School-Community Relations among Indian Communities

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As a continent, India has an ancient history. However, as a nation in the modern sense, the departure of British colonial rule in 1947 was a starting point for the new nation. The tradition of education and learning among the Hindus was provided in residential *gurukuls[2]* to young boys who were sent by the family to live with, serve and learn from a guru in ancient times. Some *gurukuls* are still around today, but these are few in number. Among institutions of higher learning, Nalanda (in Northern India) University, founded in 5th century BCE has had a glorious past. The arrival of the British all but destroyed the conventional educational system in India. With the advent of missionaries, Western schooling became an instrument of the putative conversion of the natives to a 'civilized' way of life. These trends have had serious and long-standing impact on the relationship between the school and the community. In this paper, we discuss both the emergence of as well as the transformations of school-community relationships in India to better understand the larger socio-political influences on the educational system in India.

The interface between person and environment can be understood theoretically in many different ways. Education is a process by which the evolution of this relationship (of a person with his or her ecology) is activated under the guidance of social forces, whether individual or collective. The informal teaching-learning within immediate social relations became institutionalized at some point in the history of human society. Thus, education is a powerful instrument of knowledge, wisdom, influence, power and status. This chapter deals primarily with how education in India has progressed and how these changes can be better understood within the paradigm of cultural historical theorizing.

THE HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S EDUCATION IN INDIA

Education in India can be traced back to ancient times, estimated at around 3 BCE, with religious, spiritual and traditional knowledge. Science, astronomy, mathematics, and logic were studied under the umbrella of religious discourse. For instance, Takshila (now in Pakistan) and Nalanda (in Northern India) were ancient places of higher learning. The Mughal period in India's history saw the arrival of Islamic education to the subcontinent during the middle ages. The arrival of modern education can be attributed to the missionary activities and colonial rule. For centuries, education was available only to select groups of communities, although exceptional talent was always recognized and honored.

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[2] Gurukul: Sankrit word for residential school prevalent in ancient India

The Gurukul[3]

The system of *gurukuls* or domestic schools run by sages and scholars was the most formal system within which formal instruction was provided. Typically, a teacher's home and/or surrounding areas would become a place where young men were taught life-skills and knowledge, including leadership and the art of warfare. The young boys were expected to live away from their families and serve the teacher as well as take responsibility of housekeeping and self-care. Although no formal fee was charged, the practice of *gurudakshina* (offering to the teacher) was common, especially from the well-to-do families of kings or merchants.[4]

At the *gurukuls*, gurus imparted knowledge on various aspects of the religion, the scriptures, philosophy, literature, warfare, statecraft, medicine, astrology and history. All the students at the *gurukul* lived together regardless of their social class and social position of their families. The system of *gurukul* is referred as the oldest and an effective system of education, but it was accessible only for a few selected children. Others were taught by their families where children were socialized to become competent in the local trade. Even today, families of many craftworkers continue to be trained in this manner, either exclusively or in addition to formal schooling (Anandalakshmy, 1975, 1982; Anandalakshmy & Bajaj, 1981; Khalakdina, 2008). Thus the socialization of children in India is like a veritable time-machine, with the existence of many different systems of training young children for adult roles.

According to the Vedas, the ancient Hindu scriptures, there are 6 ways of gaining knowledge. One can either learn through the senses (*Pratyaksh*), through prior knowing or presumption (*Anumaan*), via analogies (Upman), awareness of absence (*Anuplabdhi*), contradiction (*Arthapatti*), or words and texts (*Shabd*). This position on learning identifies a range of different strategies that can be used in the teaching learning situation, some of which have become lost in the modernization of education.

Medieval Education System

Some additional introductions in formal education were initiated in the medieval ages in India. Art, Architecture, Painting, Logic, Grammar, Philosophy, Astronomy, Literature, Buddhism, Hinduism, Arthashastra (Economics & Politics), Law, and Medicine were taught at the Nalanda, Takshila, Ujjain, and Vikramshila Universities. These were regarded as the important centres for higher education during ancient times.

The Islamic system of education was introduced with the establishment of the Sultanate of Delhi around the Mughal period (16th – 18 Century AD). As a result, scholars from countries like Samarqand, Bukhara and Iran looked up to the Indian scholars for supervision. Much influence of the Islamic traditions have sustained till today, greatly expanding education in India. The institutions that provided basic school education were known as *makhtabs*, while those of higher learning were called madrasas. The *makhtabs* were generally run by public

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[3] guru-teacher, kul-community

[4] DOI: http://www.nios.ac.in/media/documents/SecICHCour/English/CH.18.pdf

donations while *madrasas* were maintained by the rulers and nobles. They introduced the study of philosophy and logic in the curriculum. During the Mughal[5] rule, an immense contribution in the field of learning and education was made. The royalty were well-known for their respect and patronage of scholarship and learning and many of them were themselves scholars of great repute. Education spread in the form of Pathshalas, Vidyapeeths, Makatabs and Madarsas; all versions of schools across India.

