Understanding Classroom Diversity through Enrolment Trends

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Abstract

Diversity refers to the different identities that exist among people, some of the common identity categories that we refer to include caste, religion, gender, race, class, etc. Living in a multicultural country like India the meaning and concept of diversity may subsume an even greater significance. Schools are mini societies, and equally reflect the complexities of difference and diversity visible in society, and school administrators and teachers have to be responsive in maintaining an inclusive school climate and culture so as to maximise from this diversity. With growing mobility amongst people across borders the diversity in the educational settings is also set to increase, further posing its set of challenges. Classroom diversity has never been more than it is today. This heterogeneity that students bring to a classroom needs to be integrated to the overall learning process, rather than visible elements of exclusion and discrimination.

INTRODUCTION

India captures diversity in aspects related to its socio-cultural, geographical, economic and political spheres. Within these aspects, social diversity is exhibited in forms such as language, religion, caste and tribes. Education within this realm has its own space and role as the single largest contributor that works towards the assimilation of this diversity towards unity. This is being claimed from the

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fact that a school system come as one of the first spaces of social learning for a child and each member that they interacts with, inside this space may belong to a gender, caste, language, class or religion that is most likely to be different from them. It is these heterogeneous or diversified spaces that expose him or her to the diversity that exits in society by large. Spaces with this form of heterogeneity is rarely found in the family, community or the environment close to the household that they have been living in before they reached the school.

It also needs to be carefully noted that the effect diversity can have in a classroom can be both of accord or discord, but education as a means of knowledge, learning, development, progress and enrichment needs to integrate the elements of heterogeneity within this classroom and school spaces. This becomes more important in a time when research and data both very clearly reflect that the diversity in classrooms is growing and further the heterogeneity that each child brings to the classroom is growing. Therefore, school spaces need to help the child assimilate and grow with this diversity. The curriculum, teacher and the system as a whole are the other contributors in this assimilation process. Based on the schools as spheres of diversity this paper attempts to get a deeper understanding of the concept of diversity and also study the different forms of diversity that is experienced in Indian schools, and further its

classrooms largely based on available secondary sources.

CONCEPT OF DIVERSITY

Diversity refers to the different identities that exists among people, some of the common identity categories that we refer to include caste, religion, gender, race, class, etc. On the other side, defining diversity can also be challenging due to the ambiguity it holds in its meaning, as often it is used synonymously with multiculturalism but they have different meanings. Multiculturalism focuses on understanding and acceptance of ethnic cultures, while diversity deals with a wide range of identity categories, including ethnic cultures. Although, Mazur (2010) argues that diversity is a subjective phenomenon, created by group members themselves who on the basis of their different social identities categorise others as similar or dissimilar. Guilford refers diversity to the range of identities that exists in a group people. Although Hearn and Louvrier (2015) are of the view that defining the field of diversity is not easy, as the field is characterised by ambiguities, contradictions and unclarities, also the term diversity itself lacks a binary opposition and as with any concept, is ascribed meanings only on context. Mazur (2010) in her paper on Cultural Diversity in Organisational Theory and Practice quotes Loden and Rosener (1991) wherein they define diversity as that which differentiates

one group of people from another along primary and secondary dimensions. Primary dimensions of diversity, those exerting primary influences on our identities, are gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, age, and mental or physical abilities and characteristics. These primary dimensions shape our basic self-image as well as our fundamental world views. Secondary dimensions of diversity are less visible, exert a more variable influence on personal identity and add a more subtle richness to the primary dimensions of diversity. They include educational background, geographic location, religion, first language, family status, work style, work experience, organisational role and level, income and communication style. The secondary dimensions impact our self-esteem and self-definition.

According to Mazur, the Table 1 indicates that diversity has many dimensions. These may intertwine to produce unique syntheses of human profiles, made up of both differences and similarities. Race (caste/religion), for example, may be more dominant than age in a certain social situation, but may be less dominant than education in a work context. Thus, the position and dominance of each dimension are not static, but dynamic, making the concept of diversity more complex. In addition to this, the secondary dimensions are more malleable and many of them will change over time. Thomas (1996) defines diversity as "any mixture of items characterised by differences and similarities".

