Journal of Educational Planning and Administration

National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110016

JOURNAL OF
EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION
Vol. XXXIV No. 4 (October 2020)

CONTENTS

Efficiency and Equity in Hong Kong Education

Ying Chu Ng[*]
George Psacharopoulos[#]

Abstract

We use new estimates of private and social returns to investment in education in Hong Kong, in order to address the efficiency and equity of the higher education system. Investment in education is highly profitable to the individual, and the social returns far exceed any alternative discount rate. Public subsidisation of higher education contributes to the near world record of income inequality in the economy. The higher education expansion has not been associated with an appreciable decline of the returns to education, and the evidence does not support the existence of screening or over-education.

[*] Hong Kong Baptist University, WLB 531, 34 Renfrew Road, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong, China, Email: ycng@hkbu.edu.hk

[#] Georgetown University, 37th and O Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20057, U.S.A, Email: gpsach@rcn.com

Introduction

As judged by the PISA results, Hong Kong has one of the best education systems in the world. It is only second to Singapore, scoring 548 points in science and 523 points mathematics (OECD, 2016). PISA scores are education output indicators referring to secondary education, saying little about the rest of the system.

In this paper we report on a cost-benefit analysis of Hong Kong's education system, with emphasis on the tertiary level. The reason is that the country's post-secondary system has experienced tremendous expansion in the last decade, raising issues of efficiency and equity.

Between 2003 and 2017 the enrolment ratio in tertiary education more than doubled, covering about three quarters of the relevant age population (Figure 1). Table A.1 shows the evolution of tertiary enrolment evolution over time. Hong Kong's 74 per cent tertiary education coverage is second in the world regions, compared to 87 per cent in North America, 71 per cent in Europe and 51 per cent in China (UNESCO, 2019).

Two key issues we are focussing on in this paper are: the efficiency of investment in education, and how the returns to education have changed following education expansion.

FIGURE 1

Tertiary Education Enrolment Ratio, Hong Kong, 2003-2017
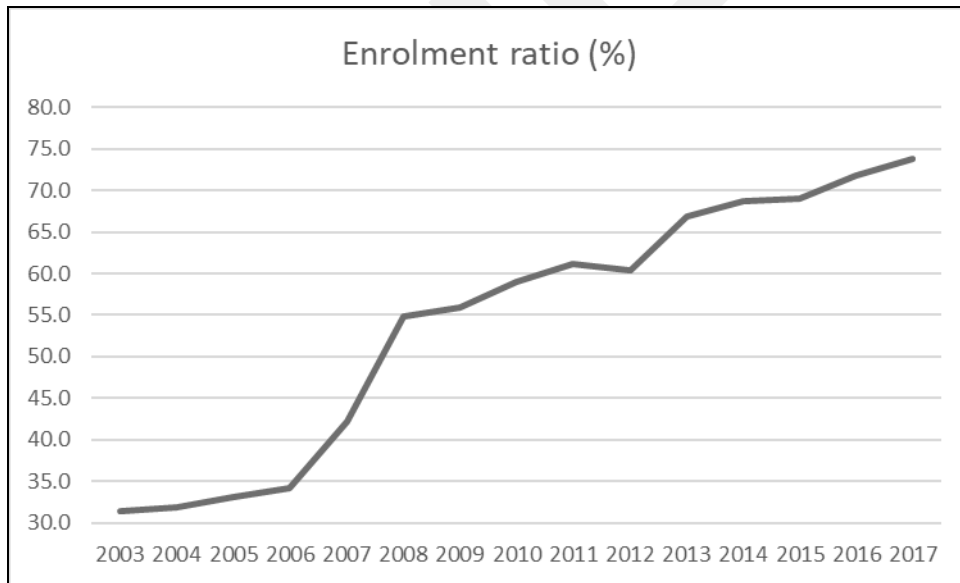
Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2019)

The key statistic we are using in the analysis of efficiency and equity issues in Hong Kong education is the rate of return of investment in education, from the private and the social point of view. Comparison of private returns to education relative to alternative investments assesses the private efficiency of investing in education. Private returns may also explain the private demand for education. Comparison of social returns to education to

the discount rate used in social projects gives an indication of the social efficiency of the investment.

Comparison of social and private returns gives an indication of the degree of public subsidisation of education, leading to issues of distributive equity. Estimating returns separately for males and females can shed some light on gender issues. Estimating the returns separately for workers in the public and private sector provides a test on the relationship between earnings and productivity. Returns to investment in education can be used as a criterion on the issue of possible over-education. Social returns can be used to estimate the contribution of education to economic growth.

Review of the Literature

There have been several previous estimates of the returns to education Hong Kong dating back to 1976. (See Table 1)

TABLE 1

Returns to Education in Hong Kong over Time (per cent)

Year	Private	Social	Years of Schooling
1976	23.4	5.3	7.3
1981	20.0	10.4	8.4
1986	25.8	12	10.8
1991	20.2	12.4	11.3
1996	18.9	8.9	12.2
2016	16.1	12.4	12.0

Source: 1976 to 1996 private rates are from Chung (1992) and Voon (2001) and social rates from Wong (1992) and Voon (2001) (Annex Table A.2). 2016 rates from Table 6. Years of schooling from, Barro and Lee (2016) for 1976 and 1981. Ng (2001) for 1986, 1991, 1996. 2016 from Table 5.

Focussing on private returns, all studies have reported private returns in excess of 16 per cent, and in the case of higher education 20 per cent. This is in spite of the huge expansion of tertiary education over the period. And unemployment of university graduates has been low and falling in recent years (Annex Table A.3).

Such phenomenon can be explained by Tinbergen's (1975) hypothesised race between education and technology. While the supply of graduates has increased, the demand for new technology skills has also increased keeping the returns nearly constant over a 20 years period (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2

Private Returns and Tertiary Enrolment
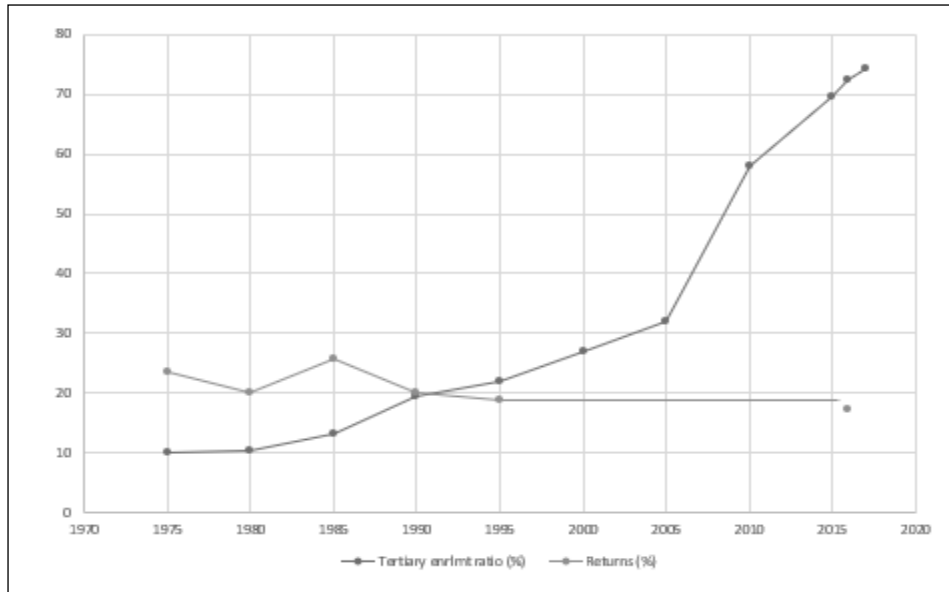
Sources: Tertiary enrolment ratio from Table A.3. Returns are private rates from Table 1.

The Data

The data in the present study come from the 2016 Population By-census (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 2016). We used the 5 per cent Sample Dataset covering the Hong Kong resident population defined as those who had stayed in Hong Kong for at least 1-3 months during the 6 months before or for at least 1-3 months during the 6 months after the survey period. About one-tenth of all occupied quarters in Hong Kong were sampled and all individuals of the households in the quarter were surveyed.

The sample data are selected in a way that no weighting is necessary, i.e., all quarters carry a weight of 1. The 5 per cent sample data are the public accessible and representative sample data available for any academic and non-academic analyses.

The full sample under consideration is 240,307 individuals. Table A.4 in the Annex gives summary statistics of the sample.

In the cost-benefit analysis we included workers in dependent employment aged 16 to 65 who had positive earnings. We also worked with a larger sample of non-working females to account for selectivity in labour force participation.

Methodology and Variables

The methodology used in this paper is based on human capital theory that treats education as an investment yielding returns. There has been an extensive literature on the

strengths and weaknesses of this methodology. The main criticism relates to the assumption that labour earnings reflect productivity and are not due to non-education factors. The availability of data in some countries allowed to make causal or experimental estimates of the returns to education, in some cases resulting in higher returns to education relative to the traditional methods used below (Card, 2001; Clark and Martorelli, 2014; Duflo, 2001).

We estimate returns to education using two computation methods – the Mincerian earnings function (Mincer, 1974) and the full-discounting method.

The basic Mincerian earnings function takes the form

$$\ln(Y) = a + bS + cEX + dEX^2$$

where Y is annual earnings, S is years of schooling, and EX is years of working experience. The function is used to estimate an overall private rate of return to investment in one year of schooling, equal to the b coefficient.

The extended Mincerian function is used to estimate returns by level of education substituting for S a series of 0-1 dummy variables corresponding to discrete educational levels,

$$ln(Y) = \alpha + D\beta + \gamma_1 EX + \gamma_2 EX^2$$

where D is the set of discrete educational levels with the omitted category is below primary education and β is a vector of estimates for the corresponding educational levels.

The private rates of return between levels of education, say primary (subscript p), secondary (subscript s) and university (subscript u), can then be calculated from the extended earnings function by the following formulas:

$$r_p = \frac{\beta_p}{S_p}, \quad r_s = \frac{\beta_s - \beta_p}{S_s - S_p}, \quad r_u = \frac{\beta_u - \beta_s}{S_u - S_s},$$

where r_p is the rate of return to primary schooling, r_s is the rate of return to secondary, and r_u is the rate of return to university.

The above Mincerian functions have been very popular in the literature given their convenience. The problem is that they estimate only private returns, because the econometric specification tacitly assumes that the only cost of education is foregone earnings.

A better method is to use actual age-earnings profiles by level of education, along with the direct cost of education to estimate both private and social returns. For example,

$$\sum_{t=1}^{42} \frac{(Y_u - Y_s)_t}{(1+r)^t} = \sum_{t=1}^{4} \frac{(Y_s + C_u)_t}{(1+r)^t}$$

where (Y_u-Y_s) is the earnings differential between a university graduate (subscript u) and a secondary school (subscript s, the control group). C_u represents the direct costs of university education (tuition, fees, books), and Y_s denotes the student's foregone earnings or

indirect costs. A similar calculation can be made for the other levels of education. Omitting the direct cost of schooling in the formula, would produce a private rate of return.

In the following analysis we use the Mincerian method to estimate private returns to the different levels of education, and the discounting method to estimate returns to various levels of tertiary education.

The years of schooling of each individual (S) were estimated based on the reported highest level of educational attainment. Potential labour market experience was computed as $EX = AGE - S - 6$. Reported monthly earnings in the survey was converted to annual earnings (Y) in \$US by assuming 12 months of employment at the official 2016 exchange rate of 1US\$=7.762HK\$. As in any other country, earnings increase by ascending level of education (Table 2 and Figure 3).

TABLE 2

Mean Earnings by Level of Education

Educational Level	Annual Earnings ($US)
Below Primary	15765
Primary	16893
Secondary	23159
Lower	18790
Upper	24850
Tertiary	53783
Sub-degree	33370
University	50017
Master	77781
Doctoral	91835

FIGURE 3

Annual Earnings by Level of Education
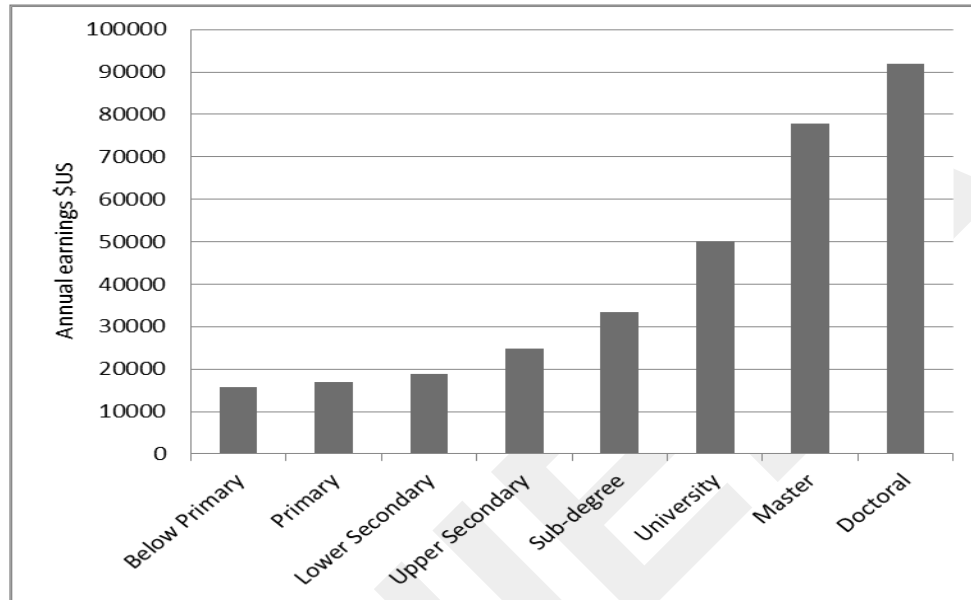
Results

Mincerian Private Returns

First we fit the basic Mincerian function to the entire sample, and separately for males and females. For the latter we used the Heckman selectivity correction on the entire sample using as an instrument *YFAMOTHR*, i.e., family income minus the earnings of the individual to account for female labour force participation. The estimation was done with STATA statement fitted to the full sample of working and non-working females

heckman ylog s ex exsq, select (work = yfamother s ex exsq) twostep

The overall return on one additional year of schooling is of the order of 15 per cent that is much higher than the one observed in other countries (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2018). As found in other countries, the rate of return to female education is higher than that for men, and much higher after the selectivity correction (Table 3).

TABLE 3

**Private Rates of Return to One Year of Schooling,
Mincerian Estimates (per cent)**

Sample	Ordinary Least Squares	Selectivity Corrected
All workers	14.8	
Males	12.9	
Females	15.4	18.8

Source: Annex Table A.5.

Fitting the extended Mincerian function with levels of education as independent variables gave the returns reported in Table 4.

TABLE 4

Mincerian Private Returns to One Year of Schooling by Level of Education

Education Level	Years Difference	All	Males	Females
Upper Secondary vs. Primary	6	8.0	4.6	8.7
Sub-degree vs. Upper Secondary	2	20.3	16.8	22.0
University vs. Upper Secondary	4	20.6	18.0	21.9
University vs. Sub-degree	2	20.9	19.2	21.8
Master vs. University	2	21.5	17.9	23.7
Doctoral vs. Master	3	5.3	6.3	1.8

Source: Annex Table A.6.