Religion and Education

At that time, education was not a State subject. From the earliest periods, it was the temples that were the seat of education. Learning was thus intimately tied to religious practice, or at least spiritual teachings. Generally the temples and mosques were the centre of elementary education. They were dependent on the donations given by rulers, rich men and donors. Sanskrit and Persian were taught in temples and mosques. There was no provision for women's education. The women of royal and rich families got education at home. The Mughal rulers were great patrons of learning and literature. This period saw the rise of Urdu as a language which came out of a long contact between Persian and Hindi, that is, the Turks and the Indians. India had robust indigenous systems of schooling well before the entry of the British. As early as 1891, it was recognized that India had a long standing tradition of learning that lasted centuries, where elementary education was mostly practical and higher education was primarily literary, philosophical and religious (Thomas, 1891).
Religion continued to be tied to education, albeit in a different way, when missionary schools became a widespread and popular option for the middle class Indian family. Similarly, other religious groups are also permitted to have minority schools where they can teach children from their own communities, both ethnic and religious.

MODERN EDUCATION IN INDIA

Pre-Independence

For administrative objectives, Warren Hastings started the Calcutta *madrasa* in 1781, the first of the schools under British leadership. Eleven years later, in 1792, Jonathan Duncan, a Resident of Varanasi started a Sanskrit college to educate native Hindus to assist the Europeans in their colonial enterprise.[6] Meanwhile, Christian missionaries were making efforts to introduce Western education by opening elementary schools and providing education to all, even the underprivileged.

The first half of the nineteenth century can be called a period of educational experiments. The East India Company's Charter Act of 1813 enabled the Company to set aside funds for the "revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of learned natives of India and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India". A debate ensued between the Orientalists and

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[5] Mughals were descendants of Persian, Turkish and Mongol Islamic States

[6] DOI: http://www.nios.ac.in/media/documents/SecICHCour/English/CH.18.pdf

the Anglicists which was finally settled by Macaulay's Minutes and Bentinck's Resolution of 1835[7]. It was decided that this fund would be utilized to promote European literature and sciences and English was adopted as the official language of the government. Subsequently, employment was extended to students who had passed through this system, creating a clear pathway for the establishment of a training-ground for colonial administration. Following this, universities were also set-up for higher education in major cities of India.

In 1904, the Indian Universities Act was passed that enabled the universities to assume teaching, inspection of colleges and undertaking of measures for qualitative improvement in higher education. Under the colonial rule, mass education was neglected and the attempt was to create an urban educated elite that would act as interpreter between the ruler and the ruled. The collective knowledge systems were thus politically mediated by upper class Indians. I many ways this persists in modern India as well.

The history of modern India can be understood also as a psychology of modern India, derived from the colonial experiences and partialities that educated, westernized middle class Indian promoted. Scholars like Nandy highlighted this in the form of psychology of dissent, partially occurring in opposition to internal social inequalities of caste, gender and class politics (Nandy, 1983, 2003). The theoretical exploitation and dominance of occident (Guru, 2009) in the history of colonized India and its persistence in post-colonial India reflects the view which was popularized and used for promoting inequality (between the occident and orient, and within India between the educated and others). The impact of English education was not even and pervaded all fields of knowledge, the sciences, humanities, the arts. Literacy and education were more widespread in towns than in villages. The positive aspect was that it produced a breed of educated political leaders and social reformers who played important roles in the freedom struggle of the country. The publication of newspapers and pamphlets brought about an awakening among the masses but a deep separation of its own people was a serious price to pay for India.

Impact of English Education

The British encouraged the teaching of English language in schools and colleges as they needed people to work in the administrative offices either as clerks or *babus*[8]. This helped in creating a new class of people who later helped them in governance as well as in controlling many aspects of administration in India. As a result, Christian missionaries who came to India expanded and set up more schools where English was taught. The 'mission' of these schools was always to replace the local culture which was constantly attacked as being outdated and inaccurate, and to put in its place the English way of learning, speaking and living as the ideal. Indulgence in local cultural practices like the celebration of Indian festivals and speaking the local language would attract a moderate 'fine' from the family. The intensity of these impositions was always more intense for students who lived in residence. Rewards were extended for attending church services and joining the local choir if there was a talent for singing. Sometimes subtly, but often not, impressionable students were coerced into

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[7] DOI: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Education_Act_1835
[8] Clerical staff of educated Indians trained specifically for administration of the British Raj

accepting a foreign ideology (personal experience, first author). Some missionary schools survive till today.