Gosh (2015) identifies diversity as multiple kind of differences that varies with time and social contexts

Table 1
Dimensions of Diversity

Primary Dimensions	Secondary Dimensions	Tertiary Dimensions
Race	Religion	Beliefs
Ethnicity	Culture	Assumptions
Gender	Sexual orientation	Perceptions
Age	Thinking style	Attitudes
Disability	Geographic origin	Feelings
	Family status	Values
	Lifestyle	Group norms
	Economic status	
	Political orientation	
	Work experience	
	Education	
	Language	
	Nationality	

Source: In B.Mazur (2010), Cultural Diversity in Organisational Theory and Practice, based on R. Rijamampinina, T. Carmichael, A Pragmatic and Holistic Approach to Managing Diversity. Problems and Perspectives in Management, 2005.

according to variability in ideas, structures, values, beliefs and people. She cites the case of India wherein diversity has tended to focus on caste, class, religion and language whereas in the American and Canadian context diversity focuses on race, culture and ethnicity. Based on these dimensions, the present paper attempts to explore the existing patterns of diversity in Indian schools and more specifically its classrooms.

Diversity in the Indian context

The literal meaning of the term 'Diversity' is a state of being diverse or being different (Webster). Living in a multicultural country like India, the meaning and concept of diversity may subsume an even greater significance and further defining it may be complex, as there may be no other country as diverse and unequal as India is and this has been witnessed overtime. Wellner (2000) conceptualised diversity as representing a multitude of individual differences and similarities that exist among people. Therefore, diversity can encompass many different human characteristics, such as race, age, creed, religion, language, ethnicity, sexual orientation and more. Taking the Indian case specifically, we are endowed with diverse demographic characteristics, religious classifications, linguistics variations, caste stratifications, regional variations, etc. Within this realm of diversity in India, the stronghold is its 'Unity in Diversity'

that stands strong and has held the country sturdy even if is regarded as one of the most the most diverse countries.

India is home to about 17.74 per cent of the world population with 1.3 billion people and the share is only increasing over the years. According to the census of 2011, Hindus comprise of 80.5 per cent, Muslims 13.4 per cent, Christians 2.3 per cent, Sikhs 1.9 per cent and the others make for 1.9 per cent of the religious composition. The Hindus are further classified according to different caste and sub-caste hierarchies, and these have been the basis of major diversity discourse as it has been largely contested that division on the basis of these caste lines has curbed the path of development of India in many ways.

The terms Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are administrative categories for the socially disadvantaged groups; the former used to designate those groups previously known as 'untouchables', and the latter various indigenous groups that for centuries have resisted assimilation into first agrarian and then industrial societies. Approximately 50 per cent of the nation's population is classified as OBC, which comprises lower-caste Hindus, certain Muslim and Buddhist groups, and other groups identified based on low social, economic or educational status. The fourth category Economically Weaker Section (EWS) has been recently added based on the economic standing of the individual.

The Census of 2011 reported that India is home to as many as 19,569 mother tongues spoken by 1.2 billion people. But 121 languages are spoken by a population of above 10,000 and 22 out of these are scheduled and recognised as official languages. These figures only give a concise picture of the larger canvas of diversity, as when these independent attributes connect with each other the results may give way to other forms of diversity. As Fassinger (2008) clearly points out that any form of diversity brings together individuals from various backgrounds that possess important skills that stimulate competiveness and growth.

Diversity and Education

The advancements made in education is highest today, and our classrooms are more diverse than ever before and this diversity can be reflected in the varied socio-cultural setting of our classrooms. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 (RTE), is regarded as one of the most inclusive public welfare schemes instituted by the state to promote diversity, it not only provides free, and compulsory education to all but also mandates private schools to provide free and compulsory education to 25 per cent of those belonging to disadvantaged groups and weaker sections. Therefore, only reinforcing the diverse setting that exits in our schools and classrooms which can be regarded as an opportunity to assimilate and create a more inclusive system to gain from.

Schools are miniatures of the larger social setting that we live in, therefore reflecting the issues and challenges of the same. This section of the paper attempts to explore the nature of diversity that exists in schools and also its classrooms, it also attempts to capture the same with the help of meager available statistics to understand what exactly numbers tell us in this context.