Social Returns

Mean age-earnings profiles were estimated showing flat earnings for secondary education and below, sharply rising earnings for post-secondary degrees and more-or-less similar earnings for master and doctoral degrees. Given the volatility and small sample size of education-age cells, we report returns for post-secondary levels. And given the similarity and overlapping profiles for Master and Doctoral, we also combined them into a GRADUATE category (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4

Age Earnings Profiles by Level of Education, Entire Sample
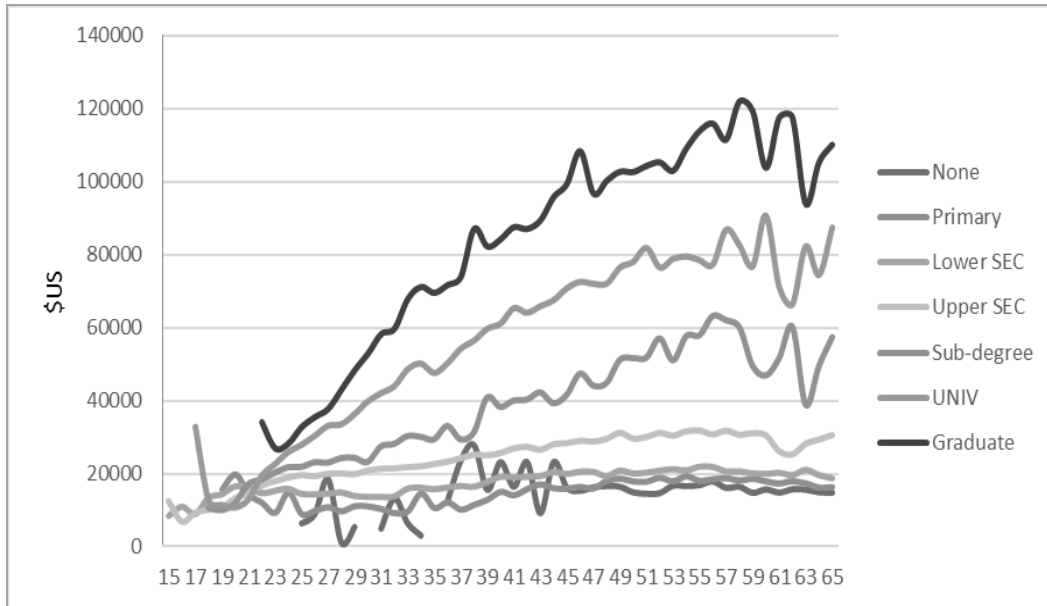
Education Costs

Private costs are foregone earnings while the student is in school, equal to what graduates of the lower educational level in the comparison are earnings in the labour market. Tuition was added to foregone earnings minus any stipend. Social costs are foregone earnings plus the direct resource cost of keeping a student in school (Table 5).

TABLE 5

Annual Cost per Student by Education Level, 2016 ($US)

Education Level	Private Cost (Tuition Minus Stipend)	Social Direct Cost
Sub-degree	6686	17779
University	7350	19325
Graduate	16529	19177
All Tertiary	6162	19454

Source: Based on Tables A.7 and A.8 in the Annex.

The resulting returns are reported in Table 6 and Figure 5.

TABLE 6

Returns to Investment in Education, Discounting Method (per cent)

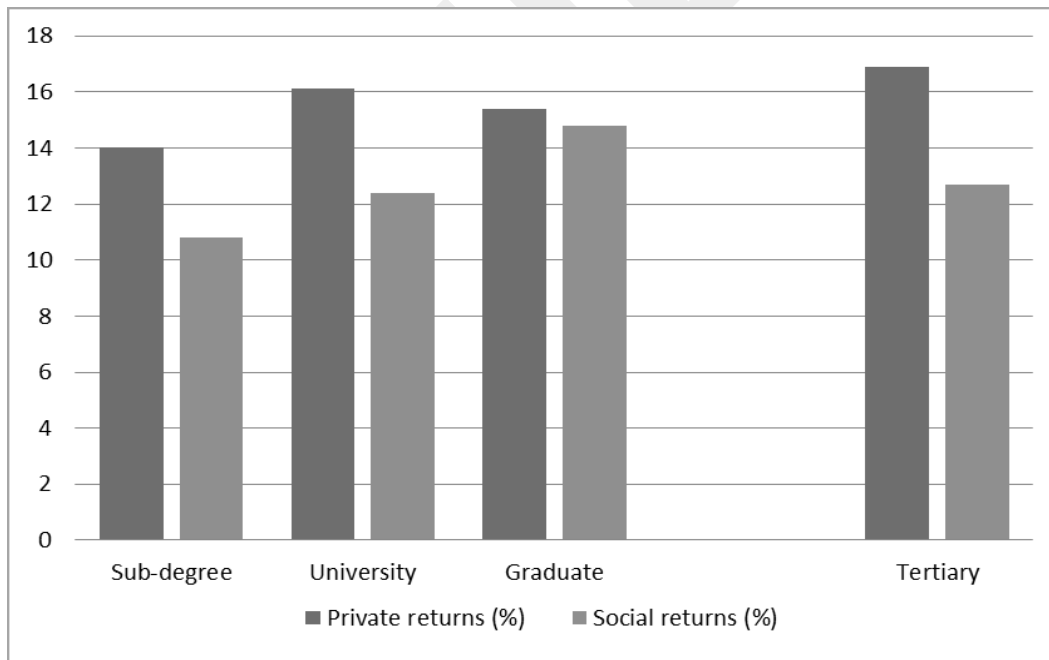| Level	Private			Social		
	All	Males	Females	All	Males	Females
Sub-degree vs. Secondary[1]	14.0	13.0	15.5	10.8	10.8	11.5
University vs. Sub-degree	17.7	17.8	17.3	14.5	14.5	14.2
University vs. Secondary	16.1	15.4	16.7	12.4	12.1	12.6
Tertiary[2] vs. Secondary	16.9	16.2	17.6	12.7	12.5	12.7
Graduate[3] vs. University	15.4	14.9	15.5	14.8	14.3	14.9

[1] Upper secondary
[2] Tertiary refers to all post-secondary levels, i.e., Sub-degree, University, Master and Doctoral.
[3] Graduate refers Master and

FIGURE 5

Private and Social Returns Structure (per cent)

Discussion

The first observation, is that the rates of return reported above, private and social, are well above any alternative discount rates in the economy (Table 7). As in other countries, returns to females are generally higher than those for males.

TABLE 7

Returns to Alternative Investments in Hong Kong

Investment type	Return (per cent)	Source
1-year Bank deposit	0.04	The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (2019)
15-years Government bond	1.5	World Government Bonds (2019)
Real interest rate	1.3	The World Bank (2019)
Base rate	2.5	Hong Kong Monetary Authority (2019)

But do earnings reflect productivity? We run two tests in this respect. First, we fitted the basic Mincerian earnings function within the sub-samples of workers in the private and public sector of the economy. Returns are higher in the private competitive sector relative to the public sector, thus supporting the productivity argument (Table 8).

TABLE 8

Returns by Sector of Employment

Economic Sector	Rate of Return (per cent)
Private	14.7
Public	10.9

Source: Annex Table A.9.

Second, earnings profiles diverge by years of experience or the length of time the employee is under the employer's observation, meaning that employers value the higher level of education (Figure 6). If the more educated were not performing well relative to the less educated, the employer would correct the initial hiring mistake of offering more to the more educated, and the profiles would converge with experience. If they diverge, as in our case, it means that the employer values the higher level of education (Layard and Psacharopoulos, 1974; Psacharopoulos, 1979.)

FIGURE 6

Experience-Earnings Profiles
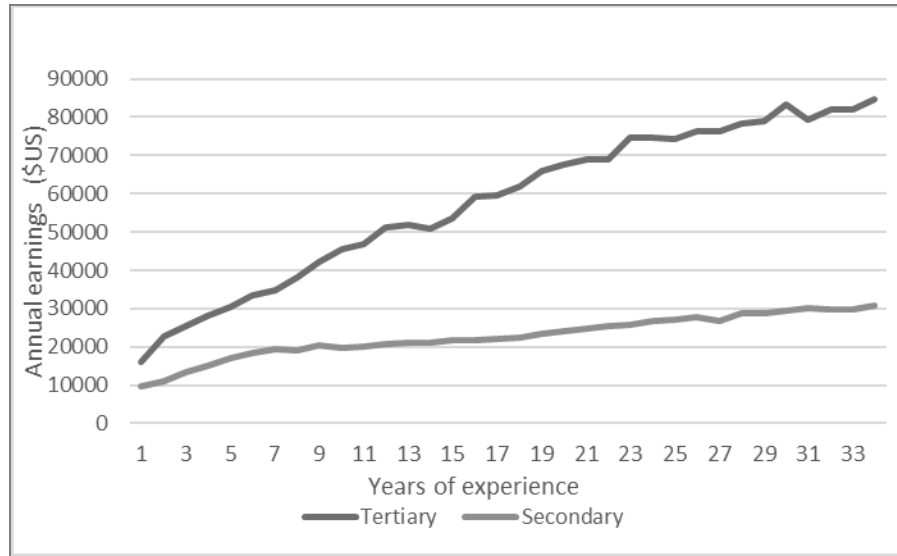
The estimated social rates of return can be used to assess the contribution of education to Hong Kong's economic growth rate. According to the growth accounting decomposition, education investment's contribution to GNP growth is given by

$$\left(\frac{I_e}{Y}\right) r_e$$

where (I_e / Y) is the share of education expenditure to GNP and r_e the social rate of return to investment in education (Psacharopoulos, 1972).

Adopting a 10 per cent overall social rate of return of education expenditure and a 3.3 per cent share of education expenditure in GDP (UNESCO, 2019), the contribution of education is 0.33 or one-third growth point of the 3 per cent growth rate of the economy (Table 9).

TABLE 9

The Contribution of Education to Growth

Educational Level	Social Rate of Return (per cent)	Education expenditure as Per cent of GDP	Percentage Points Contribution to Economic Growth Rate
Overall	10 per cent	3.3 per cent	0.33

With a Gini index of 53.9 in 2016, Hong Kong is on the top of the world income inequality league (Central Intelligence Agency, 2019). The difference between private and social rates is an indicator of the degree of public subsidisation of education. As in most

countries, such subsidisation is regressive, in the sense that those who come from higher income families get a subsidy to attend tertiary education and have higher lifetime incomes relative to the less educated (Table 10).

TABLE 10

Tertiary Education Subsidisation Index

Education Level	Private Returns (per cent)	Social Returns (per cent)	Degree of Subsidisation Index
Sub-degree	14.0	10.8	30
University	17.7	14.5	22
Graduate	15.4	14.8	4
Tertiary	16.9	12.7	33

Source: Based on Table 7, All rates
Note: Col. (4) = {[Col (2) – Col. (3)] / Col. (3)} x 100

Post-graduate students in public institutions receive a subsidy of $US 24,272 per year regardless of family income (Table 11). The tuition of $US5, 424 covers slightly below one quarter of the $19,454 direct social cost of a student place (Table A.7).

TABLE 11

Family Income by Level of Educational Attainment

Educational Level	Annual Family Income ($US)
Primary	34393
Secondary	39997
Higher	48039

Source: The 2016 Population By-census 5 per cent Sample Dataset of Hong Kong.

The rapid education expansion in Hong Kong might raise the concern that the country is overeducated. There are alternative approaches in defining over-education (Kiker, Santos and Mendes de Oliveria, 1997). Typically, the education level of the individual is compared to the required level of education of his or her occupation. The requirement comes from a dictionary of occupational titles, such as the United States Survey on Working Conditions (Rumberger, 1987) and the Quality of Employment Survey (Tsang, Rumberger and Levin, 1991). Or it is measured as a deviation between the person's educational attainment and the mean educational level of his or her education. So, if a secretary has a PhD degree, she is classified as overeducated and hence her excess education is a waste of resources.

Based on the deviation of the mean schooling of the occupation, as shown in Table 12, there is no over-education in Hong Kong.

TABLE 12

Actual vs Required Years of Schooling

Occupation	Occupation Mean Years of Schooling ("Required")	Over-education Years of Schooling
Manager	14.67	0.000013
Professional	16.47	0.000010
Associate Professional	13.91	0.000003
Clerical	12.66	0.000010
Services	11.26	0.000016
Craft	9.80	-0.000003
Operators	9.25	-0.000012
All (N=94806)	12.79	0.000006

Another definition of over-education is an economic one, based on the rate of return of the investment. If the rate of return is below an alternative discount rate, the person is classified as overeducated (Freeman, 1976). Based on our findings of returns in excess of 10 per cent, there is no over-education in Hong Kong.

Conclusion

Investment in education is highly profitable to the individual. The social returns far exceed any alternative discount rate. The size of private returns helps explain the demand for higher education. Although the expansion of the sub-degree level has slowed down in recent years, the continuous low fertility rate as well as the recent development of the Greater Bay Area (as part of the One-Belt-One-Road policy promoted by the Chinese government) is likely to keep the higher education investment sustainable in the coming years.

Comparison of social and private returns indicates a high level of public subsidization of higher education, contributing to the near world record of income inequality in the economy.

Returns of workers in the competitive private sector of the economy are higher than those for workers in the public mirroring the productivity value of education. The higher education expansion of recent years has not been associated with an appreciable decline of the returns to education. We find no evidence for screening or over-education, while education makes a significant contribution to economic growth.

Hong Kong's education system is efficient, but the public higher education financing mechanism could be reconsidered to promote equity. This would mean increasing tuition and reducing the stipend based on family income. A parallel system of student loans could be strengthened promoting further education expansion in an efficient and equitable way.

References

Barro, R J and Lee, J W (2016): "Educational attainment Dataset" (http://wwwbarroleecom/)

Card, D (2001): "Estimating the Return to Schooling: Progress on Some Persistent Econometric Problems" *Econometrica*, 69(5): 1127-1160

Central Intelligence Agency (2019): *The World Factbook* (https://wwwciagov/ library/publications/ the-world-factbook/rank order/2172rankhtml?)

Chung, Y-p (1992): "Economic Returns to Vocational and Technical Education," in Chung, Y-p and Wong, R Y-c *ed): *The Economics and Financing of Hong Kong Education*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, pp 91-112

Clark, D and Martorell, P (2014): "The Signaling Value of a High School Diploma," *Journal of Political Economy*, 122(2): 282-318

Duflo, E (2001): "Schooling and Labour Market Consequences of School Construction in Indonesia: Evidence from an Unusual Policy Experiment," *American Economic Review*, 91(4): 795-813

Freeman, R B (1976): *The Overeducated American* New York: Academic Press

Hong Kong Annual Digest of Statistics (various years): Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department (2016): *Population By-census 5 per cent Sample Data of Hong Kong* Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Hong Kong Monetary Authority (2019): wwwhkmagovhk/eng/data-publications-and-research/data-and-statistics/economic-financial-data-for-hong-kong/

Kiker, B F; Santos, M C and Oliveira, Mendes de (1997): "Overeducation and Undereducation: Evidence for Portugal," *Economics of Education Review*, 16(2):111-125

Layard, R and Psacharopoulos, G (1974): "The Screening Hypothesis and the Returns to Education," *Journal of Political Economy*, 82(5): 985-988

Mincer, J (1974): *Schooling, Experience and Earnings*, New York: Columbia University Press

Ng, Y C (2001): "Overeducation and Undereducation and Their Effect on Earnings: Evidence from Hong Kong 1986-1996," *Pacific Economic Review*, 6(3):401-418

OECD (2016): *PISA Results, 2015* OECD

Psacharopoulos, G (1972): "Measuring the Marginal Contribution of Education to Economic Growth," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 20(4):641-658

Psacharopoulos, G (1979): "On the Weak versus the Strong Version of the Screening Hypothesis" *Economics Letters*, 4 (1979): 181-85

Psacharopoulos, G and Patrinos, H A (2018): "Returns to Investment in Education: A Decennial Review of the Global Literature," *Education Economic*, 26(5): 445-458

Quarterly Report on General Household Survey (various reports): Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Rumberger, R W (1987): "The Impact of Surplus Schooling on Productivity and Earnings," *Journal of Human Resources*, 22:24-50

The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (2019): (https://wwwhsbccomhk/ investments/market-information/hk/deposit-rate/)

Tinbergen, J (1975) *Income Distribution Analysis and Policies* Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Co

Tsang, M C;, Rumberger, R W and Lein, H (1991): "The Impact of Surplus Schooling on Worker Productivity," *Industrial Relations*, 30:209-228

Voon, J P (2001): "Measuring Social Returns to Higher Education Investments in Hong Kong: Production Function Approach," *Economics of Education Review*, 20:503-510

Wong, K-f (1992): Private and Social Rates of Return to Investment in Education, in Chung, Y-p and Wong, R Y-c (ed): *The Economics and Financing of Hong Kong Education*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, pp 17-38

UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2019): http://datauisunescoorg/
University Grans Committee (2016): Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (http://cerg1ugchk.org)
World Bank (2019): https://dataworldbankorg/indicator/FRINRRINR
World Government Bonds (2019): http://wwwworldgovernmentbondscom/country/hong-kong/

ANNEXURE

TABLE A.1

Student Enrolment

Year	Sub-degree	University	Master	Doctoral	All Tertiary
2000	15910	47880	11255	3962	79007
2001	18819	48340	10959	4284	82402
2002	21486	49467	10947	4445	86345
2003	24777	50428	10674	5225	91104
2004	28085	51214	8089	5233	92621
2005	29476	51959	5628	5474	92537
2006	29016	56240	4668	5716	95640
2007	31600	76055	34866	5871	148392
2008	34038	81730	31349	5959	153076
2009	45459	76625	35592	6747	164423
2010	49282	77561	38480	6905	172228
2011	49548	78260	39770	6999	174577
2012	57696	97304	40384	9153	204537
2013	51010	100710	42112	9646	203478
2014	41703	105053	42348	10069	199173
2015	39496	108145	40144	10407	198192
2016	40197	106002	39418	10911	196528
2017	39658	105745	40652	11227	197282

Source: Hong Kong Annual Digest of Statistics, HKSAR (2006, 2012, 2018).

