



**PRESS RELEASE**

**School Choice Campaign and Penguin Books launch  
The Beautiful Tree by Prof James Tooley**

The School Choice Campaign and Penguin Books launched Professor James Tooley's new "**The Beautiful Tree-A Personal Journey into How the world's Poorest People are Educating Themselves**" on 11 November 2009 at the India Habitat Centre as part of the STUDENT FIRST! Dialogue Series on Quality Education for All.

The launch of the book was followed by a panel discussion between the author, **Mr Madhav Chavan**, Co-founder and Director, Pratham; **Ms Reshma Lohia**, Correspondent for Lohia's Little Angels School, Hyderabad; and **Mr Ashish Rajpal**, CEO, idiscoveri. Madhav Chavan spoke about the importance of the book in a time when the national parliament has passed the Right to Education Bill. Ms Lohia spoke passionately about the role of budget private schools in educating children from disadvantaged communities. Recounting her own experiences as a teacher and correspondent of a school in Delhi, she expressed her support for the efforts of Prof Tooley. Mr Rajpal impressed upon the need for quality education and applauded the Prof Tooley's work in this regard.

Following the remarks of the panel, the members of the audience participated in a lively discussion of the educational challenges facing the nation in this day and age. This session was moderated by Mr Baladevan Rangaraju, National Director – School Choice Campaign.

The Beautiful Tree is a journey that begins in India and takes the reader to East Asia and Africa, to learn of the efforts of poor communities in education. While doing so, one discovers competent, committed entrepreneurs who have started schools catering to slum children. Through the book, the author recounts the stories of engaged teachers, passionate entrepreneurs and teaching models working together to ensure that students are engaged and learning.

**The book highlights a wave of change sweeping the nation and the role of numerous small but inspiring private schools run by good samaritans from the communities themselves. The book tells us numerous stories of how the hope and aspirations of the poor and the enterprise of the new school owners come together to offer an alternative to the government education system.**

*Excerpts from The Beautiful Tree have been posted as three articles here:*  
[http://www.cato.org/pub\\_display.php?pub\\_id=10212](http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=10212)

**About the author**

James Tooley is an award-winning scholar featured in PBS and BBC documentaries. He has written several books and his work has been covered in *Newsweek*, *The Atlantic*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Financial Times*. Tooley is currently professor of education policy at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

*For more information on the author and to buy the book, please visit here:*  
<http://jamestooley.net/>

**STUDENT FIRST! Dialogue Series on Quality Education for All** is a monthly forum for debate by the nation's foremost experts on national education policies and solutions to problems of quality in the education sector. The series, a joint

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initiative of the School Choice Campaign and India Habitat Centre will usher, for the first time in the country, a sustained constructive collaboration of ideas between the policy makers, leading economists, school leaders and other key stakeholders like parents, educationists, civil society bodies, NGOs working on education and the youth.

*For details on the previous dialogues please log onto <http://schoolchoice.in/sfdialogue/index.php>*

### **School Choice Campaign (SCC)**

SCC seeks to achieve Right to Education of Choice for All. We believe that while the government has a constitutional mandate to educate every child, it cannot accomplish this task by building more government schools. It has to remain a sponsor and facilitator, and let edupreneurs execute the task of delivering the service. This will bring choice of schools even to the poor while improving the quality of education delivered through competition. Thus our slogan "Fund Students, Not Schools".

*We solicit your support in taking the book to a larger target audience through media articles, book reviews and interviews with the author.*

*For excerpts & review copies please contact Varun Chaudhary at [varun.chaudhary@in.penguingroup.com](mailto:varun.chaudhary@in.penguingroup.com) or 91 11 4613 1412*

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