

**POLICY SHIFTS IN SCHOOL EDUCATION SECTOR IN KERALA:
A STUDY OF 'UNECONOMIC SCHOOLS' SINCE 2000**

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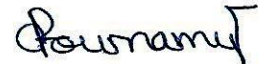
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DECLARATION


I declare that this thesis titled **Policy Shifts In School Education Sector In Kerala: A Study Of 'Uneconomic Schools' Since 2000** submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for award of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** in Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, is an original work and has not been previously submitted in part or in full for any other degree of this university or any other university/institution.



Pournamy

CERTIFICATE

We recommend this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation for the award of the degree of Ph.D.


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Dedicated to
Mr.Chenthamarakshan (Dad)
&
Mrs.Vanaja (Mum)

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List of Abbreviations

ANTS	Animation Training Programme for Students
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BJP	Bharitya Janta Party
BRC	Block Resource Centre
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
CM	Chief Minister
CMDE	Curriculum Material Development & Evaluation
CP I(M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CSS	Centrally Sponsored Scheme
DFID	Department for International Development
DIET	District Institute for Education and Training
DPEP	District Primary Education Program
DPSP	Directive Principal of State Policy
DRU	District Resource Unit
EC	European Community
EDF	European Development Fund
EDUSAT	Educational Satellite
EFA	Education for All
ET	Educational Technology
EU	European Union
FOSS	Free and Open Source Software
FYP	Five Year Plan
G8	Group of 8
GOI	Government of India
GOK	Government of Kerala
GSDP	Gross State Domestic Product
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Service
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights
ICSE	Indian Certificate of Secondary Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDA	International Development Association

IEA	International Energy Agency
IFIC	In-service Programmes Field Interactive Innovation and Co-ordination
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INR	Indian Rupee
IT	Information Technology
KIIFB	Kerala Infrastructure and Investment Fund Board
KITE	Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education
KPMS	Kerala Pulaya Maha Sabha
KSB	Kerala State Board
KSSP	Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad
LCD	Liquid Crystal Display
LDF	Left Democratic Front
LED	Light Emitting Diode
LKG	Lower Kindergarten
LMS	London Missionary Society
LP	Lower Primary
MDG	Millenium Development Goal
MDM	Mid-Day Meal Scheme
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MS	Mahila Samakhya
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPE	National Policy of Education
NSS	Nair Service Society
NSSO	National Sample Survey Office
OB	Operation Blackboard
ODA	Overseas Development Authority
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
P&M	Planning and Management
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
POA	Program of Action
PROBE	Public Report on Basic Education
PSTE	Pre-Service Teacher Education
PTA	Parents-Teachers Association
RTE	Right to Education
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program

SC	Scheduled Caste
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SNDP	Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalna Sangam
SPARK	Service Payroll Administrative Repository for Kerala
SPB	State Planning Board
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
ST	Scheduled Tribe
STARS	Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States
SWAP	Sector Wide Approach
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
TIMS	Teacher Information Management System
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematic and Science Study
TLC	Total Literacy Campaign
UDF	United Democratic Front
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UEE	Universal Elementary Education
UF	United Front
UKG	Upper Kindergarten
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Social and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's fund
UP	Upper Primary
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USA	United States of America
VICTERS	Versatile ICT Enabled Resource for Students
WB	World Bank
WCEFA	World Conference on Education for All
WE	Work Experience
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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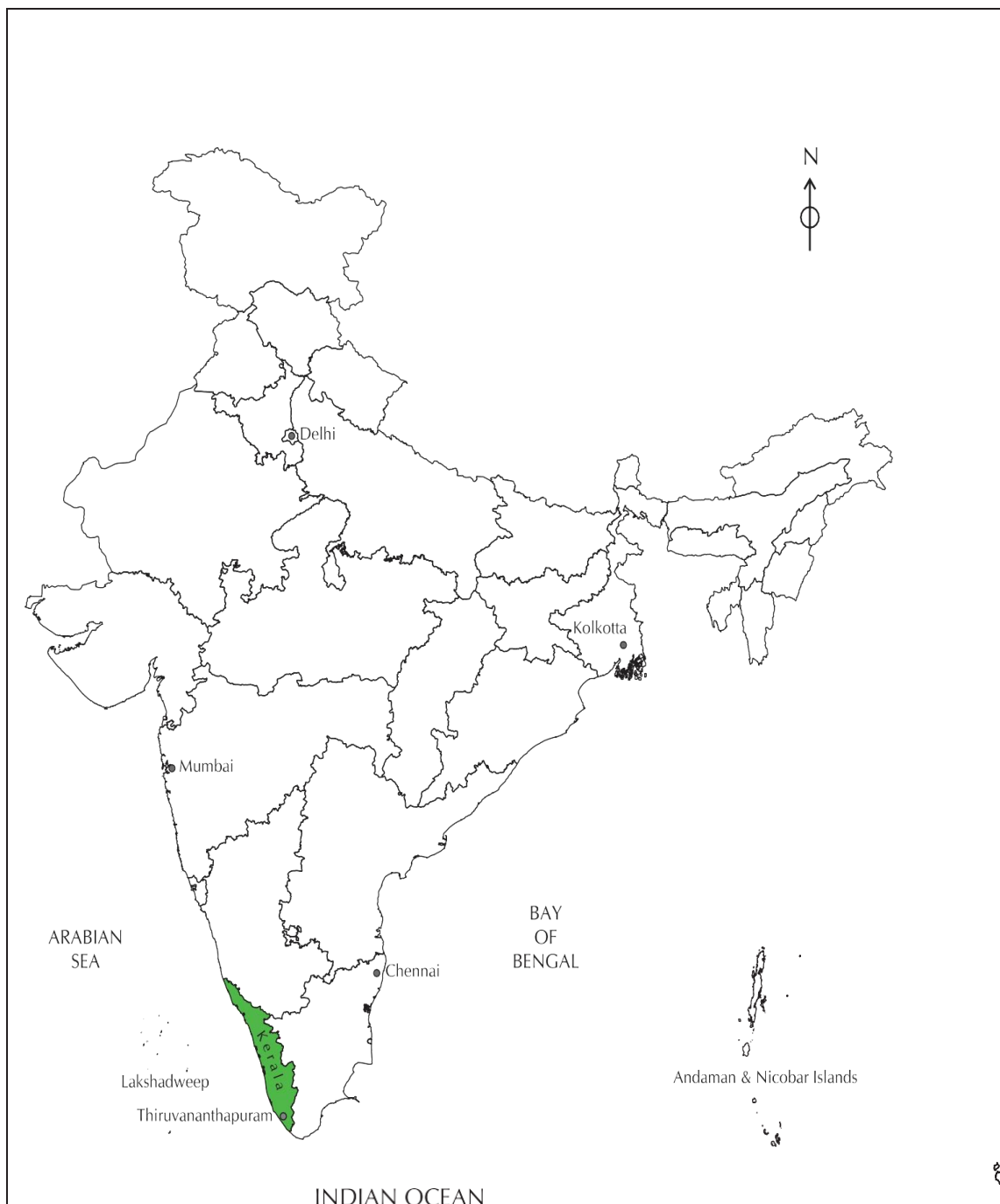
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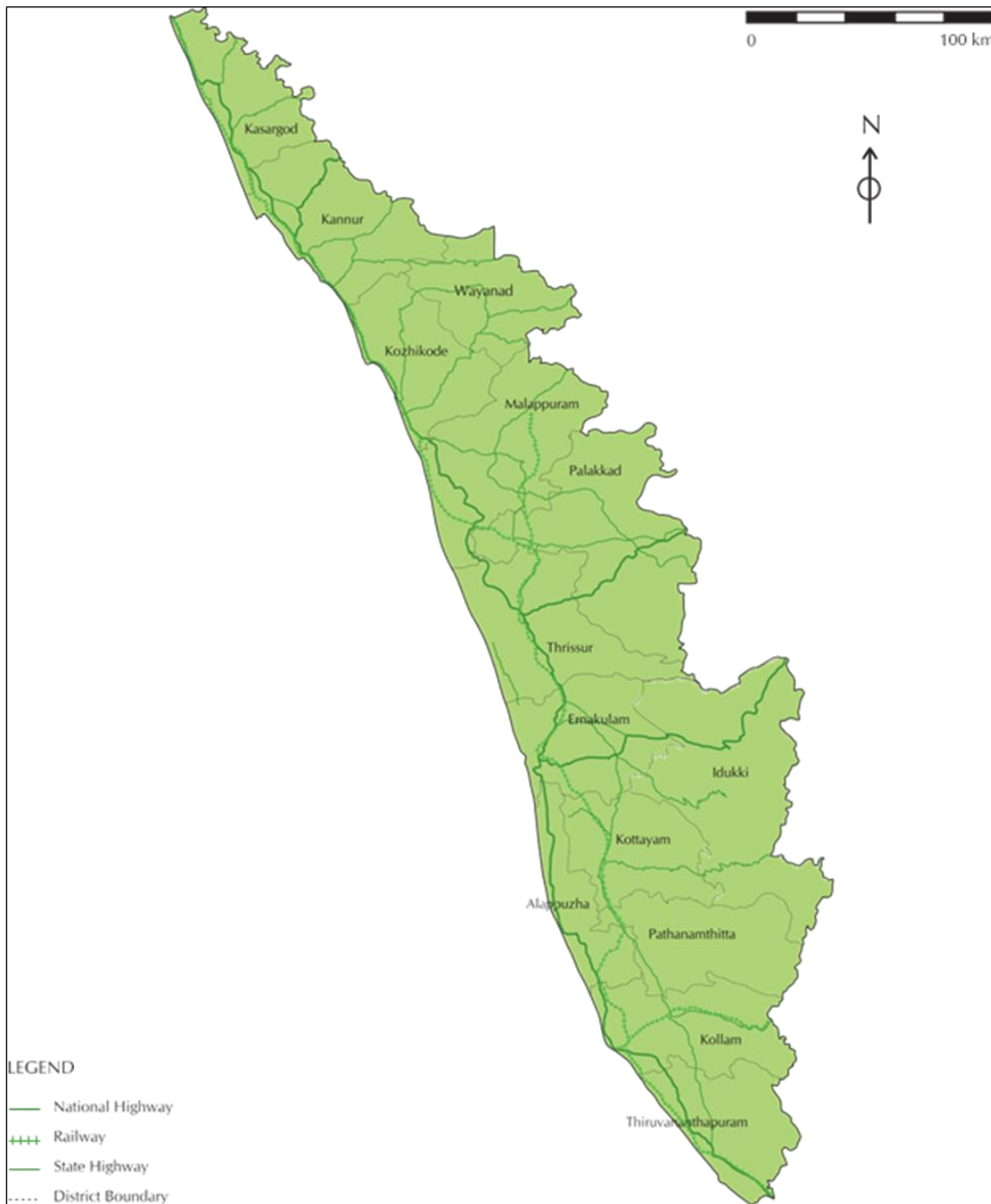
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Map 1. Location of Kerala in India



Source: Kerala Human Development Report, 2005. Available at: https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/stateplan/sdr.php?state=b_sdrbody.

Map 2. Administrative Map of Kerala Showing Districts



Source: Kerala Human Development Report, 2005. Available at: https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/stateplan/sdr.php?state=b_sdrbody.htm

Introduction

The Public Report on Basic Education in India (1999:8) points out that “no matter how one looks at it, the state of elementary education in India paints a dismal picture.” Geeta Kingdon (2007:168) mentions that “India consists of 22 percent of the population of the world and is home to 46 percent of the world’s illiterates and is also home to a high proportion of worlds out of school children and youth”. Yet, all is not as bleak as it looks. She further proceeds to point out that “While the base of India’s education pyramid might be weak, India has emerged as an important player in the worldwide information technology revolution.” (Kingdon, 2007:168-169).

This conundrum of education sector can also be seen in the context of Kerala. The school level education in Kerala paints a unique picture. Kerala’s achievements in the field of education are usually considered exemplary. Be it in the case the achievement of total literacy rate, or near universal primary education, low drop-out rate at different school level, or even gender equity in access to schools. Infact, the state of Kerala has often given prime importance to strengthening school education. This can be seen by the fact that Kerala was recognized as a total literate state way back in April 18, 1991 (Kerala Development Report, 2008). However, there is another aspect of education sector in the state that has not received much attention. In the late 1990s, there was a trend of public schools being forced to close down.

This research attempts to understand this phenomenon in context of Kerala. The study also looks at the Kerala primary education sector within the emerging policy framework at the national level. This research is an attempt to understand the causes of public schools being shut down by the state government. The study looks at perspectives of teachers, officials and parents on this particular issue. K James write that “between 1990 to 1993, Kerala government closed down several “uneconomic schools” where the student strength had gone down by significant level”(1995: 3274). Furthermore the whole idea of considering a school as “economically non-viable” is also questioned by this work.

This thesis, therefore, attempts to understand this phenomenon of schools in Kerala being defined as ‘uneconomic’ and closed due to declining number of students in the school. This study also attempts to map the policy shifts in the school education sector at the national level and in Kerala. This study primarily attempts to understand the emerging issues in the Kerala model of development which was hailed as a remarkable example within and outside India. The study, further engages with the question of what kind of

socio-economic and political changes led to emergence of the terminology like ‘uneconomic’ in a state which widely celebrated its social welfare centric model of development.

Table 1.1: Literacy Rate in the state of Kerala (1951-2011)

Year	Persons	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1951	47.18	58.35	36.43
1961	55.08	64.89	45.56
1971	69.75	77.13	62.53
1981	78.85	84.56	73.36
1991	89.81	93.62	86.17
2001	90.92	94.20	87.86
2011	94.59	97.10	92.12

Source:<https://web.archive.org/web/20100726215318/http://www.kerala.gov.in/education/status.htm>

Table 1.1, shows that since independence Kerala has managed to turn their education trajectory around by becoming the most literate state. Kerala was hailed for its development model, especially in the 1980’s and 1990’s. Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen articulating about the Kerala’s model that “Kerala’s accomplishments shows that the well-being of the people can be improved, and social, political and cultural conditions transformed, even at low levels of income where there is appropriate public action” (1997:255).

A crucial factor behind Kerala’s better performance on development indicators, in comparison to other states in India is because of the high proportion of literates and educated persons who make up the population of Kerala. As shown in Table 1.2, Kerala has been on the top of the charts as far as education and Human Development Index is concerned. Echoing this, Robin Jeffery(1976) argues that ‘literacy is the basic personal skill that underlies the whole modernizing sequence as far as Kerala is concerned.’

This is because literacy serves as a foundational aspect of Kerala’s public life, especially in informing public opinion, which in turn influences the political culture, thereby strengthening the social as well as political life of Kerala.

Kerala’s society and economy have seen deep changes in the last two to three decades. This makes one look closely into the changes taking place especially in the social sector of Kerala, especially in education.