TABLE A.2

Previous Studies

Year	Level	Rate of Return (per cent)		Method/Sample	Source
		Private	Social		
1986	Higher	25.8	14.7	Full discounting	Voon (2001)
1991	Higher	20.2	12.4		
1996	Higher	18.9	8.9		
1976	Upper Sec	18.0	14.5		Wong (1992)
	Matriculation	24.8	22.5		
	University	15.1	5.3	Full discounting	
1981	Upper Sec	10.7	10.4		
	Matriculation	19.0	17.8		
	University	23.4	9.9		
1986	Upper Sec	12.2	9.6		
	Matriculation	13.9	10.6		
	University	26.9	12.0		
1976	Upper Sec	14.4		Mincerian, male employees	Chung (1992)
	Matriculation	17.1			
	University	23.4			
1981	Upper Sec	11.7			
	Matriculation	14.2			
	University	20.0			

TABLE A.3

Tertiary Enrolment Ratio and Unemployment Rate

Year	Enrolment Ratio (per cent)	Unemployment Rate (per cent)
2003	31.8	3.7
2004	32.3	3.0
2005	33.5	2.9
2006	34.5	2.5
2007	42.6	2.4
2008	55.4	2.1
2009	56.4	3.6
2010	59.6	3.2
2011	61.7	2.3
2012	60.9	2.7
2013	67.5	2.7
2014	69.3	2.5
2015	69.5	2.9
2016	72.3	2.8
2017	74.3	2.5

Source: Employment ratio from UNESCO (2019). Unemployment rate from Quarterly Report on General Household Survey, Census and Statistics Department, HKSAR (2003-2018).

TABLE A.4

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean
Whole sample (N=240307)	
Years of schooling	11.38
Educational level:	
Below Primary	0
Primary	5.09
Secondary (All)	10.64
Lower Secondary	8.60
Upper Secondary	11.54
Tertiary (All)	16.01
Sub-degree	14.19
University	16.00
Master	17.15
Doctoral	20.00
Household income ($US)	3717.90
Workers (N=161546)	
Annual earnings ($US)	32923.52
Years of schooling	12.02
Years of labour market experience	22.89
Male employee	47.75 per cent
Female employee	52.25 per cent
Private sector employee	96.25 per cent
Public sector employee	3.75 per cent

TABLE A.5

Basic Earnings Function Estimates

Variable	All OLS	Males OLS	Females	
			OLS	Heckman
Constant	7.631	7.97	7.472	5.542
Schooling	0.148	0.129	0.154	0.188
Experience	0.039	0.055	0.027	0.106
Experience^2	-0.0003	-0.0007	-0.0001	-0.0018
Household Income				-0.000003
Constant				-0.988
S				0.043
EX				0.091
EX^2				-0.0019
Lamda				1.354
Rho				1.000
R^2	0.29	0.36	0.27	
N	161545	77142	84402	163164

TABLE A.6

Extended Earnings Function Estimates (OLS)

Variable	All	Males	Females
Constant	8.711	9.131	8.595
Educational level			
Primary	-0.018*	-0.099	-0.069
Lower Secondary	0.111	-0.112	0.022*
Upper Secondary	0.463	0.175	0.455
Sub-degree	0.870	0.512	0.896
4-year University	1.288	0.897	1.333
Master	1.719	1.255	1.807
Doctoral	1.878	1.445	1.860
Experience	0.051	0.067	0.044
$Experience^2$	-0.0007	-0.0011	-0.0005
R^2	0.34	0.40	0.33
N	161545	77142	84402

* indicates that the coefficient is not statistically significant at level of 5 per cent or less. The reference group for education level is Below Primary.

TABLE A.7

Annual Cost Items per Student by Level of Education

Level	Private cost items (US$)				Social Direct Cost[3] (US$)
	In Private Institutions		In Government Institutions		
	Tuition[1]	Stipend	Tuition[2]	Stipend[2]	
Sub-degree	6686	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	17779
University	9276	N.A.	5424	N.A.	19325
Graduate (Master & Doctoral)	16529	N.A.	5424	24272	19177
All tertiary	6162	N.A.	5424	24272	19454

[1] Tuition average in private institutions weighted by the enrolment shares of master and doctoral. For tertiary, it is the average of sub-degree and university courses.

[2] Tuition fee and stipend in public-funded institutions (University Grants Committee, HKSAR (2016)

[3] Official unit cost by the University Grants Committee, HKSAR (2016). For the graduate level, weighted by 85 per cent for master and 15 per cent for doctoral.

TABLE A.8

Discounting Method Computation Parameters

Parameter	Values
Years of foregone earnings	Sub-degree = 2 University = 4 Master = 1 Doctoral = 3 Graduate = 2
Working life	Secondary: Age 19-65 Sub-degree: Age 21-65 University: Age 23-65 Master: Age 24-65 Doctoral: Age 27-65 Graduate: Age 25-65

TABLE A.9

Basic Earnings Function Estimates by Sector

Variable	Public Sector	Private Sector
Constant	8.336	7.635
Schooling	0.109	0.147
Experience	0.072	0.037
Experience^2	-0.0012	-0.0003
R^2	0.29	0.29
N	6063	155483

NIEPA Digital Archives of Education Documents

Vision

All education documents in one place in soft version – this is the purpose of the Digital Archives of Education Documents being developed and hosted by NIEPA. This digital archives provides access to policy and related documents covering all aspects, sectors and levels of education system since Independence, so that no policy analyst and planner, researcher, and others interested in education need to go elsewhere for reference and use of the data.

Collection

The collection of digital archives is nearly 6,000 and growing. The documents have been classified under 18 categories, and further sub-divided under Central and State and other such categories.

Access

NIEPA Digital Archives is accessible to all users through NIEPA website by registering for _free_. The Digital archives lends itself for multiple search options like author, title, subject, keywords, place, year, etc.

Roadmap

The digital archives aims to generate a Community of Users as an extended face of NIEPA. The digital archives would have provisions for feedback and suggestions for its further development. You could also suggest any policy document on education in India – Central and State levels - available on public domain that we could upload in NIEPA Digital Archives.

Access Digital Archives _Free_ by registering yourself through

http://archives.nuepa.org or **http://14.139.60.153/**

To Register

Step 1: Open NIEPA Digital Archives home page at http://14.139.60.153

Step 2: Click on Register

Step 3: Provide Email-id in the box provided

Step 4: Click on the message sent from nueparepository@gmail.com in your email

Step 5: Provide your details, set a password to register and submit

Step 6: Your registration is complete now and you can proceed to "Go to Home" to browse the Digital Archives

Step 7: Digital ArchivesDocuments can be searched by providing keywords in "..." to get exact search results or you can browse according to the categories provided like Acts, Bills, Reports etc. You can also view the entire collection by Author, Title, Subject and Publication Date etc.

NIEPA

Role of Transformational Leaders in Participatory Educational Governance at the Grassroots

G Palanithurai[*]

Introduction

Centralisation and decentralisation of powers are in operation in governance and administration in India in the context of the ongoing globalisation of economy. All the global phenomena today are not specific to India alone. But in every aspect of governance and administration here, one will find the impact of globalisation. While looking at the above paradigm it seems that the whole process involves a paradox. At one level it appears that the two aforementioned processes are contradictory and at another level they are complementary to each other. In the process of making them work, they can be made complimentary or contradictory. It depends on how centralisation and decentralisation of powers are being handled by different stakeholders from the Central Government to the local governments including the members of the Gram Sabhas. Best results have been achieved in both centralisation and decentralisation in all the periods of history by striking a balance between the two. In governance and administration a fine balance has to be arrived between centralisation and decentralisation to get the best results out of globalisation to achieve development. Since 1991, much discourse on decentralisation and globalisation took place in policy fora as well as intellectual fora without much deliberation on centralisation as it is identified with globalisation. There is yet another strange argument that has been projected that in order to increase the speed of the globalisation process, decentralisation has been advocated by the World Bank. Reality, however, seems to lie in between the two.

Globalisation has left both positive and negative impacts on our society, as has decentralisation. It has been found out that decentralisation has been effectively used to utilise the opportunities brought forward by globalisation and to avoid the threats of globalisation. It all depends on the leadership of the local bodies.[1] But the essence of the whole debate and discourse lies in how to get best results out of globalisation and how it can

*   Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies, Department of Political Science and Development Administration, Gandhigram Rural Institute - Deemed University, Gandhigram - 624 302, Email: gpalanithurai@gmail.com
1   G Palanithurai, How Some Panchayats Become Model?: Actionable Agenda to become a Model, Gandhigram: Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies, 2009

be distributed through decentralisation to enable the communities and groups to lead a decent human life with dignity.[2] Essentially, the whole process has to enhance the human development scenario. It also empowers the people and enhances the capacity and capability of the people.

Against this background, an attempt has been made in this work to analyse to what extent education is being handled by the rural local bodies through the participation of the stakeholders for the larger benefits of the communities. In more precise terms, it investigates the role played by the leadership in transforming the governance and administration architecture in the given context of the powers devolved to the bodies to achieve the targeted goals in education. It essentially focuses on two aspects, namely the leadership of the institution and the participatory process in decision making at the grassroots on issues related to education by using the powers conferred on local bodies. The underlying assumption is that leadership plays a crucial role in leveraging the powers devolved upon the local bodies to enthuse and enable the local populace to participate in the decision making process on the key issues of education.

Methodology

For this work the author relies on the vast literature developed by the Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies through its wide range of activities over a period of two decades in the Gandhigram Rural Institute covering the state of Tamil Nadu. Huge literature has been developed in different projects in different periods on the function of rural local bodies and equally the performance of the same bodies.[3] They are being used for this work as the data set. The author has, being an academic activist, served in many committees in the Government of Tamil Nadu, mostly relating to power devolution and rural development programmes. Hence the committee proceedings have been used substantially for this work. A large number of studies carried out by the Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies for different agencies, on the performance of the rural local bodies, as well as published documents are being used apart from the larger studies conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India[4] and the studies sponsored by IDRC, Canada, through the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER).[5] Basically, secondary sources are the data base for this work. An intensive case analysis has been made with the help of the case studies conducted in a large number of Gram Panchayats in various districts in Tamil Nadu. Those studies have been used in other ways as well, for this work.

---

[2] Joseph E Stiglitz, Making Globalisation Work, London: Allen Lane, 2006.

[3] Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies, Ten Years of Experience in Decentralisation, Gandhigram: Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies, 2007

[4] Government of India, *Study of Elected Women Representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions*, New Delhi: Ministry of Panchayati Raj, 2008; Institute of Rural Management Anand, *State of Panchayats Report 2008-2009*, Vol I&II, New Delhi: Ministry of Panchayati Raj, 2010

[5] Hari K Nagarajan, Hans P Binswanger Mkhize, and S S Meenakshisundaram, *Decentralisation and Empowerment for Rural Development*, New Delhi: Foundation Books, 2015

Backdrop

The 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India has come to stay in the governance framework of the country, with the objective of making the people from the position of beneficiaries to the position of stakeholders and to convert the noise of the people into their voice.[6] It enables the people at the grassroots to play the role of citizens. Having realised the conditions of the rural communities embedded in the caste, religious and patriarchal structure, a provision has been incorporated in the said amendment to make governance and development inclusive, by reserving seats for Dalits and women in proportion to their population and not less than one third respectively in all the positions in all the three tiers of the rural local bodies. There is yet another provision incorporated in the said constitutional amendment to enable the citizens to participate in their respective Gram Sabhas to take decisions on the issues which affect their life and livelihood. These are all constitutional provisions which may be effectively claimed and used by the stakeholders. In a caste-ridden hierarchical society, unless enabling conditions are created, these provisions remain mere symbols and not effective instruments. The enabling conditions have to be created by different agencies and thereafter the stakeholders may make use of these provisions. In this study an attempt has been made to analyse to what extent such facilitative conditions have been created and what is the impact the facilitative conditions created on the issues of education at the grassroots.

Theoretical Assumptions

The recent discourses on citizenship and participation stem from the new models of development and governance as the market emerges as the decisive force in influencing the activities of the State and society. In this context, it is being visualised that the role of the State and the citizens has to undergo a change from the existing paradigm of dominant State and weak beneficiary citizens to that of active citizens and facilitative State. In the new context of democracy, the citizens' role is carved out to be an influencing factor in the decision making on matters affecting their lives.[7] Hence, their agency, engagement and participation are considered important in making development humane and governance inclusive. Participation is considered as a key element in the political process of democracy and social process of development. This represents a shift in the way people are seen and visualised by governance, while governance is seen and visualised by people. The new dispensation through the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India argues for a shift from State-centric governance to people-centric governance. People-centric governance argues for engagements of citizens in governance and development. All the engagements are rights based as the rights are claimable and justifiable. By the participation of people, the State is thus made accountable. Citizens are watchdogs and they are guardians of their own development.

---

[6] A detailed argument has been projected for decentralisation of powers in the Parliament and outside by Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies. For details, see G Palanithurai, Rajiv Gandhi's Vision of Local Governance, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2010

[7] John Gaventa and Rosemary Mcgee (ed), Citizen Action and National Policy Reform: Making Change Happen, London: Zed Books, 2010, pp 1-43

Yet there is a critical element which is to be addressed in the whole process. As India is a country with vast differences, disparities, hierarchy, complex, faction ridden and deprivation, an enabling condition is needed to make every segment inclusive in the process of governance and development. The critical element has to be addressed through a transformative process of the elected representatives and democratisation process of the communities through transformational leaders.

Transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms people. It is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards and long term goals and includes assessing followers' motives, satisfying their needs and treating them as full human beings. Transformational leadership involves an exceptional form of influence that moves the followers to accomplish more than what is usually expected.

- Anyone in transformational leadership first transforms himself or herself, and through which he or she signals the entire group of followers and community that he or she stands apart in the process of transformation, differently from the other leaders and followers.
- Secondly, transformational leaders carve out a framework of values and behavioural traits for others who want transformation.
- Thirdly, the followers or communities are engaged in the development and governance process through an alternative approach.

The process is creative and exceptionally struggle ridden. The whole process from goal setting to engagement of the community for governance and development, is kept simple, understandable, followable, beneficial and realisable. Trust is the most essential factor[8]. Thus transformational leaders have to use the new opportunity to transform the communities ---one by which they have to enable the people to lead a decent human life with dignity. In this process social transformation is the key act which has to happen by engaging the stakeholders.

The Issues Examined

The Tamil Nadu Panchayati Raj Act of 1994 created the rural local bodies as per the framework laid out by the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India.[9] Powers to the three tier panchayats have been devolved through executive orders not through the Act as mentioned in the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India. Further, the Government of Tamil Nadu, led whether by the DMK or by the AIADMK, has developed a perspective that in the new Panchayati Raj system, based on Gram Panchayats and Gram Sabhas, has to be strengthened to deliver all social development schemes and programmes. There is also a considered opinion that Tamil Nadu has a well developed bureaucracy and that it has got the capacity and skill to deliver goods. The accepted idea is that the existing bureaucratic structure should not be weakened. This is the position which the Government of Tamil Nadu has taken.