School Culture

The term 'School Culture' refers to the common perceptions, attitudes, practices, beliefs, relationships and certain formal and informal regulations that outline and impact every aspect of how each school functions. Every student further in the school setting exhibits a unique kind of ability and knowledge pertaining to their culture or identity that should add more meaning to the school culture and climate and this further adds to the classroom learning on larger scale. Henceforth, multicultural aspect of education has gained a larger significance with an affirmation towards cultural pluralism, keeping in view the diversity in classrooms. The CABE committee (2005) on 'Integration of Culture Education in School Curriculum' in addressing various components of school culture, has stressed on our diversity being a wealth, and this plurality and variety is sure to give a child an idea, a vision beyond one language, one religion, one music, one literature and one culture. The value in the differences

that one carries needs to be brought out to the best of its capacity.

Classroom Diversity

While discussing diversity, Sudarshan also raises a question of who is seen as different from whom while addressing the issue she also attributes this difference as a way of normalising and reinforcing hierarchical power relations. Hence, 'how to manage diversity so that it becomes a source of mutual enrichment rather than a factor of division and conflict' has been the concern of many governments and organisations (Howarth). Garibay in the 2014 UCLA diversity faculty development programe on diversity in the classroom clearly pointed out that as individuals are exposed to diverse groups or attend a highly diverse institution, they are often exposed to experiences, perspectives, and opinions different from their own. This intergroup contact and exposure to diverse perspectives provides important opportunities for learning to occur. Psychological theories of minority influence indicate that having minority opinions present in groups stimulates cognitive complexity among majority opinion members (Gruenfeld et al., 1998, in Garibay, 2014). Scholars contend that this 'discontinuity' from students' home environments provides students with a social and intellectual environment that challenges them in ways that enhances their cognitive and identity development (Milem et al., 2005, in Garibat 2014). On the

contrary, homogenous environments restrict learning opportunities across social and cultural lines (Hurtado et al., 1994, in Garibay, 2014). Therefore, as pointed out by Garibay, the educational benefits of diversity are extensive. Educators need to understand what the benefits associated with diversity are and how to realise the conditions required in order to achieve these benefits. Banks who has widely researched and written about diversity argues that schools are public institutions that should promote the common good and the overarching values of the nation-state. Wherein, he says we must value diversity and it must exist within the framework of our democratic values. Therefore, diversity in our classrooms need to be used as a pedagogic resource for effective learning and the value in the differences that each child brings into this space need to be utilised as a valuable asset for learning and assimilation.

Challenges of a Diverse Classroom

As classrooms become more diverse, the role of educators becomes more critical to provide an environment that is more inclusive to cater to this diversity. The CABE committee 2005 also pointed out that most of our children do not have sufficient understanding of the strengths of their own cultural backgrounds. Nor are they aware of the cultural backdrop of their friends and acquaintances. It also underlined a distressing fact that children pick up

inaccurate, distorted understanding leading to complexes, prejudices and intolerance and all these come together to form the challenges of our diverse classroom. Therefore, the increasing number of learners from diverse backgrounds entering elementary classrooms has reinforced the importance of making schools more inclusive (Kumar, 2014), and sensitive to diversity as our school education does not provide sufficient opportunities to our children to understand either themselves or others (CABE, 2005).

Kumar (2014) in a study on inclusive classrooms and social diversity in India identifies certain persisting myths that he says are discriminatory practices by teachers, educators, school authorities and all of us in general about underachieving learners' socio-cultural identities and abilities based on a number of problematic assumptions. He further asserts that these assumptions are based on the pervading beliefs and common perceptions about the children's individual and collective identities, and their abilities. The myths identified by Kumar categorically include:

- 'Children are children after all…. they are the same';
- 'Learning achievements of children are determined by heredity';
- 'School Kids' are different from 'Street Kids';
- 'Boys are for Schools, Girls are for Marriage';

- Children learn only from textbook transaction by teachers in the classroom' and
- 'Inclusive education means enrolment of all children in school'.

These are often deeply rooted and shaped by varied socio-cultural contexts which have remained largely unspoken but understood by those who believe in diverse societal norms. These myths, he further argues, provides formidable challenge to educate learners in a diversity classroom. Some of the specific challenges that Kumar identifies are:

- Recognising the increasing diversity of classrooms
- Developing and maintaining disaggregated databases on diverse learners
- Developing ethnographic research focused on teacher beliefs and practices
- Need for a greater focus on diversity issues in teacher training and teacher education programmes
- Maintaining teacher diversity in the elementary teaching workforce and
- Developing organic school-community relationships.