Table 1.2: Comparative outlook of HDI indicators across Indian States

Improvement in HDI across States						
States	1990		2017		Change (2017 over 1990)	CAGR of Social Expenditure (2017 over 1990)
	Index	Rank	Index	Rank		
Haryana	0.46	13	0.70	6	7	15.7%
Himachal Pradesh	0.48	10	0.72	4	6	14.0%
Tamil Nadu	0.47	11	0.70	7	4	13.4%
Karnataka	0.44	16	0.68	12	4	14.8%
Punjab	0.49	6	0.72	3	3	12.6%
Arunachal Pradesh	0.43	18	0.65	15	3	15.1%
Rajasthan	0.40	22	0.62	20	2	15.2%
Kerala	0.54	2	0.77	1	1	13.6%
Andhra Pradesh	0.42	19	0.64	18	1	12.9%
Odisha	0.40	23	0.60	22	1	15.1%
Goa	0.55	1	0.75	2	-1	14.4%
Maharashtra	0.49	8	0.69	9	-1	14.3%
Tripura	0.44	15	0.65	16	-1	13.6%
Assam	0.41	20	0.61	21	-1	15.1%
Sikkim	0.54	3	0.71	5	-2	14.8%
Jammu & Kashmir	0.49	9	0.68	11	-2	14.6%
Gujarat	0.47	12	0.67	14	-2	14.1%
West Bengal	0.44	17	0.63	19	-2	13.3%
Madhya Pradesh	0.40	21	0.60	23	-2	13.9%
Mizoram	0.52	5	0.70	8	-3	12.0%
Manipur	0.49	7	0.69	10	-3	12.9%
Meghalaya	0.45	14	0.65	17	-3	13.5%
Nagaland	0.53	4	0.67	13	-9	12.7%
Uttar Pradesh	0.39	24	0.59	24	0	14.0%
Bihar	0.38	25	0.57	25	0	13.8%
All India	0.43	-	0.64	-	-	14.6%

Source: SBI Research, UNDP, Global Data Lab Green Shade indicate Social Exp. Pushed up HDI

But despite having indicators that are at par with the developed countries, what led to the phenomenon of ‘uneconomic schools’ or ‘school with less number of students’ in Kerala. This is the question this research attempts to explore.

Origin and Usage of ‘Uneconomic School’

The term, “uneconomic schools” although has been in use for decades now but it emerged in popular parlance in 1988 when for the first time it was used in State Economic Review. Followed by this the Government of Kerala’s General Education Department (F) specifically began to look into the criteria of uneconomic schools in Kerala. A Directorate of Public Instruction(DPI) official, in conversation with the researcher said that the term came into usage when the auditor used it for the first time for auditing purposes. Uneconomic schools is defined in the state economic review as a school which “does not fulfill the requirement of para 1 of Rule 22(4) of Kerala Education Rules, which requires that the minimum strength per standard in LP/UP/HS shall be 25.”¹

Since then, it was used commonly in the state, both in public and private sphere till August 2018. In August 2018, the nomenclature for such schools was changed to “Schools without sufficient student strength”. However, during the interview conducted at Ganapathi vilasam school the headmistress Ms.Ahalya(name changed) pointed out that “it is just a change in the nomenclature and still a lot needs to be achieved.” She highlighted that the challenges of education sector continue to remain the same despite this change in nomenclature.

The rise in number of such schools gained momentum beginning from 2000 onwards, when the number of such schools increased to 2,244, out of which 993 schools were from government sector and 1,251 schools in private-aided sector. Furthermore, out of the total 2,244, uneconomic schools, 1,926 were lower primary schools, 282 were Upper Primary Schools and 36 were High Schools. (State Economic Review,2000)In 2015-2016, there were 5,715 uneconomic schools in the state, which was an increase of 142 schools over the previous year. Out of these 2,606 were government schools and 3,109 were in aided sector. District wise analysis shows that the highest number of uneconomic schools were in Kannur(723).²

¹ Refer to Kerala Education Rules, 1959 available at <https://education.kerala.gov.in/kerala-education-rules/>

²Kerala State Planning Board Economic Review, 2016

Problem Statement

The problem statement that this work attempts to explore is, does this phenomenon of “uneconomic schools” indicate that the “welfare state model” is withering away in the state of Kerala? The usage of a market-oriented term like “uneconomic” in context of education indicated a shift in the policy that may have been occurring in the state. It also indicated that education was no more perceived as a universal public good but a commodity with economic worth measured in terms of profit and loss. In addition, could it also be perceived as a gradual withdrawal of state from some of its primary welfare responsibilities opening various public sectors like education for various kinds of non-state economic actors (for instance like, private educational institutions). Does it also indicate that market players were being given a primary role in promoting and enhancing the strength of the education sector for the overall welfare of Kerala. Based on some of these assumptions, this study looks into changing role of state and other actors in the education sector.

Historical Background

Before addressing the larger issue of uneconomic schools in Kerala, it is important to look into the historical background of school education in Kerala. This is done in order to contextualise the schooling system in the state. A brief analysis of historical background of the education sector in Kerala helps develop holistic picture of the school education system in the state. Kerala, as a state, that it is today, was formed in 1956, when three regions that primarily spoke the native language i.e. Malayalam, were joined together into a single state entity. The three regions were Travancore, Cochin and Malabar. (Travancore and Cochin were princely states before independence and Malabar was a part of the Madras Presidency). The old Travancore (pronounced and spelled as Thiruvithamkoor) comprised of the districts of Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Kottayam, Idukki, Alappuzha while the region of Cochin consisted of present day Ernakulam and Thrissur and the districts that form the erstwhile Malabar district include, Malappuram, Palakkad, Kozhikode, Kannur, Wayanad and Kasargod.

It is crucial to understand the distinction that existed among the three regions to better understand the social, economic as well as political development of the state of Kerala. The three regions till the time of independence and state formation were marked by differences. Ramachandran writes that

Travancore had a more powerful and authoritarian State than Cochin compounded with a much larger bureaucracy and a more high profile and interventionist regime. It had bigger and more varied resource base than Cochin and the development of capitalism in agriculture and expansion of trade and commerce was greater in Travancore than in Cochin.(1995:22)

The difference was not only between Travancore and Cochin but also Travancore and Cochin on one side and Malabar region on another. For instance until, 19th Century, with regard to agrarian relations, health as well as education(to name a few sectors) Travancore and Cochin were far ahead than Malabar region, as can be seen in the table below

Table 1.3: Literate Persons as a Proportion of the Population (1901-1951)

Year	Total Persons			Males			Females		
	Travancore	Cochin	Malabar	Travancore	Cochin	Malabar	Travancore	Cochin	Malabar
1911	15.0	15.1	11.1	24.8	24.3	19.0	5.0	6.1	3.5
1921	24.2	18.5	12.7	33.1	27.3	20.9	15.0	9.9	4.9
1931	23.9	28.2	14.4	33.8	38.3	22.9	13.9	18.5	6.4
1951	46.7	43.3	31.3	55.6	52.2	41.3	37.7	34.7	21.7

Note:1941 figures are not reported as the Census was conducted during World War II and hence might not be reliable. Source:State Human Development Report 2005, Government of Kerala. Available at:https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/plans/stateplan/sdr.php?state=b_sdrbody.htm

The educational achievements in Kerala, had its genesis in the pre-independence era. Highlighting this Jeffery(1987) writes,“Mass literacy requires mass schooling and the history of literacy in Kerala is closely linked to the history of modern schooling that was introduced in the region in the first part of the nineteenth century.”

Amongst some of the actors who played a crucial role in introduction of modern education in India were the Protestant Missionaries. However, the sole group of people responsible for the growth of education, especially school education in Kerala was not the missionaries alone. As the reader shall see later the Royalty of the region of Travancore was also driven towards encouraging it's populace to engage in activities that involved the attainment of education. It is in keeping in line with this that the Royal Rescript was issued in 1817, defraying the cost of education. This goes to show that it was as a result of concerted efforts of the Royal family of Kerala, coupled with the activities of the missionaries, that served as a starting point and enabled Kerala to achieve significant strides in education at an early stage. Therefore, it won't be wrong to state that the people of Kerala got an early start and impetus to pursue education and orient themselves towards the teaching-learning process. To understand this further one needs to take a deeper dive into the activities of royal family of Travancore and the role played by missionaries, in encouraging the people of Kerala in attaining education.

As a result more detailed and in-depth analysis of the historical background of school education sector in Kerala is done in detail in the second chapter.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

This study is an attempt to understand

- The policy changes taking place in the school education sector in India in general and Kerala in particular;
- Is the void that is being created by the so called withdrawal of government sector being replaced by the private sector?
- Is the private sector assuming larger role and responsibility in provision of education to the masses?

Research Questions

- What are the “uneconomic schools” in Kerala? How did this conceptual category in Kerala's education sector emerge?
- How has the government of Kerala addressed this issue through the modicum of policy intervention in primary education sector?
- What are the Policy shifts that are taking place vis-a-vis the government and its policies in relation to school education?

- If education is understood to be a critical base for social advancement then why is there the need to use the term uneconomic with reference to schools? What really are the factors that lead to the rise of uneconomic schools?
- What are the specific reasons for the shutting down of uneconomic schools in Kerala which is known for its high rate of literacy?
- Is the government slowly withdrawing its role from the social sector and giving more room/space to private players to play a larger role, especially as far as education sector is concerned? In other words is market overtaking the role of provision of education which primarily falls in the concurrent list and hence is the responsibility of the government?
- Why is the government reluctant to make larger investments in the school education sector, considering it is a critical base for social sector advancement?

Hypotheses

- Increasing role of market is leading to a new phenomenon of government tacitly withdrawing from its role of provision of school education leading to the rise of uneconomic schools
- The policy shift in school education is closely related with the change in ruling party of Kerala.

Review of Literature

The existing literature on the subject can broadly be divided into three major categories.

While the first part deals with the theoretical explanations that provide a detailed understanding of the debates that take place in the realm of education policy, followed by which the second section briefly explains the conceptual understanding of education policy and finally it gives a brief glimpse of Indian perspective and scenario.

Theoretical Explanations

While attempting to understand the problem of uneconomic schools, it becomes essential to view it from a theoretical lens. The lens of Human Capital Theory, serves this purpose well because, this theory in particular views education as an investment from which, they aim to benefit in the form of development. This theory has been explained in detail below, following which other theoretical dimensions as espoused by different scholars has also been discussed.

Human Capital Theory seeks to explain the gains of education and training as a form of investment in human resources (Aliaga 2001:427), and the main proposition is that people are considered a form of capital for development (Aliaga 2001; Becker 1993, Benhabib and Spiegel 1994; Engelbrecht 2003; Hendricks 2002)

As a result both schooling as well as education are considered as crucial investments that are necessary to hone the skills of the labour force in such a manner that it leads to increased productivity as far as individuals are concerned, ultimately leading to development and growth of the nation at a global level.

As per Schultz (1961) “Human capital is the knowledge and skills that people acquire through education and training being a form of capital, and that this capital is a product of deliberate investment that yields returns.”

According to G Psacharopoulos(1985) “Human capital as being formed through investment in education and training. This results in increased productivity among the employees in the workplace.”

G Psacharopoulos(1985) argues that “There is widespread evidence that an individual's earnings increasing with each extra year of schooling. The explanation of human capital theory is that education makes the individual more productive, not only in the market place but also in the household”

As far as human capital theory is concerned, education as an approach is in the centre of factors leading to economic development. Therefore education is seen from an utilitarian lens leading to economic growth and development. This has lead to widespread criticism of the human capital theory. This is specifically because under the theoretical lens of human capital theory, education tends to increase and enlarge the productivity as well as

earnings of a particular individual who is recipient of education, thereby, viewing education as a form of investment. Highlighting this Mingat and Tan (1987) writes that “this investment (in the form of education) is not only crucial for individuals, but is also the key to economic growth of a country’.Echoing this thought line, Alfred Marshall(2009) argues that “The most valuable of all capital is that which is invested in human beings”.

In the 1950’s and 1960’s when human capital theory gained prominence it also received a serious criticism when the liberal academicians related it to slavery, arguing that treating human beings as a machinery that could be invested into could once again leads to slavery or “neo-slavery.”In fact, even before the 20th century, the liberal philosopher J. S Mill criticized it and noted that “the human being himself. . . I do not class as wealth. He is the purpose for which wealth exists” (Mill, 1909, p. 47).

But despite being subject to astute criticism, it has not reduced the popularity of Human Capital Theory, so much so that it is still very popular paradigm among policy makers while formulating education policy.

While this is the predominant lens through which this work has been viewed, it is also important to look at the other theories that operate in the paradigm of school education, in a brief manner here.This is done with the intent of enriching the theoretical debate that centers around school education.

Another theoretical debate pertaining to education policy centers on conservative and neo-conservative dimensions. When it comes to conservative debate in education it mainly revolves around achieving progress in the field of ‘science and math.’Therefore, it subscribes to more traditional idea of learning within the structure of a classroom. On similar lines the neo-conservatives do not see the critical intent behind learning, except to produce skilled labor ready to face a competitive economy.

In contrast to this another theory is propounded by the Marxists and can be referred to as the left-educational theory. They, view schooling as a system that enables capitalist relations to re-produce itself. Therefore the knowledge that is imparted in schools reproduces the existing class structure, thereby reinforcing the discourse on domination. The proponents of this school of thought are Bowles and Gintis, Carnoy, Witty, Apple to name a few. According to the notion propounded by radicals, schools were thus stripped

of innocence and grafted into a social and economic concept of rationality that was motivated by capitalism to produce a labour class.

But it has been met by its own criticism that schools are not necessarily dominated by the logic that exists at workplace and to see it purely from the lens of the oppressor and oppressed seems to deprive the school from the sacrosanctity of learning, which is the prime role of schooling.

Another two major debates deal with postmodernism in education and feminism vis-a-vis school education. These debates have been analyzed here in a succinct manner and it gives a glimpse of the overall paradigm of educational debates.

Postmodernist debates with regard to school education as espoused by scholars such as Jameson(1984), Lyotard(1984) Laclau(1988) view schools as democratic spaces where children actively engage in an environment where democratic ethos govern the structure and functioning of a school and a classroom set-up.

As against the above mentioned theories the feminist debates with regard to schooling include Sandra Acker(1987), Eileen Byrn(1978) have further two subsets. One is the liberal bourgeois feminist view, who tries to eradicate the gender discriminatory practices that exist in not only the school set up, but also the individual psyche.

While the other subset of socialist feminists, derive its ideas from Marxist stream of thought that women are encouraged in streams of education that mould them into low-paid employees, thereby reproducing the capitalist-class divisions.