The social superiority of an English-speaking individual was firmly in place during the colonial period. This was strengthened by the rampant expansion of missionary schools built along with churches of different missionary groups. These schools were run by a range of different orders under the names of Convents or Saints (Carmel Convent, Saint Mary's and several others). There was a near universal acceptance that these schools provided good education along with proper socialization. Many families were never made aware of the subtle coercion that children were faced with in the classrooms and residential schools.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS IN PRESENT TIMES

The complex history of schooling in India along with the immense ecological, social and economic diversity, makes any generalization about the Indian system of education an arduous, if not impossible task. From the training of children of selected families, to the spread of religious training and then the missionary schools, school-community relations have also passed through many different phases. In ancient times, children (mostly boys) were simply handed over to the guru, only to return home after the completion of education. During the colonial times and subsequently, in the missionary schools, there was a clear divide between the providers and the clients. The community was considered to be ignorant and inferior, and most children were treated that way, unless they made a good fit within the school and learnt the English ways well. There was an antagonism towards local cultures, and several rewards were provided for changing one's ways. This is the backdrop for the present relationship between the school and community.

School community relationships in the present times continue to be somewhat antagonistic. In a recent article, Visvanathan laments this disconnect between the local environment of children and the lessons in the classroom. "In creating a sanitary idea of citizenship, modern education has amputated our primordial affinity with the world around us" (Viswanathan, 2016, p. 10). Somehow, the modern interpretation of the classroom is focused much more on what is inside a book, as if it represents a reality that is elevated. This tendency has an important consequence, even though it may be unintended, that of distancing the learning from the physical world around. When children of first generation learners confront this sort of schooling, the resulting disengagement from the environment is even more serious.

Regarding the community-school interface in India, many of the tensions between school and community persist, especially in disadvantaged communities, except in States where there is concerted action towards a more universal, child-friendly approach under the Right to Education Act (RTE, 2009)[9]. The northern State of Himachal Pradesh has had an exemplary transformation in the provision of early schooling for its people. There are several other important initiatives that are changing the face of schooling for young children in India[10] by way of classroom practices, textbooks and educational design. These experiments

[9] DOI: http://mhrd.gov.in/rte
[10] http://subirshukla.blogspot.in/

are defined by development, political and cultural (and subcultural) forces. Given the acute diversities of people's lives across contexts- whether regional, religious, ecological, and the poverty-affluence continuum- the education scene in India is gaining greater indigenous ground. Government initiatives, voluntary sector work, corporate schemes and individual academics are seen more and more addressing the real life social and cultural relevance of education for communities. From parent-school partnership in the child's education, India is moving more towards community ownership of education programs with greater involvement of local personnel, use of local languages and steady assessment of academic constructs for their cultural relevance. Academic performance indicators still indicate poorer scores among students, sometimes low knowledge levels among teachers and poor resource infrastructure in schools. A lot more work needs to be done. Gender equity issues still plague the school scenario. But in all this background, the foreground is one of active questioning of tradition, public advocacy for equality and positive change, and the reach of information and technology to all.

The child at School in Different Ecological Settings: Village, Tribal, Urban

Ecology is the new intelligence (Goleman, 2010). How we relate to ecological settings, preserve their core features and live in productive harmony with our surroundings defines to a good extent the success and substance of life today. Vygotsky's monistic construction of human cognition, in the cultural-historical activity theory has the answers to the role of varying socio-cultural contexts in the study of competing development of cognition in children (Cole, 2005). Parental everyday occupations determine their microgenetic interactions about the world with their children. Changing occupations change the nature and focus of these interactions. Along with a mentalistic theorizing occurs a physical hands-on training of the child. Mediation is a double-sided process emerging from phylogeny and feeding into culture continually. Just learning a concept does not make it a psychological tool for a child. It is in mediation or everyday use and interaction (internalization) that it becomes a tool for further learning. According to Vygotsky (1934/ 1986), "the difficulty with scientific concepts lies in their verbalism" (p. 148).

Skutnabb-Kangas (2009) highlights the 'linguistic genocide' prevalent in tribal education in India. Teaching children in non-local dominant culture languages can lead to psychological barriers, and not just academic or learning difficulties. It can further lead to economic, social and political alienation. Panda (2004) in her study of mathematics learning among Saora tribals through as-if type of discourse suggests strongly that any academic learning cannot be studied or imparted, devoid of its cultural context. Researchers and academics need to see what people want to learn and how they want to learn before assessing any form of learning outcomes.