Exploring Classroom Diversity

Diversity within schools refers to the vast range of identities that exists in a classroom setting. As discussed earlier, these identities can be

measured and understood in various dimensions of a common identity. In relation to these range of identities, the present research makes an attempt to understand and represent some basic nuances of the existing disparity in the school setting. With the limited information base, available secondary information through school statistics collected by government agencies has been examined to get a sense of what these numbers say about the existing diversity within classrooms in the national context.

The numbers discussed include classroom diversity measured through the primary dimensions given by R. Rijamampinina and T. Carmichael (2005) and they include race, ethnicity, gender and age. Although, it must be mentioned that caste has been substituted for ethnicity as variables and information base is limited. Religion has been taken from the secondary dimension as it has a more outstanding factor in the Indian context. These dimensions of diversity will be understood in the context of the existing educational indictors to assess how diverse are our classrooms and the developmental variations within these groups. The Census of India, UDISE, UDISE+ and Student Database Management Information System (SDMIS) data collected by the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration and Ministry of Education, Government of India, New Delhi. The main parameters through which diversity

has been examined firstly includes the demographic diversity and secondly, the classroom diversity.

Demographic Profile

The distribution of the population with attributes related to age, gender, caste and religion can be regarded as one of the main determinants to understand diversity, as they may be directly related to the size of these varying numbers. To elucidate this, population for the school going age has been cross-tabulated from the Census 2011, with the mentioned dimension of diversity to get an understanding of the distribution of the numbers. As reflected, it is noted that 41 per cent of the population is under 19 years of age and this sums up to 492 million people (2011), which is more than the population of big countries like United States, Brazil and Russia. The Scheduled Castes which comprise of 16.2 percent of the total population have 43.2 per cent of the population at 45.5 per cent under 19 years of age. The Scheduled Tribes which account for 8.6 per cent of the total population have a higher proportion of population below 19 years, but the growth of the ST population is higher when compared with the SC population. Within the religious groups, Muslim population has reflected the highest growth over the years and looking at their distribution, 47.3 per cent Muslims are under 19 years as compared to 39.8 per cent Hindus.

Table 2
Age-wise Distribution of Population for Social Category and Religious Community

Religion / Age Group	%Total Population	% SC to Total SC	% ST to Total ST	% Hindus to Total Hindus	% Muslims to Total Muslims	%Christians to Total Christians	% Sikhs to Total Sikhs	% Buddhists to total Buddhists	% Jain to total Jain	% Other Religions to Total
0–4	9.32	9.92	11.04	9.04	11.28	8.38	7.26	8.12	6.16	10.86
5–9	10.48	11.20	12.20	10.23	12.47	9.20	8.10	8.77	6.88	12.26
10–14	10.96	11.65	12.18	10.77	12.45	9.92	9.14	9.96	7.66	12.21
15–19	9.95	10.38	10.09	9.78	11.09	9.24	10.14	9.80	8.07	9.98
Total 0–19	40.71	43.15	45.50	39.82	47.30	36.75	34.64	36.66	28.76	45.30

Source: C-15 Religious Community by Age-group and Sex, Census of India 2011.

Classroom Diversity

All children in the school going age group belonging to diverse communities irrespective of gender, age, caste, class, religion or race should be represented in our classrooms. None should be excluded only on the basis of them being different from the larger group in any aspect. Classroom diversity under this section is captured by the share of those from different social and religious groups participating in education in relation to its total share. The total number of students enrolled in the schooling system by gender and levels of education have been cross tabulated with social and religious groups to measure the diversity in schools.

