

DECENTRALISED MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Management of education has to be Decentralized in order to achieve the goal of Education. For All, through devolving authorities from higher to lower level. Therefore, Decentralized Management in education can be a way to equality. This paper delineates the decentralized setup of educational management, its rational existing situation and prospects.

Keywords: *Management, Education Decentralization equality*

I. INTRODUCTION

Equality and inclusiveness are the basic features of a true democratic society. Equality is among one of the four pillars, of democracy. This is why it is imperative for democracy. In Indian democracy, this pillar has somewhat weakened over the times, as a result, democracy itself has weakened nation. exists due to various demographic variables such as religion, ethnicity geographical conditions etc. Democratic setup is the only way to cater to this heterogeneity and to maintain the unity of the nation. This heterogeneity creates inequality which is a big threat to democracy-which requires equal participation of every one. Peoples' participation is conditional, they should have ability to understand it in a true sense. It means every person has equal rights and duties, but in India most of the citizens are unaware to their rights and duties; many do not observe them intentionally. Only quality education has a catalytic power to unite the two i.e.unity of the nation and diversity of the culture. But here lies the great irony that the quality education, as a fundamental right is not in reach of more than half of the population of the country. The contributing factors behind this inequality in education are again geographical, ethic and religious one. This diversity expresses the need of democratic decentralization to increase the people participation in every sphere of national life. Consequently 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments (Govt. of India Ministry of Law and Justice 2007) assure the mass participation in democracy.

Taking cognizance of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment, educational management system has also been decentralized corresponding to the three tier system of panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). Granting, that local institutions and agencies can better understand local priorities problems and their solutions so all the responsibilities of school management have been devolved to these local bodies. Democratic management of educational institutions has hoped to increase equal access (equality) in education through creating inclusive setup which would cater to the

local needs. This decentralization has been proposed as a way to equality and 'quality in education' (Dash & Panda 2009, p.95). This equality in education will ultimately lead to equality in other walks of life and will result in inclusive society.

Decentralisation has also been termed as 'democratic decentralisation' (Mukundan 2003, p.27; Govinda & Bandyopadhyay 2012, p.1) as a part and parcel of democratic system. The basic tenets of democracy are equality, liberty, fraternity and justice. Owing to this nature of the system, it (democracy) needs decentralisation in all its aspects i.e. social, social democracy, political democracy and economical democracy (Fotopoulos 2000, pp.211-251). Decentralisation in educational management is visualized to promote and concretise social democracy through political and economical democracy.

Decentralisation which is defined as "the transfer of decision making authority, responsibility and task from higher to lower organizational levels or between" (Hanson 1998, p.112); also has variations in its form (see Figure No-1) which varies according to its purposes and depends upon the economic-socio-political goals of the nations.

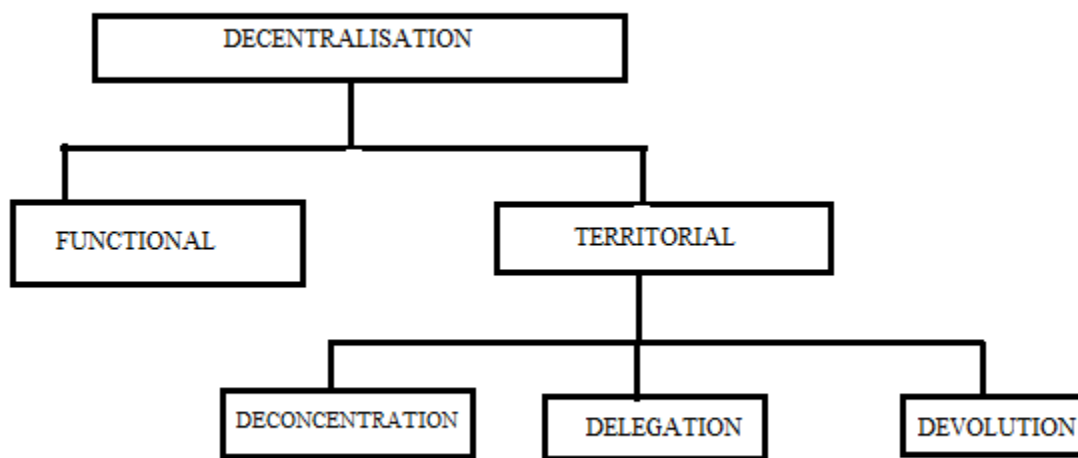


Figure 1: Forms/Dimensions of Decentralization (Bray & Mukundan 2004)

