

Facilitating a Systemic Change towards Decentralisation of Education Governance

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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

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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 stakeholder² 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 Block³ 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 study⁵ 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 data⁶ 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 Panchayat⁷ 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 Person⁷ 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 from 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.

Prajayatra, 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.

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