In an analysis of teachers' mind-sets regarding children's diverse and complex social-cultural-economic profiles and consequently their perceptions of children's abilities, Kumar (2014) emphasizes how diversity in classroom composition results in greater complexity in school and community relationships. This complexity needs responsible inclusion. Moving beyond the pegs of caste and religion are critical musts in our pedagogic approaches. He

highlights children's mortifying experiences of marginalization and exclusion in classroom settings citing the case of children of the Musahar community (pig rearing community; formerly, as legend has it, they were rat eaters) in Gaya district of Bihar. Considered impure by school authorities, the children were at the receiving end of indifference (by teachers and other children) as far as their academic learning goes. As the author remarks, this reduces the chance of peer to peer learning in the absence of teacher initiative.

Experiences such as these have demonstrated how the esteem of families of marginalized children is critically reduced when they realize that their children attend a school that is not committed to their learning or wellbeing. Several pockets of such marginalization still plague the Indian school system, and much work needs to be done in order to ensure the inclusion of all children. Similar experiences have also been experienced by children with disability. In addition to the existing difficulty of access, unwillingness on the part of the school to extend itself to children with disability is another sore point for the community. Despite the vast tolerance, multi-ethnicity and plurality of Indian social life, these positions become seriously truncated when classrooms are considered, as they are still much more favorable and welcoming towards socially successful families.

By the time a child reaches school he/she has an ascription to a certain cultural identity, and is developing certain modes of thinking and perceiving. Schools cannot ignore these developments and use a uniform bar for all children. Miller and Chen (2004) discuss how theory of mind is a "core human cognition" (p. 2), acting on shared knowledge with other primates and mammals. It is a developmental framework for human thought and learning. Even though early knowledge of object, number and space is partly shared across species, refined understanding of others' intentionality and mental states is uniquely human. Research on theory of mind has led to re-viewing of cognitive development in terms of nature and content. Is cognition domain specific or general? Is it all about naïve theories of intelligence, or is it conceptual and modular? Is it networked as in information processing theories?

Studies on theory-of-mind development in Japanese children have shown that a typical one year delay in Japanese children's theory-of-mind acquisition compared to Western children is because Asian cultures evaluate human action with reference to contextual and relational features whereas Western cultures attribute it to the individual's internal mental states (Naito, 2004). Dunn (1996) suggests that language and social interaction operate through family disagreement, pretend play and dialogue about feelings. Nelson (2004) proposes the concept of eCoM (entering the Community of Minds), as a move over the individualistic notion of ToM (theory-of-mind). CoM represents the social-cultural world in which the child lives. A child enters the CoM when s/he begins to participate in discourse related to mind topics with others. Personal narratives, stories and explanations are essential features here.

Correa-Chavez and Rogoff (2005) found that children of indigenous heritage mothers with low schooling were more attentive to several ongoing activities (but asked for less information on those activities) than children of European-American mothers with extensive schooling who preferred to attend to one activity at a time. Communication seems to be the

new line of investigation in tracking cognitive development and the need of the hour in good pedagogy. Nunes (2005) suggested how the "cognitive disadvantage" hypothesis is misleading in the context of children involved in informal trading. The same math problems that they failed in school, they were able to work out in day-to-day training. They do it in the head but cannot put it on paper. Hadegaard (2005) emphasized that as children learn about the world they act on a developing theoretical knowledge system, and an empirical knowledge system. Whereas Vygotsky used the empirical knowledge system to explicate childhood cognition, the theoretical knowledge system that develops along with advancing perception, attention, logical structures, abstract thinking and scientific imagination, is crucial in defining the child's conceptual understanding of the world.

Children learn about their world by elevating their understanding of and levels of generalization. This helps them to be skilled in applying common rules to everyday problems of a specific nature, and changing the frame of reference when the situation demands. Knowing how to do this is advancing cognition. Generalization is important and so are its psychological constituents. In keeping with this line of thought, Brouwers, Mishra and Van de Vijver (2006) discuss how the confounding of chronological age and educational age, and socio-economic status and schooling are misleading in studying cognitive outcomes in children. Models advocating a great divide in schooling effects for low and upper socio-economic status (SES) children are also misleading in assuming qualitative differences in children's cognition. More than chronological age, it is children's educational age that can help evaluate appropriately the extent of their learning and conceptual understanding. Piaget and Western studies have mostly addressed chronological age vis-à-vis schooling. The sequence in which cognitive concepts appear in children's lives is important. It is understandable that children are faced with everyday cognitive concepts in their lives a bit before they learn about and refine the same concepts in school. However knowledge of concepts does not ensure skill in applying them. School facilitates the ground for systematic practice of these concepts. Often the home and other natural contexts of school-attending or upper SES children may expose them more frequently to literacy experiences compared to unschooled or lower SES children. The contexts in which such groups live do not provide complete segregation of educational and chronological age. Studies on cognitive attainments may confound these variables, thereby providing misleading results. Studies contrasting two contextually varied groups of children must not assume that there will be qualitative differences in their thinking. School experience does not create new structures for thought, but merely facilitates what children have already picked up from their worlds and are operating upon.