Conceptualising Education Policy

Psacharopolous (1989:180) defines educational policy as well as reform as “Perhaps the contemporary equivalent of what twenty years ago was known as educational planning. Whatever it is, and no matter how many disguises it takes (such as educational reform) practically every country in the world has at one time or another proclaimed an intention or made a decision that would affect some aspects of schooling in society.”

At the onset, it would be interesting to note that the following study would be more political in nature although it would continue to have inter-linkages with the economic as well as the field of education. Bringing to fore the prominence of the political realm while

looking at educational policies , Riddell(1999:208) classifies the study of policy shift in education sector as primarily being political, by claiming that when seen from the “political lens” that which comes to light is the “agenda setting and implementation process by which reforms are brought about”(Riddell,1999). This point has been further highlighted by Grindle who notes that

In order to understand the political dynamic it is very important to understand how improvised education becomes a part of the political agenda, how reform initiatives are developed, what type of interactions and negotiations shape or alter their contents, how important actors as well as interest groups respond to proposals for change and how initiatives are implemented and sustained once they are introduced. (Grindle, 2004:1-2)

Riddell(1999:209) points out that in the economic paradigm the economist looks at the school system in terms of efficiency as well as resource use and tries to understand the interface between the school and labour market.

In contrast to the above two perspectives, educationists looks at aspects like access to education, the levels of equity in participation as well as issues relating to improvement of school.

Highlighting the political perspective Rowley (1971:12) writes that education “is a reflection of the political system of a nation and to some extent the instrument of the national government”. Many countries from time to time have experienced various changes in educational policy especially in line with the enormous changes taking place all over the world. Khandelwal (2001:1) writes “The education scenario in the present century is highly influenced by the trends of globalization and liberalization”.

Emphasizing this Joseph Di Bona writes, “As the world becomes more closely integrated, financially, industrially and in terms of communication and media, there appears to be a greater need for national system of education to reflect global tendency”(1998:356).

Priyam(2015:10) writes that in many developing countries, policy reforms pertaining to education sector have been carried out “within a framework of economic reorganization and restructuring-often referred to as Structural Adjustment Programmes which were undertaken in the 1980’s and 1990’s.”

In this context, World Bank requires a special mention as it has been involved over the years, in assisting various educational reform programs all across the globe. According to the World Bank Report (1995:9), “within its lending portfolio, education had the largest share thereby, underlining the importance of education sector.” Priyam(2015:11) writes that “Even within the education sector priority was given to primary education.”

Dreze and Sen highlight that

Deep seated biases and the pressures that have determined Indian educational priorities and the fact that inequalities in education are a reflection of inequalities of economic and social powers of different groups in India. Therefore the educational inequalities both reflect and help to sustain social disparities. (1997:14)

Indian perspective and scenario

Khandelwal(2001:4) elaborating about the Indian experience points out that with regard to India the educational policy that is being implemented in present, finds its origin in historical past. Patel reiterating this point writes that our educational policy is indebted to Gandhiji’s educational philosophy according to which

if education is to fit the future citizen for playing his role in society, he should cultivate in school a character appropriate to a social being. He must be trained for his life. He must have an opportunity to practice civic virtues at school. He should cultivate the breadth of vision, toleration and good neighborliness. The school must be an organized society engaged in some fruitful creative activity. (Patel, 1952:24)

This is the philosophy underlying the “Basic Education Scheme” as expounded by Mahatma Gandhi.

Over the course of several years in India especially, post-independence efforts, have been made to improve school education. Especially after independence, it was soon realized, by the policy makers of the nation, that the basic thrust of education policy in the country is “Education for All”. With education sector, being included in the Concurrent List of the country, thereby becoming a joint responsibility of the central and the state governments.

It became important that the State Governments as well as Central Government had to work together to prepare as well as implement national plans for the building up of the education sector in the country. Thus as a result of this, the Indian Education Commission also known as the Kothari Commission was set up in 1964, and came out with its report in the year 1966. Amongst the several recommendations that it made one of the key recommendations was that educational system in India should be reconstructed by improving the effectiveness of primary education and introducing work experience as an integral part of general education.

The recommendations of the Indian Education Commission then proved to be the basis for the creation of National Policy on Education which was formulated in 1968 and some of its key recommendations were:

- Provision of free primary education in all parts of the country
- Special assistance should be provided to under developed areas for expansion and improvement of primary education by the Government of India.

Exactly two decades later National Policy on Education was revisited in the year 1986 which amongst other things recommended

- The introduction of Operation Blackboard with the aim of providing basic infrastructural facilities in primary schools in India.
- Involvement of voluntary agency and Panchayt Raj institutions in running of Non- Formal Education Programme (NFE)
- Launching of a national mission before entering 21st Century

Following the National Policy on Education which was introduced in 1986 and the Programme of Action in 1992, educational reforms were eventually introduced in the early phase of 1990's. Thus came to light the Operation Blackboard and the Mid-day-Meal Scheme(MDM), both of which were domestically funded. These were intended to improve school participation rates as well as the quality of institutions.

At the time these reforms were being brought about in the early 1990's, the World Conference on Education was held at Jomtein in Thailand(also known as the Jomtein Conference). Priyam (2015:69)writes that "The turning point in the education sector came

after the 1990 Jomtein Conference and the economic crisis faced by the country in 1991. During 1991 Balance of Payment (BOP) crisis forced Indian Government to resort to loan from the World Bank with conditionality's attached to it."

Priyam further highlights that (2015:69) the World Bank became the largest donor for primary education in India. During the same period DPEP was launched in 1993 and an extension and improvised version of it i.e the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was introduced in 2001. It is interesting to note that at the time of Jomtein Conference the country had a successful programme on adult literacy inspired by then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The parties of the Left especially the Communist Party of India (Marxist), (which had a significant base in Kerala) backed this programme and a large number of intellectuals and academics also supported it.

Thus, the two organizations that is the World Bank and the UNICEF (who were also the principal sponsors of the Jomtein Conference) made public that their sole focus of funding was primary education. This view was shared by various aid agencies and even UNICEF supported the bank's position. The Indian stand was that primary education alone was not enough for universal literacy.

However, India's national policy, soon enough took a sharp U-turn in favor of the "agenda of primary schooling which was affected by the economic crisis of 1991 and highlighted the need for World Bank Resources. This was reflected in the declining importance of adult education in the Centre's education spending priorities—from 8 percent in 1990-1991 to 1 percent in 1995-1996 and the rise in spending of elementary education from 14 percent to 39 percent over the same period"(GOI:Budget Analysis till 2006-7).

Even, teacher's accountability issues gained increasing significance in the research literature especially as reforms moved to implementation stage in the states. The Public Report on Basic Education (1999) was the first of its kind a research report that brought together the perspectives of researchers, activists and officers concerned with primary education. Based on the educationally backward states of Bihar, MP, Rajasthan and UP the report highlighted the dismal status of primary schools in these states. The Report combines the voice of stakeholders—teachers, parents and children, whose voices it broadcasts without distortion.

A decade after the Public Report on Basic Education (PROBE Report) was launched, in the year 1999, another report was launched called the PROBE Revisited, in the year 2006, in which the same villages, schools and households were surveyed, with some minor modifications. The PROBE Revisited report found that the fundamental problems pertaining to schooling such as low quality of education, classroom activity being less and differences in learning capabilities due to issues of accessibility still present. Although the study also found that the state of Himachal Pradesh did show a significant turnaround when it came to prioritizing school education, this was because the “Education Policy was focused on improving access and retention with its key targets being elimination of inter-regional inequality” (Probe Revisited, 2011). As a result of this turn-around Himachal was seen to be close behind Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

This once again brings the researcher to probe into the school educational scenario in Kerala and for this the methodology that was employed is given below.

Methodology

The research methodology used in this study involved both primary and secondary sources. After the collection of the secondary resources this study was substantiated by field work and entailed conducting interviews with all the key stakeholders both government and civil society members as well as parents and headmasters and headmistress of schools. It primarily employed qualitative tools for research. The dependent variable of this research was uneconomic schools in Kerala, while the independent variable was government action and policies, people’s preferences, quality issues and the like.



Picture No:1.1 Picture shows the researcher undertaking the field study at Edachovva UPS school in Kannur. Credit:Mr.Chenthamarakshan

The study, involved long field visits, with key emphasis on interviews. The interviews that were undertaken over a period of 2 years brought out the insights of the following groups:

- 1) Bureaucrats / Government officials
- 2) Principals of primarily Uneconomic Schools
- 3) Parents (Through PTM's)
- 4) Experts who were also seasoned professionals with regard to Kerala education system

Based on the field study the following study draws on the narratives from the field and analyses them in a thematic manner. Some of the themes that have been covered include the matter of choice/preference, the question of incentive, the issue of social status associated with schooling, the factor of facilities being provide at school, be it infrastructure etc, the question of community participation.

The valuable and diverse inputs that the author garnered from these interviews enabled the author to develop a deeper understanding of the situation that faces the uneconomic schools in Kerala and specifically in the district of Kannur.

In order to unearth the data as well as the ground reality the researcher first established key contacts at the Kerala Secretariat in Trivandrum and the researcher also met the Additional Secretary General at the General Education Department. The department suggested the researcher to consult the Directorate of Public Instruction(DPI). Researcher was greatly benefitted from the discussions in the Directorate. Researcher also received the copy of schools which were earmarked as “uneconomic” from the directorate for the year 2017-2018, when the researcher embarked on the first round of field work. Followed by this meeting the researcher conducted interviews at Schools in Kannur. Details of these schools are provided in the table in the next page:

Table 1.4: List of uneconomic schools visited as a part of field work for this study in Kannur as per DPI List of 2017-2018

Name of the School	Standards in the school	Lower Primary/Upper Primary/Higher Secondary	Management	Name of Assistant Educational Officer/District Educational Officer
GLPS Chovva	I-IV	Lower Primary	Government	Kannur North
Govt. LPS Thayatheru	I-IV	Lower Primary	Government	Kannur North
Govt. UPS Thavakkara	I-VII	Upper Primary	Government	Kannur North
GUPS Devatharkandy	I-VII	Upper Primary	Government	Kannur North
GUPS Muzhathadam	I-VII	Upper Primary	Government	Kannur North
Edachovva UPS	I-VII	Upper Primary	Aided	Kannur North
Elayavoor Dharmodayam LPS	I-IV	Lower Primary	Aided	Kannur North
Elayavoor South LPS	I-V	Lower Primary	Aided	Kannur North
Ganapathivilasam LPS Chovva	I-V	Lower Primary	Aided	Kannur North
Gourivilasam UPS	I-VII	Upper Primary	Aided	Kannur North

Source: Directorate of Public Instruction(DPI), personally retrieved after visiting the DPI

The total no of schools covered were 10 uneconomic schools of Upper primary, lower Primary sectors. Researcher interviewed 42 people including parents, and headmasters/Headmistress. List is provided in Appendix 1.

A semi-structured interview was used as a tool to collect data from respondents. In addition, unstructured interviews were also conducted with the officials and experts. The questions are provided in the Appendix 2. This study was based upon a semi-ethnographic method as the researcher also stayed in the villages of the study. However, it didn't involve a long-term stay. The researcher also revisited the sites in order to interact with the same group of respondents in order to know about their response to the state policy.

Kannur: Field Site

In the year 2000 the maximum number of public schools that were termed as uneconomic schools (i.e school with less than 25 number of students) were found in the district of Kannur in Kerala(418 in number) and even after almost 20 years in the year 2018-2019, i.e when this study was conducted the maximum number of uneconomic schools were to be found in Kannur(723 in number). This further prompted the research scholar to narrow down on Kannur as the field of study.

As per the State Economic Review(2016), the highest number of uneconomic schools(723) were and are in Kannur District of Kerala, therefore the focus of this study was Kannur North Taluk, of Kannur district of Kerala. However, one of the limitations of the study is that in order to keep the identity of the informants discreet and protected the names of the schools as well as the respondents have been changed. Furthermore, the thesis uses the terms-ward, pupil, child and student interchangeably, as well as government schools and public schools interchangeably.

Details of the field site, including its demographic, geographical, economic, and sociological features is discussed in detail in chapter three.

Outline of the Study

This study examines the phenomenon of 'uneconomic' schools in the state of Kerala, and the dynamics and nuances therein, with special focus on the district of Kannur, The introduction mainly discusses the background of the proposed research, including the research questions, aims and objectives, literature review, the theoretical lens/outlook, hypotheses and research methodologies and overall outline of this study. The first core,

chapter attempts to understand the school education policy with regard to India and the role played by International actors in influencing the National policies on education and the dynamics therein. It also looks at the political economy of funding and how in with neo-liberalisation taking place globally, what can be seen is neo-colonialism in the field of education as well. This chapter, therefore concludes by analysing how external aid serves as a link between what is understood as Global and Indian, especially with regard to education policy. Following this, the second core chapter, analyses the genesis of modern education in Kerala and brings to fore the pre-independence efforts that were undertaken both by the royalty of erstwhile Travancore and the missionaries in strengthening the education system in Kerala. It also brings to light the role that the masses played in raising public sensitivity towards education. Following which it looks at the post-independence efforts in towards emboldening the education system in Kerala and finally concludes by seeing how the confluence of global and national policies plays out in Kerala. The third chapter takes a deep dive into the field level analysis pertaining to ‘uneconomic’ schools in Kannur, by first giving a detailed description of the field that is Kannur district. Followed by which it gives a glimpse of the School education structure in Kannur and then proceeds to look at the reasons behind the rise of ‘uneconomic’ schools in Kannur and concludes by analysing the same. The fourth chapter therein attempts to understand the policy interventions undertaken by the Government with regard to schools in Kerala with a special focus on arresting this phenomenon of rise of ‘uneconomic’ schools, lately. It also brings to light the effort and voices of Government officials who are directly involved with making and implementing policies pertaining to school education in Kerala. The fifth chapter sees how as a result of the policy interventions there is a change in the outlook of the masses as a result there is a trend of reverse migration taking place with regard to parents transferring their students from private schools and putting them in government or aided schools, even if they come under the category of ‘uneconomic’ schools. Therefore it analyses at a closer level the factors leading to reverse migration of pupils from private schools to government and aided school, by enriching it with narratives from the field. Followed by which it also looks at remittances as a form of Human Capital investment and attempts to understand the role of public-private dynamics that plays out in school education sector in Kerala. Finally the thesis concludes by enlisting the findings from the field and the study and the further takeaways that could further enrich the role played by school education in Kerala.

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Chapter 1.

India's School Education Policy since Independence:

An Analysis

Introduction

The overall framework of this chapter is broadly divided into three broad sections. While the first section deals with the evolution of school education policy over the years, especially pertaining to education in India. The second section looks at the global influences, on evolution of India's school education policy. The third section looks at the external aid as a link between the global and national and thereby throws light at the political economy of funding pattern.

