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First and foremost, I would like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Jenson immensely, for the invaluable support that they have provided, for me to conduct a preliminary field-research in New-Delhi, India that would not have been possible otherwise. I would also like to thank the center for Global Studies for supporting and instituting such a grant that allows students to get this often-necessary research experience outside the United States.

My question as I went into the government-schooling field, in New Delhi, was: Why are government school teachers not working? The question had the implicit assumption that the government schoolteachers were *in fact* not working. This assumption was based on an extensive review of some of the most dominant educational research studies, which repeatedly revealed rampant teacher absenteeism and non-engagement of teachers (as being ineffective, even while present in the classroom) in several parts of India. These studies have shown that the above-mentioned factors also have a significant negative effect on the quality of schooling, especially as expressed through students' grade-level proficiency. I chose the above-question due to the ubiquitous policy discourse of the need for a 'quality education for all', and the seeming unequivocal verdict against government schools, which have miserably failed their students, who largely come from the poorer sections of the society. Teacher absenteeism and their lack of content-knowledge and ineffective teaching are cited as some of the major reasons behind the lack of quality in education as imparted to a large majority of government school student population.

These already established *facts* then led me to study the possible reasons behind the above-mentioned teacher conduct. I conducted informal discussions with students (grade 6th to 10th), parents, professors and researchers of universities and research centers and above all 16 teachers from six government schools. I also observed classroom instructions in three government schools ranging from grade 7th to 10th in English (thrice), Maths (thrice), Social Studies (twice) and Science (twice). While in many cases the assertions of 'non-teaching', like absenteeism or non-engagement held true; equally, there were many other cases of seriously engaged academic activities, which cannot simply be ignored as exceptional ones. My on-field pilot study notes the crucial need to account for the variations among government schools and within-school socio-cultural organizational dynamics of learning and teaching. The very understanding of "government" schools, as one uniform system of organization, might also be misleading as there are five broad types of government schools within the state of Delhi itself (where I did my study), with one type – Central government schools – common to many other states. The schools have different grade-specifications, administrative-mechanisms, and governance along with varying roles and performance expectations of teachers and students.

Having encountered the variations from the very inception of the study, during my pre-dissertation research this past summer, I was able to see the limits and possibilities of my proposed research question. The field-work pushed me to bring at the forefront the

assumptions of what teaching entails, given the contexts of a 'modern' schooling system and the broad policy parameters of 'quality education for all' in urban India. This in turn, made me focus more on the methods, which would be congruent to the future research question, the form of which has assumed more clarity after the field-experience. The limitations of the methods, given the perils of 'observation', for example, were some of the most important features that became visible during the current study as well. In classroom situations, I assumed the role of a silent, passive, observer with no direct participation and the instructional processes as noted by me needed to be crosschecked because of the possible influence of 'observation'. The crosschecking itself raised several questions with regard to the issue of trust.

Besides the direct research-method concerns, the trip also made me acutely aware of the necessary disposition I needed to acquire in order to conduct a study which would require active state-government cooperation. This integral but somewhat indirect part of research was learnt through a few interactions I had with the state government educational authorities. Often, anything governmental is criticized vehemently by people outside of the system and which we, as students, are sometimes more prone to engage in. However, the more I spoke with the officials, the more restrained I needed to feel to understand my own research, not because of the demand for 'objectivity' but because of the complexity of the situation. It seemed easy to direct criticism and blame at the officials for anything that was not properly done (and there were many) but it seemed a difficult terrain, when some of the conditions of multiple and simultaneous policy practices were taken into account.

The meetings with researchers at the universities and other research centers had been useful in understanding the current debates in the education sector, which sometimes remain beyond grasp, as in my case, because of the distance and the sole reliance on the published materials. Informal discussions at a personal level with professors and researchers have opened the doors for possible future correspondences, which otherwise may not have worked effectively.

In summary, I believe that through this pre-dissertation study, much was accomplished and I could not have done this research without going to India to clarify my questions, methods, and the complexity of the situation. I am now able to move forward with a clearer research proposal for my dissertation work that will hopefully make much more of an impact because of this earlier work.

Once again, therefore, I truly appreciate the support that I received from this Scott-Kloeck Jenson-Global Studies Fellowship and I intend to use the field work for my future dissertation.