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ABSTRACT

This study is about the Anglo Arabic Senior Secondary School, Delhi. It explores the socio-cultural milieu of Anglo Arabic School and its schooling and non-schooling activities from the perspective of its students, teachers and the community it caters to. The schooling process and its meaning for those it caters to are being delineated in this study by studying the everyday happenings at the school, the inter- relationships between the teachers, the students and the teachers, the teachers and the Management and the community. The Anglo Arabic School along with the formal expectations of individual behaviour one is also concerned with individual perceptions, alterations, adaptations or acceptance of the same as these shapes the nature of social interaction. The attempt is to render the school sociologically intelligible and in relation to ideology and society within an overall perspective that includes both objective facticity and the subjective meaning brought to situations and processes by the participants. The purpose of this ethnographic study was to develop an understanding about the school by getting immersed in its daily routine and activities and place it in a larger sociological framework. The study has thrown up a number of issues which are of significant value. Use of the ethnographic method has helped in highlighting issues which would not have been possible to do in a study dependent on a purely survey based research. Most research on schools would not be able to highlight the nuances of the issues in the manner this study had done. For Instance, the study has highlighted the lack of harmony between all the players in the field – teachers, students and the parents and the reasons thereof. Moreover, it brings before us some very relevant issues which need to be addressed in the context of schools, especially those

which are government aided and belonging to the minorities. For example, the vacant positions in the school which can exist for ever (because of bureaucratic hurdles in a govt. aided minority institution) and can create havoc in the schooling of marginalised children and the system of declaring teachers 'surplus' and the effect it has on the psyche of the teacher, the negotiations the teachers enter into for not getting declared 'surplus' all impact the teaching learning process. Further, the study has also brought before us some of the compelling reasons for the educational backwardness of the Muslims community located both within and outside of the community. While Muslims never tire of assigning blame for their backwardness on external factors there are many counts on which Muslims fail themselves as well. What Willis (Paul Willis, 2011) in his path breaking work Learning to Labour has pointed out that how for "the lads" it is their own culture which blocks teaching and prevents the realisation of liberal education aims, the same can be said to a large extent of Anglo Arabic school. Finally, this study on AAS demonstrated the linkages between school processes, the views of school's actors, influences of the local community and impact of physical surrounding, its historical legacy, and its unique character of having multiple units—educational, vocational and religious. I have focussed more on the relations among the actors, between the actors and school life, between academic system and rituals and ceremonies and school's relation with the community school is serving. All these are seen in relation to one and another which developed insights about the whole aspects of life at AAS. My concerned with the social reality of the school in terms of interactions—teacher interacting students in the classroom and other informal situations, student interacting among themselves over various matters of school life, teachers interacting with each other over various assigned and non assigned school and personal works in different settings in which interaction takes place along with substantive contents of the interaction.