Caste is one of the determining factors of marginalisation. Research evidence has often reflected on how marginalised communities have been denied access to basic right such as free education. To reflect on it further, Table 3 below gives the proportion of students enrolled by social categories of General population, Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC). The Office of the Registrar General collects data on the SC (16.2 per cent) and ST (8.2 per cent) population but the proportion of OBC population is not given by the Census. The NSSO in a sample study in 2006 have an approximate per centage of 41 per cent. From the pattern of distribution

**Table 3**
Social Category-wise Enrolment to Total Enrolment

Caste	Elementary I–VIII		Secondary IX–X		Hr. Secondary XI–XII		Total School I–XII	
	Boys	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Girls**
General	25.48	24.72	26.74	26.75	31.30	30.79	26.25	25.62
SC	18.82	19.06	18.02	18.18	16.69	17.05	18.49	18.73
ST	9.75	9.79	8.04	8.31	6.52	6.74	9.17	9.27
OBC	43.69	44.09	44.90	44.12	43.40	43.05	43.85	43.99

Source: UDISE, 2017–18

of students across the different levels of schooling based on their social category, it is clearly evident that the proportion of those enrolled is well represented at the elementary level of schooling, with 43 per cent of the students comprising of OBC students. The post elementary level of schooling represents a decline in the proportion of SC and ST students with only 6.5 per cent ST girls enrolled at the higher secondary level. Since the SDMIS data is available only for the period 2017–18, hence the U-DISE data has also been used for the same period.

Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) represents the participation of children in an education system in relation to their total population. The GER, therefore, represents the size of an enrolment, which when exceeds 100 per cent may represent an enrolment of overage and underage children, in accordance to the prescribed age. The GER in the study has been analysed for only the SC and ST population due to limitations in the age specific demographic data under other social and religious groups. The GER was higher for the marginalised communities at the elementary level at 100.9 per cent and 100.8 per cent for SCs and STs respectively. The higher share of participation is mainly attributed to a higher number of overage and underage children. On the contrary, GER at the secondary level dropped drastically for the SC and ST students by almost half to 56.7 per cent and 46.7 per cent respectively. Comparatively the GER for the total population was lower at the elementary level at 93 per cent and higher at the secondary level at 56.7 per cent.
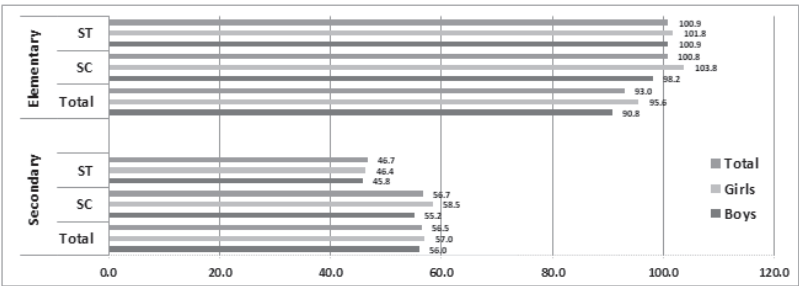
Source: U-DISE, 2017–18, NIEPA, New Delhi

Figure 1: Gross Enrolment Ratio, 2017–18

Religion in India is the basis for the diverse social hierarchies that exists, it is on the basis of religion that different caste structures spring out. Religion in India is also the main detriment to identify minorities in India. U-DISE collects data on the religious background for only the minorities, the Hindus who are considered as a majority group along with religious groups that do not comprise of the minorities are considered as majorities. According to the Census of India 2011, Hindus comprised of 79.8 per cent of the total population and other religions (excluding minorities) comprised of only 0.66 percent of the population. These two together make up for the majority religion or it can also be said that the majority religion in India comprise of Hindus. Examining the participation in education amongst the different religious groups as given in Table 4, it is clearly evident that the proportion of the majority group across all the levels of schooling is not only higher but also increases as

Table 4
Religion Wise Enrolment to Total Enrolment

Religion	Total Population (2011)	Elementary I–VIII		Secondary IX–X		Hr. Secondary XI–XII		Total School I–XII	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Muslim	14.23	13.72	14.52	10.35	12.14	8.30	9.81	12.67	13.70
Christians	2.30	1.42	1.49	1.43	1.59	1.48	1.78	1.43	1.53
Sikhs	1.72	1.35	1.19	1.70	1.46	2.06	1.78	1.47	1.29
Other	1.95	1.68	1.65	1.92	1.93	0.57	0.61	1.61	1.59
Majority / Hindus	79.80	81.82	81.15	84.60	82.87	87.59	86.03	82.82	81.89

Source: U-DISE, 2017–18, NIEPA, New Delhi

one goes up on the education ladder. On the contrary, the percentage share in educational participation of Muslims minority students is relatively lower to their total population proportion and also represents a declining trend. Ironically, participation within the gender groups represents a higher per cent of girls enrolled as compared to boys across all the levels for minority religious groups when compared with the majority groups. Diversity settings on the lines of religious composition also represents a decline amongst minorities and increase amongst majorities.