---

8   Peter G Northouse, Leadership: Theory and Practice, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2007, pp 175-206

9   G Palanithurai, New Tamil Nadu Panchayati Raj System: Act in Original, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2003

As a matter of fact, Gram Panchayats are nearer to the people. All other elected representatives and their institutions are far away from the people and hence people in the villages normally approach the Gram Panchayats for certain basic and felt needs. If the water supply system is not functioning, if street lights are not in order, if PDS shops are not functioning well, the approach roads are not good, wastes are not managed, schools are not functioning, health centres are not working, and so on, people immediately approach the Gram Panchayats. That is why Gram Panchayats have been strengthened in Tamil Nadu. As per the scheme of devolution of powers in Tamil Nadu, there are certain obligatory functions and discretionary functions. All the Gram Panchayats have to perform obligatory functions. None of them can escape from it. But in discretionary functions one can do excellent work if the individuals elected as representatives have got commitment, passion, skill, knowledge and sincerity. They will acquire all the traits if they transform themselves as leaders. The whole leadership qualities can be assessed only in the domain of discretionary functions. To perform the discretionary functions, the leaders require imagination, vision, strategy and needed skill and knowledge to manage the institutions. How leaders have performed their role and responsibilities have to be assessed here in this work.

There are several studies on the performance of the elected representatives in India. Of them larger studies are very limited.[10] Micro studies too are abundant. Two of the macro studies have unequivocally concluded that despite several barriers and obstacles, the local bodies have performed well. These studies have further concluded that if an enabling environment is created, there is ample scope to tackle many of the critical issues of development at the grassroots. Micro studies have brought to light the major achievements scored by panchayat leaders through their performance in these institutions.[11] Yet another set of micro studies has amply explained the inherent problems in the process of decentralisation of powers.

Here a few case studies are being narrated in the following pages which are taken from some of the action research carried out by the Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayat Raj Studies. These action research endeavours have been supported by various bilateral and multilateral agencies. Before coming to the case studies, here it is appropriate to mention the background of the action research carried out by the Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies. The Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies was created in the Gandhigram Rural Institute with the avowed objective of strengthening the local level democracy by building the capacity of the elected representatives and extending handhold support to the panchayat leaders when they face problems in the field, apart from doing research in decentralised governance and decentralised development. This initiative was taken with the premise that while electing any representatives is not in the hands of the intellectuals, they can indeed shape those elected representatives into transformative leaders if those intellectuals have a concern for the society and, more particularly, for the poor and the marginalised.

---

[10] George Mathew, Status of Panchayati Raj in the States and Union Territories of India 2013, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2013

[11] G Palanithurai, New Panchayati Raj System at Work: An Evaluation, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2000; G Palanithurai, Election of Process and Performance of Gram Panchayats Women and Dalit Presidents in Tamil Nadu, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2003

With the above premise and objective, Rajiv Gandhi Chair involved itself in leadership training in a massive way and carried out the exercise for about ten years.[12] The case studies which are presented here are the cases which have been documented and analysed during the action research projects. Since the Rajiv Gandhi Chair has conducted transformative leadership training, handhold support was extended by the chair to the transformative leaders when they were in struggle. These leaders have been continuously observed for a period of five years. Their activities have been evaluated and their struggles analysed. They are documented and published as an anthology under the title *Change Makers*,[13] A few cases are being presented here.

Potentials Demonstrated

Leaders come to the panchayats with different aspirations, levels of commitment and skills. To make the leaders work for the society, for its transformation and upliftment, they have to be conscientised on the roles to be performed and sensitised on the real issues of development. To manage the institutions, they require management skills. To manage and mobilise the community for development work, they need communication skills. To manage development, they need constant flow of information on all aspects through all tracks pertinent to development. As communities are uneven in terms of their socio-economic conditions, their leaders have to face several hurdles and, to overcome all those hurdles, they need a supportive structure. When the above requirements are fulfilled, the leaders will achieve what they wanted to achieve and then they will be recognised by the community. Once they get the recognition of the community, the leaders are recognised as path finders. They become visible in the media. They constitute the core group of potential performers. They are visited by government officials, panchayat leaders of other districts and leaders of political parties. They spread success stories and they become role models. When MPs and MLAs do not address social development issues, who will address them is the main question. It is the panchayat leaders who are addressing social development issues. Everyone is looking for such kind of panchayat leaders. Such panchayats are now visible in the society though their number is not large. Now the success stories are spreading through the media. The media play a predominant role in this regard.

From our experience in Tamil Nadu, one would strongly argue that panchayats are capable of tackling all the social development issues provided the needed support is ensured. Representatives of the people assume responsibilities and perform their role and function. Ten Gram Panchayat presidents have demonstrated this by their constant attention to the services provided through their achievements in regard to enrolment of eligible children in school, reduction of dropouts in schools, ensuring antenatal care and postnatal care, family welfare, adoption of family planning methods, protection of the environment, establishment of good sanitary conditions, provision of safe drinking water, ban on the sale of illicit liquor, clearing of the channels which bring water to drinking water ponds and tanks for irrigation

---

[12] G Palanithurai, Capacity Building Exercises for Local Body Leaders, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2001

[13] G Palanithurai, M A Thirunavukkarasu, and G Uma, Change Makers at Grassroots, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2007

purposes, and so on. The above activities were carried out by the Gram Panchayat presidents with the support of the communities.

These activities were the result of the Population Foundation of India project executed in Dindigul district.[14] It was made possible by the continuous training given to the Gram Panchayat presidents, vice-presidents, community leaders and self-help groups. The ten Gram Panchayat presidents visited the Gram Panchayats in Kerala under the interface programme conducted by the Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies and acquainted themselves with the process of achieving social development. The Kerala visit provided them enough inputs to work on social development issues.

Some Case Studies

There are cases where the Panchayat presidents have taken up the issues pertinent to social development on their own because of the commitment and the continued support of various development agencies. The Semmipalayam Gram Panchayat in Coimbatore district was headed by a mill worker with a primary education background but one who had a perspective to look at issues of the poor. Accordingly, he perceived that public schools in Tamil Nadu are meant for the poor. If anybody wants to help the poor, they have to support the public institutions. This panchayat has got two primary schools, one middle school and one high school. The president first provided water supply to the toilets in the schools and thereby he enabled the students to use the toilet facilities. He further provided protected drinking water connections to all the students and thereby he enabled the students to get safe drinking water. The high school did not have a laboratory and he approached the NABARD to get some financial assistance. NABARD agreed to provide funds but it demanded land. The president convinced the Gram Sabha members to give away the land needed to construct a laboratory for the school. Finally he succeeded in getting a resolution passed. For school enrolment, he conducted a campaign throughout the panchayat area and ensured 100 per cent school enrolment.[15]. It was his continuous engagement with the community which enabled him to do all those works. He also carried out a series of activities in the social development domain as communities continuously extended their support through their participation.

Ms Jamrud Beevi was the president of the Devipattinam Gram Panchayat in Ramnad district. It is a holy place of the Hindus. She defeated all the Hindu candidates who contested the election. She took initiative to activate the Parents Teachers Association (PTA). Based on the demand from the PTA, she mobilized funds from MP and MLA to construct two additional buildings. Apart from providing water supply to the toilets in the schools, she enabled the schools to bring a toilet culture among the students through her continuous sensitisation programmes in the school. Being a Muslim, she made several drives to make

---

14 G Palanithurai, Panchayats, Communities and Social Development, Gandhigram: Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies, 2003

15 G Palanithurai, Leadership Matters in Grassroots Governance (Pathfinder Series - 1), Gandhigram: Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies, 2005

the Muslim community enrol their girls in the school. She took steps to re-enrol the dropout children in the schools.[16]

Ms. Rani Sathappan was the president of K Rayavaram village panchayat in Pudukottai district. First she provided a well-designed kitchen to the *balwadies* of her panchayat to prepare food hygienically. She provided baby toilets to all the *balwadis*. She provided toilets to all the primary schools in the Gram Panchayat area with water supply facilities. She mobilised funds for putting up additional buildings for primary schools. She activated the parents teachers association. As a result, enrolment has increased in public schools and the closure of public schools has been prevented. She has helped the school to establish a tuition centre in the school itself to give coaching the students who are poor in studies.[17]

Mr. Elango, basically an engineer and scientist, resigned his job from a scientific organisation, and contested and won the election for the president post in Kuthambakkam Gram Panchayat. It is a Dalit dominated village. But it was considered as a model panchayat for all round developments. He created a panchayat academy to train the Gram Panchayat leaders. He elevated the conditions of all the primary and secondary schools on par with private schools by mobilising funds from the companies and donor agencies. By doing so, he drew the attention of the media.[18]

Odanthurai is a village panchayat in Coimbatore district. It was headed by Mr Shanmugam who elevated this panchayat to the level of as a model panchayat by his multifarious activities, including those regarding education. At present there are two primary schools and one middle school in the Odanthurai Panchayat area. Further, there are two matriculation schools run by private managements. The primary school located at Oomapalayam functioned in an old building where there were only two classrooms, without any other basic infrastructure facilities. The villagers demanded to make improvements in the school so that it could be upgraded to a middle school. Shanmugam came to know that there was no common land available to extend the facilities of the school. The issue of non-availability of common land always stuck in his mind and, in consultation with the VAO, he tried his best to find a piece of common land. In that attempt he came to know that under 'natham' classification an extent of three and a half acres of land had been allotted to an ex-serviceman in the year 1942. The concerned beneficiary, instead of holding the land himself, let it out to a third party, which was a violation of the rules. Shanmugam took up the issue with the Collector and succeeded in bringing the RDO for a personal inspection and verification. The RDO recommended cancellation of the allotment. The ex-serviceman appealed to the DRO and the issue was delayed.

In the meantime, the ex-serviceman went to court. The court very quickly heard the case and reiterated that the decision taken by RDO was correct. Shanmugam, realising the need of the hour, acted quickly and eviction was executed. On the same day the foundation for a school building was also laid after cleaning away the banana plantation which stood there.

---

[16] G Palanithurai, Leadership Matters in Grassroots Governance (Pathfinder Series - 2), Gandhigram: Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies, 2005

[17] G Palanithurai, Leadership Matters in Grassroots Governance (Pathfinder Series - 4), Gandhigram: Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies, 2005

[18] G Palanithurai, Leadership Matters in Grassroots Governance (Pathfinder Series - 5), Gandhigram: Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies, 2005

During the construction of the school building, the ex-serviceman appealed and obtained a stay in a writ petition. The writ petition was dismissed and the Collector was authorised by the court to proceed. In the meantime, the then Collector was transferred and Shanmugam met the next Collector and briefed him about the nature of the issue. The Collector not only took immediate action but also sanctioned funds under various schemes like Employment Assurance Scheme, Sampoorna Gram Rozgar Yojana, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. A new school with adequate buildings, all necessary infrastructure like toilet, drinking water system, kitchen shed, playground and compound wall etc., came up. Further, the primary school too was upgraded to a middle school.

All these activities were successfully performed within a period of one year. Shanmugam said that he was able to achieve all this because of the positive mindset of all the concerned officials. His tireless efforts, including spending his own money to periodically visit the district officers and Chennai to meet and appraise the lawyer, also counted in this regard. The Parents Teachers Association mobilised about one lakh rupees and in all classes from first standard to eighth standard, furniture was provided to the students. There was a proposal to provide two computers to train the students. With regard to the *balwadi* centres, the Village Panchayat arranged for the provision of toilets and drinking water supply. Further, in one *balwadi*, the flooring was upgraded with tiles, spending Rs 15,000 from the village panchayat fund. It was proposed to provide a lot of toys and other play materials to the children in the *balwadis*.[19]

Keerapalayam is a Gram Panchayat in Cuddalore district. Under the leadership of Mr Panneerselvam, it emerged as a model panchayat for sanitation, which drew the attention of the President of India. The then President of India, Shri Abdul Kalam, visited the panchayat and appreciated the work done by it on social development issues. In 1996, Keerapalayam Panchayat had only one school building which housed both the Panchayat Union Elementary School and the Government High School. The village panchayat president and the members felt that Chettikulam hamlet also needed its own elementary school building in order to ensure that all the children receive elementary education. The village panchayat also felt the necessity of having a separate high school building since the building of the elementary school did not suffice for the high school. This vision of the panchayat led to the following:

- A new Panchayat Union Elementary School at Chettikulam was opened four years ago and this caters to 52 children who predominantly belong to the downtrodden sections of the society.

- The village panchayat elders voluntarily donated six acres of land for the construction of a new Government School building for Keerapalayam Panchayat.

- Generally a new school gets a three classroom building under the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan scheme through the special sanction of the District Collector. However, since the land was gifted by the village panchayat elders for the Government High School, Keerapalayam, the then District Collector, allocated two additional buildings in the same year under the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan scheme for the Government High

19 G Palanithurai, Leadership Matters in Grassroots Governance (Pathfinder Series - 8), Gandhigram: Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies, 2005

School Hence the above school has five classrooms now. This is a unique gift given to the village panchayat by the district administration for its proactive role in the promotion of school education.

- The village panchayat also collected a sum of Rs 25,000 and deposited it under the Swajal Dhara scheme. Thus a water supply scheme, including construction of an OHT and a borewell, was undertaken under the Swajal Dhara scheme for provision of drinking water supply to the 561 students of the Government High School, Keerapalayam.

- The village panchayat also made efforts to enroll the school students in the School Recurring Deposit Scheme of Small Savings in order to promote the habit of small savings. As a reward to the village panchayat for these efforts, the present District Collector sanctioned a sum of Rs 3.00 lakh from the Collector's Discretionary Small Savings Fund for laying of a *pucca* road from the main road to the Government High School.

- The village panchayat has also got about 20 families of Narikuravas, an erstwhile nomadic people, who now do the business of selling ornamental beads, etc. The village panchayat president and the members made efforts to ensure that all the 16 children of the Narikurava families were enrolled in the local elementary school. This effort has been highlighted in the press also.

The above effort of enrolling the children of erstwhile nomadic families in school has really been a wonderful achievement of Keerapalayam Panchayat[20]. Koonavelampatti Gram Panchayat in Namakkal district under the leadership of Ms Siddeswari emerged as a model panchayat for its outstanding work in social development, while paying attention to serious development issues, he performed good services for education also. In Koonavelampatti and Palapalayam there are one primary and one secondary school, while one management matriculation school is situated in Karayanthinniputhur. Several children of the panchayat area are studying here. A proper noon meal centre building has newly been constructed near the schools and the food is provided under the supervision of the teachers. Toilet for the students is available in a nearby sanitary complex, but due to lack of water connection, it has not been opened. The headmaster asked the president for the construction of toilets, especially for the girl students, and it was accepted by the president.

The Parents Teachers Association meetings are now being frequently held and the urgent requirements are immediately fulfilled. At the request of SHGs, the PTA recommended the extension of teaching hours for the students and one woman teacher was appointed by the PTA. The newly appointed headmaster of the school actively participates in the panchayat activities voluntarily. The president motivates the students by distributing prizes during competitions. She has already got trees planted near the school and has also decided to get more trees planted in the surroundings of school buildings with the help of the students and the teachers of the school.

---

[20] G Palanithurai, Leadership Matters in Grassroots Governance (Pathfinder Series - 10), Gandhigram: Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies, 2005

As many as 44 dropouts, who are working in powerooms, have been educated under the SSA scheme, which is handled by two women teachers. Due to insufficient buildings, these classes are held in a building which was constructed for the Self-Help Groups (SHGs). The headmaster and the president take full responsibility for the education of these students and have made several arrangements for getting government aids like bags, books, food, etc. Three Anganwadis are working under this panchayat. The Village Health Nurse (VHN) frequently visits these villages and provides iron tablets to teenage girls and instructions to mothers. A primary health centre is situated in another panchayat, Kurusamipalayam. A sub-centre is working in Puthur.Women go to this sub-centre and get prescriptions from the lady doctor who helps them and clarifies their doubts without any hesitation.[21]

The above mentioned cases demonstrate the potential of the Panchayati Raj institutions. The achievements projected here are the achievements of their dedicated leaders. How were these leaders able to achieve such results? They were sensitised, conscientised and capacitated leaders. They established contacts with the community, NGOs and government officials. They established contact with the media also. Government officials are taking these success stories to various places for dissemination. The message they want to spread across the State is that if they were able to achieve this much despite the limited resources, powers and functionaries, why can't others do the same by following these models? The officials know pretty well that there is no political will and in the absence of political will they want to do something for panchayats by which the leaders who want to break new ground can get the support of the higher level officials. Many of the higher level officials feel that panchayats are competent to achieve social development provided they are given the needed support.

The cases quoted here are only a few which have registered remarkable achievements. These show that many of the panchayat leaders are breaking new ground in many areas and they are to be documented. Now the Government of Tamil Nadu has decided to form a training team among the achievers in panchayats and to conduct training classes for the panchayat leaders. While sharing their experiences, they can motivate others to do such things in the panchayats. At present these leaders are identified and they are provided needed support individually, not through a system. Panchayat leaders want an activity manual. It is very difficult to create political will among the leaders at the State level. But making the panchayat level leaders assume responsibilities and achieve a modicum of social development is possible.