I. Evolution of India's School Education Policy

Before developing a deeper understanding of how India's school education policy evolved over the years, it is important to look into what does one imply by the term 'Policy' which has so often been used in this study.

Policy is a term that has been defined by various political studies scholars and management professionals. But for the purpose of this work one may refer to the definition espoused by political scientist Freidrich (1963) who considers policy to be a

Proposed course of action of a person, group or government within a given environment, providing obstacles and opportunities which the policy was proposed to utilize and overcome in an effort to reach a goal or realize an objective or a purpose. (Freidrich, 1963)

With this definition in backdrop Anderson(2014) proceeds to define, public policy as "Whatever Governments choose to do or not to do". He further emphasis that "Public policies are those policies that are developed by Governmental Bodies and officials"(Anderson, 2014). Public policies often tend to arise in response to or as a reaction to certain policy demands in other words the "claim for action or inaction on some policy issues made by various actors (like private citizens, group representatives etc) upon government officials and agencies" (Anderson, 2014).

Since policies tend to arise in response to demands even public policies tend to evolve and change as the society evolves and changes and with it the needs also change. It is in this context that one tends to look at the policy shifts taking place in the education sector

and the various actors serving as a stimulus and catalyst for this change and shift in educational policy.

Indian Case in Point

Now, while attempting to understand the evolution of India's education policy it is important to look at the past, in order to understand the present scenario in which Indian education system stands, today. When India became independent, the proportion of literates in the total population was 12 per cent (about 18 per cent if we exclude children below five from the total population). Spread of literacy and primary education were rightly perceived as national priorities by the eminent leaders of that period (Kumar, 1998).

It was in this backdrop, that the world had just emerged from the devastating world war and in the year 1948, education had been declared as an essential fundamental right by the newly formed United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was adopted by the United Nations (UN) proclaimed that "Everyone has a right to Education" (United Nations General Assembly, 1948).

Meanwhile in the newly independent India, the constitutional mandate was that "the state will endeavor to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of the constitution, free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14." (Constitution of India, Art. XLV, part 4). This was the only article within the Directive Principles that came with a fixed time period, thereby reflecting the seriousness of the constitution maker's vis-à-vis provision of education to its citizenry. Therefore here it becomes important to briefly look into the internal dynamics of how India's educational pillar was formulated.

Historical Background of Education Policy in India: Inner Workings

This section attempts to look at the idea behind the formulation of education policy in India in the immediate aftermath of independence. It focuses on how India's first education minister, Abdul Kalam Azad, undertook the challenging task of uplifting the mass of Indian populace from the tight grip of ignorance coupled with poverty; especially when India was reeling under the aftermath of partition, and the Government of India at that time was occupied with the issues of rehabilitation of the people affected and attempting, to unite the country as one single nation and also to make the country tread

the road of economic recovery. It was in this context that Abdul Kalam Azad was left with the onerous task of building and strengthening one of the core pillars of a nation, i.e the education sector. K.N. Panikkar(2011:38) writes that for Azad the chief focus of building an education system was bringing about an ‘intellectual decolonization without losing sight of the advances in knowledge that the colonial system represented’.

For Azad there were openings in colonial modern, as well as in ‘native traditional, and from here much was to be gained.’(Panikkar 2011:40) Therefore he wasn’t completely dismissive of either, but tried to incorporate the best element of western world as well as the traditional world, while removing or filtering out the colonial aspect and ideology of the former and the irrational as well as unscientific aspects of the latter. Hence, “What was advocated by Azad as an alternative was a system of liberal and humanitarian education which would then transform the outlook of the people and set the nation on the path of progress and prosperity” (Panikkar 2011:41).

Thus, Azad’s view had the characteristic traits of best of both worlds in which the concept of modernity was conceptualized within the broader realm of universal values.

The reason why this was the pressing need of the hour was because the steps that were undertaken by the colonial rulers, in order to educate a small Indian populace, led to the creation of a unique social-strata with a tinge of ‘modernity’ which was primarily relayed through the colonial administration.

Education that was provided in the colonial era proved to be a breath of fresh air, because India being a society that is primarily caste ridden, in the pre-colonial era, educational pursuits was primarily restricted to the upper caste of the Indian society. But with the onset of missionaries, and later with the introduction of schools run by government, any student irrespective of his or her religion, caste or creed could seek admission in the government run schools.

Although this was met with opposition from upper castes but nevertheless, it provided an avenue, for the previously excluded social class and caste to rise up the social ladder. Thus despite its oppressive nature and as self-contradictory as it may sound, the ‘non-discriminatory’ form of colonial education system proved as a means for lower castes to consider “colonialism as a source of emancipation”. Expounding this Panikkar(2011) writes “In a society in which educational opportunities were dependent upon the location

of birth in the caste hierarchy, the public character, of colonial education which, in principle, permitted open access was an exciting new departure” (Panikkar,2011).

This above mentioned breath of fresh air was further compounded by the fact that the curricula that was brought in by the missionaries and the colonizers brought with them the branch of scientific knowledge system, which was unbeknown in the traditional form of education system in India. Adding to this it also served as a means to learn English which was the main language of the British, and thereby paved a way for social mobility of many.

Besides the language of instruction the scientific content and nature of the western education served as a major attraction to the Indian middle class. But when Azad became the first education minister his intent was that mass education had to be imparted via mother tongue of Indians while retaining scientific temper as an integral part of the Indian education system. Therefore, what we see is an amalgamation of both the worlds.

This was because he was concerned that education imparted by the colonizers in their language of instruction, will create a social strata of Indians who would not only be alienated and vastly removed from their “national and ethnic” culture but would also be socially distanced from their own fellow Indian citizens and countrymen. As,“the overwhelming opinion was that unless rooted in the national, culture and language, modernity would remain superficial”(Panikkar 2011:40). Azad(1948) elucidated this in an emphatic manner in the following statement

No Indian language but English which was foreign to us was made the medium of instruction. The result was that modern education in India began to be imparted in an un-Indian way. The Indians had to shape their minds in artificial and not in natural moulds. Not only, had they had to change their language but also their minds. Their whole approach to different branches of learning was through the medium of a foreign tongue. Now it became necessary for every Indian child to shape an artificial mind and to tackle every aspect of learning from an unnatural angle of vision. He could not enter the sacred precincts of learning with a natural mind. (Azad, 1948)

In the immediate aftermath of independence the national leaders of that time like Jawaharlal Nehru, Azad were keen on the pressing need for decolonization and this thought process reverberated even in the field of education as could be seen in the various policy statements that were made during that time.

Thus, in the aftermath of Independence, two Commissions were appointed, the first was the Radhakrishnan Commission in the year 1948 which focused on the higher education, followed by the Mudaliar Commission in 1952 which focused on the secondary education.

Following this in the year 1964, under the aegis and chairmanship of Dr. D.S. Kothari an 'Education Commission' was appointed, which came to be known as the 'Kothari Commission'. It was set up in order to look at all the stages of education and to build and set up a national system of education. Its final report was submitted in the year 1966 and some of its key recommendations among the several others were 'Qualitative improvement of standards, equal educational opportunities for all'. Rao (2010) writes that "even though recommendations of the Kothari Commission were diluted at every stage, they continued to remain the basic framework on which important decisions on education were taken by successive governments".

Thereafter in the aftermath of the Kothari Commission's report, in the year 1968, the first National Policy on Education was introduced based on the recommendations of the Kothari Commission. According to this policy "Education had to be viewed as an instrument to promote a sense of common citizenship and culture and to also strengthen the national imagination"(NPE, 1968).

Moreover, post-independence, till the year 1976, education was part of the State list but in the year 1976, it was transferred to the Concurrent List, by the 42nd Amendment Act, thereby becoming the joint responsibility of the centre as well as the state. This was followed by the National Policy of Education which was adopted by the Indian Parliament in the year 1986 and it came to be known as the National Policy of Education 1986. As per this National Policy on Education, education was viewed "as a unique investment for the present and the future."(NPE, 1986) It aimed to correct gender and regional imbalances and at the same time re-emphasizing on inclusive education.

But with the change of the government at the centre in 1990 and with the National Front coming to power, the then Prime Minister V.P.Singh set up a review committee under Acharya Ramamurthi to recognize the Right to Education(RTE) as a Fundamental Right in the country. Its report, attempted to link all educational programs with the basic requirements that existed in the society.

In 1991, the Government once again changed, and the new minority government that was formed under the aegis of P.V. Narasimha Rao attempted to review the National Policy of Education of 1986 and came up with an updated version in the form of Program of Action (POA) in 1992. It was as per the recommendation of the POA, that District Primary Education Program was launched to promote Universalisation of Elementary Education.

This needs to be understood in the context of overall politics that was taking place at that time. During the early 1990's India faced a serious fiscal crisis, and the country had to take a turn towards policies which had neo-liberal inclinations. Thus with the onset of liberalization, privatization and globalization, in the beginning of 1990's, the state started withdrawing gradually from the public sector, leading to an entry of foreign capital and private investors in the realm of social sector. This was done among other things with the hope that India will be able to keep up with changing times and the tides of change brought about by globalization. Although foreign capital investment was accompanied with Structural Adjustment Program that brought with it a whole set of conditionality's. During that time there was large scale criticism doing the intellegentsia that this opening of the doors is leading to re-colonisation of a new kind (quite different in nature from the colonization of 19th Century, which was primarily based on territorial occupation) leading to intellectual hegemony by advanced nations who also hold the key to the purse strings and thereby influencing the funding.

Around that time the Yashpal Committee Report(1993) entitled "Learning without a Burden", which was released in the year 1993 claimed that "the educational policy that the government has enunciated, as evident from various legislations before Parliament, has three distinct features - centralisation, privatisation and the entry of foreign educational providers". Although the entry of foreign-national investors was done with keeping in mind the pressing need to "modernize" thereby making it possible for Indian students to keep up with the 'global educational and intellectual interactions"(Yashpal Committee Report,1993). Though it was initiated with this intent, as can be seen both

now and in the hindsight that educational enterprises that are and were private in nature are more focused on accruing profit. In line with this Panicker (2011) writes “Private education has therefore turned into a synonym for what can be understood as commercialization.”

Despite this happening at the realm of Indian politics, in the year 1994, the Supreme Court of India in *J.P. Unnikrishnan v. State of Andhra Pradesh* (1993) case argued that “every child has a fundamental right to free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 and proclaimed that this flows from the right to life enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution.” As a result of this judgment various political parties included in their manifesto the provision of elementary education as a fundamental right.

In 1997, the United Front government that came to power introduced the 83rd Constitutional Amendment Act which “proposed to make education free and compulsory for the children between the age group of 6-14 years as a fundamental right”. It was also during this period that Team PROBE (1999) including Jean Dreze et al released the PROBE Report (Public Report on Basic Education, 1999) which argued strongly for elementary education to be made a fundamental right.

In the year, i.e. 1999, Tapas Majumdar Committee also stated that “the financial implications of the fundamental right to elementary education, was well within the national commitment of 6 percent for education sector” (Government of India, 1999).

This set the mandate to bring to fruition the Right to Education in India. And after few years, in the year 2001, the 83rd Constitutional Amendment Act was reworked and re-introduced in the Parliament as 93rd Amendment Bill 2001. But the passage of this bill was not bereft of intense debate.

Firstly, it was argued that this bill was in clear violation of Supreme Court judgment in the *JP Unnikrishnan Case*, where it was held that every child who was below the age of fourteen years had a fundamental right to primary education. Furthermore it was also argued that every child should be guaranteed a right to education till the age of 18 years or else it would lead to growth of child labor.

Secondly, the bill had also come under heavy criticism for inadequate financial allocation of budget for the implementation of it Right to Education. While the financial memorandum that was appended to the bill claimed that a sum of Rs 98000 crore would

be provided for implementation of the Act during a duration of next 10 years, critics argued that the expert body called the Tapas Majumdar Committee that was set up under the NDA Government, had estimated a total sum of Rs.1,37,000 crore for the implementation of Right to Education Act over a period of ten years.

Thirdly, this bill also faced heavy criticism for not defining the key terms such as “free” and “compulsory”, which led to a lot of ambiguity in its provisions.

Finally despite astute debates, “The 86th Amendment Act, 2002, made three specific provisions in the Constitution to facilitate the realization of free and compulsory education to children between the age of six and fourteen years as a fundamental right. These were (i) adding Article 21a in Part in (fundamental rights), (ii) modifying Article 45, and (iii) adding a new clause (k) under Article 51A (fundamental duties), making the parent or guardian responsible for providing opportunities for education to their children between six and 14 years. After much dithering, especially for almost seven years subsequent to the 86th Amendment to the Constitution, the RTE Act 2009 received presidential assent on 26 August 2009, which came into effect on 1st April 2010” (Rao ,2010).

Other Initiatives

While the debate to bring about the Right to Education Act was taking place, the Central Government was also rolling out several initiatives pertaining to education, which have been discussed below:

One such initiative was the Operation Blackboard. This scheme saw the light of the day as a follow up to the National Policy of Education (NPE) 1986. The main agenda behind the policy was to establish basic norms for primary school at the national level. It attempted to provide every primary school with human resource and basic infrastructure. This was to supplement and compliment the efforts being made at the state level for the primary schools. Rao (2010) argues that “small schools located in remote areas and serving mainly the marginalized sections of the population had suffered from severe inadequacies like lack of adequate infrastructure, single teacher handling multi-grade classes etc.”

Therefore to address this issue, the Government of India highlighted that “every primary school will have minimum two classrooms and two teachers irrespective of the number of

children”. It also assured a provision of basic infrastructural material. It was primarily done with the aim to enhance the condition of schools in rural areas of the country.

This scheme was brought to fruition in eight phases wherein the first four phases focused on lower primary schools and the last four phases focused on the upper primary schools in total spanning over a period from 1987 to 2000. During this entire phase the Government of India spent Rs. 40 crores per year on an average, under this very scheme.

Non-Formal Education that emerged over a span of last two decades had also offered an alternative to rigidity as well as inflexibility of the existing formal schooling. It was meant to cater to the needs of children who could not or were unable to avail regular learning facilities at a formal school. Rao(2010) writes that “though it was originally meant for 10 educationally backward states, it was later expanded to cover urban slums, hilly, tribal and desert areas; moreover it was involved in projects for working children.”

Importance was given to establishing Non-Formal Education centers at habitations that were un-served, with special focus towards out-of-school children, school dropouts, non-enrolled children and the like. The main objective with which the program was established was to impart “literacy, numeracy as well as awareness” (Rao,2011) to such children. More than 800 NGO’s were made responsible for running these centres. From the very time of its inception this plan had grown consistently both in its size as well as its coverage.