Government and Private schools: School education in India is imparted under both government and privately managed schools. It is largely understood that fee charging private schools are less diverse and more elite as compared to the government run schools as economic factors control their participation. An attempt in this section has been made to study the social and religious composition in the classrooms across these government and private schools to get a better understanding of the diversity factor that exists in different management setting. This is primarily done of understand how inclusive classrooms are in government and private setting as the latter has often been criticised for not being very inclusive.

Figure 2 below illustrates that the percentage share of the marginalised communities of the Scheduled Caste and Tribe students is higher in standalone government school followed by private aided schools as compared to private un-aided schools. The change in the share decreases almost by half from 23 per cent to 13 per cent for SC students enrolled in government schools. On the contrary, the share of students from non-marginalised communities or under the general category comprises of 36 per cent in the private schools as compared to 19.4 per cent of those enrolled in the government schools. The proportion of SC students enrolled in government schools at the national level also outnumber the general or higher caste students by a
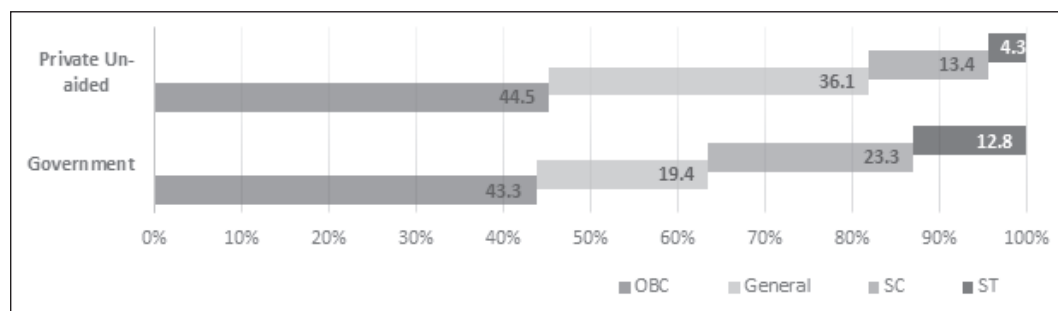

Figure 2: Distribution of Students Enrolled by Social Category
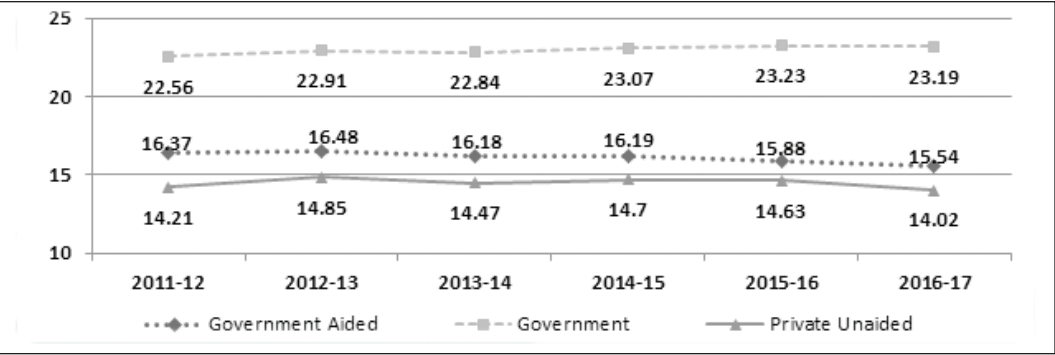Source: UDISE, 2017–18, NIEPA, New Delhi

Figure 3: Proportion of Scheduled Caste Enrolment to Total
Source: UDISE, 2017–18, NIEPA, New Delhi

relatively higher percentage, wherein there were 23.3 per cent SC students as compared to 19.4 per cent students belonging to the General category. Within the different levels of schooling, it was the primary level that represented a higher proportion of the marginalised communities in both the government and private schools. The SC enrolment at the primary level in government schools is 25.81 per cent as compared to 14.1 percent in private schools.

Overall, these figures only indicate that the proportion of those belonging to marginalised communities is not well represented in the private schools further making it relatively less diverse. Economic factors could be the main determinants of those enrolled in private schools but provisions under RTE need to be investigated more.