Tooley (2009) highlights the face of change in schooling in India characterized by the community's investment of its own money in education without expecting education aid from government institutions. Das (2010) writes about the plight of low-fee charging 'private' schools for the poor in India, citing the example of Andhra Pradesh. The establishment having come down heavily upon these schools by closing them down in many areas of Andhra Pradesh, has made an embarrassment of itself as most government school teachers are afflicted by absenteeism and plain laziness. Parents want education for their children, which these private 'unrecognized' schools in peri-urban and rural areas provide,

albeit in meagre ways. What the recognized government run schools provide is maybe a building without an active school program. He suggests a graded system of recognition should be in place to facilitate in legitimate ways the purpose of education through small scale private schools.

In summary, school-community relations in India are faced with tremendous challenges. The sheer extent of the problem in terms of numbers is mind-blowing. And yet, as Shukla argues (2016), a lot of ground has already been covered. We just need to continue to work in the directions that have been proved to be beneficial.

SCHOOL AND SOCIETY: PLANNING AND POLICY

In this section we discuss the relationship between school and society, planning and policies that support India's mammoth dream of education for every child, recent developments in Right to Education Act[11], planning for the future and technological advancement and its various functions in relationship with the society; and parent's involvement in school education.

When we discuss social determinants of education, we are reminded of the famous observation of Emile Durkheim "Education is the action exercised by the generations of adults on those which are not yet ready for social life" (cited in Ottaway, 1953/2013, p. 11). If we think that education depends on the total way of life of a society, then the kind of education provided will be different in different kinds of societies and will change from time to   time   as   society   changes.

School is a social unit within the wider society in most communities of the world through which education is imparted to children to make them educated members of their social world. It is connected in many ways and not isolated from other social groups. Here the relationships between school-society, government –school, home-school and parent-teacher relationship comes into picture. School has its own set of social relationships within and with the outer world (Ottaway, 1953/2013).

An interesting theory about the linkages between school and society advances a proposal that school and societies reflect each other not only in terms of what is taught to society members in school but also how schools are organized and how they function (Feignberg & Soltis, 2004). These authors chose three umbrella terms as heuristic devices for convenience to explain how societies socialize their members through the kind of school or education they participate in while growing up, the Functionalist, Conflict and Interpretivistic, each with different consequences for school-community linkages.

In general, the Functionalist generally sees schools as serving to socialize students to adapt to the economic, political and social institutions of society. School is also believed to serve latent functions like producing people who share basic eco-political and cultural practices

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[11] http://mhrd.gov.in/rte

and norms of the society. In this system, school is seen as vital and integral to socialization of future generations. In the Conflict system, schooling is visualized as a social practice that supports and is utilized by those in power to maintain dominance in social order whereas in the Interpretivist approach it is believed that "to understand this world of meaning one must interpret it" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118). Thus, the social world is believed to be a world made of powerful actors who acquire, share and interpret a set of meanings, rules and norms that make social interactions possible. Children in school should learn society's ways of life through songs, fables and other cultural resources (Howe, 1998).

In most traditional societies children learned to work by watching their parents and others work. This method still persists among many communities in India that are bound within traditional occupations in a modern world, often in combination with modern schooling (Anandalakshmy, 1982). In the contemporary model of school, parents have very little opportunity to watch their children learn, thereby becoming potentially transformative. In present times, schools are powerful institutions for learning about the world, including a variety of activities, academic and other: co-curricular, community work, educational trips and social service camps (Dhiman, 1987). As Young & Kaplan (1990) wrote, "What conceptions the school holds in society also play an important role in determining its indispensable role for the present and for future generations as well. How a society cares for its children and designs its schools, becomes an essential consideration" (p. 4).

Children learn according to four norms, independence, achievement, universalism and specificity (Dreeben, 1968). These are a part of the hidden curriculum, not something that is directly taught to children, but implied. This brings up an important question about the function of school in society. Should school be a collaborative venture with society or the enterprise of developing an individual? This sustains as an important debate in schooling for the majority world (Serpell & Nsamenang, 2014).