Moreover, when the Government of Tamil Nadu announced a 15 point programme to make Tamil Nadu the number one State in the country, the Women Panchayat Presidents Federation convened a meeting and discussed all the major issues contained in the 15 point programme. Then they fixed the responsibility of the panchayats for implementing the 15 point programme in the rural areas. They submitted a memorandum to the Minister, the Secretary and the Director of Rural Development, Government of Tamil Nadu, about how to help the Gram Panchayat presidents by the government departments to achieve the targets of the 15 points programme. By sensitising the masses through the Gram Sabhas about the rights of the people vis-a-vis the service providers, they prepared the people for action. It was thus that people were mobilised through the panchayats for social development

---

[21] G Palanithurai, Leadership Matters in Grassroots Governance (Pathfinder Series - 11), Gandhigram: Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies, 2005

activities. By taking a number of initiatives, the panchayats have made various government departments participate in the people's activities.

The Process

The leaders who have broken new grounds had commitment and were in search of supportive structures. Eventually, they came to be supported by many institutions. They enhanced their capacity and fixed targets for accomplishment. They developed their vision regarding the development of the community. They perceived their roles and responsibilities properly as they had undergone training continuously. By putting up exemplary performance they have developed contact with the higher level officials. To manage the problems of the middle level officials, they have built an alliance with the media and formed a network with NGOs and other leaders. Because of their achievement, these leaders have established and maintained strong contacts with communities.

Communities are drawn towards the panchayats by the transparent administration of the panchayat presidents. They cross the boundaries of caste and political parties for panchayat work. When their achievements are brought to light, this strengthens their self-esteem. Thus devolution for social development has been achieved through personal transformation. All social indicators can be achieved through this transformation. Every village panchayat is a manageable administrative unit. All social indicators can be achieved at the micro level by enhancing the capacity of the Gram Panchayat leaders. By extending support to such leaders, their achievements will be increased to the next level. Their achievements are brought to light by the media as the media are constantly being sensitised by The Hunger Project though its media workshop on building the perspective to cover the stories of panchayats and women's empowerment. Panchayats ensure entitlements. People can claim their rights through panchayats. By shaping a leader at the micro level, social development can be achieved. All the achievers have transformed themselves first and got the support of the people and transformed the villages.

Devolution has become evolution in Tamil Nadu

Panchayats are instruments of the people created for governance with the participation of the people in order to achieve development. Though panchayat leaders come from the place where MLAs and MPs come, the former cannot adopt the attitude and behaviour of the MPs and MLAs as they have to work with the community closely. By increasing their capacity and sensitising them on developmental issues, panchayats can be prepared to achieve development and social justice. Capacity building, continuous support extended by the support structure, forming networks with the media and NGOs and providing needed information could make them achievers and pathfinders. If State Governments really want to achieve social development, it can be achieved through the panchayats. People should be mobilised to participate in the development process. In the long run, people are sure to assert and claim their rights and entitlements through the panchayats. Both macro studies and micro studies have demonstrated the fact that decentralisation of powers have got enormous potentials. To make use of the potentials, all barriers and obstacles in the process of decentralisation have to be removed. It requires a series of activities at different levels, and of them a few could be done by the higher learning institutions through their

three dimensional activities. Through action research, policy advocacy can be done effectively and, through outreach activities, leadership training can be conducted in the academic institutions and handhold support extended to the leaders when they are at work at the grassroots. All macro level social development issues may very well be tackled through micro actions performed by the local bodies. Institutions of higher learning can contribute substantially in the discharge of this all-important task professionally.

Conclusion

It is true that there are very many weaknesses in the concerned Act itself and a variety of existing Acts do not permit the State to devolve powers beyond a limit. To make the Panchayati Raj system more effective and perform its role and responsibility, two important initiatives are needed at the ground level. They are: (a) transforming the elected representatives into transformational leaders and (b) sensitising the masses on their roles as citizens in the society. The capacity of the leaders is not so high as to handle all the subjects earmarked for Panchayati Raj and yet leaders are alert and optimistic at present that the Panchayati Raj System is the only solution to most of the problems in the rural areas. Steps are on to rectify the defects. Leaders of the local bodies are now putting out a one point demand to the State Government --- Devolve adequate powers and resources to the local bodies! The expected pressure has come from the people for devolution of powers and the leaders of local bodies have come to a stage to take powers from the State Government on their own in the event of denial of powers to the local bodies.

Thus the Panchayati Raj System in Tamil Nadu is being kept in operation not so much because of the powers and resources devolved to them as because of the leadership at the village panchayat level. No doubt these panchayats are creditably fulfilling the obligatory functions. A lot of innovations have happened in panchayat areas due to the exceptional leadership qualities of the panchayat leaders. Wherever panchayat leaders are strong, energetic, capacitated and committed, they perform very well. Whenever the District Collector and Project Officer of the DRDA, are pro panchayat, the panchayats perform very well despite several problems and constraints. District Collectors and Project Officers see this dispensation as very positive as they can achieve the targets in carrying out the rural development schemes through the panchayats. Thus it becomes a partnership between the district administration and the panchayats. In Tamil Nadu, panchayats are thus evolving on their own.

Deletion of Education from Fundamental Rights during Constitution Framing: New Light on 'Why?'

Nalini Juneja[*]

Abstract

This article presents new findings that reveal Centre-State dynamics to be at the root of the deletion of the constitutional provision for free and compulsory education from the list of Fundamental Rights when the Constitution was being framed in 1947-1949. Initially believed to have been deleted on the issue of affordability, this article presents new evidence which also tantalisingly suggests that the history of education in India might have followed a different trajectory if only the List of Fundamental Rights had been reviewed, not in April 1947, but just a month or two later, i.e. after a 'strong Centre' came to portray the political dynamics of the Centre-State relationship.

This paper describes how, as the Constitution was being framed, educational and political plans became entangled in the power dynamics between the Centre and the units to form the logic for the deletion of the right to education from the list of Fundamental Rights.

[*]   1091, Sector-A, Pocket-A, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070, Email: nalinijuneja@gmail.com

Introduction

If the visions and aspirations of the people of India may be said to be articulated in its Constitution, then it was only in 2010,[1] sixty years after the adoption of the Constitution of India, that the constitutional guarantee vide Article 21 A reflected the determination to provide every child of the age of 6-14 years the right to free and compulsory education. Till then, Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy had feebly expressed the hope that "The *State shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.*"

As is well known, this hope of Article 45 was belied and education was neglected to the extent that the Supreme Court of India was forced to intervene in1993 to chide the Government for its 'inversion of priorities' and declare the right to education in Article 45 to be a fundamental right. However, the Constitution itself was amended only much later.

The focus of this paper is, however, on the presentation of this author\s new findings, showing the hitherto unknown *cause* of the deletion of the right to education from the list of Fundamental Rights in 1947, and how it was deleted not on account of money, but to the potential effect of lack of money on the power dynamics between the Centre and the units. The turbulent decade prior to the framing of the framing of the Constitution in the second half of the forties was marked by the Second World War and, for India, by the upheaval of the freedom struggle. Therefore in order to acquaint the reader with the significant political and educational happenings of that period, these are briefly sketched out before going on to explain how the logic for the deletion of the right to education came to be determined by the unforeseen conflict of educational and political plans.

It is remarkable that books on the history of free and compulsory education in India fail to mention that education was deleted from the list of Fundamental Rights during the faming of the Constitution. Despite the widespread availability of this fact in the text books of law, it was only in 1998 that the first article on education mentioned the now familiar piece of information that the "founding fathers" were in fact determined to delete this clause from the Constitution altogether (Juneja, 1998), and that it was only on second thoughts they allowed it to be shifted to the list of "Non Justiciable Fundamental Rights," later termed as the "Directive Principles of State Policy."

In its stead, books on the history of compulsory education in India have typically narrated the story of the brave struggle against the British rulers for the right to free and compulsory education --- the derision with which the demand for compulsory education had been received in 1882; and the valiant efforts of the Princely States to 'show' the British that such a right is indeed possible, and is not 'utopian'.[2] The endeavours of Gandhi and Zakir Hussain in the Wardha Committee to develop a scheme and a curriculum to enable education to become self-supporting were part of the folklore of how "before 1947, the movement for national education developed in the shadow of the struggle for freedom, and the ideas of

---

[1]   Although the 86th Constitution Amendment Act, making free and compulsory education a fundamental right was passed in 2002, it was only eight years later on 16th February 2010 that it was put in practice.

[2]   The Indian Education Commission in 1882 had deemed the Indian demand for free and compulsory education, as 'utopian' in the Indian Context.

national education drew their sustenance from the movement for political independence" (Naik, 1982:196).

The enunciation of a right to education in Article 45, in the Directive principles of State Policy, was actually hailed as signifying the important status enjoyed by education:

In India, Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) has been recognised as a crucial input for nation building since independence. The founding fathers of our Constitution had given a prominent place to educational endeavours when they made a provision for free and compulsory education for children up to fourteen years of age (India, 1997: 1)

The fact that Article 45 was the one and only clause in the Constitution which carried the specification of a ten year period within which the right had to be provided, added a shine to its fabled import to the framers of the Constitution:

The Constitution Framers opted for the quick solution in ten years. This also highlights the fact that they attached the highest significance to this programme as the foundation of democracy and wanted it to be implemented at any cost" (Nurullah & Naik, 1974).

And

And so keen was the solicitude of the Constitution makers that in a rare dedication they enjoined vigorous action in the very first decade of India's Constitution" (Baxi, 1993: 18).

In the face of these historically constructed beliefs about the great importance of education, the reproduction by Juneja (1998:23) of an excerpt of the minutes of the Meeting of the Fundamental Rights Advisory Committee on the 22 April 1947, describing the discussion during the framing of the Constitution and the fateful rejection of this right from the list of Fundamental rights, provided unassailable evidence to the contrary:

Secretary: 23. "Every citizen is entitled as of right to free primary education and it shall be the duty of the State to provide within a period of 10 years from the commencement of this Constitution for free and compulsory primary education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years."

M Ruthnaswamy: Is this a justiciable right? Supposing the government have no money?

Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar: I want the deletion of this clause.

Govind Ballabh Pant: I suggest that this clause be transferred to Part II It cannot be justiciable. No court can possibly adjudicate.

The question that has been asked ever since; and the question that this paper now attempts to address; is *why* the clause was deleted and that too without opposition? It appears strange that M Ruthnaswamy should suddenly raise the issue of this clause being a justiciable right in the same breath as the issue of affordability when the matter had been discussed by the Sub-Committee on Fundamental Rights, and a ten year time frame been attached to this clause.

Then again, it raises other questions such as for example regarding Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar, who had been an active member of the Sub-Committee on Fundamental Rights (which had proposed and refined this clause on free and compulsory education in its numerous meetings). Why did Alladi, abruptly, and without explanation, demand the deletion of the clause. Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar was, incidentally, the foremost constitutional expert of the country. Could there have been something that he and perhaps the others in the meeting suddenly realised, and therefore allowed the deletion of this clause without further ado?

This paper offers an explanation for the first time for the unexpected deletion of this right from the Constitution of free India, a right for which its leaders had been struggling for the past fifty years and more. For this, in the next section, this paper delves into the situation prevailing at the time of the framing of the Constitution.

Prologue to Constitution Framing: The Troubled Forties

The Second World War, still ongoing at the beginning of the forties, foreshadowed the tumultuous decade which saw India's independence, the preceding unrest and agitation, a horrifying partition, and the framing of the Constitution of India. For education, the year of independence marked denial, for its own people, by its own people, of the right to free and compulsory education which they had ironically demanded from the British rulers. This section briefly recalls the significant events leading up to the framing of the right to education in the Constituent Assembly.

Education: The Two Wardha Committees, 1937-38

World War II interrupted the sequence of important events in education which had begun in 1937 with the assumption of responsibilities of Government by Congress Ministries in seven of the provinces. They had met in October that year to discuss the policy formulated at the All India Educational Conference at Wardha, which was presided over by Mahatma Gandhi. This Conference appointed the Zakir Hussain Committee whose report submitted in December came to be known as the "*Wardha Scheme for Basic Education*." This Scheme recommended for free and compulsory education from 7 years to 14 years of age.

Thereupon, in 1938 the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), which had been revived just a couple of years earlier, in 1935, appointed two committees under chairmanship of Shri B G Kher, the Premier of Bombay (the Second Wardha Committee), to examine the scheme of educational reconstruction incorporated in the Wardha Scheme the previous year, in the light of the Wood-Abbott Report on General and Vocational Education. The committee made important recommendations for implementation of free and compulsory Basic Education from the age of 6 to 14 years.

Politics: Cripps Proposal 1942 and Other Centripetal Forces

On the political front, the onset of the Second World War in 1939 led to the putting aside, for the time being, the issue of India's independence. In 1942, however, a mission was sent to India from Great Britain under the leadership of Sir Stafford Cripps. The Cripps Mission offered some proposals to Indian people that virtually portended the potential

fragmentation of India into several autonomous units. According to this proposal, the Princely States would be free to form their own treaties with Great Britain, while the provinces would be free to form their own Constitutions. These proposals were rejected by almost all the parties and sections in India on different grounds[3] and Gandhi demanded the "orderly and timely British withdrawal from India" and gave the slogan 'Quit India' in April 1942.[4]

India was already under threat of disintegration in this period by the demands raised for separate lands by different regional or religious groups, such as, for example, Dravidanad or Dravidistan for Dravidian Tamils, Pakhtunistan for the Pathans, and Azad Punjab for the Sikhs, etc. In fact one of the slogans of that period stressed that "there would be no lasting peace in the country unless India was divided into three main parts, namely, "Pakistan, Aryastan (or Hindustan) and Dravidastan."[5]

Post-War Plan for Educational Development 1944

Just after the war, grateful for the valuable military help extended by India in the fight against Japan, especially in the campaign in Burma,[6] a Post-War Plan for Educational Development was prepared for India. This plan was contained in the "Report of The Central Advisory Board of Education." but was best known as the 'Sargent Plan, 1944'. Sir John Sargent, the then Educational Adviser to the Government of India, was instrumental in the preparation of this report in 1944 as an amalgamation of the recommendations of the eight committees set up by it. These eight committees made recommendations for Basic Education, Adult education, the Physical welfare of school children, School buildings, Social service, the Recruitment training and conditions of service of Teachers in Primary, Middle and High Schools, the Recruitment of education officers, and Technical education respectively.

The rationale for the setting of these committees was the *expectation that sooner or later serious attempt would have to be made to tackle the problem of providing India with a system of education approximating to those available in other countries"* (India, Sargent Plan 1944, 1964: 1). For primary and middle (basic) education, the recommendations of the Sargent Report according to the Report, were "*very largely based*" on the (Wardha) Committees on Basic Education set up by the CABE in 1938-39 and that "*Basic (primary and middle) education, as envisaged Central Advisory Board, embodies many of the educational ideas contained in the original Wardha Scheme*" (ibid, p 11).

In an arrangement in which school education was the responsibility of provincial governments, the report envisaged a partnership of the Centre and the Provinces in financing and implementation of free and compulsory education. However, the positive contributions of this plan were overshadowed by the long period of 44 years that it estimated would be required for the achievement of universal elementary education and by the exorbitant cost of 200 crore rupees that would be required to implement it.

---

[3]   http://www.kkhsou.in/main/polscience/historical_background.html

[4]   http://tamilnation.co/heritage/aryan_dravidian/dravidanadu.html

[5]   ibid

[6]   http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/india_1900_to_1947.html

The Central Advisory Board of Education was conscious that its report would elicit criticisms that it "*costs too much or that it takes too long*" (India, Sargent Plan 1944, 1964: 2), and for this reason the report was also conscious of a need for *"a drastic reconsideration of the present method of paying for education and for a redistribution of the burden between Central and Provincial Governments"* (India, Sargent Plan 1944, 1964:7).The report forecast that this might *"involve some kind of subsidy from Central to Provincial revenue…" w*hile maintaining that for historical and other reasons the Provinces should remain the main units for administrative purposes (ibid: 131). As anticipated, the plan evoked varied reactions, including need for faster change, at lesser cost, as is amply borne out in the notes of dissent appended to the Report.