Rao(2011) argues that “despite several difficulties faced in its implementation, the Non Formal Education managed to provide access of primary education to millions of children from remote and inaccessible areas from the disadvantaged section, girls as well as children belonging to urban slums.” Further he points out that “The program contribution comprised of 3.5 percent of the enrollment at the primary stage, and a reduction of over 1 percent in the overall dropout rate.”(Rao,2011) However it was not bereft of criticism as it received backlash for not being able to provide good quality education to the children.

In the year 1994, another scheme that is the District Primary Education Program(DPEP), was initiated under the aegis and after receiving financial assistance from World Bank. Its aim was universalization of primary education, through the modicum of decentralized planning, as well as community mobilization and with special focus on district as well as population specific planning. Rao (2011) writes that “the districts selected were those that

had female literacy, which was below the national average, and were Total Literacy Campaign had been successful in leading to a larger demand for elementary education.”

This program also aimed at reducing drop-out rates by less than 10 percent. The agenda was to mainstream children who belonged from marginalized sections especially girls as well as SC's and ST's. Although this program was initially introduced in 42 districts of seven states, the program eventually stretched to 273 districts of 18 states. The program ended in 2002.

The grounds for selecting the districts was that, firstly the districts where the projects were being implemented and were able to handle the issue of access more efficiently as well as effectively by opening a large number of schools in areas where the number of schools were less and by upgrading lower primary to upper primary schools. Secondly, some states such as Karnataka started conducting radio lessons which gained momentum and popularity as they helped support rural teachers by providing them adequate academic support. Thirdly it led to the creation of Block Resource Centre (BRC), which provided regular teacher training and support as well as motivation to teachers. Fourthly it led to enrollment drives which further served in reduction of drop-out rates.

Once the districts were selected that issues that arose were that: Firstly, since the implementation of DPEP was not even in all the states, its impact also remained uneven. Secondly there were quality concerns pertaining to achievement levels of various students. Thirdly many resource centers could not provide continuous support to its teachers. Thus in 2002, the DPEP was eventually merged with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan(SSA).

Thus another scheme that needs to be looked into is Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. It is often counted as the single largest program pertaining to education that has been launched in India, and is often also counted as one of the largest programs to exist in the world. It was launched in 2001-02, and it was launched not in a program mode but rather in a mission mode and was Government of India's flagship program for Universalizing Elementary Education(UEE). It was aimed at achieving the goal of Universal Elementary Education in a time bound way. Its design was based on the preceding primary education programs like DPEP and was meant to be an umbrella program. Under the SSA each state as well as district was made to set target dates of not beyond 2010 so that the goals laid out under SSA could be achieved within their specific contexts. It was meant for channelizing all

initiatives of the central government at school level. Initially, during the 9th Plan, it was funded on a sharing basis of 85:15 between the centre and the state, following this in the 10th Plan it was funded on 75:25 basis between the centre and the state and thereafter on a 50:50 basis. The focus area of SSA primarily involved, out of school children, deprived sections of the society including SC, ST and other minorities, provision of education to girls as well as children with different kind of disabilities. It also included ensuring learning achievement of adequate level for all children, bridging gender as well as social gaps in the education system by the year 2010.

Its coverage involved the entire country, although it tried to give special focus and attention to districts which had specific set of issues and problems. The implementation of the SSA initiative was meant to have a holistic approach, whereby it would be a community-involved initiative, thereby involving, NGO's and private players in order to strengthen the initiative to provide Universal Elementary Education(UEE) to all. To realize the aims of SSA, ten interventions and hundred and four programs with the following interventions were formulated. Like in-service computer aided learning, inclusive education for children with special needs, education of girls as well as National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level, the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme, Distance Education and Electronic funds Transfer.

As a result of these interventions the impact of SSA was quite widespread. For instance it helped mainstream those children who were at first left out of schooling process. The infrastructure of the school made significant improvement. There was also significant achievement in teaching methods as well as learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the number of out-of-school children dropped from almost 23 million in 2003-2004 to 9.4 million in 2005-2006. Around 73,000 centers related to academic resources were established at the block level as well as the cluster level in order to provide academic support to teachers belonging to primary and upper primary level. Further SSA was one of those rare programs that brought significant levels of convergence between various other programs. For instance, ICDS, water supply and total sanitation were considered interlinked and crucial for achieving Universal Elementary Education.

Besides the SSA, Mahila Samakhya was another initiative that was launched by the Central Government. After the NPE 1986 was introduced an imminent need was felt to

address the gender gaps in educational achievement of students. This program attempted to recognize the centrality and the pivotal role that education played by empowering women in order to help them achieve equality. This program was unique in the sense that it focused more on the process rather than on mechanical achievement of targets. Rao (2011) writes that “the program revolved around women from village collectives and it helped raise a number of issues that were related to women’s livelihood, health, and other societal concerns.”The aim was to involve greater women’s participation by building capacities creating social awareness, so that they could effectively engage in village level development in general and educational development in particular. This gave credence to the proverb, ‘you teach a woman, you teach a village.’ It was a flexible program which enabled women to learn various issues at their own pace, set their own respective priorities and seek out information as well as knowledge that concerned them. The program served as a crucial link between the empowerment of women in general and women’s education in particular. While attempting to understand the Indian educational policy scenario it becomes important to look into the global policy influences and actors that played a crucial role in molding the domestic policies. This is because the Indian state does not exist in silos but is rather interconnected and also affected by the global influences that underplay its policy making role.

II. Global Influences on Evolution of India’s Education Policy

In order to understand the global educational policy reform within the context of plural framework of actors, policies, context and paradigm it is important to see education as the key to progress, excellence, justice, and equality (Chabbott and Ramirez 2000). This section is an attempt to look at global educational policy within the paradigm of globalization. This is because it’s with the opening up of the market that, in a large scale, a series of policy convergences and diffusion started taking place, whereby there appears to be a similarity in the way in which policy ideation and implementation took place, globally. For instance Carnoy (2016) argues that “global policy develops primarily due to different national elites, adopting similar solutions to a number of common problems, facing education in different countries.”

This trend has enhanced in the context of globalization. As globalization, is often seen to be producing “convergence” in norms and values in the form of institutional culture

specially with regard to “human rights and social policies, such as equity, norms of social efficiency, and democracy” (Meyer *et al.* 1992).

However, while making policies these above mentioned norms and values should not be viewed in water tight compartments but should be seen as a confluence where all these above mentioned aspects meet. For one is not distinctly separate from another.

Especially, with regard to globalization there seems to be a form of inter-dependence worldwide. As countries often learn from models and policies being established in other countries, and take a leaf from how these policies are being put to work in different socio-political and economic context. The dynamics that affect the interplay of these above mentioned aspects is interesting to probe into. This is because the various nations are often influenced by and have to deal with the wider supra-national environment in which they exist.

It is in this context one tries to understand how educational policies are conceived, brought to fruition and then implemented in the wider socio-political scenario, thereby leading to a kind of policy convergence. (That has been discussed in the following section). In order to understand this process further, it is crucial to look into various factors that play a crucial role in conception and formulation of policy especially educational policy and one of the key players in formulation of educational policy are the global actors influencing the policy making process.

Policy Convergence

Education policy has often been considered to be in the putative domain of what is known as the nation-state. Karen *et.al.*(2016) argue that

Education systems complemented the state’s legitimate right to exercise power within national territory, providing a mechanism for socializing citizens and allowing for the authoritative allocation of values. Schooling spread rapidly because of popular demand from citizens and communities – who saw education as an opportunity for personal and group progress. Thus, in the 19th and into the 20th centuries, governments in many parts of the world, vociferously expanded access to schooling and they achieved near universal enrollment at elementary and later secondary levels, and established publicly funded systems for higher

education. Early educational systems, which had often been funded and controlled by religious organizations or communities, were gradually absorbed into nationally funded and controlled public systems; leaving governments to play an increasingly authoritative role in childhood socialization. (By controlling the allocation of public resources for education; setting national (and sub-national) curricula and standards; hiring and paying teachers and structuring their work; and owning the schools themselves, schooling and school systems played a central role in constructing what Anderson (1991) describes as the “imagined community” of the modern nation state. (Karen et.al., 2016)

Therefore if one were to look at the annals of history, it is interesting to note that “that cross-national education policy borrowing emerged as a persistent feature of national educational policy setting.”(Karen, et.al, 2016) For instance in the early 19th Century when national education systems were first instituted in Europe or North America, education policy makers were actively studying education systems abroad in order to decipher what aspects of an education system to borrow and what to avoid, in order to develop a best system for its citizenry.

However, this was not a phenomenon that was only restricted to western hemisphere, as even in Meiji Japan, when the government first began to develop an education system in the 1870’s, it sent many emissaries abroad to study the education systems that existed in different countries like in USA and also in countries of Europe like Germany and they subsequently continued to adopt many of its policies in developing its own educational system.

Apart from the policy borrowings at the national level a modest attempt was also made at the international level through the setting up of International Bureau of Education at the time of the League of Nations.

Karen *et al* (2016) argue

“The end of World War II marked an important departure from this trajectory. As with the creation of the United Nations, and the first international inter-governmental organization with an educational

mandate, UNESCO, as well as with the establishment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), placed education on the agenda of a new kind of multilateralism among post-war governments. It was focused on building shared principles and values across nations through stronger economic and political interdependence, the new multilateral architecture helped to construct a form of “embedded liberalism” that married together the objectives of building more inclusive economies (primarily through the recognition of the need for social safety nets and greater access to jobs), with greater civil and political freedoms and a more integrated, and a better managed, world economy (through the creation of the Bretton Woods institutions). (Ruggie 1982; Mundy 1998).

Karen *et al.* (2016) further argue that

It is in this context of “embedded liberalism” that education became recognized as a powerful tool not only for constructing more inclusive national economies, but for ensuring a lasting peace based on common values of individual freedoms and shared prosperity. While education would remain predominantly the preserve of national sovereignty in this new global order, for the first time, the need for global standards and cross-national problem solving in education was recognized as an appropriate and important domain for multilateralism. The breakdown of colonialism and the emergence of a whole new group of independent states after World War II further spurred the growth of international educational policy-making. By the 1960s, newly formed national programs and agencies for delivering foreign aid, as well as international organizations, such as the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank, had begun to join UNESCO in supporting national educational development in newly independent states. (Karen *et al.*, 2016)

Therefore since the mid 20th Century, education has become a formal issue to be dealt with, hands on, for international policy makers and international organizations. Karen et al(2016)further argue

that this can be seen with the formation of United Nations Education and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and with the establishment of what came to be known as United Nations Declaration of Human Rights for it ushered innew era for global policy-making in education, opening the way to a proliferation of bilateral, multilateral, and non-governmental efforts to influence and transform educational systems and set global educational standards. Today, governments are increasingly engaged in forms of global educational exchange and policy-making, through membership in such diverse institutions as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Group of 8(G8), the World Bank, the European Union (EU), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).(Karen et.al., 2016)

Globalisation and the Onset of Global Education Policy Post-1975

Dale (1999) “has attempted to document the mechanisms through which policy ideas from international organizations influence national, provincial, and local policies in education, namely, imposition, harmonization, dissemination, standardization, and interdependence.For instance, imposition works through funding conditionality’s. International organizations (as well as powerful states) impose their policy preferences on low-income and/or financially dependent countries via loan conditionality’s, debt cancellation, and trade agreements, among other mechanisms”.

This can be seen in the form of Structural Adjustment Program(SAP) that was imposed on India in the early 1990’s.On the other hand, “Harmonization occurs when groups of nations agree to implement common policies in a specific policy domain. While, dissemination is the exhortatory or suasion approach to influence and works, through examples of best practice and the like.” (Simons 2014). “Standardization is another important mechanism and can be seen in the international comparative testing work of the OECD and the IEA.”

“Tests such as PISA, TIMSS, and PIRLS help constitute the globe as a commensurate space of measurement, creating what one might see as an epistemological mode of global governance through the alignment of global and national epistemic communities and learning standards” (SellarandLingard,2013a;2013b;2014).

On the other hand, “interdependence is another mechanism through which the influence of international organizations has effects within the national and provincial policies and policy-making, for example, through globally established targets such as with Education for All” (Verger *et al.* 2012; Benavot *et al.*,2016).

The reason these concepts emerged was because,

by the 1980s, the World Bank had emerged as the single largest source of international finance for educational development, and as the most powerful global thought leader in education, particularly for developing countries. Heavily influenced by the USA, the World Bank has, framed and heavily promoted the use of market like mechanisms and competition to ensure educational efficiency. (Jones 1992; Jones and Coleman 2005; Mundy 2002; Resnik2006; Woods 2000).

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Bank was influential in designing a reform agenda for countries facing debt crises due to the loss of cheap international credit, advising governments around the world to restructure their education sectors by lowering subsidies to tertiary level education and introducing user fees at this level; and to introduce efficiency-driven reforms through the use of contract teachers, lowering of repetition rates, and enhanced parental and community “participation” in school level costs. (Hinchliffe 1993; World Bank 1988; 1995).

Though the OECD and the “World Bank form the institutional anchors of the new global policy architecture in education, it is important to recognize that this architecture is thicker – and much more diverse – than a focus on these two organizations might suggest. Among intergovernmental actors, the United Nations and its specialized agencies UNESCO and UNICEF continue to play a critical role in advancing the notion of education as a fundamental human right, often challenging more econometric approaches to education policy”(Karen *et. al.*, 2016).

Role of Global Actors

As can be seen above, international players also tend to influence the policy making at the country level both in covert as well as overt ways. Thus, amongst the multi-varied actors, some of the key players influencing the formation of educational policies globally are United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and World Bank.

Historically, UNESCO has been professionally influencing international policies pertaining to education sector. This can be seen even in the year 1951, that is five years after its inception, during the year 1951 at the International Conference on Public Education, which was sponsored by UNESCO and the International Bureau of Education (which also operates under the aegis of UNESCO), adopted a recommendation (no. 32) reinforcing the stance on compulsory education. These recommendations laid down broad principles and practical methods for each state to follow in order to organize its national education system along the lines expressed by the organization. By the year 1983, at least 5 years of education were made compulsory in 171 countries.

However, it is interesting to note that UNESCO's work has not been exclusive as far as creation and sustenance of educational policies are concerned. For its work World Bank has often complimented pertaining to education.

Although, initially created to rebuild Europe after the devastating impact of the World War II, with adequate infrastructure support, it was in the year 1960 that the World Bank began making inroad through investments in the realm of education sector. For instance,

in the 1960s, the World Bank began investing in vocational education programs based on demands for manpower. Then in 1980s, the World Bank, in response to criticism that it solely emphasized on vocational and technical education, broadened the scope of its financial investments to include all levels of education, from elementary to higher education, and to include academic and basic education as well. (Heyneman, 2003).