In fact, the separation of society and individual development are not in conflict. Education is both a necessity and a privilege; making it free and compulsory would not only help the individual to grow personally and professionally, but would also help in the progress of a nation. This was recognized as early as 1910 and more than one hundred years later continues to provide challenges to the Government of India. Over decades, the Government has formulated various policies and programs to ensure children's enrolment and retention in schools. The National Policy on Education was framed in 1986 and amended in the year 1992. The policy has been revised many times to suit the changing dynamics of the population's requirement with regards to quality education, innovation and research, aiming to make India a knowledge superpower by equipping its students with the necessary skills and knowledge.[12]

However, moving towards the rights-based framework, the Government introduced its most ambitious Right to (free and compulsory) Education Act mentioned earlier. Along with 135 other countries India pledged to make education a fundamental right of every child (Dhar,

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[12] DOI: (http://mhrd.gov.in/nep-new) and
https://web.archive.org/web/20100201181216/http:/www.education.nic.in:80/constitutional.asp

2010) through The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act (RTE), is an Act of the Parliament of India, from April 2010, which highlights the importance of free and compulsory education for children between 6 and 14 years in India under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution (Department of Higher Education, 2010). Its various objectives[13] are:

- Right of children to free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education in a neighborhood school.
- It clarifies that 'compulsory education' means obligation of the appropriate government to provide free elementary education and ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education to every child in the six to fourteen age group. 'Free' means that no child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education.
- It makes provisions for a non-admitted child to be admitted to an age appropriate class.
- It specifies the duties and responsibilities of appropriate Governments, local authority and parents in providing free and compulsory education, and sharing of financial and other responsibilities between the Central and State Governments.
- It lays down the norms and standards relating to Pupil Teacher Ratios (PTRs), buildings and infrastructure, school-working days, teacher-working hours.
- It provides for rational deployment of teachers by ensuring that the specified pupil teacher ratio is maintained for each school, rather than just as an average for the State or District or Block, thus ensuring that there is no urban-rural imbalance in teacher postings. It also provides for prohibition of deployment of teachers for non-educational work, other than decennial census, elections to local authority, state legislatures and parliament, and disaster relief.
- It provides for appointment of appropriately trained teachers, i.e. teachers with the requisite entry and academic qualifications.
- It prohibits (a) physical punishment and mental harassment; (b) screening procedures for admission of children; (c) capitation fee[14]; (d) private tuition by teachers and (e) running of schools without recognition,
- It provides for development of curriculum in consonance with the values enshrined in the Constitution, and which would ensure the all-round development of the child, building on the child's knowledge, potentiality and talent and making the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety through a system of child friendly and child centered learning.

The Constitutional (86th Amendment) Act, 2002 added Article 21-A to the Indian Constitution that talks about providing free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of six to fourteen years. Article 21-A and the RTE Act came into effect in the year 2010. With this powerful legislation in place, what seems imperative now is the 'accountability' in education. Accountability in schools lies with the children, teachers and

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[13] Extracted from http://mhrd.gov.in/rte
[14] Capitation fee refers to an illegal transaction whereby an organization that provides (or supposedly provides) educational services collects a fee that is more than what is approved by regulatory norms.

administrators, each accountable to the other. Children are accountable for their grades in examination. Similarly, teachers are accountable for their children's grades in examination.

LOCAL INNOVATIONS IN SCHOOLING

In addition to efforts of the government, India has seen many experimental interventions in education ranging from single schools to community-wide programs, State-level initiatives as well as pan-Indian initiatives. Private, fee paying schools have always been popular among upper-class families, but these are also gaining popularity among middle and lower income families. Small neighborhood schools have become an important alternative to public schooling, but they are largely unsupervised and unregulated. In addition to private schools, there is a booming household industry of private tuitions at all levels of the economic ladder. In a recent survey, this industry is pegged at a staggering 1.6 trillion INR (23 billion USD) nationwide. These findings are also supported by the National Sample Surveys (Ratnam, 2016). This is cause for great concern regarding the standards of teaching-learning in this large sector. Yet it remains true that if every single child wanted to enter school, there are just not enough institutions to provide for them. Thus, many children still remain out of school on account of lack of availability. For this reason, interventions in children's education have gained much ground in making learning accessible and fun for children of all ages. In this section, we provide four examples of how experimental programs have made provisions for enhancement of services provided to children. Each initiative is different, targeting different participants and fulfilling different objectives.

Super 30: A Case of Personal Commitment to Children's Educational Success

The Ramanujan School of Mathematics, or Super 30 is an organization that each year, selects 30 children after high school from low income, disadvantaged families who are found to be meritorious. These 30 children are then given rigorous training for entrance into the prestigious program of the Indian Institutes of Technology. Boarding, lodging and tuitions for the children is free of charge[15]. The founder of Super 30 is Anand Kumar, himself a Math genius who realized that there was an urgent need to support talented children from poor families who lag behind their wealthier peers on account of poor infrastructure and schooling. Kumar himself was the son of an officer of the Postal Department and his family was barely able to make ends meet when he was in college (Sengupta, 2009). After the untimely death of his father, Kumar was forced to take up a job, and was offered one by a private coaching institute in Delhi that prepares young students for entrance exams to the IITs. From then on, there was no turning back. Anand Kumar is now a household name, one that has gained international recognition for his contribution to the teaching community for young bright children from poor families. Over the last 15 years, 212 out of 240 students have been successful in gaining the prestigious admission, and others have reached other universities. Super 30 does not accept any donations.