The Cabinet Mission Plan 1946

 In Britain, in 1945, the newly elected Labour Government under Clement Atlee was disposed more positively to "the Indian problem" than was Churchill, and in this context another plan was proposed for the independence of India. The "Cabinet Mission" arrived in India in March 1946, with the purpose of reaching an agreement and evolving a plan. They had long deliberations with leaders of the National Congress and the Muslim League, whose stands were influenced by the results of the recent elections to the provincial legislatures which "made the leaders of the National Congress more determined than ever to uphold the unity of India, and at the same time convinced the leaders of the Muslim League that they should press ahead for the creation of Pakistan" (Antonova, Bongard-Levin, & Kotovsky, 1979: 242).

Eventually, on May 16, 1946, the Cabinet Mission itself proposed a scheme for the formation of an Indian Union comprising British Provinces and Indian States; establishing a Constituent Assembly and forming an Interim Government with representatives of the major political parties.

The structure of the Indian Union that the Cabinet Mission proposed envisaged the British Provinces grouped into three zones--- A, B and C. Zone A comprised the Hindu majority provinces of Madras, Bombay, the United Provinces, Bihar, the Central Provinces and Orissa; Zone B comprised the 'Muslim Majority provinces of Punjab, North West Frontier Province, and Sind; while Zone C comprised Assam and Bengal. The units would enjoy all political and financial autonomy except for Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications, which would be looked after by the Centre.

The proposed Constituent Assembly was to draw up a Constitution for the whole of India while, constitutions for the three zones would be drawn up within the three sections of the Constituent Assembly by deputies from the concerned provinces of the said three zones. Ratification of each article of the draft constitution would require approval not only by the Constituent Assembly as a whole, but also by a majority of the deputies from the Hindu and Muslim electoral colleges. (Antonova, Bongard-Levin, & Kotovsky, 1979).

Constituent Assembly, 1946

Under the Cabinet Mission Plan of May 1946, a Constituent Assembly for the task of preparing a new Constitution for India was set up with members from the newly elected Legislative Assemblies of the Provinces. In the initial days of the Constituent Assembly, i.e. in

late 1946 and early 1947, there was uncertainty about whether or not the Muslim League and whether or not the Princely States would join in the federal polity The first session of the Constituent Assembly was convened on the 9 December 1946, with 207 members, but without the presence of the Muslim League which abstained in protest (Shiva Rao, 1967).

Interim Government with Azad as Education Minster 1947

In the Interim Government that was formed at the Centre, Maulana Abul-Kallam Azad who was already playing crucial roles related to the negotiations related to the transfer of power in addition to his roles as member of two subcommittees within the Constituent Assembly, took charge as the Minister of Education. According to the Maulana, he was prevailed upon to do so 'in the national interest,' by none other than Mahatma Gandhi, for he saw education as a 'basic question' for free India:

Gandhiji pressed even more strongly than before that I should join (the Interim Government).....Gandhiji suggested that Education would be the most appropriate subject for me and also in the true national interest. He said that the pattern of future education was a basic question for free India. Accordingly, on 15th January 1947, I took over Education from Shri Rajagopalachari who till then had been the education member (Azad, 1988: 188).

Gandhi and the Clause on Education

The question of education was considered by Mahatma Gandhi as 'a basic question' for free India, and for this, he had even pressed the Maulana, already a member of the Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee to take charge of Ministry of Education in the Interim Government (Azad, 1988: 188). It had been at Gandhi's call that the historic "Wardha Committee" to discuss education had been convened in 1937, and reports of the two "Wardha Committees" had in turn fed into the (Sargent) *Plan for Post War Educational Development of India, 1944*. The essence of the Plan was, as shown by Juneja (2014), introduced into the Constitution in the making, as Article VIII of the draft of fundamental rights proposed by KM Munshi in March 1947 to the Sub-Committee for Fundamental Rights. Thus, as a "basic question for free India", it was imperative that education become a fundamental right for all citizens, but it was sacrificed for some unknown reason in the precarious situation existing at the time.

Advisory Committee Meeting and the Political Situation

Although it was in accordance with the Cabinet Missions Plan of May 16, 1946, that the Constituent Assembly had begun its task, the political situation continued for months to be tense and uncertain, as described by the Maulana:

As I have said the situation was difficult and delicate. The Muslim League had at first accepted and then rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan. The Constituent Assembly was in session but the League had boycotted it in spite of the fact that the whole country was united in its demand for freedom. On the one hand the people were

impatient for the attainment of independence. On the other, our misfortune was that there was no solution of the communal problem. The Cabinet Mission Plan offered the only solution and yet we were not able to clinch the issue to resolve our differences (Azad, 1988:190)

Even as the Advisory Committee was to meet on 22 April to prepare the final list of Fundamental Rights, the situation was, as explained by the chairman of the Advisory Committee, such that "supposing the League comes in ...we may have to reopen the whole thing" (Shivva Rao, 197, Vol II: 214).

Why did Alladi Want the Deletion of the Right to Education?

In searching for an answer to why the clause on right to education was deleted so abruptly, one might query: Was there something in the clause that was recognised by M. Ruthnaswamy? Was it reflected in his question and perhaps his tone? Could this in turn have alerted Alladi Krishnawamy Ayyar to a situation which he had overlooked? Could this sudden realisation have been the cause for his abrupt call for the deletion of the clause which he had so far supported? Judging by the acquiescence and silence of others, it might be surmised that the unstated cause was understood and acknowledged by others. Within such a line of questioning, an inquiry of the backgrounds M Ruthnaswamy and of Alladi Krishnawamy Ayyar might be as important as, if not more important than, the political situation at that time.

Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar

Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyer, or "Sir Alladi" was a revered "legal luminary" (Ravi, 2003) of the period, "whose name is [still] mentioned with awe and respect in court rooms, and who "was a three-time advocate general of Madras" (Ramanathan, 2009). Without the backing of wealth or influence, "he became the leader of the Bar in seven years, a position he retained through his life. His rise in the legal profession was meteoric" (Ravi, 2003):

Within a few years he acquired a legendary reputation as a great lawyer and was known throughout the erstwhile Madras Presidency for his encyclopaedic knowledge of all branches of law. People from all over the country came to him for legal advice. Honours were not slow in coming to him. In 1926 he was awarded the Kaiser-i-Hind Medal in appreciation of his philanthropic and social services .He became Advocate General of Madras in the year 1928 and continued to be in that position for several years - the longest for any Advocate General in any State in the country. In 1930 he was awarded the title of Dewan Bahadur and in 1932 the honour of Knighthood was conferred upon him in recognition of his services to the State."(Ravi, 2012).

One also learns from such hagiographies on the internet that, despite his stature, he retained his humility and his loyalty to friends. Sir Alladi was also a member of the Sub-Committee on Fundamental Rights of the Constituent Assembly, and had attended all but one of the ten meetings of the Sub-Committee before the "fateful" meeting of the Advisory Committee reported above. Every one of the evolutionary drafts of "Article 45" had passed under his watchful legal eye, without comment, or dissent.

At the first meeting of the Sub-Committee on Fundamental Rights, on 14 March 1947, he had presented a note on fundamental rights for consideration. In this he had supported the distinction (as suggested by the Constitutional Advisor B.N. Rau) between "rights which are justiciable rights and rights which are merely intended as a guide and directing objectives to state policy"(Iyer, 1967: 67)..His note was short, did not mention education, and it was concerned mainly with issues of citizenship rights in the "peculiarities of the Indian political situation" in which "Union Powers being restricted in scope, care will need to be taken" to bring in among other provisions, "state or provincial citizenship" (Iyer, 1967: 68) or, as he also suggested, both, as in the US.

Prof M Ruthnaswamy

Not to be eclipsed by the presence of such a towering figure was Professor M. Ruthnaswamy, Sir Alladis compatriot from the Madras Presidency. In fact, there were 49 members in the Constituent Assembly from the Madras Presidency, and as such there was a sizeable presence from Madras, which, as described by Ramanathan (2009), "back then was a very large province. It consisted of 26 districts. And if you excluded the princely kingdoms, the whole of South India practically belonged to Madras Presidency" (Ramanathan, 2009).

M Ruthnaswamy, Vice Chancellor of Annamallai University, was a renowned scholar with numerous books on legislation, administration, and political science, to his credit. Even today, a search on the internet will show up at least ten books authored by him with titles such as *The Political Theory of the Government of India*" (1928); *The Making of the State* (1932); *The Political Philosophy of St Thomas Moore* (1935); *Some Influences That Made the British Administration System in India* (1939); *Legislation: Principles and Practice* (1974), etc.

It is therefore highly unlikely that these learned scholars of law and political science, one a Tamilian Brahmin lawyer, and the other a prominent lay Catholic and the Vice Chancellor of a prestigious university, would not have known between them, about the constitutional clauses all over the world, supporting education as a right; or would not have appreciated the value of it, especially for a dawning democracy.

As for the Clause 23 in question, since M Ruthnaswamy was not being a member of the Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee, he may have met this clause for the first time in this Advisory Committee Meeting, Sir Alladi Krishnaswamy Ayyar had had more than enough opportunity in the past two months as a member of the said sub-committee, to make known his antipathy if any to the right to education clause. Having written numerous comments and notes of dissent on various other issues in the same period, if Sir Alladihad had any objection to this clause, he had only to write yet another note. But the important point is that he did not. What then caused his sudden turn around to the extent of an emphatic decision: "*I want the deletion of this clause*"?

Perhaps the answer lay in the question raised by M. Ruthnaswamy upon seeing the clause and no doubt recognising within it its antecedents in the Sargent Plan Document of 1944, to which he, as a member of CABE, had added a note of dissent, before appending his signature.

Ruthnaswamys Note of Dissent to the Sargent Report

M Ruthnaswamy was one of the 33 signatories of the Sargent Report, more formally known as the Plan for Post-War Educational Reconstruction of India, on 16 January 1944. He was therefore not only familiar with the details of the entire plan but was also aware of the large costs it entailed. As a professor of political science, and administration, he was well aware of the problems that this could create, especially in the situation as currently obtaining in India. He had therefore written a note of dissent which was appended to the report of the Sargent Plan, and as such is available to us today.

The note of dissent consisted of six points, each in a paragraph of its own. While the first five points deal with the contents of the report, in the sixth and final paragraph he points out:

6. The financing of the scheme and the consequent control by the Government of India may raise doubts and fears in the minds of those that are concerned with the constitutional progress of the country. Education is a field primarily requiring experiment, and provincial variations will add to the richness of Indian education. **If there is to be subvention by a wealthy Central Government, which can afford to finance education, besides essential central services like defence and foreign affairs, it can be done only with due regard to Provincial autonomy, which may become in the future even more extensive than it is now***.*

Subject to these observations, I subscribe, to the Report as being a planned attempt at the solution of India's educational problem.

M Ruthnaswamy
(Sargent Plan, 1944: 131/135)

Thus it would seem that even an educationist of the stature of Prof M Ruthnaswamy, who, despite recognising the Sargent Plan of 1944 as capable of solving India's educational problem, saw it through lenses coloured by the potential fragmentation of India into several autonomous units as per the Cripps Proposals of 1942. It may be recalled that the 1942 proposal for the freedom of India provided for the Princely States to be free to form their own treaties with Britain, while the Provinces would be free to form their own Constitution. Such a proposal was hardly helpful to a political situation already strained by fissiparous tendencies.

Could it be that within the uncertain political context in 1947, the political scientist in Prof. M Ruthnaswamy, saw similar "*doubts and fears"* that the Centre-State relationships in future might be fraught with the dangers of "*consequent control by the Government of India"?* Within the context of the demands for provincial autonomy, and / or even the potential for the emergence of a "Dravidanadu", was he cautious of risking a tangible and hard fought freedom, for the ephemeral dream of universalisation of elementary education?

Fears for Provincial Autonomy and the Sargent Plan

The concerns of M Ruthnaswamy for provincial autonomy were, it seems, shared by many others, for four out of the six notes of dissent to the Sargent Report raised the same or similar points about provincial autonomy, "subvention" of funds; Centre-State relationships

and potential for tension on the issue of financial responsibilities and burden. These other notes of dissent were replete with phrases like these:

There are many indications in the report that Provincial autonomy, in the sphere of education, is going to be interfered with at the several stages of education
<div align="right">--- R M Stratham, Sargent Plan, 1944: 133 – 135</div>

.......education should not be a central subject.
<div align="right">--- Pir Illahi, ibid, 120 – 135</div>

The latest attitude of the British Government in so far as it has found expression in the Cripps proposals clearly indicates the possibility of the country being divided into several independent Dominions or States......he plain fact that on the strength of an argument like this central control even of Primary Education can be advocated equally strongly, shows its futility.
<div align="right">--- Tamizuddin Khan & Sayidur Rahman, ibid, 129 -- 135</div>

Surfacing repeatedly from the excerpted notes of dissent reproduced above is the concern related to the possibility of the country being divided into several independent dominions or States, and indicate that their authors were hopeful of political and fiscal autonomy. Thus they even perceived in an educational plan such as Sargent's, a proposal "*calculated to detract from the autonomy of the Constituent States.*" In this era of uncertainty about impending political partitions (initiated by the Stafford Cripps proposals, 1942) the primary concern of the Provinces was evidently their survival, which depended on their remaining autonomous and independent. As seen from excerpts from their notes above, the detractors of the Sargent Report were fearful that the yet to be born autonomy could be put to grave risk through centrally tied grants in order to finance an educational plan such as this one. Whether each of the dissenters came up with the same concern independently and without consultation with the others, is difficult to say.

Clash of Political and Educational Plans and the Deletion

It may be recalled that the Cabinet Mission Plan, 1946, under which the Constituent Assembly had been set up, could be broadly described as a proposal to hold the country together by grouping provinces and (princely) states and into three political and financially autonomous zones A, B, and C, around a weak Centre with powers only for Defence, Communications, and External Affairs.

M Ruthnaswamy no doubt recognised the elements of similarity of the situation under the Cripps Proposal of 1942, and that obtaining under Cabinet Mission Plan, 1946. Perhaps this recognition revived similar doubts for political and fiscal autonomy of each of the three zones A, B, and C? In the present right to education clause, given his previous experience, Ruthnaswamy recognised the seeds of the Sargent Plan of 1944. Therefore his question – "*Is this a justiciable right?* – Perhaps reflect his concerns for political and fiscal autonomy of the constituent units of the proposed Union of India, especially in the eventuality of a government of a unit having no money.

In such an expensive proposition as free and compulsory education, M Ruthnaswamy's questions reflect his alertness to the risks to provincial autonomy should the governments of these zones have no money. Sir Alladi, the astute constitutional lawyer that he was, also perhaps immediately recognised thereupon, as is evident from his abrupt and curt demand for its immediate deletion, the unintended implications of this expensive right within the pattern of Centre-State relationship of the Cabinet Mission Plan, 1946.

Prior to this, others had perhaps never considered the implications of such an expensive positive right within a federal relationship, characterised by powerful States around a weak Centre. It perhaps simultaneously became evident to all that there was much more at stake than whether or not to accord education the status of a fundamental right. In the situation of a weak Centre with strong States, as was proposed under the Cabinet Mission Plan 1946, the risks to provincial autonomy were similar to those articulated by the notes of dissent to the Sargent Report, 1944.

While on the face of it, it could be said that the clause was deleted because of concerns for money, such a statement would fail to capture the nuances of the situation in its entirety, for the issue of money was in relation to the issue of justiciability of a fundamental right and that too within the pattern of the Centre-State relationship under which the framing of the Constitution was taking place at that point in time. This evidently M Ruthnaswamy grasped immediately, given his previous brush with this clause, and was able to convey to the others merely in the asking of a pointed query: *Is this a justiciable right? Supposing the government have no money?*

The Capriciousness of Time

It has been asserted that "the history of Constitution making is required to be divided in two stages- (a) Prior to June 3, 1947; and, (b) After June 3, 1947" (S Angani, 2004: 16). On 3rd of June, i.e. just 45 days after the deletion of the right to education, the Cabinet Mission Plan of May1946 was replaced by the Mountbatten Plan of 3 June 1947, for the division of India into two nations – India and Pakistan. The 'Weak Centre' proposal of the Cabinet Mission Plan, which had been devised in order to bring the units together under a federal scheme, no longer applied.