Decentralization has different aims in different countries. In Spain, aim of decentralization is to Confront Regional problems, seeking economic developmeniont is the aim in Venezuela and in India decentralization democracy aims to foster democracy(Fiske 1996,p.12). Thus, in Indian perspective decentralization is a specific call for democracy .But decentralization in education is a very complex enterprise. The road from concept to its implementation is by no means straight and simple. This decentralization cannot be achieved over right as many policy makers hope. Decentralisation and centralization exist on the two poles of the continuum. ,Between the two, there are phases which are also known as types of decentralization.

II.CENTRALISATION DECENTRALISATION DELIGATION DEVOLTION
DECENTRALISATION



Decentralization is the process through which a central authority establishes offices, staffing them with its own officers. Delegation decisions are made at local level, but power in a delegated system basically rests with the central authority, which has chosen to lend them to local one and can withdraw at its own will. Devolution of powers are formally held at sub-national levels, the officers of which do need to seek higher level approval for their actions. Privatisation or localization is the transfer of government functions to private sector or to local enterprises (Therefore in some aspects privatization can be considered as another form of decentralization). (Bray & Mukundan 2003 p.3).

In India, responsibilities and authorities in many democratic sphere, including education, have been devolved to local bodies i.e Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) since 1993. According to 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 tasks in following areas have been devolved to PRIs; Education, including primary and secondary schools (Clause 17); Technical training and vocational education (Clause 18); Adult and non-formal education (Clause 19); Libraries (Clause 20) and Cultural activities (Clause 21).

Under the light of 73rd 74th constitutional amendment and the emphasis laid by National Policy on Education 1986, following three tier system evolved.

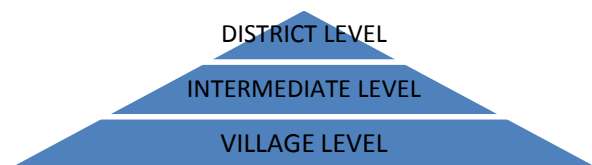


Figure 2: Three Tiers of Educational Decentralization along with their centralisation

This decentralization in education is a complex process as it can result in substantial changes in educational system, in educational management, teacher- training, designing curriculum etc. Changes in education system indisputably cause changes in social system because education is potential sub-social system responsible for socialization and social change. This can directly promote social democracy.

In the whole country PRIs, the local level political bodies are established to manage economic, academic and administrative tasks in educational management along with their other socio-political responsibilities. This is a reestablishment, (as education never was centralized in India) is sought to redress historical inequalities by explicitly identifying the representation of traditionally underserved groups, women, schedule castes and scheduled tribes. Unlike other countries of the world, India is facing multiple problems. As regards geographical problems many regions are hard to reach with reference to providing educational services. Some sociological issues such as

caste, religion, ethnicity, gender etc. which also transform social status into educational status in the long run. Rural-urban division also affects the delivery of educational services and causes multiple inequalities in the society. Considering all these problems of inequality, decentralization becomes imperative in the quest for equality. This system has been considered as a way to social justice. In decentralized system, local communities can manage the educational services delivery according to their local needs. Local level problems can be identified without delay and quick solution can be provided in their own way, which might never have been understood by the authorities in the centre. Central and state government and their administrative machinery facilitate in the terms of resources, monitor their management as well as provide technical support to these bodies.

This increased capacity of decision making at the local level has been hoped to improve the educational delivery system and its quality directly by increasing the amount of input and its quality in the schooling. Programmes designed at this level are guaranteed to be relevant and also can reduce inequalities in access to education of quality. As the functionaries are under direct observation of the planners/authorities, decentralization improves the operation of the education system in the terms of efficiency of resources allocation and utilization. This territorial decentralization benefits the central and state governments by relieving them of political and financial problems.

Even after one and a half decade of the evolution of the decentralized educational management system in India it will not be early to raise the question on the efficiency of the system. It is necessary to deliberate over the issues of inequality in education which was thought to be solved by decentralization of education system. It is well evident in some part of the nation that the situation is in a very sorry state. What are the reasons behind it? Which are the contributing factors? What are the major issues that need deliberation beforehand? It has also been identified that it is failure of implementation not of policy (Banerjee, Banerji, Duflo, Glennerster & Khemani 2006,p.29; Leclercq 2003,p.21). The major issues which are creating obstacles in the way of democratic decentralization and posing threat before the national goal of equality and social justice are noted below.