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[15] DOI: http://www.super30.org/mediatale.html

Pratham: Corporate Participation in School Improvement

Pratham is a national level non-governmental organization that is operational in 21 States of India, working to support children's school participation through several experimental initiatives. Initiated in 2005, among the main contributions of Pratham in addition to direct inputs into schools by providing libraries, materials, technology, training and other support, is the Annual Status of Education Reports[16] that provide answers to three main questions. Firstly, are children enrolled in schools, secondly, can they read and thirdly, can they do basic arithmetic. This has, over the years, provided valuable data for planning and implementation of country-wide schools. One of the primary findings over the years has been that despite substantial increase in enrolment, children's performance still lags behind in both rural and urban schools. As per the latest estimates of children impacted by Pratham programmes, 1.2 million children have directly benefited and 4.7 children have been reached through partnership with Government schools[17]. The ultimate aim of the organization is to eliminate poverty through the provision of good education for all children.

Hole in the Wall to School in the Cloud

In the year 1999, Prof. Sugata Mitra initiated an experiment he titled 'Hole in the Wall'. The basic initiative started in a slum community in New Delhi which shared a boundary wall with his office building. He set up an internet enabled computer on the wall, allowing people in the neighbouring community free access to the internet. A hidden camera kept a record of the usage and response to the screen. Within about 8 hours of setting up the facility, it was found that children had learnt to browse and were teaching others how to access information. In his renowned TED talk, Mitra discusses how important such access is for children living in low income areas. The same experiment was then taken to a rural area where he found during his next visit several months later, demands from children for an upgrade to a faster system. Here, it was demonstrated that learning takes place even without any supervision or training; children have a natural curiosity and providing them with opportunities is what is lacking, not their capacity for learning. Mitra has now scaled the concept up to 'School in the Cloud' where children interact with others from different parts of the world, and he now plans of involving grandparents in hand-holding for children's learning (Bag, 2016).

Eklavya Education Foundation

In the year 1996, the Eklavya Education Foundation was established, as a non-government, non-profit organization, with a "mission to revolutionaize school education in India."[18] Setting up schools and teacher training institutes was the first step taken by this group of businessmen, educators and professionals. The founders believed that education was as important for citizens (if not more important) than basic services for national development, and individual well-being. Schools, training institutions, curricula and material were all

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[16] DOI: http://www.asercentre.org/p/158.html
[17] DOI: http://www.pratham.org/about-us/about-pratham
[18] DOI: http://www.eklavya.org/eklfond.html

geared towards a high quality services for individual children rather than for mass-production. The legend of Eklavya from ancient mythology was selected for naming the programme after much deliberation. Eklavya was a forest-dwelling boy from a jungle tribe who desired to learn martial arts from the great Guru Dronacharya. Drona refused him saying that he teaches only the sons of Kshatriya Kings. What follows in the story is a dramatic tale of determination and self-discipline. Legend has it that Eklavya returned to the forest, sculpted a life-like image of the revered Guru and taught himself. The organization focuses on this aspect of learning, an individual child's practical exploration of the world around him or her. In order to achieve these goals, Eklavya Foundation has established training programmes and publications and other resources used nation-wide. Some of the pioneers in innovative education in India have emerged from this group of educators and are advisors for national and international forums on children's learning and teacher training.

THE PRESENCE OF THE PAST: POST-COLONIAL CONTEXT AND EDUCATION IN INDIA

In this chapter, we have outlined a brief history of education, and more specifically, schooling in India. It is important to keep several points in mind while presenting school-community linkages in India. Firstly, India is a vast and complex country with diverse languages, religions, ethnic groups and geographical areas. It is also a highly populated country with many of its citizens living in poverty, and the government and NGO's are still struggling to provide basic services for a vast majority of the population. Although the history is ancient, as an independent nation, India is only around 60 years old. Thus any phenomenon must be viewed with these features in mind.

Formal education in its present form is an outcome of the colonial times. The history of education in India is very old, even though only a section of the people had access to these learning centers. Learning has thus been an issue of great concern for centuries, and it is important to learn from the past and attempt to look to the future with this knowledge. Much of ancient education discussed, including recently, has been in the purview of the Hindu worldview. While it is essential to learn from our past, it should be done in a manner that feeds into our present secular leanings. Local knowledge is now an imperative in research and its application. Linguistic and conceptual barriers should no longer find place in the list of obstacles to learning for children. Communities possess enough motivation and wherewithal to educate children. All they require is the correct ideological push and baseline resources without hidden costs to their everyday lives and functioning. Additionally we need to emphasize that the ancient forms of teaching learning are not the only panacea for the ailing education machinery. A futuristic technology savvy outlook cannot be done away with. While in terms of program content and its delivery we need to be advanced, there is a need to go back to ensuring the basics in terms of school infrastructure and facilities.