In short, the political situation and other conditions that governed the deletion of the right to education suddenly vanished, leaving in its place a strong Centre, which also had the residuary powers, while the units had legislative powers for a much smaller list of subjects.

Once the Mountbatten Plan came into effect, the powers of the Centre were reformulated, with the States given powers over a specified list of State Subjects, while the Centre held all the residuary powers. The making of the Constitution continued for another two and a half years. However, the question of education which Gandhi and Maulana Azad had considered as crucial to a free India, was not raised in all those years, nor obviously was the issue of returning education to the list of fundamental rights.

Free and compulsory education was relegated to an item in the "Directive Principles of State Policy" in the Constitution of India. But even here, its story of neglect continued. For, neither of the two National Policies on Education, in 1968 and in 1986, sought to make education free or compulsory.

Conclusion

It is tempting to imagine what might have been, had the Constitution adopted in 1950 included a fundamental right to education. Perhaps the story of India might have been the story of countries like Japan, Korea and even Vietnam. However, at the time of the framing of the Constitution, the final outcome in the prevailing situation described as "precarious" was governed only by the "the logic of state and nation-building" (Nigam, 2004).

What if, the Advisory Committee had met on this issue, not in April 1947, but a few weeks later, after the 3rd of June 1947. Perhaps then the concerns might have been related only to the "how" of the financing of the programme by the Centre as had been suggested in the Sargent Plan 1944. The Constitution might then have carried education in the chapter on fundamental rights, and who knows, sincere efforts might indeed have been made. On the other hand, there was nothing to stop the framers of the Constitution from restoring the right to education to its earlier place in the list of Fundamental Rights, even after the 3rd of June.

Under the Mountbatten Plan of 1947, although the framing of the Indian Constitution continued after the separation of the units comprising East and West Pakistan, the concerns for an educated populace did not appear to bother the framers unduly. In that sense, as Nigam (2004) reminds us, "Constitutions are rarely about change; they are codes that legitimise the new dispensation that arises out of historical conflicts and struggles. They provide a quasi-permanent shape to the new regime. In this sense, Constitutions are already in existence even before they come to be formally written."

References

Antonova, K, Bongard-Levin, G & Kotovsky, G (1979): *A History of India (Book 2)* Moscow: Progress Publishers

Azad, M A (1988): *India Wins Freedom* Madras: Orient Longman Limited

Baxi, Upendra (1993): "Unconstitutional Politics and Child Labour" *Mainstream*, Vol. XXXI(47) October 2, p. 17

CABE (1944): *Post-War Educational Development in India* Ministry of Education, Central Advisory Board of Education New Delhi: Government of India

Central Bureau of Education (1948): *Decennial Review of Progress of Education in India 1937-1947* Publication No 113, Ministry of Education, New Delhi: Government of India

Chandra, B, Mukherjee, M, & Mukherjee, A (2008): *India since Idependence*, New Delhi: Penguin

India (1997)" *Sixty Third Report of the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development,* New Delhi: Government of India

India, GO (1964): *Post-War Plan for Educational Development in India* Ministry of Education, New Delhi: Govt of India Press

India, GO (1997): *Post-War Plan for Educational Development in India,* Retrieved April 20, 2004, from www.education.nic.in: http://education.nic.in/cd50years/g/52/5B/525B0501htm

Iyer, A K (1967): A Note on Fundamental Rights March 14, 1947 In S Rao (ed): *The Framing of the Consitution: Select Documents* (Vol 2, pp 67-69), New Delhi: Indian Institute of Public Administration

Juneja, N (2003): Consitutional Amendment to Make Education a Fundamental Right: Issues for a Follow-up Legislation *Occassional Paper No 33* New Delhi: National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration

Juneja, N (1998, April): Constitutional Commitments *Seminar, 464* (Special Issue on Right to Education), pp 22-26

Juneja, N (2014, May 8): Correcting a Historical Injustice, *The Hindu*

Juneja, N (2014): Was Article 45 a Vestige of the Attempt to Embed the Sargent Plan into the Constitution of India *Proceedings of the 75th Indian History Congress* (p 24), New Delhi: Jawaherlal Nehru University

Kashyap, S (2004): *Consitution Making since 1950*, New Delhi: Indian Institute of Public Adminstration

Naik, JP (1982): *The Education Commission and After,* New Delhi: Allied Publications

Nigam, A (2004, May 22-28): A Text without Author: Locating Constitutent Assembly as Event, *Economic and Political Weekly, 39* (21), 2107-2113

Nurullah, S & Naik, JP (1974): *A Students' History of Education in India, Noida(UP):* Macmillan & Co. Ltd.

Pearce, F (circa 1947): *Plan or Education: A Descriptive and Critical Commentry on "Post-War Educational Development Plan in India"Otherwise Known as "The Sargent Plan,"* Geoffery Cumberlege, Oxford University Press

Ramanathan, L (2009, January 26): *Times of india* Retrieved April 16, 2013, from Indiatimes.com: http://articlestimesofindiaindiatimes.com/2009-01-26/chennai/28004252_1_constituent-assembly-nehru-ttk

Ravi, V (2003, September 29): *Legal Luminary* Retrieved April 16, 2013, from www.thehindu.com: http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/mag/2003/09/28/stories/2003092800270400html

Ravi, V (2012, August 1): *The life and Times of Sir Alladi* Retrieved April 16, 2013, from ekamranivasblogspot.in: http://ekamranivasblogspot.in/2012_08_01_archivehtml

Report of the Zakir Husain Committee 1937 (1938) *Basic National Education* Segaon, Wardha, CP : Hindustani Talimi Sangh

Sangani, P N (2004): Federal - State Final Relation in India with Special Reference to the State of Gujrat- A LegalStudy Retrieved April 17, 2013, from www.saurashtrauniversity.edu: http://ethesessaurashtrauniversity.edu/id/eprint/748

Shiva Rao, B (1967): *The Framing of India's Constitution: Select Documents* (Vol. III), New Delhi: Universal Law Publishing Private Limited

Shiva Rao, B (1967): *The Framing of India's Constitution: Select Documents* (Vol. II), New Delhi: The Indian Institute of Public Adminstration

Facilitating a Systemic Change towards Decentralisation of Education Governance

Mary Punnoose[*]

Introduction

Acknowledging the various developments over the years in the efforts of the government in bringing about decentralisation of education governance, this paper brings forth the experiences of Prajayatna,[1] in its efforts to improve the quality of education in Government schools in the states of Karnataka, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan by facilitating communities to engage with and take ownership for the public schooling system. The paper argues that decentralisation is looked by the State as a channel for implementation of their schemes rather than an actual devolution of powers. This would then require for the community to become partners in defining their educational goals and core to the decision-making process rather than being consulted for their opinions with the final say being with the 'experts.' This requires a paradigm shift in the perception of the community and a redefinition of their role vis-à-vis the State, resulting in a community articulated vision of education that is based on the needs and expectations of the community.

The current system of learning is based on the premise that knowledge can be transferred. This knowledge is encased in text books, the reproduction of which through tests and examinations is an acknowledgment of an individual's understanding. The existing educational governance system, established to legitimise this transfer of knowledge is characterised by centrally-set, predefined standards for defining learning. This mistaken idea of what education is and how it can be achieved seems to be the root problem in mainstream education today. The question staring at us is whether what we want from education is for our children to learn by rote and pass their examinations or is there a need of equipping them to be able to build their capabilities in order to be able to lead a meaningful life. In an increasingly complex scenario which is constantly changing, from being agrarian to industrial to the present information age, it becomes important that the children are able to adapt themselves to the changes around them and acquire the

---

[*] Prajayatna, 331, 1st A Main Rd, 7th Block Jayanagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka – 560070, Email: mary@prajayatna.in

[1] Prajayatna means the 'citizens' initiative' in the vernacular of Karnataka and evolved in 2000 out of the experiences of working with child labour. Study on the progress of work in 11 districts of Karnataka between 2000 and 2012: Prajayatna

knowledge required to function effectively. But it is not enough that education equips one to find a livelihood, but rather enable one to lead a constructive and dynamic life which is useful to both the self and those around his/her surroundings.

In John Dewey's *The School and Society,* it has been pointed out how haphazardly the existing school organisation had developed all over the world. It was composed of oddly assorted and poorly fitting parts, fashioned in different centuries and designed to serve different needs and even conflicting social interests. Thus, the entire system has been put together in bits and pieces. For example, the university came from a concept wherein it was intended to cater to the aristocracy, wherein the elite was trained for such professions as law, theology and medicine. The high school dated from the nineteenth century when it was instituted to care for the demands from commerce and industry for better-trained personnel. The primary school was inherited from the eighteenth century when it was felt that boys ought to have the minimum ability to read, write and calculate before being turned out to fend for themselves.

The history of the education system in the Indian context becomes even more disjointed with education changing with time depending on the rulers of the day and age. With the advent of education starting under the tutelage of a guru in the earlier historical days, with education being closely connected to religion which then later gave way to education being imparted according to the caste and their needs. The education system came under heavy influence of Buddhism, Islam and then finally the colonial rulers, the result of which can be seen even in the kind of education that is being followed in India to this day.

The lack of vision is evident even in the present day, with the complete disjoint between what the needs of the society are and what is being taught in our schools/colleges. It can be seen that Education has always been looked at from a utilitarian point of view rather than as an empowerment tool and therefore the citizens have not been part of the dialogue of what we want as a nation from our education system nor is there a consistent objective/ principle tying it from one end of the spectrum to the other.

If the schools and colleges are a reflection of a society's perception or interpretation of its educational needs – an expression of the kind of society one wants to create or live in, it needs to represent a collective consciousness of what kind of a 'present' and 'future' one wants to build as a village, state and a nation. The National Curriculum Framework of 2005, in reiterating this vision of democracy as articulated by the Secondary Education Commission (1952): "*Citizenship in a democracy involves many intellectual, social and moral qualities..... a democratic citizen should have the understanding and the intellectual integrity to sift truth from falsehood, facts from propaganda and to reject the dangerous appeal of fanaticism and prejudice..... should neither reject the old because it is old nor accept the new because it is new, but dispassionately examine both and courageously reject what arrests the forces of justice and progress.....*" in order to foster democracy as a way of life rather than only a system of governance, the values enshrined in the Constitution assume paramount significance when defining the education system.

For this there has to be a shared vision of what a school means or does to a society. This essentially requires a process of learning that will strengthen people's relationship with their socio-cultural contexts, develop in them a perspective of collaboration, collective decision-making and strengthen their innate potential for creativity and innovation. This learning process should also support in developing abilities to analyse issues that confront communities, especially the issues of livelihood and lifestyles that ensures a democratic way

of life and also enable them to find an appropriate balance between sustainable growth and preserving one's environment in order to be able to live in peace and harmony with one's surrounding.

This is aptly stated in the NCF 2005, *"Education is not a physical thing that can be delivered through the post or through a teacher. Fertile and robust education is always created, rooted in the physical and cultural soil of the child, and nourished through interaction with parents, teachers, fellow students and the community."*

Decentralisation of Education Governance

An active process of learning calls for the engagement of the community with the education process. Community involvement has been sought and restricted to the provision of infrastructure and maintenance and other management issues. When it comes to the learning process, communities have not been a part of the learning process at all. At present, with more and more children attending educational institutions, the management of such a vast system has resulted in standardisation of every aspect from uniform budget allocation, standardised classroom infrastructure, same mid-day meals across the state and in some cases across the country. This is also seen in the context of learning in schools, which is completely driven by the bureaucracy and autonomous institutions set up with responsibilities of addressing specific aspects such as curriculum, teacher training, textbook design, etc. Though all these are useful and may contribute to quality education, this has further completely alienated the community from the decision-making process and thereby the learning process itself. Communities, largely seen as being illiterate, are perceived as being incapable of contributing to the learning of the children. However, looking at education and learning from a broader perspective, makes it obvious that a rich source of local traditions, values, experiences, perspectives and ideas gets excluded from the schooling system by not involving local communities in the learning process.

Hence, it is being increasingly understood that there is a need for a systemic change. It recognises that there is a need for a complete shift in perspective rather than addressing the issues piecemeal within the framework of the existing paradigm. *It must include all the stakeholders, structures, policies and practices at all levels. It must include the nature of the learning experiences, the pedagogy, the administrative system that supports the instructional system, and the governance system that governs the whole educational system (Banathy, 1991; Reigeluth, Garfinkle 1994).*

This requires a desirable vision for education rather than trying to address issues on a short term which in turn leads to programmes and schemes that are formulated based on political compulsions, resource availability, established expertise of administrators or professionals and/or donor pressure. Hence a change cannot be derived from merely stating a change in policy but needs to be followed with institutional mechanisms that would realise the policy with definite accountability in place. Influencing policy while addressing poor governance is not about making cosmetic changes in archaic authoritative guidelines of schemes that have assumed the form of government policies but more about facilitating

structures and institutional experiences towards a collective vision on education as a community, which could reflect itself in a stakeholder[2] evolved policy.

Community ownership is the key to decentralisation. Ownership or stakeholder ownership is critical to develop a shared vision which sets the basis for enabling them to initiate the change that they desire. It does not imply a set of things to do or an end product but connotes a process, a path of continuous improvement where the various stakeholders build on each other's strength and constantly attempt to understand, do and reflect. Quality comes from this need or a demand to improve. Also, it is important to recognise that stakeholder ownership of education does not imply mere administrative decentralisation but a democratic process evolved and determined by the community to articulate their needs and expectations (here educational) and arrive at solutions. There needs to be critical reflection on the part of all the stakeholders. These reflections need to result in concrete and legitimate action by the State through appropriate structural mechanisms taking into consideration the interrelationships and interdependencies among the different parts of the educational system, that would redefine the entire paradigm.

In order to be able to consolidate citizens' articulation, there needs to be a meaningful engagement of various stakeholders with the education system, for which there needs to be suitable structures at various levels to ensure participation in a systemic framework. It also implies that there has to be linkages between the various structures to allow them to dialogue with each other. This ensures the participation of the stakeholders at the respective levels thereby giving them a platform and space to participate in their own development (education) in a sustainable manner, thereby institutionalising this process of engagement. This brings about the desired changes in the governance of the system, with the consequence that all the stakeholders take active ownership over the change effort. This democratic process would also ensure accountability and transparency, leading to decentralisation of education governance.

Local Self-Government: Present Governance Structure

The systemic framework for participation is provided for by the Constitution of the country under the 73rd and 74th amendments, which made room for decentralisation of governance through the provision of the local self-governments. Though local governing bodies has been existing in India from time immemorial, the 73rd and 74th amendments gave it a constitutional backing and institutional arrangements were made to ensure that people had access to their government at the local level. The 73rd amendment specially gave the Panchayats a fillip. This also ensured that legislations empowering Panchayats with powers and responsibility were given a prominent status.

The principle of subsidiarity is core to the Panchayat Raj. The principle of subsidiarity stipulates: *"What can be done best at a particular level should be done at that level and not at higher levels. All that can be done optimally at the lowest level should be done at that level."* *This necessitates a rational and realistic analysis of the functions that are required to be discharged at different levels of PRIs, devolution of those functions to those levels of Panchayati Raj, simultaneously ensuring that required funds are devolved to that level for*

---

[2]   'Stakeholders' as used in this paper refers to educational bureaucracy, local community, parents, teachers, elected representatives, children, academia etc.

discharging that function and transacting the activity – National Curriculum Framework, 2005.

Taking the case of the State of Karnataka, which has always been in the forefront in the context of decentralisation, where in the year 1985, a two-tier Panchayat Raj system was in place; after the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution in 1992, Karnataka was one of the first States which implemented the Act by passing a new legislation, namely, the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act that came into force from May 10th, 1993. The three tier Panchayat Raj structure was implemented and the responsibility of 29 subjects was brought into the gamut of the Panchayat Raj Institutions. This was further strengthened through the publication of the gazette notification on 21st October, 2004 where the power of determining the programmes and activities were transferred to the Zilla Panchayat, Block Panchayat and the Gram Panchayat, thereby making this a significant milestone in the history of Karnataka governance.

In the context of education, there has been a separate Department to manage it since the days of pre independence. This is still being continued in a similar manner, with the Department functioning at the State, District and Block[3] level. In the year 1961, for the first time, School Betterment Committees (SBC) was formed to encourage people's participation. These structures were then reconstituted during the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) to form Village Education Committees, in the target districts.