III. PROBLEMS IN THE SYSTEM

Local elitism:

Local elitism is a major problem. Bhatnagar and Williams (1992) observed “sometimes resources for development can be captured by local elites and used primarily for their own benefits rather (that of) intended beneficiaries” (Bhatnagar & Williams 1992p.4).

Decreasing interest of community members

Decreasing interest of community members is also a big threat in the way of decentralization. Individual or community management of education has been a cultural phenomenon in India from ancient period to present time, but it is reversing when it is formally assigned to the community. Bray (1996,p.15) states that “one result of increased government input has been decreased community involvement and control”.

Illiteracy and low educational level

Illiteracy and low educational level have cumulative impact on the actualization of the democratic participation

/decentralization. Illiteracy bars the flow of information to the some definite section of the community and makes them unaware about their roles, rights and responsibilities.(Sethy 2006,p.50)

Lack of interest on the part of political leaders and bureaucrats

Political leaders and bureaucrats also do never attempt seriously to include the all sections of the societies in the management of the education. Some socially economically deprived groups dare not to raise their voices and communicate their educational needs. Political leaders and bureaucrats use to maintain secrecy regarding public rights and their roles in the systems.

Dearth of human resources fit for the work is a major problem of the field.

Education sector is deprived of the administrative leaders who have firsthand experience of the system as well as interest to improve the system. It needs self motivated personals who can realize the existing policies like decentralized management and can conceive innovative plans and strategies to implement them.

Rampant corruption in Indian culture.

The pandemic of corruption has also caught Indian education system in its grip. Although the democratic decentralization in the form of democratic participation is potentially able to check the mal practices but owing to lack of thoughtful planning (because of dearth of planners) and lack of will power in the administrative machinery it has come up in the form of decentralization of corruption.

Lack of expertise in the planning

The loopholes in the policies adopted by states and local governments have made the situation grimmer. Gap between schools and local community / society is increasing while connections between the two must be increased.

Lack of appropriate propaganda and ensuing awareness

There has been inadequate government initiatives in popularization of the law and policy through different type of media. It becomes imperative as a large number of populations in every community are not aware about the decentralized system and their role in it. Banerjee et al. (2006,p.7) in their research work on people's participation in educational management found that most of the parents are not aware of the existence of such type of committees. Some time even when they are supposed to be member of it and committee members are found unaware of the key roles they are empowered to play in education services.

All these problems are interrelated such as dearth of experts and planners causes bad planning, lack of awareness and illiteracy in the public decreases community participation and control. All these situations and lack of propaganda raise elitism and corruption in the system. To deal with all such types of hindrances in the way of democratic participation and in realization of equality and inclusiveness in the society, the concerted effort should be made. One of these problems cannot be solved separately. Following areas need substantial changes simultaneously.

IV. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

Problem related to human resources and planning can be solved by initiating special services in education also suggested by National policy on Education 1986. For this, government should start Union Educational Services.

Corruption and local elitism can be eliminated through propaganda via various media networks. Also the culture of information secrecy by such groups can be eradicated through the use of mass media. Substantial improvements are necessary in educational delivery services. Various types of programmes related to mass literacy, adult education and informal education have been launched, but have failed to reach their goal. Wholistic plan should be launched targeting the achievement of the goal in the terms of learning. Education Transparency in the system should be maintained through initiation of programmes like e-governance in educational management. Use of technology should be widened in educational programmes, especially in the programmes of mass literacy and informal education. Technology use in education is itself a problem in education, but should be tackled through joint efforts.

V.CONCLUSION

The above mentioned solutions cannot be effective, if enacted separately. Therefore, combined efforts should be made in all the areas. Administrative restoration, community mobilization, propaganda and restructuring committees in the combined way can be beneficial in the achieving the democratic decentralization, which is essential for 'inclusive society', free from all types of inequalities, despite existing demographic variations. Without equality, democracy is not more than an illusion. Thus, equality and democracy are complementary to each other. Democratic management in education is needed to ensure equality and quality in education, which in turn will foster democracy.

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