Modern education carries implications of secular and democratic principles based on human rights and liberty as we know them today. This is a right of every child, as the Government recognized when it added the Right to Education Act (GOI, 2009). With the large numbers of people lacking access to modern education in India, schooling is a matter of grave concern. Relying only on Government efforts does not seem to be fulfilling the hunger for schooling that rages among the Indian population. Even in the remotest of areas, there is a belief in the

magic of education as a path to better life, but there are just not enough schools. If every child in India wanted to gain admission in school, we just do not have enough of them. Therefore, illiteracy is a structural problem that we need to deal with. The innovative programmes described in the last section (and several others) provide important alternatives or supplementary support to the mainstream educational system. From these examples we can see a productive range of instances of innovation that are crucial to national development through schooling as well as outside of school. These program initiatives show us that communities are willing to take the risk of trying out unconventional modes of learning for their children. When communities with scarce resources faced with poverty imposed challenges can believe in these programs, it shows promise and potential for the future of education. What people are perhaps looking for is not a school for their children but education that ensures a future and allows them to dream, and to nurture hope. A lot more needs to be done at every level of intervention to improve schooling, making it relevant and meaningful for the population.

During the three centuries of British presence in India, the sinister transformation of traders into rulers left much of the local leadership dumbfounded. Local differences and petty quarrels between regions left the region vulnerable to collective takeover. As their power spread across the country, it was clear that there was a need to influence the educational system at a national level. Yet, there were several critical debates on what sort of education was to be provided. It was decided that all levels of learning was to be politically mediated under the Empire to provide support for the foreign administration to make successful inroads into the local cultural imagination. Indians were taught *how to be governed*, just as Englishman were being taught *how to govern* in their own native country. The widespread impact on education during that time sustains even in post-colonial India (Nandy, 2003) and the impact is visible in the ways in which school and higher education is transacted. The higher status of the English language even among Indians is a continued source of persisting inequalities. Additionally, scholars have noted that the despite the great deal of energy that led to the freedom struggle and success, a mass non-cooperation against a single authority had long-standing political consequences for India. Political emancipation as a collective was achieved, but many local inequalities were left unattended. The efforts to fight against an external domination left Indians quite blind to inequalities within its own boundaries (Khair & Verma, 2010). There is a constant resurgence of these unresolved issues in present times. Issues of region, caste, language, religion, ethnicity, food habits and poverty have insidious, hydra-like regenerations. It is the responsibility of contemporary Indian political and intellectual leadership to ensure that these issues are attended so that the fundamental rights of citizens, especially children, are realized.

CONCLUSION

Psychology has largely concerned itself with the individual, and educational psychology suffers from the same preference. The structures within which the educational system in India have evolved have derived from an ancient tradition that became over-written by missionaries, traders, travelers and rulers. Historically, there was believed to be a great capacity for eclectic combinations in Indian art, architecture and culture, the influences of

which are still available to witness. The British empire had the most far-reaching consequences on account of their deep and far-reaching policies in the governance of educational policy, creating new categories of suppression. Education is hailed as an empowering exercise, one that both educates and liberates the individual from social circumstances. This dual nature of education creates several possibilities for the exact opposite objective, as an instrument of suppression and subjugation. In modern times, it is essential to re-invent the political boundaries so as to achieve the true potential of educational practice for the children of India.

In order to better understand the history and current status of education in India, a diachronic examination of the learner in context is essential. The person-environment interface can be theoretically understood in many different ways, causal or contextual in orientation. And when context is examined, there is a need to accept that context is not simply an accumulation of facts, but rather a subjective, meaningful interaction between self and others (Mead, 1934). Using Valsiner's (2007) examination of person-environment interface as separate but inclusive, such that the person-in-environment in irreversible time becomes the key perspective. Further, we also need to attend to what Moghaddam (2010) terms as interobjective features of social reality. The predomannce given to individual processes has in fact (Moghaddam, argues) led to the diminishing attention to social forces and group relations and social forces. The history of education in India reinforces the need to attend to social historical factors in order to better understand the status of contemporary education in India. Well before an individual teacher can attend to a single child's needs in a classroom, there is an ambient cultural reality that has already placed its own preferences. Ignoring these features has led to the perpetuation of inequalities as we have demonstrated in this chapter. Unless these are understood and acted upon, as in the cases of innovative programs, where social inequality is a key consideration in the provision of an emancipatory agenda, the agenda of education will remain clouded by past biases.

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