It is often argued that people in India tend to send their daughters to free of cost government schools and their sons to fee charging private schools which are considered to impart better quality English medium education. The second part of this section tries to study the variation in participation by gender in schools; in total, boys comprise of 49 per cent of the share in government schools as compared to 57 per cent boys in private un-aided schools. Taking gender wise proportion on the basis of the different social category, Figure 3 below clearly marks out the variation in participation, wherein a higher proportion of girls were enrolled in government schools as compared to a higher proportion of boys enrolled in private schools across all social groups. The gender disparity was higher in private schools as compared to government schools, and the general community represents the highest variation with 48.3 per cent boys enrolled in government schools as compared to 56.4 per cent boys enrolled in private schools. These statistics clearly spell out that diversity is higher in government schools.
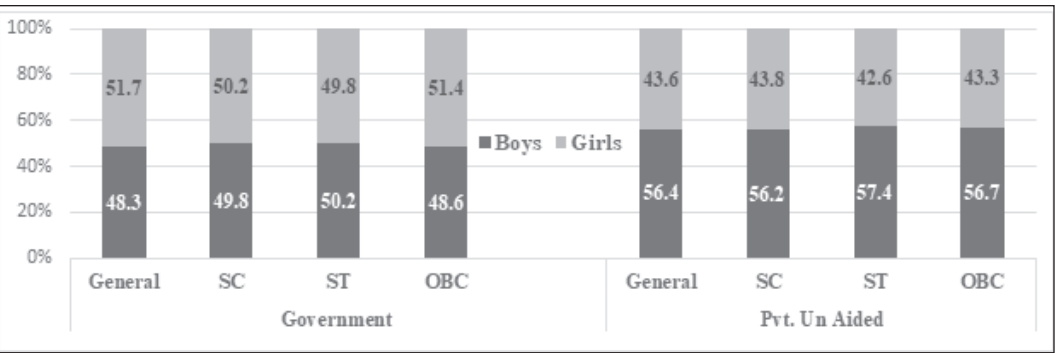
Figure 4: Distribution of Students Enrolled by Social Category-gender
Source: UDISE, 2017–18

Taking the religious composition of those enrolled in government and private schools to understand classroom diversity, it can be said that variation is lesser when compared between the two. Since the share of minority religious communities is relatively low, they have been clubbed as Minorities and the remaining Majority comprise of Hindus largely. As illustrated in Figure 4, Government schools comprise of 17 per cent students belonging to minority communities as compared to 83 per cent majority communities and in private un-aided schools, the share of minorities was at 15 per cent and majorities at 85 per cent. This clearly reflects that a higher proportion of minorities are enrolled in government schools as compared to private schools.

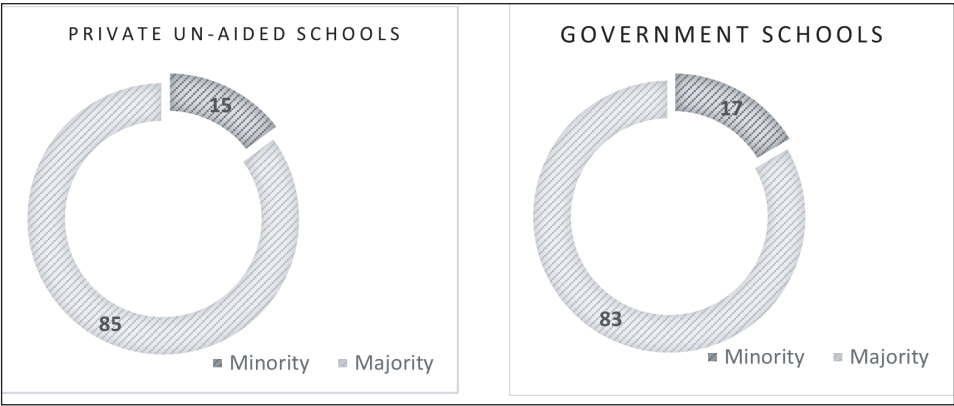Unlike a stark variation amongst the social groups, the

