poor infrastructure;
- e) geographical and social diversity;
- f) differences in language and education levels of tribal/lower caste children (notably girls);
- g) the relevance of the curriculum to the local context and adolescent age groups;
- h) poor governance; and
- i) interference from local political groups.

6. Recommended Interventions

On reviewing the problems in both districts, it is recommended that The Trust consider these six intervention types, when considering funding an education project:

6.1 Enabling Access to Secondary Education: by improving school infrastructure and facilities, providing additional teachers and increasing girls' participation through escorted transport or the provision of safe residential hostels (supported by Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, National Institute of Open Schools and RMSA).

6.2 Efforts for Enhanced Student Achievement: by a systemic and comprehensive development of Science and English teaching and enhancement of library facilities.

6.3 Enabling Curriculum and Pedagogic Reform: by collaboration with RMSA in Orissa and Uttar Pradesh for the revision of the secondary school curriculum, development of teaching training materials and reform of student assessment processes.

6.4 Enhanced Teacher Support: by strengthening teacher training institutions through additional personnel, curricula reviews, infrastructure development, in-service teacher training, short term training in national and international institutes, creating teacher awards schemes and developing professional networks. Training in ICT skills and ICT-based distance learning could also be considered.

6.5 Support to Adolescent Children: through interventions on health, education, life skills and leadership delivered through the Panchayati Raj Institutions and School Management Committees.

6.6 Ensuring Quality and Relevant Research and Advocacy Efforts: through training researchers, enabling collaboration with UK institutes, commissioning and promoting quality research and creating a think-tank of education professionals to bring stakeholders together, form networks and advance the agenda of secondary education.

6.7 Community Engagement for Secondary Education: through mobilisation of the School Management Committees, community leaders and local institutions.

7. Donor Roles

It is recommended that The Trust explore these two options.

7.1 Funding NGO initiatives in both districts, with a focus on effective financial support, best practice and the delivery of comprehensive programmatic reports by the implementing partners.

7.2 Becoming a technical agency (in addition to its donor role), with a substantial enhancement of its own knowledge and skills, which would require the support of other agencies and consultants to deliver strategy development, capacity building, training and research.