

source and financing higher education out of general as well as specific tax revenues. Referring to the claims made for leaving decisions to the market he had this to say not long after India adopted structural adjustment: "The power of market forces is tremendous. Once unleashed they are not likely to be easily curbed. What they can do, can hardly be undone. Moreover, the changes they bring about will most probably stimulate still more market-oriented changes".

He warned of potentially serious changes such as the "creation of an increasingly inegalitarian society, a fragmentation of knowledge and the pursuit of immediate short-term interests at the expense of long-term social and intellectual needs of society".

Professor Tilak considers himself fortunate to have had good teachers even in schools in remote tribal areas of Andhra Pradesh as also in a degree college in a small town. A major influence are his parents, Lalita-Subbalakshmi and Jandhyala Venkateswara Sastry. His father, Professor Tilak says, was his teacher in a formal sense and a true mentor who imbued in him a sense of values. He recalls that Professor B.Sarveswara Rao, who taught economics in the Andhra University for a number of years with distinction, left a profound impression on him through his Gandhian way of life, professional dedication and integrity. The late J.P.Naik with whom he worked in the Institute of Education in Pune was also a role model. A third influence but one cast in a different mould is George Psacharopoulos, an eminent economist of education. Tilak remembers with affectionate gratitude the contribution to his development made by his teachers at the Delhi School and the Institute of Economic Growth.

In spite of the empirical thrust of his work Tilak considers his domestic felicity, the contribution of wife Punya and their children, beyond quantification.

The Malcolm Adiseshiah Award, instituted by the Malcolm and Elizabeth Adiseshiah Trust and administered by the Madras Institute of Development Studies, commemorates Dr Malcolm Adiseshiah's life-long commitment to promote research of high quality in the social sciences, in the area of development studies in particular. It is also a remembrance of the encouragement he steadfastly provided to young scholars.

The first award (2001) was presented to Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee, MIT, USA and the second award (2002) to Bina Agarwal, IEG, Delhi.

The jury for the third award consisting of Professor M.V. Nadkarni, ICSSR National Fellow at the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore, Dr Maithreyi Krishna Raj, retired professor of SNTD Women's University, Mumbai and Dr Thomas Pantham, retired professor of Political Science, M.S. University, Vadodara, has unanimously recommended that the award for 2003 be conferred upon Professor Jandhyala B.G. Tilak.

Professor Tilak has furthered our understanding of the beneficial effects of investment in education and has demonstrated that a sustained focus on the weaker sections—Scheduled Castes and Tribes, Backward Castes and women—is as justifiable from a strictly efficiency point of view as from a moral perspective. The conferment of the award on him is particularly appropriate given Malcolm Adiseshiah's life-long commitment to the cause of education in India.

**Malcolm & Elizabeth Adiseshiah Trust  
Madras Institute of Development Studies**

Second Main, Gandhi Nagar, Adyar, Chennai 600 020

# **Malcolm Adiseshiah Award 2003**

Presented to  
**Jandhyala B.G. Tilak**  
Professor  
National Institute of Educational Planning  
and Administration, New Delhi

## *A Profile*

**J**andhyala B.G. Tilak has been unanimously nominated for the Malcolm Adiseshiah Award for Distinguished Contributions to Development Studies for 2003. The jury has highlighted Professor Tilak's "work relating to the economics of inequality in education which is an extremely valuable contribution".

Educated in the Andhra University, Waltair, Delhi School of Economics and Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi, Jandhyala Tilak has established himself as a scholar of the first order in the economics of education. That he chose to direct his prodigious energies to a relatively neglected sphere of inquiry affirms his intellectual belief that investment in education can make a significant contribution to improvement in social welfare. Commencing with his doctoral work and continuing up to the present, we find in him a scholar constantly engaging with inequality with the avowed objective of mitigating its deleterious effects.

This concern has found expression in Professor Tilak orientating his work, indeed centering it, on the "weaker sections" which in his taxonomy comprise the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, the backward castes and women. Virtually all of his writings study education at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels and always with a concentrated focus on the weaker sections. Some of his major findings are best conveyed in his own words: "On the whole, the returns to education of the backward castes are higher than the returns to education of the non-backward castes". And, therefore, "individuals, whose education yields larger social returns, ought to receive greater public support,

in order to maximize the social welfare resulting from the educational budget".

Based upon rigorous inquiry, a sound theoretical and analytical structure backed by empirical evidence, assiduously collected and imaginatively interpreted, Professor Tilak is able to state without equivocation: "One need not search for non-economic reasons—adverse social status, tradition, history, etc—for supporting such a policy: at best these are of secondary importance". On investment in women's education he makes his case in its support in these words: "Not only as a matter of charity, grace and social equity, but also from a strictly efficiency point of view, investment in education of weaker sections, including women, needs to be expanded".

It would be difficult to improve upon this as an endorsement of positive discrimination.

This and other similar findings are placed by Tilak against the observed backdrop of wage discrimination against the weaker sections. He explains the higher returns to education for the weaker sections, "seemingly contrary to the general belief", in terms of the differences in costs of education, which in turn, are an indicator of poor quality. It is for this blend of reasons that to him the weaker sections represent the "best unexhausted opportunities" for further educational investments in India. He adds reinforcement to this by referring to the common failure to compute the value of non-market work and concludes that if this were to be done the returns to education particularly in the case of women would be further enhanced.

In the course of his inquiries, large in number and exacting in depth, Tilak has examined the relative contributions of the three levels of education to income distribution. He demonstrates that secondary

education makes the largest, and higher education the least, contribution. Also he illustrates that the larger the degree to which higher education is subsidized the greater is the inequality. At the same time, without dismissing the legitimate case for higher education, he argues that: "Public financing of higher education seems to have perverse effects of accentuating inequalities in the society and calls for redirecting public subsidies towards school education".

This conclusion flows from his book *Education for Development in Asia*. And it must be a matter of pride for Tilak, as indeed it is to us, that Dr Malcolm Adiseshiah expressed the opinion that the book was "both instructive and illuminating on many issues". Following his meticulous analysis of the Asian context and his comparison of East and South Asia he points to "conspicuous failures" in South Asia and comments that the "pattern of investment in education is found to be beyond any systematic explanation".

Given his overarching concern with inequality it should cause no surprise that Professor Tilak has brought under his scrutiny the financing of education. Contrary to accepted wisdom he shows that household expenditure on education is quite significant although it is extremely small when compared to public expenditure, and examines the relative merits of different methods of financing such as loans, graduate tax, and educational cess. His advice to be cautious about student loans is important in India's context since, as he argues, they carry the potential to affect adversely the demand for education of aspiring students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. In the case of women he is even more explicit as loans can work as a form of "negative dowry". Without at any time yielding to the temptation of being a 'primary education fundamentalist' his option is for progressive taxation and funding school education through this