Combined Role of International Actors

In the year 1991, the World Conference on Education for All was held and the key sponsors of the conference were UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO and World Bank, and it is

little surprise that the Executive Secretary of this World Conference on Education for All (Jomtein Conference) was Mr. Wadi Haddad, who had just before the start of the conference been in-charge of the World Bank's central education policy department.

Here it is important to note that the focus of World Conference on Education for All attempted to address the issue of "basic education" which had hints of universal primary education within it. At the same conference it is interesting to note that within the ambit of basic education consisted early childhood education, primary schooling, adult literacy, essential skills for youth and adults, and access to knowledge and skills via the mass media.

Within ten years of the World Conference on Education for All, in the year 2002 was conducted the agenda Education for All was adopted through the Dakar Framework. King (2007) writes that "Dakar provided an opportunity for UNESCO in particular to reinforce the wider understanding of basic education which had been present in Jomtien". This included the following, which came to be known as the six Dakar Targets (UNESCO, 2000)

- 1) Expanding as well as improving early and comprehensive childhood care and education; especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- 2) Ensuring that by the year 2015 all children, particularly girls, those belonging in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to complete free and primary education of good quality
- 3) Ensuring that learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills program
- 4) Achieving 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- 5) Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with focus on ensuring girls full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- 6) Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Five years following the Dakar Summit, the Millennium Development Goals came into existence with 8 Goals, 18 associated Targets, and no less than 48 indicators. However they could not come into complete fruition and were then subsumed under the currently enforced Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Following this, on 04th November 2015, the Incheon Declaration was brought in, in which the Education 2030 Framework for Action was introduced. Despite the various up's and down faced during the policy formulation process the key players like UNESCO and World Bank continued to play significant and crucial role, but this was not without its own criticisms.

As far as UNESCO is concerned it has and had been embroiled in various controversies dealing with its notion of westernization and globalization, especially with its legitimacy being questioned for over a period of a decade with both United States of America and United Kingdom being absent from the it's domain. This had seriously impacted and placed limits on its financial resources and thereby political clout and power. This had also strongly impacted UNESCO's ability to serve as a "lead agency" of UN as far as education was concerned thereby making many question its credibility.

The World Bank had come under criticism for "championing of, what can be understood as economic globalization" through which educational policies were being endorsed and the lending parameters seem to be closely dovetailed or linked to one another.

This leads to the question of funding.

The World Bank has supplemented UNESCO in recent decades as the primary funding agent for international literacy programs. Whereas UNESCO's budget for 2002 totaled more than US\$900 million, the World Bank provides US\$3 billion in new loan investments annually. Furthermore, much of UNESCO's aforementioned extra-budgetary funding derives from the World Bank itself. (Heyneman, 2003)

Due to the international intervention and influences a new issue that is emerging, which is known as Neo-colonialism in education and is subject to major criticisms which has been discussed below.

Neo-Colonialism in Education

Neocolonialism typically refers to the "control of states by external powers despite the formal appearance of constitutional independence" (Bray, 1993). Kwame Nkrumah, a post-independence Ghanaian leader, contended that,

The essence of neocolonialism is that the state which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus political policy is directed from outside. (Young, 2001).

According to Bray (1993), "schools in colonial settings were "primarily designed to meet the conceptions and needs of the colonizers rather than the colonized, and this influenced the amount, type and availability of education". Watson (1994) "asserts that colonial educational systems destroyed existing indigenous educational systems, which in many cases were strongly linked to cultural norms and work preparation. The structures of school systems, textbook and curriculum content, assessment systems, and pedagogical practices were all created in colonial systems in the image of the colonial powers" (Watson, 1994) and thus typically ignored or sought to replace local cultures and discourses. In fact, the agenda of the colonizers was largely characterized by ideological processes aimed at undermining the authenticity of the 'other.' Hence, "education was framed, constructed and driven by an ideology aimed at colonizing the mind and alienating the self and creating an individual that did not believe in her/himself" (Chilisa, 2005).

Thomas and Postlethwaite (1984), while analyzing neocolonialism within the context of globalization argue, "Different dimensions of schooling within any country can be placed on a continuum where complete control by foreign powers is at one end of the continuum and complete control by independent nations is on the other. (Thomas and Postlethwaite, 1984)

Indeed, comparative research has demonstrated amply the isomorphic and convergent character of education and its supporting ideologies and practices throughout the international system.

In order to understand these two pulls well, this chapter has so far looked at the influence of foreign players and will now look into how external aid serves as a link between the global and the local.

III. External Aid as a Link between Global and Indian

To understand the external aid vis-à-vis India better it is important to look into the scenario from the time India opened up its economy in early 1990's and came under the pressure of Structural Adjustment Program. (SAP)

The decade of nineties for India commenced with the onset of new policies, commonly addressed as 'structural adjustment policies', which were related with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). With a slightly different trajectory from other countries in the south, India had to embark on such policies rather suddenly as India found itself on the verge of bankruptcy and needed to be bailed out by July 1991. These policies have been implemented in almost 105 countries so far, which led many to criticize it on the lines of neo-colonialism. The situation of, financial turmoil lead India to open up its economy and allowed the international market to build inroads into the domain which was earlier the space of the state. Further, structural adjustment program significantly stressed for reduction in Government expenditure thereby implying that public subsidies would go down significantly.

Tilak (2002) argues that "The stabilization policies and structural adjustment policies, that accompanied the adjustment loans from the World Bank and the IMF, had led India to make serious cuts in budgetary resources of all sectors, including education, and primary education in particular. Further, with regard to various international aid organizations like the World Bank, this was also the right time to show their commitment to basic education, following the aid commitments made in the World Conference on Education for All at Jomtien in 1990 (WCEFA 1990). Consequently, a social safety net program, in other words a compensatory program that aims at reducing the impact of structural adjustment policies, was launched with loans from the international aid organization to protect vulnerable but important sectors like primary education from the brutal impact of

the economic reform policies. Thus, after a period of four decades since independence, India eventually began open up its economy and to embark on the international assistance for primary education in India, which was never sought by the Government of India for a long time post-independence.

The World Conference on ‘Education for All’ (Jomtein Conference) and the Aftermath

During the time the World Conference on Education for All was being held at Jomtein, Thailand from 5th March 1990 to 9th March 1990, India already had a program on adult literacy which was running successfully, under the aegis of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. But the position of World Bank was different from India’s stand. Priyam (2015) writes, that “the World Bank put exclusive emphasis on the provision of primary schooling”. This stand was supported by different donor agencies including UNICEF. The World Bank as well as UNICEF, being the key principal donors of Jomtein Conference made it crystal clear that their sole focus would be on funding primary education (King 2007). Priyam (2015) throwing light on India’s role argues that Mr. Anil Bordia, the GOI’s Secretary of Education argued at the conference that “primary education alone was not sufficient to ensure Universal literacy.” He stressed and emphasized on the importance of adult literacy and Non-Formal Education(NFE) which during that time were operational in India. However the sharp U-Turn in India’s national education policy was in line with the primary schooling that took place when India was faced with a major economic crisis in 1991, and was in dire need of resources from World Bank.

But, it is interesting to note that the Government of India simply did not buckle under pressure from external sources, in fact it give a stiff opposition at the Jomtein Conference from external influences through, it’s representative Mr. Anil Bordia the secretary of Department of Education. He was very much critical of the policies of World Bank which had laid special emphasis on primary education and he continued to argue on behalf of the borrowers from developing countries and those who were less articulate but still stood in opposition to the World Bank’s lending approach which had camouflaged its lending for primary education within the context of what later came to be known as Structural Adjustment Program.(SAP)

Global Scenario Vis-À-Vis Educational Aid

It is said that “each aid age, 'marches to two different sets of drums': one set which is played in the agency's own domestic political environment, and another which is played by the political leadership of the 'recipient' country with which aid agreements are concluded. There is, of course, a good deal more noise in this area than just two sets of drums: other bilateral donors, international organizations, inside and outside the UN system, donor conglomerates such as the European Development Fund (EDF) and increasingly the World Bank, all contribute the sound and rhythm of their own drums, to the relationship between the assisting and the assisted country” (Weiler, 1984).

There are primarily two sources from which external aid flow into the education sector: one is domestic and the other is international or foreign aid. Tilak (1988) argues that external aid can be further classified into two distinct categories i.e. one as loan and the other as grants.

The reason why aid in education sector draws attention and is of special focus here is because, education is a sector that influences the fabric of the society in the manner in which it channels and directs the flow of the future of the country.

As a result of which education is an area which is more susceptible to both direct and indirect intervention by international players. The rationale that is often given by international donors while making investment in the education sector is that in developing countries “education contributes to economic growth, to alleviation of poverty, to a more equal distribution of income, and to an improved social environment”. (Tilak,1988)As a result of which it requires “it requires massive investments in education, which the developing economies find it difficult to afford” (Tilak,1988).

“It has been unambiguously found that returns to primary education are the highest, followed by returns to secondary education; and returns to higher education are the least, suggesting that more resources should flow to lower levels of education”(Tilak,1988).

The Political Economy of External Funding in Education

A UNICEF paper, presented at the conference, indicated that these bold targets set out at the Jomtein Conference were attainable, provided that sufficient resources were made available by national governments, supplemented by significantly increased levels of international aid (Colclough, 1993). Arising from the conference both, the World Bank and UNICEF announced ambitious increases in their intended support for primary

schooling. DFID also signaled its intention to put increased emphasis on the primary sector, rather than on adult literacy and non-formal education (ODA, 1994)

India was considered to be prominent country amongst the nations in need of educational aid. This was because, of the global-total of some 145 million children of primary-school age who were out of school in the late 1980s, some 60% were resident in four countries – India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nigeria (Lockheed et al., 1990) – and up to half of them (some 30–40 million children) were estimated to be in India. Thus, following the Jomtien conference, international aid for the cause of education in India increased to significant levels which, by the end of the century was considered to be, larger than for any other country.

However, this was not a smooth process. As, the World Bank had been very keen to lend assistance to India with regard to primary education since 1987, but it was met with deep seated resistance in India, particularly amongst the senior level ministry officials. This was because World Bank was considered to be a “domineering” partner as it adopted a “hands-on management style in project design and management”, having “the propensity to offer universal prescriptions, to ignore country experience, to induct expatriate consultants regardless of need, and to insist on setting up the recipient country parallel project structures” (Ayyar, 2007).

It was during the early 1990’s, at the Jomtien conference, the World Bank placed strong pressure on the GoI to accept aid for education, although, GoI was given the space to set their own terms. Coclough et. al.(2010)writes that “in the initial part of 1990, India did not feel constrained financially, and nothing was agreed. Shortly afterwards, however, when India’s foreign exchange crisis appeared, broader external support was required. In response to a GOI request, the World Bank indicated that IDA support would be coming, only if aid for primary education were accepted.” In other words, it wouldn’t be wrong to point out that India was forced to accept aid pertaining to primary education. As under “the new circumstances the Ministry of Finance pressed the Ministry of Human Resource Development to accept the Bank’s condition and, in 1991, an IDA loan to support basic education was agreed. However it took almost two years for the World Bank, the GOI and the state governments to agree upon the project design”(Coclough, et.al. 2010). Hence it was in this very manner that the assistance for education made inroads into the country.

Thereafter European Community (EC) also began to shown interest in funding education projects especially in primary education since 1991. This made it possible for the Indian government to launch the District Primary Education Program (DPEP) in 1993-4. It was also the first project on education which was funded by multiple sources and was meant to be developed indigenously. Coclough et. al. (2010) writes “The central and state governments were expected to finance DPEP projects in the ratio 85:15, with aid from the World Bank, EU, DFID, UNICEF and the Netherlands supporting the GoI contribution.”

Therefore, whole experience of harmonization of external funding lead to several lessons for the Government of India. For once it lead to the initiation of a large scale program known as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which was launched by GOI in 2001-2, and it managed to retain several of the DPEP goals. Under this, the coverage was extended to all districts and it attempted to universalize not only primary, but also elementary education. The minor difference between DPEP and SSA was that while the basic unit of planning under DPEP was the district, under SSA it shifted down to the level of the habitation. As a result of which decentralized planning as well implementation were central and core aspects of its design. (CoClough et. al. 2010) “The national SSA program was intended to absorb all existing schemes in elementary education, including not only DPEP but also other externally-aided program.” Given the tug of war between the international donors and the Government of India’s reluctance to allow the donors to influence the domestic policies of the country (too much) on one hand and the donor’s modicum which was based upon program bound approaches, the donors eventually accepted the new conditions that were set out by the government.

Thus, as far as aid was concerned “The World Bank was the major partner – providing a loan of nearly half the agreed amount (48%) while DFID (33%) and EU (19%) provided grants to cover the remainder.” The Centre mostly passed on the aid to the various states in the form of grant, irrespective of the form in which they received the aid. GoI took responsibility for funding 45% (\$1.58 b) and the state’s 25% (\$875 m) of the program development and recurrent costs over the Tenth Plan period. (Coclough et. al. 2010) Further in the year 2004, “an annual education cess of 2% was added as a supplement to all existing taxes, to be used by GoI solely and exclusively for elementary education.” (Coclough et. al. 2010) These very twin national resources of finance proved exceptionally fruitful for SSA.

Following this a second phase of aid for SSA was agreed in 2007 between GoI and World Bank, European Union and DFID, which were at that time India's three main development partners. The modalities of cooperation amongst them continued to remain the same. The "World Bank, DFID and EC agreed to provide 60%, 30% and 10% of the external resources, respectively, with the remaining project costs being met by the states and GoI in a 40:60 ratio" (World Bank, 2008).

Parallels between Policy Shifts in Education Sector in India and the World

The decision to universalize elementary education had been independently taken by the Indian planners and was already part of national policy by the late 1980s (GoI, 1986). Ten years down the line, when the Millennium Development Goals were projected on the global forum, "DPEP had already laid the foundation for scaling up elementary education in India and the SSA program had been planned in outline by the government." (Coclough, *et.al.* 2010). As a result of which the priorities of GoI was already in sync with the MDGs, and India's aim was to universalize eight years of education instead of the average five or six years, which is often implied by Universal Primary Education (depending upon national practice). "The Dakar meeting did not, therefore, have a strong impact on Indian policy-makers, possibly because it retained a focus on universalizing primary education, which had been an earlier target in the Indian case" (Coclough *et. al.* 2010).

By, accepting aid, India placed the discussion on its education sector at the international stage and it no longer remained a domestic issue. But here it is also crucial to note that the story of confluence of international and national via the modicum of aid was not limited to the 1990's period alone, infact even recently in the year 2020-2021, i.e exactly two decades after India opened up it's economy in 1990, India and World Bank once again joined hands in implementing of the Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States (STARS) Programme.