The role of these committees was strengthened further with the formation of the School Development and Monitoring Committees (SDMC)[4] in 2001, which came into being based on the recommendations of the committee chaired by Dr Raja Ramanna. The SDMC bye-law gave a wide scope for the committees to play a strong role in the management of the schools. This has further gained prominence in the country in the light of the Right to Education Act of 2009 where the formation of School Management Committees has become mandatory.

In the year 2006, the SDMCs were given a legal standing and a constitutional status with the committees coming under the purview of the Gram Panchayat and made a sub-committees of the Civic Amenities Committees (CAC) --- a standing committee of the Gram Panchayat. Through this single move, the SDMCs in addition to being responsible to the parents' council, was also accountable to the CACs. This was an effective step towards decentralisation of education governance. Similarly, there is a Standing Committee at the district level in the Zilla Panchayat which is responsible for education in the district. There is no linking standing committee at the block level which is an important tier in the entire system and hence the lack of a committee is an issue which needs to be addressed. The Right to Education Act 2009, while making the local Authority responsible for the status of education in the vicinity, lacks the institutional connect between the School Management Committees and the Gram Panchayat. Similarly, the role of the Block and District Panchayats

---

3   A block is an administrative unit of a district and differs from state to state with it being called Taluk in Karnataka, mandal in Andhra Pradesh, Block in most states.

4   School Development and Monitoring Committees are school committees initially comprising of 9 parents as elected members; they were instituted by the State Education Dept, Govt of Karnataka 2001 on the recommendation of the State Education Task Force led by the late Dr Raja Ramanna. It was reconstituted in 2012 in order to align with the Karnataka State Rules of RTE and presently consists of 13 elected members.

are not mentioned in the Act, though it has been articulated in the National Curriculum Framework, 2005.

Decentralisation is a complex and multifaceted concept, having three dimensions – political, administrative and fiscal. Appropriate political structures at the local level complemented with administrative capacity for service delivery and adequate financial autonomy to emerge as viable self-governing institution is key to decentralisation. In the case of education, it is clearly not the case.

In a study[5] undertaken by Prajayatna on the actual fiscal decentralisation of education in Karnataka, it was found that though 90 per cent per cent of the funds allocated to the Department of Education was indeed being routed through the local self-government bodies, in reality it was seen that out of the amount allocated to the Taluk and Zilla Panchayats for Primary and Secondary Education, 90 per cent per cent of it went towards salaries of teachers with only a negligible portion of it being available for implementation of activities planned at village or school level. As per the 2010-2011 Plan Budget estimates it was just 0.5 per cent for Primary education and 16.66 per cent for Secondary education.

There should be more funds allocated to local bodies which are not tied to centralised planning but can be used by the village Panchayats and School Management Committees. Availability of funds at their disposal will make the local bodies more involved in the school development rather than being merely involved in implementing plans according to a budget given by the Department of Education. For decentralised planning and implementation to be effective, genuine financial decentralisation is imperative.

Though local structures like the School Management Committees are involved in planning for their schools in most States, the processes and structures, necessary for these plans to be communicated to the higher levels of the Government bodies for consolidation and approval, are not in place. Hence, the local bodies have no clear indication that their plans are given due consideration when budget allocation takes place and, in most cases, the whole exercise becomes a farce. In addition to this the time taken for plans to get approved by various concerned departments and to finally get budgetary approval, is protracted and often accurate update information is unavailable to local bodies. These factors create a non-conducive environment for the local bodies, leading to inactive or disinterested local structures.

A change in how allocations are made can decide the extent to which the local bodies will participate in the governance of their schools and this in turn will determine the development of education in the State by active participation of the citizens. This needs to be further consolidated at the block and district level through the Panchayat Raj Institutions at these levels, in order to create linkages between the various structures at the different levels, thereby creating a through line from the school to the district level. There is a need for education to become an important agenda at the block and district level as well. Most states have a health and education standing committee at the district level. The role of this committee needs to be redefined and district committees to consolidate the vision as articulated by the people and for taking responsibility for ensuring that quality education is accessible to all children.

[5.] Prajayatna (2012): Study on Financial Decentralisation in Education, Karnataka undertaken to understand the fiscal decentralisation of education in Karnataka

Prajayatna and Its Experiences with Community Ownership

The problems faced by schools are not specific to certain geographical areas but instead manifest as typical patterns across communities and the State. The need therefore is to go beyond the local manifestation that are merely symptoms; towards addressing the structural dimensions causing these patterns. It needs to begin with providing communities, the primary stakeholders, an enabling institutional mechanism to participate and engage with the system in a transparent and equitable manner.

When communities 'own' the schools and the vision for education; they will share the concerns about quality and will be driven to change it. When communities articulate their collective vision of education, the fabric of learning shifts from one of static knowledge to one that is contextually appropriate and therefore dynamic. When through enhanced awareness of decision-making structures and processes, the capability to articulate, to identify and effectively utilise resources become natural outcomes; leading to an education that is representative of people's needs and a system that is democratic and accountable. This is not a zero-sum relationship between the state and civil society. It goes beyond either a lesser role of the State or a condition where the state merely provides inputs within its existing bureaucratic framework, leaving the rest to be addressed by the community. There is a need for a mutually-reinforcing relationship between various stakeholders, which will improve the efficacy of the system dramatically.

The recurring question for Prajayatna has been to evolve a means of facilitating this character of ownership among various stakeholders. Given the inequalities in the social and political structure, mechanisms to facilitate a basis for articulation of diverse opinions of all stakeholders was perceived as critical to address factors that might otherwise set limits to working together. There was a need to create and institutionalise structures at various levels for the continuous engagement of the communities in order for them to be active participants in the process. The strategies that Prajayatna evolved to accomplish this was three-fold

- Creating a structure for communities to participate – finding a means of engagement
- Institutionalise these structures and in the process build their capabilities to engage with issues of learning
- Accompany these structures towards institutional maturity where they are able to plan, implement and review independently.

Creating a Structure for Communities to Participate – Finding a Means of Engagement

Local Education Governance Data

Volunteers are trained to collect data[6] from every school and Anganwadi which in turn forms the basis for engagement with the stakeholders at various levels. The collected data includes information ranging from infrastructure, retention, lack of teachers, aspects of

---

[6] Local Education Governance Data (LEGD) is an 18 page booklet-organised around factors that impact universalisation - infrastructure, teachers, learning, community participation etc.

learning to community participation structures and their efficacy. This tool helps in initiating a dialogue with the community about the condition of their schools and gets them to engage with the schooling system. While this information is used to give information of the school to the community at the school level, it is consolidated and presented to the Gram Panchayat Presidents and Secretaries to give them a picture of the status of the schools within their purview. The information is also consolidated and presented to the block and district level officials along with the Block and Zilla Panchayat members to give them an overview of the educational scenario in the block and district respectively. This information is thus used as an engagement tool at various levels.

Shikshana Gram Sabha

Shikshana Gram Sabha is a primary and powerful form of enabling local level direct democracy. This process sees to the participation of parents, teachers, School Management Committees, Gram Panchayat members, youth and women's groups and other interested individuals, to discuss school development and evolve a school plan. In these meetings, there are open discussions which are not only a presentation and verification of information, but also a community level dialogue on critical areas of concern pertaining to the local school and children's education. A platform is created for necessary action to address their concerns and identification of responsibilities for ensuring the same. A plan is made which encompasses the vision of the community vis-à-vis education. As a primary step towards influencing education governance, the Shikshana Gram Sabha contextualises the roles, responsibilities and work of the school committees, teachers and elected representative, thereby ensuring a mechanism of accountability of the School Management Committees to the parent's community and most importantly helping strengthen the School Management Committees to function better with the support of the community.

Building Institutional Capabilities

School Management Committees and the Gram Panchayat joint meetings at the Gram Panchayat level

In order to institutionalise the education governance structure at the Gram Panchayat level, joint meetings between the Standing Committee of Education in the Gram Panchayat[7] and the School Management Committees are held at the Gram Panchayat level in order to enable both these structures to work together, build on each other's strength; thereby redefining one's role. This is a joint meeting of Gram Panchayat members, constituent school committees, the Cluster Resource Person[7] and the Anganwadi supervisor to represent pre-school issues at the GP level. A network meeting builds and enables a collective vision of School Management Committee. This enables building of a collective vision and reinforcing this vision through formulation and implementation of GP level education plans that are

---

[7] In Karnataka the Cluster Resource Person (CRP) is responsible for 10 – 15 schools, which forms a cluster. Therefore, the role reaches out to an average of 2-3 GPs.

based on the school level plans. These meetings allow the stakeholders to identify issues that could be addressed at respective levels of governance. This leads them to approach the concerned stakeholders at various levels such as the Block or District in order to address issues which cannot be addressed at the Gram Panchayat. This process supports in building linkages with the various structures at the different levels of governance and contributes towards creating a more decentralised approach to governance. This process builds on the mutual strength of these two key stakeholder groups – the Gram Panchayats and the School Management Committees, thereby supporting institutional building in terms of planning, resource mobilisation, budgeting, sharing of responsibility and also working together as a group. These meetings are conducted periodically, thereby building the capabilities of both the School Management Committees and the Gram Panchayats.

Block level Gram Panchayat Presidents and Secretaries meeting

In order to institutionalise the role of the Gram Panchayat and make them truly responsible for the development of their Panchayat, in the context of education (schools), there was a need for their plans to be a base for the plan of the Block/District. Workshops and meetings are held at the Block level with all the elected representatives of both the Gram Panchayat and the Block level President and department functionaries. These meetings enable the Gram Panchayat to develop a deeper understanding of education and the system and its functioning along with the problems. Better ways of resolving the issues at the local level is figured out. The presence of the Block Panchayat representatives enables them to address certain issues that can be resolved at the block level. This process also supports in creating better linkages with the different levels of governance.

Engagement with learning

Prajayatna, through its community level interventions has actively sought community involvement in the pedagogy. Specifically, through the involvement of parents and school committees, the involvement of local people has been gradually integrated to the learning processes in schools. From holding discussions with teachers, parents and school committees on understanding learning concerns and through the introduction of processes that support parents to observe and understand what goes on in the classrooms, Prajayatna has incrementally facilitated community involvement.

Involving the local community in the form of local resource persons visiting the schools and interacting with the children to taking the children to explore their surroundings; have all led to taking the learning process out of the text book and the four walls of the classroom and enabled the children to experience and thereby learn. Creation and maintenance of individual portfolios for the children have enabled the parents and the school committees to track the progress of the children and support them in their process of learning.

Discussions on the learning levels of the schools that come within the purview of the Gram Panchayat and the quality of learning, discussed in the Gram Panchayat level meetings have brought about a certain level of accountability between the teachers and the community. It has also made each stakeholder realise the importance of their role in the overall learning process. Through a Cluster level approach, Prajayatna has been able to involve officials and community members, to identify local learning resources and develop a

directory of local resources which can be utilised by any public school belonging to the cluster. Similarly, at the cluster level, resource persons form different villages in the cluster have been brought together to interact with teachers, Panchayat members, officials, parents and school committee members to discuss and plan on the effective utilisation of learning resources for enhancing lessons and classroom processes.

These various interventions, has led to a dynamic process of learning which has led to a noticeable improvement in classroom processes, teacher involvement and learning levels of children.

Facilitating Structures towards Institutional Maturity

Taluk/Block and District Education Standing Committees

Apart from supporting the school committees at the village level and the network at the GP level to function as accountable structures, the Education Standing Committees at the block and the district level are strengthened, by providing necessary and accurate information about issues faced by the schools at a block/district level. Feedback on the implementation of schemes, allocation of infrastructure based on the real needs of the schools, issues pertaining to learning, teachers, etc is deliberated upon and shared with the Standing Committee. A through line is created from the school (village) to the District, thereby creating an ecosystem within the district where there is an engagement of the community at all levels making them the active owners and determinants of the education system.

Prajayatna, through the various processes facilitated with communities and various stakeholders and accompanying them in the process of decentralizing education governance has over the years impacted several aspects of the schooling system. Creating an eco-system where education becomes part of the discourse amongst the stakeholders has been one of the major impacts amongst many others.

Some of the key aspects are as below:

- Involve communities to deliberate and reflect on the status of the schools in their midst and about education at large and take onus for the same.
- Building credibility for the School Management Committees (SMCs) amongst all stakeholders and building their capabilities to address issues of school development.
- Enabling SMCs and communities to prepare and implement school development plans resulting in improved school infrastructure, better learning environments for children.
- Enhanced capability of the community to access resources from different sources and ensure effective utilisation of government plans and schemes.
- Increase in teacher accountability to local communities.
- Increased interaction on learning between the communities and teachers.
- Improved attendance and retention of children in schools.

- Develop the vision and capability of the Gram Panchayat and other PRI structures to place education as the priority in its development agenda and to support SMCs of the schools in their jurisdiction
- Gram Panchayats realising their responsibility towards education by enabling access to resources.
- Enhanced interaction between the different levels of governance structures–the Panchayat Raj Institutions.
- Bring about collaboration between the various structures such as the SMC, PRI, Departments, etc.
- Enhanced accountability and transparency between the SMC and the GP.
- The Block/Zilla Panchayats paying attention to broader issues of education that is being faced by the block

Prajayatna, being a systemic intervention addressing issues in its structural dimensions have had many challenges to face and the experience in working with communities has led to many insightful learnings. A few of them are as below.

- Strengthening SDMCs – an effective hand holding process have ensured enhanced institutional capabilities of the School Management Committees which in turn has made them function better. This requires an effective training module which accompanies the structures till they attain maturity as a structure.
- The parents have to be given information and engage with the school in order to be able to make the School Management Committees accountable.
- Working with the School Management Committees consistently does have an impact on their capabilities which in turn can enhance learning in the schools. This is found to be true even in marginalised communities.
- Structures are made of individuals. It takes time for practices to be established within these structures, for which there has to be a certain aspect of continuity amongst the members at the time of constituting the bodies for which attention needs to be paid regarding election and tenure.
- Active Gram Panchayats have led to improved functionality of the School Management Committees.
- A discussion of learning between the School Management Committee and the teachers ensures enhancement of teachers' accountability.
- Networking of schools within a GP – A small Gram Panchayat with lesser number of schools are found to be more effective in the context of supporting schools and its activities.
- There is a need for collaboration among the Department of Education and Rural Development (Panchayat Raj Institutions) in order to ensure cohesion of thought and work amongst the Department personnel as well as in the functioning of the institutional structures
- There is a need for the planning and implementation to be streamlined in a seamless manner from the school to the district thereby ensuring transparency and accountability amongst all the stakeholders.

Conclusion

The process of effecting a systemic change in education governance would entail a context where the State redefines its operational paradigm (in terms of structure, role and related institutions) to engage with community evolved structures – SMCs, GP network, taluk and district level standing committees. This can be done by creating an environment for such a change by creating platforms and facilitating conversations that engage all key stakeholders in the existing governance structure ranging from the community to the policy makers, to bring about a paradigm shift in education.

If education is the panacea for bringing about equity amongst the various castes and classes that exist in our country amongst myriad other problems, it is important at this juncture for policy makers and other stake holders to realise that such a change require prolonged and sustained intervention over a period of time despite high illiteracy and poverty (Kochar, 2014), which demands a political will which will only come from the demand created by all the concerned stakeholders.

References

Banathy, B H (1991): *Systems Design of Education: A Journey to Create the Future*, Englewood Cliffs, N J: Educational Technology Publications

Dewey, John (1907): *The School and Society*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Kochar, A (2014): "Can Community Participation Improve School Quality?" Policy Brief on an Evaluation of Prajayatna's Schooling Programme, Stanford University

Reigeluth, C M & Garfinkle, R J (1994): *Systemic Change in Education*, Englewood Cliffs, N J: Educational, Technology Publications

Prajayatna (2012): *Study on Financial Decentralisation in Education*, Karnataka

Contents of Volume XXXIV (2020)

Journal of
Educational Planning and Administration

Chief Editor
N. V. Varghese

National Institute of Educational
Planning and Administration
17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg
New Delhi 110016

Contents of Volume XXXIV (2020)
Vol. XXXIV No. 1 (January 2020)

Vol. XXXIV No. 2 (April 2020)

Vol. XXXIV No. 3 (July 2020)

Vol. XXXIV No. 4 (October 2020)