Figure 5: Distribution of Students Enrolled by Religion
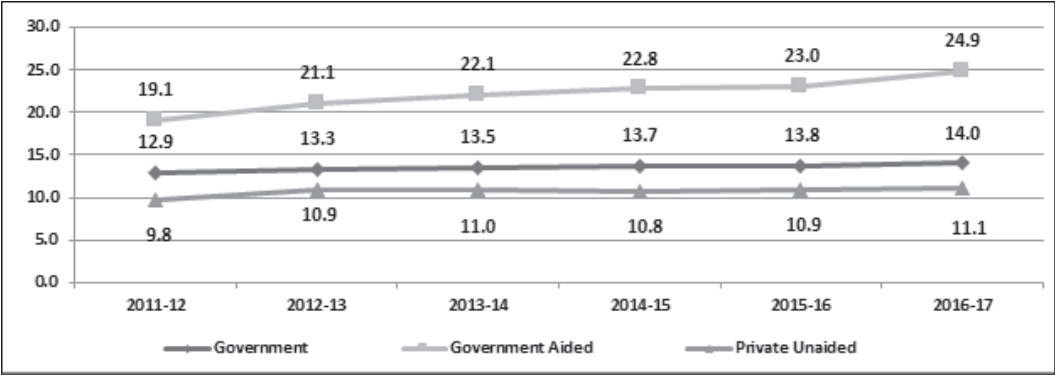Source: SDMIS, 2016–17

Figure 6: Proportion of Muslim Student Enrolment to Total-elementary
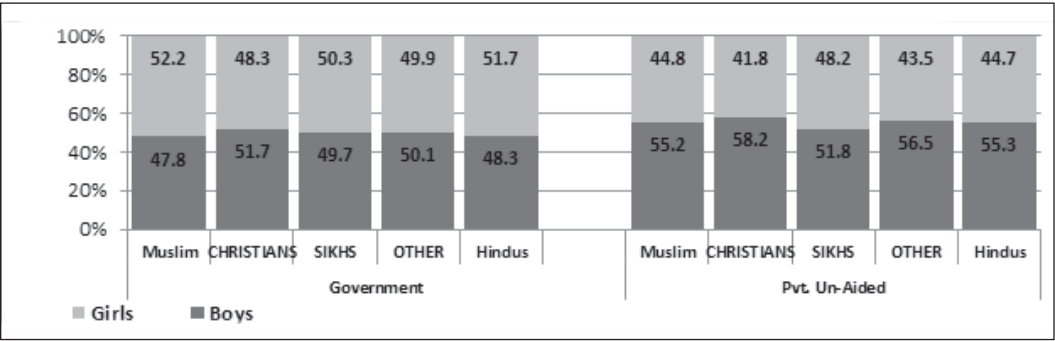Source: UDISE, 2017–18

Figure 7: Distribution of Students Enrolled by Religion-gender
Source: SDMIS, 2016–17

gender differentials under religious compositions are relatively less, but not absent although the trend is the same. Christians and other minority religious groups have a higher number of females enrolled in government schools, and all other groups have a higher number of girls going to government schools and in private schools, boys form a larger per cent across all religious groups, with the share of Christians being the highest.

CONCLUSION

India may exhibit unity in diversity in many forms but its social diversity today seems to be posing a set of challenges as politics in the name of caste, class, religion, language and race which are posing as threats to its socio-cultural fabric. These threats have impacted school and classroom harmony with cases of exclusion and discrimination often heard from classroom settings. Schools are spaces where knowledge and wisdom

is imparted to children to become more responsible, accountable and law-abiding citizens, both in their personal as well as the professional space. India is growing to become one of the global powers, globalising India needs to nurture children from diverse social economic and cultural setting in her classrooms of today to attain the correct knowledge value and attitude that is required for the future.

Data clearly reflects that our classrooms are more diverse than ever before, although the range of this diversity may vary on the basis of who manages the school, where it is located and the overall school size. It is to be noted that classroom diversity and its impact on education within the Indian context lacks research. With a rise in the number of those moving from one place to another within states as well as regions, the diversity in educational settings is set to increase further. More research that provides a framework for understanding required educational needs appropriate for a diverse classroom setting is the need of the hour. Improving access for marginalised and economically weaker students, improving academic success, and retention among unrepresented students and inclusive curricular need in policy strengthening and monitoring. To sum up, we need to identify and nurture the value in the difference.

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