Conclusion

Thus, it can be argued that the global dimension of policy making in the education sector has always been and still continues to influence polices at the national level, and as it is in the case of India. With education sector coming under concurrent list and thereby becoming the joint responsibility of the Centre and the State Government, the policies and

the schemes undertaken at the Centre level continue to keep influencing policies at the state level thereby impacting the grassroots. Therefore a congruence of policies can be noticed and although educational policy making, which used to be earlier considered, a putative domain of the nation-state, as it is no longer the case as waves of global trends in educational policy making seem to have a profound impact on the policies that are being implemented at the grass root level, and this can be seen through the strong role played by the international players like World Bank and various agencies of the United Nations like UNICEF and UNESCO.

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Chapter 2.

Genesis of Modern Education in Kerala

Introduction

One of the reasons that served as a conducive environment for spread and growth of literacy in erstwhile Travancore was that due to the large scale commercialization of economy (Sen, 1997); as a result of which there emerged a demand and need for basic literacy skills. This, led to an impressive growth of school network in the state of Travancore. Therefore this, probes one to question as to whether high level of education is resultant of high rate of economic development or whether high rate of economic development leads to growth of education in the state. In order to understand this further, this chapter shall look into the education sector in Kerala in four sections: the first section shall look at the pre-independence endeavours that were undertaken to establish modern education in Kerala, while the second section shall look at the growing awareness and growth of public sensitivity in the state of Kerala while at the same time attempting to give an overall picture of Kerala's education system especially with regard to school education and the third section shall look at the post independence efforts undertaken with regard to schooling in Kerala and finally the fourth section shall look at the confluence of global and national Policies at the state level.

The reason why looking at historical background of education in Kerala becomes important while studying the question of 'uneconomic' schools is to place this phenomenon in the larger context of educational scenario in Kerala and understand how education and especially school education has evolved over the years. As this makes mapping the policy shifts a coherent process.

I. Pre-Independence Endeavors

According to Michael Tharakan (1984) the period between sixteenth century till eighteenth century was a period when Kerala witnessed exponential growth in literacy. This was because during this time "the spread of education reached beyond the reach of Brahmans and came within the reach of almost all socially and economically privileged sections of society" (Tharakan, 1984). Soon with the onset of Christian missionaries, modern schools began to be established, and eventually the state also stepped into the field of establishing modern schools. Ramachandran (1997) writes that 'Protestant missionaries were the pioneers of modern school education in Kerala'.

One of the key hallmark events, when it comes to tracing the history of Kerala with regard to literacy, happened in nineteenth century, was the missionary lead activity led by London Missionary Society and Christian Mission Society. Although they started their mission with the aim of evangelizing people of Travancore, their mission gradually took the shape of bringing educational as well as social reform in the society. This can be seen through the influence exerted by the protestant missionaries on education ‘by giving a new sense of direction to schooling in early nineteenth century’(Ramachandran,1997). Some of the main features of the missionary education that was undertaken in the region of Travancore was by the Protestant Mission workers. Their mass base primarily came from the previously oppressed classes which comprised of the Ezhavas, the Pulayas and the Shanars. Further “there was a clear perception among early Protestant missionaries that educational work was necessary pre-requisite for their religious work” (Tharakan, 1984).

During that phase it was mainly the missionaries who had emphasized the right of the masses especially the oppressed castes to modern education. And back then mission schools were the only ‘new styled schools’ to which the various oppressed castes could gain access. Emphasizing this aspect Samuel Mateer(1883) a nineteenth century Christian missionary as well as historian wrote that:

Let (the educated classes of Travancore) take a decided stand against the social evils of caste. Let them make an attempt in real earnest to raise the masses by primary education and by a few firm and resolute measures against the cruel oppression of the poor and helpless; and a solid and general advance in national prosperity, power and happiness will speedily be evident to the world. (Mateer, 1883)

By 1883, Samuel Mateer, further wrote that there were ‘some ten or twelve thousand(Pulayar people) under the instruction of the Church and London Missionary Society(LMS).’(Mateer, 1883). He further argues that “the lowest classes are.....without the means of obtaining instruction, except in Mission Schools.” As a result of this situation, the missionaries and their educational institutions served to fill an important gap in the society, by providing, good quality education, to the lower classes as well.

Another feature was that the conversion as well as primary education that have been usually attached with missionary activities, was pitted against the various aspects of the

Hindu society, such as untouchability, distance pollution, agrarian slavery and various other caste based oppressions and taboos. Moreover, as a result of missionary education, several girls who belonged to the oppressed castes were introduced to modern education by virtue of being brought to schools.

Tharakan(1984) also argues that

Although the missionary led schools had their own biases towards teaching of Christian Theology, but, the courses were not bereft of secular aspects and concepts either. For instance, ‘secular subjects’ such as geography and arithmetic were included in the primary school curriculum. Another interesting feature of the missionary schools was that they also offered elementary level technical training and craft skills and were one of the first schools to do so. Furthermore, they also had dispensaries established and also provided instruction in hygiene and public health. (Tharakan, 1984)

As a result of all these unique features, the missionary efforts towards education received tremendous support of the state power that existed in Travancore. Especially during John Munro’s time in Travancore that lasted from 1811 to 1819. Infact, in 1817 a Royal Rescript was issued, which among other things read that,

The state should defray the entire cost of education of its people in order that there might be no backwardness in the spread of enlightenment among them, that by diffusion of education they might become, better subjects and public servants and reputation of the state maybe enhanced thereby.(Tharakan,1984)

This was exceptional in the sense that it “declared universal education, paid for by the state and to be an objective of the state policy’,(Ramachandran,1997) way back in nineteenth century itself. But, Tharakan(1984) argues that, “despite the issuance of the Rescript, there was very little activity from the state of Travancore with regard to modern schools, although some schools were established in which the language of instruction was English.” However, by the second half of nineteenth century the momentum towards education picked up, under T.Madhava Rao, who was the then Dewan of Travancore and the government started opening up new schools for both boys and girls. And their efforts did not only stop at that, but was complimented by grant-in-aid to individuals as well as

private organizations to start schools. Thus, began the indigenous efforts to popularize education. Infact, Francis(1985)writes that “The first English school was established in 1834, in Thiruvananthapuram during the rule of Maharaja Swati Tirunal. The school was free of tuition charges till 1863-1864, and was thereafter, eventually made fee-based.”

Soon, thereafter education began to be linked to gaining employment and adequate schooling became a much needed pre-requisite in order to attain a job, more specifically a government job. This was done through a proclamation issued in the year 1844, that gave preference to people educated in English language when acquiring government employment. To second this, the Maharaja of Travancore, in the year 1881, declared that

No civilized government can be oblivious to the great advantages of popular education...for.....a government which has to deal with an educated population is by far stronger than the one which has to control ignorant and disorderly masses. Hence education is a twice-blessed thing as it benefits those who give it and those who receive it.(cited in Jeffery, 1992)

Education as a Panacea for Social Ills

An interesting feature regarding mass education is that it cannot be achieved without overcoming the hindrances that exist in Indian society like gender based discrimination compounded with caste discrimination as well as class based oppression. Moreover just a release of official policy, in Travancore and Cochin regions of Kerala, supporting education was not enough. Furthermore, despite the release of official policy, Kerala had to see organized mass movement especially pioneered by the oppressed castes. Thus in years to follow, the left based movements helped provide mass literacy and aided the establishment of comprehensive schools.

The state of Kerala was also exposed to some of the worst ails of caste system which reflected itself in the form of acute untouchability and distance pollution. One of the factors that led to mass literacy in Travancore region was the advancement of education among the Ezhava caste in the region, who were previously oppressed. Ramachandran(1997) writes that “The change in literacy levels on a social scale came in the 1930’s with the Ezhava caste being exposed to higher levels of education.” This change further happened when the social reform movement started by Ezhava leader Sree

Narayana Guru, took on the character of a large scale mass movement. His movement was not only limited to attainment of education, but also removal of other social ills like ban of temple entry by lower castes, that once implemented helped change the colour and fabric of Indian society.

As far as female literacy in the state of Kerala was concerned, Kerala served as a unique anomaly. This is because while in some sections of the society their culture fostered what can be understood as female literacy. For instance in matrilineal communities of Kerala, like the Nairs, the woman's role, position and advancement were given prime importance, while amongst the Namboodiris and Muslim women, where they had to face some restriction in comparison. Here it is interesting to note that Namboodiri women despite being higher caste than Nair's, were not encouraged much, to take to higher education.

But despite this, mass literacy amongst the women of Kerala only became popular from the 1960's onwards. This was because a majority of women began to be able to read and write as literacy grew and spread to the most backward and remote parts of Kerala, reaching even the poor, as mass schooling began to be established especially in the Malabar region after its merger with rest of Kerala in early 1960's.

From the first step of onset of literacy to different sections of society to a stage of total literacy that Kerala has achieved in the recent past has not been an easy one. This whole stage of transition has been characterized by heightened public awareness leading to mass movements (as mentioned above) for the cause of achieving large scale schooling and literacy. Therefore it requires deliberate and intentional public action towards attainment of total literacy at an en masse societal level. Because of this concerted effort by the society in Kerala, Kerala not only became the first but also the only state in whole of India where each and every district was geared towards becoming wholly literate as per the National Literacy Mission, in the year 1988, itself. This was followed by a Total Literacy Campaign from the year 1989 to 1991, which was a state wide campaign in Kerala. It was pioneered by the Ernakulam District Total Literacy Campaign(TLC) which served as a model campaign which influenced the various designs of achieving total literacy campaigns in all of India. The Ernakulam campaign saw the participation of widespread players like beginning from the district administration upto the concerned citizen. Crucial role was also played by mass organizations and non-governmental organizations like Kerala Shastra Shaitya Parishad(KSSP). It is accounted that more than

3.5 Lakh people undertook various roles as volunteers in the literacy campaign. Interestingly, the agenda of the participants and volunteers was not simply to make people aware of the three R's (i.e. read, write and arithmetic) but the campaign primer which was entitled Aksharam, entailed lessons pertaining from India's freedom struggle to food habits, disease prevention, dignity of labour and work, importance of drinking water as well as oral rehydration therapy, equality of sexes, immunization etc.

Before proceeding further it helps to contextualize the dynamics and system of school education in Kerala.

II. Overview of Kerala's Education System: Growth of Public Sensitivity

While understanding the role of education, especially school education in Kerala, it is not only important to understand the public sphere in Kerala, but it is also important to note that the challenges faced by Kerala vis-à-vis education are unique when seen in comparison to the rest of the Indian states. This is because while rest of the country faces the issue of provision of good quality education, that has already been covered by Kerala through the various reform movements and the onset of missionary activities compounded with the royal families of Cochin as well as Travancore taking a keen interest in the sphere of education even in the pre-independence era.

Highlighting this fact Amartya Sen *et. al.* (1997) argue that

Kerala has indeed had the benefit of both types of breaks (i.e. education-oriented lower class movements as well as missionary activities), in addition to the good fortune of having the royal families of Travancore and Cochin, who happened to be in favor of elementary education. Thus, the state of Kerala is an anomaly in the sense that heightened levels of public action and public awareness leading to political activism lead to educational expansion of lower caste and lower class groups. (Sen *et. al.*, 1997)

Another aspect that sets Kerala's education system apart is the angle of what Amartya Sen (1997) calls "historical heterogeneity within Kerala". Expounding this he argues that when India was gaining independence from British Raj, the state of Kerala was carved on

linguistic lines, thereby joining Malabar, which formed a part of “the old province of Madras in British India(which is present day Tamil Nadu) with the erstwhile princely states of Travancore and Cochin.” (Sen *et. al*, 1997) As mentioned above, since the princely states of Travancore and Cochin were already sensitive to the need of education and were way ahead in the provision of education to the masses the newly conjoined part of Malabar seemed to lag much behind in social development indicators like literacy and life expectancy. Nevertheless, Sen *et. al*(1997) argue that “by the eighties ‘Malabar’ had so much ‘caught up’ with the rest of Kerala, that it could no longer be seen in divergent terms.” This was because the initiatives that the various state governments in Kerala undertook under the aegis of both Communist Party of India(Marxist) and Congress, helped transform Malabar into an integral part of Kerala.

Here it is important to note that the state of Kerala offers a lesson for rest of the country that much can be achieved with heightened and determined levels of public action, even without the favorable circumstances that Travancore and Cochin seemed to have historically, as can be seen in the case of Malabar. Therefore it becomes imperative to look at the ‘public’ in the public action in the public sphere even more closely.

‘Publicness’ In Kerala and its Link to Education

Kabeer AP(2019) argues that “the onset of modern education played a very crucial role in bringing otherwise private individuals together on a common platform.” One example of this is that in the state of Kerala, education played a crucial role in pulling individuals out of the clutches and stronghold of the deep rooted caste system which was not only feudal in nature but had its basis in the agrarian economy. Kabeer(2019) further argues that “ the added effect of education on the existing social structures was further amplified by the political upsurge, community mobilization and social transformation that occurred simultaneous in the state” leading to the growth of the ‘public’ in Kerala. Thus new political imagination began to take roots into the public space, especially in caste and religious communities across the state of Kerala. This was further compounded by the efforts of community led reform organizations like Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Sangam(SNDP), Kerala Pulaya Maha Sabha(KPMS) and Nair Service Society(NSS).

Kabeer(2019) further highlights that

The widespread educational landscape, augmented by the social reforms initiated by these social groups and also the anti-colonial struggle and the left centered social movements were instrumental in creating solid foundations of public sphere in the state of Kerala. (Kabeer , 2019)

The above mentioned communities led organizations were also instrumental in raising pertinent issues relating to social justice and equity in society as well as denouncing oppression in the political sphere. These issues, questions and struggles waged and lead by these community organizations were instrumental in adding color and giving character to public sphere in Kerala.

Hence, these activities or mobilizations that have taken place in the public spheres have been quite instrumental in uniting and bringing otherwise private individuals together. As a result, these publically as well as socio-culturally and politically aware people have been quite instrumental in bringing up schools and libraries in otherwise remote places of Kerala. Thus education can be seen as a thread uniting all of Kerala in one strand. Kabeer(2019) writes that ‘the schools and libraries have not only created a distinctive literary public sphere but have also become sites of imagining the political by articulating dignity, equity and justice against discrimination in these public spaces.’ So we can see a trickle-down effect from community lead organizations to schools and libraries where these issues are discussed and fleshed out.

However, community organizations were not the only sole actors instrumental in awakening the public sphere in Kerala(although they played a crucial role) for many demands that were social and political in nature, which also resulted from public modicums such as mass petitioning through pamphlets, as well as through art clubs, youth clubs, reading rooms, journals newspapers and the like. This has led to what Kabeer(2019) calls ‘Publicness’, i.e. ‘a general consciousness of individuals as citizens, who are ready to lose their private interest for public good.’ It is interesting that in Kerala the caste lead community organizations were instrumental in diluting the importance of rigid caste system and rules by changing the focus from caste system to education and public awareness. Therefore education has been used as a tool to restructure the socio-cultural and economic life of Kerala. As, education, has in itself played a crucial role in pioneering, to a great extent, an egalitarian social-cultural order in the state. Emphasizing this further Kabeer(2019) argues, “Education has the potential to re-shape society in a

desirable direction and thereby create the public sphere, and also create a politically and socio-culturally sensitive mass of public citizenry.”

Thus spearheading education as an instrument for socio-cultural transformation is essential when trying to understand the growth trajectory of the state of Kerala. Salim(2002) argues that “Kerala has also accomplished spectacular achievements in education through various socio-economic struggles.” Therefore, it is important to understand both education and socio-economic and cultural struggles as hand in glove as they both play into each other.

Thus as seen above, both, the various diverse communities of Kerala as well as the state have continued to play complimentary and crucial roles in furthering education in the state of Kerala with the aim of uplifting the socio-economically backward as well as the depressed groups and communities. Hence, Sen (1997) claims that

Kerala’s accomplishment shows that well-being of the people can be improved, and social, political and cultural conditions transformed, even at low levels of income, when augmented by appropriate public action. For, in Kerala the action of mass organizations and mass movements against social, political and economic oppression and policy actions of governments have been the most important constituents of public action.
(Sen , 1997)

Further, the heightened level of literacy in Kerala is one of the key reasons for the rising awareness and social and political consciousness of people within the Kerala community. Chandrasekar *et al.*(2001) write that “The experience of Kerala is an excellent example of how literacy and education are also of immense instrumental importance in social development.” One such example is the fact that there definitely exists strong co-relation between the different levels of literacy as well as life expectancy. According to Bhat and Rajan(1990) female literacy is "single most important factor explaining the demographic transition in Kerala"

Some of the reasons why schooling received such an impetus in Kerala was that the social movements recognized quite early the need for mass education in the form of schooling hence it attempted to overcome the obstacles of caste based as well as class and gender discrimination and therefore the state very early on engaged in efforts to build mass

schools. Since the pre-independence era the state was responsible for providing education. A quintessential condition for the success of the mass schooling in Kerala and the public investment made by state towards school education.

III. Post-independence efforts towards school education in Kerala

With independence came new paradigm and lens through which education had to be provided to the citizenry. Thus with independence came new power structure and owing from it new set of policies. Here it is important to note that, although with education being in the concurrent list both the Centre and the state governments are responsible for providing funds for education the state government continues to play a crucial role in universalizing school education and making sure that it reaches all level of the state.

Therefore, with the state also playing a crucial role in the enactment of law and policies, it acts in a manner to protect the interest of the state, its institution as well as the individuals within the broad spectrum of the laws laid down in the Constitution. It is in this context that one needs to look at the broad rules and regulation that the Government of Kerala has laid out rules pertaining to education.

Kappor *et al.*(1994) argue that ‘the State Education Department in Kerala derives its powers and authority to administer educational services through the following, Acts, Codes and rules and at the same time they also provide legal safeguards to all the concerned institutions as well as individuals.’ Some of the rules on which Kerala’s school education are based are given below:

Kerala Education Act 1958

This Act led to the setting up of the State Education Advisory Board in order to advise and help the government on various matters relating to the Education Policy and administration of the department. In fact, Kerala happened to be the first state in India to emerge with a Kerala Education Act in the year 1958. This goes to show that Kerala was a pioneer and a torch bearer when it came to enacting laws pertaining to school education. Following this many states like Assam, Gujarat etc. formulated the draft for compulsory education in the 1960’s and 1970’s but they largely “remained unenforced due to various socio-economic reasons” (Rao,2010).

While analyzing school related policies in Kerala, it is important to note that there exist three types of Schools:

Government Schools: These schools are run purely under the aegis of the Government, from the provision of salary of working professional to the infrastructure support.

Aided Schools: In the aided schools the government “pays the entire salary of all the approved teachers and non-teaching personnel through the headmaster of the school.” The service conditions of all the teachers in aided schools including those relating to pay, pension and gratuity as well as Provident Fund and age of retirement are to be in lines with what has been prescribed by the government. The state government is also entitled to take disciplinary action against the faculty or teacher of an aided school.”(Kappor, 1994) It is usually run under a manager who owns the building and is also responsible for the functioning and conduct of the institution in lines with the rules of the government. Kappor(1994) also writes that

“If the government is satisfied that the manager of an aided school has neglected to perform duties that are prescribed in the Act and that it is in the public interest to take over the management of the school, then the State government is entitled to take over the school after giving due notice to the schools management”

Private Schools: Private schools are those schools that are wholly managed and run by private players.

Keeping this in mind, we shall be looking at other rules vis-à-vis school education in Kerala.

Kerala Education Rules, 1959

This rule was framed under the Kerala Regulation Act 1958 and has been formulated in order to govern the aided schools. It deals with admissions, inspection of pupils progress, transfer and removal of pupils from school, medium of instruction etc. As per the

amendments made under the rule no tuition fee is to be charged in government and aided schools up to the secondary stage(Class X).

The Kerala Education Department (Inspection) Code 1966:

This code allows for inspection of schools within the state of Kerala. It acts as a guide for various officers within the education department, in order to help them discharge their duties related to inspection of schools.

Objectives of Schooling in Kerala

It's because of rules like this that Kerala, can said to have made remarkable progress in the field of Education. In Kerala based on the above rules and the intervention of the centrally sponsored schemes (CSS) and the advice rendered by the State Education Advisory Board, specific objectives have been outlined for each stage of school education. For instance the objectives of Primary schooling among others are to help children acquire basic tools required for formal training, further to allow children to develop muscular coordination and attain body development through group activities.

As far as secondary education is concerned, the objective is to develop and enhance basic language skills among the students and also to develop and hone basic social skills required to function in an effective manner in a democratic society.

IV. Confluence of Global and National Policies in Kerala

Kerala, in order to achieve the goal of 'Education for All' (EFA) has adopted a three-pronged strategy which entails Universal Adult Literacy, Non-Formal Education and Formal Schooling. Further, the decentralization of education plans at the district level was done through district councils which were given adequate budget to implement the programs.

For instance as far as Operation Blackboard (OB) was concerned, which was a centrally sponsored scheme that was being implemented in Kerala, made for the provision of equipments, of at least two school teachers , supply of teaching learning material and the like. It also involved improvement of science education through the provision of adequate instruments, bringing girls to the fore front of education system, establishment of District centers of English for providing teachers with adequate training. It also involved

introduction of the Plus two classes at school level and the development and enhancement of School Libraries and revision of school curriculum.

Another example of national level program being implemented in the state was Total Literacy Program(as briefly mentioned above) that was being brought to fruition by the Kerala Sashtra Sahitya Parishad. The first project was undertaken after submission to the National Literacy Mission for the district of Ernakulam and a mass campaign approach was used, which entailed among other things teaching by various voluntary workers, linking of literacy work to developmental and other welfare activities. The Project was successfully completed for which the state was awarded UNESCO Literacy award.

Conclusion

Despite having structures and rules in place, pertaining to education, from pre-independence era in Kerala, one particular area that still needs to be looked into, in greater detail, is the issue of uneconomic schools or in other words schools with insufficient student strength. The reason why this becomes an important issue is to understand, whether the state, is providing over and above needed support to the schools which don't have sufficient student strength or are they subtly withdrawing from the state sector. This shall be analyzed in greater detail, in the following chapters.

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Chapter 3.

“Uneconomic Schools” in Kannur: A Field Analysis

Introduction

The reason for opting for Kannur district in Kerala as a base region for doing field work of this study is because after analyzing the data provided by Directorate of Public Instruction(DPI) in State Economic Review for last 20 years the maximum number of uneconomic schools were consistently found to be in the district of Kannur. Here, it is also important to note that while studying the phenomenon of ‘uneconomic’ schools there is usually a misconception, that when it comes to the number of ‘uneconomic’ schools, it is popularly believed that the maximum number of uneconomic schools are in the district of Pathnamthitha, but the data shows otherwise.

Thus, it was an intriguing process to unearth and investigate the reasons behind this trend of surge of uneconomic schools in Kannur. Thus to understand this phenomenon further, this chapter is divided into three sections: while the first section provides a broad overall description of Kannur district where this study is placed out of, the second section looks at the school education structure in Kannur and the third section analyses, the specific reasons behind the rise of ‘uneconomic schools’.

I. Description of the Field

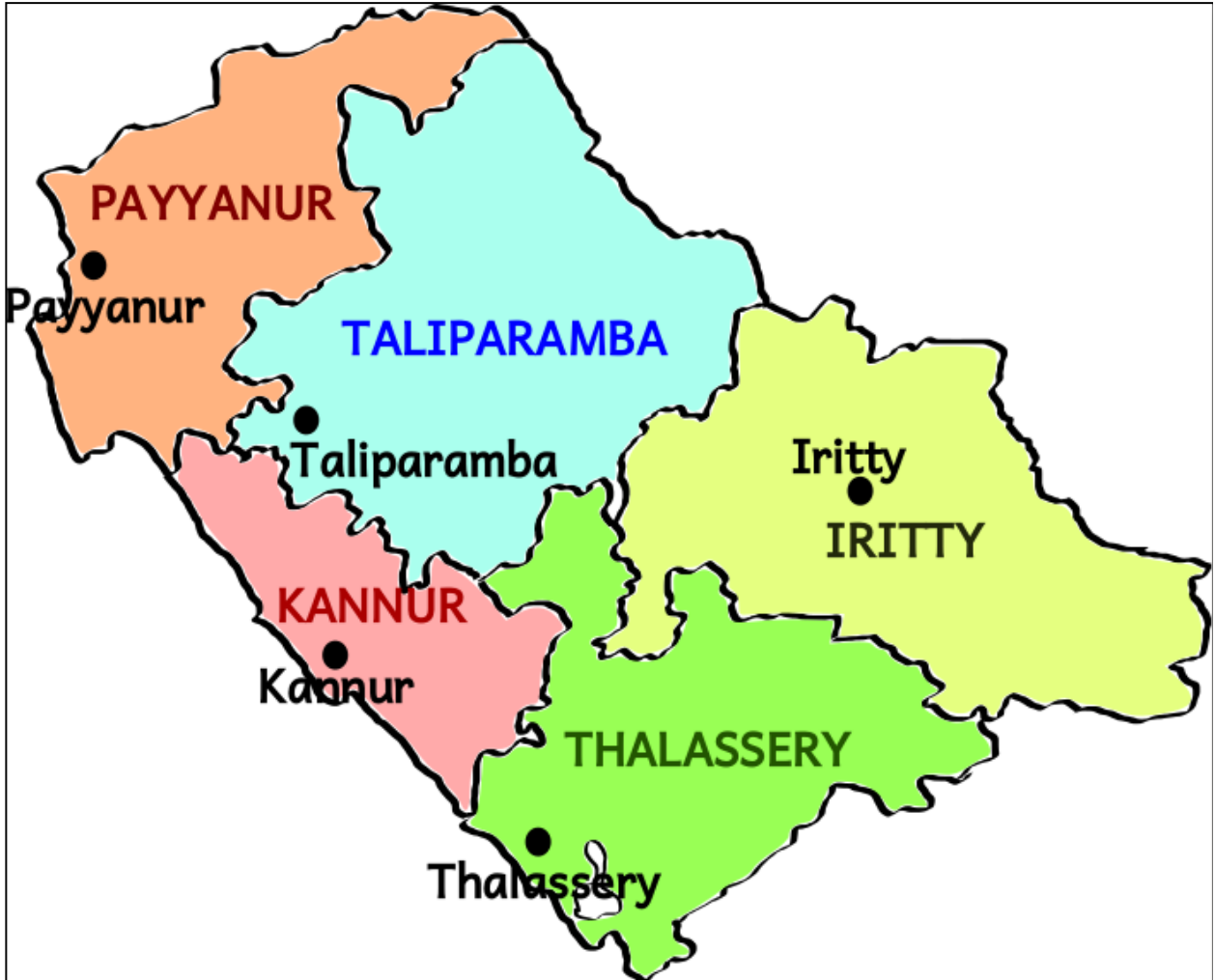
Before developing a deeper understanding of the issue of ‘Uneconomic Schools’ in Kannur, it is important to get a broad overall description of the state of Kannur.

Geographical and Economic Features of Kannur

The district of Kannur, like any other district in India is divided into taluks, which is further divided into blocks followed by panchayats and villages, for administrative purposes. As far as Taluks are concerned there are five Taluks in Kannur district, which are as follows:

Kannur
Taliparamba
Thalassery
Iritty
Payyanur

Map 3. Depicts the sub-districts in Kannur district



Source:https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kannur_district#/media/File:Subdistricts_of_Kannur.png

Located in the Malabar region of Kerala, Kannur district is surrounded by Kasaragod district in the North, and is flanked by Western Ghats in the East, and to the west it is surrounded by Lakshwadeep Sea and Mahe, and to the south it is bordered by Kozhikode and Wayanad District. Its latitudes are 11°40' to 12°48' North and longitudes are 74°52' to 75°56' East. The district overall covers an area of 2,961 sq.km and is the sixth largest district in Kerala in terms of its area coverage.(District Census Handbook, 2011)

With regard to its physiographic features, Kannur district is quite richly endowed. Starting from the Canannore Coast to PringomeMattannur's undulating upland, to Taliparamba-Koothuparamba Plain to Kannothe Forested Hills, it is quite lush green. Furthermore the mountains in the district are a continuation of midland region in a graded way ascending into the main ridge of Western Ghats. Highest peak in the entire district can be found in the Taliparamba taluk and is known as Veidalmala or also as Paithalmala. The district also has a very fine river system which helps in irrigation, with most of them being perennial in nature. Some of the rivers are Ramapuram, Kuppam, Mahe, Thalassery etc.

The district mostly has a humid climate, with district witnessing high intensity of rainfall in the months of June and July. The forest cover in the district is upto 295.52 sq km and the type of forest found there is mostly tropical moist deciduous forest. The vegetation in Kannur is also very rich in flora and fauna ranging from mangroves to evergreen forests. With the bed soil being alluvium in nature there are large quantities of China Clay that can be found in Taliparamba as well as Kannur Taluk of Kannur District.

Agriculture, Irrigation and Animal Husbandry, Fisheries along with many co-operatives, with regard to sustenance are also found in the district. (With regard to spices, pepper production is the highest in Kannur. As far as industries are concerned, 'Kannur is an industrially backward district in the state,'(District Census Handbook, 2011), with handloom industry being the largest as well as most important in the district. Infact, "Kannur is known as the Land of Looms and Lores, because of the loom industries functioning in the district and ritualistic folk arts held in temples."(District Census Handbook, 2011) As far as infrastructure is concerned, Kannur is very well connected through roads and rails. This is important because it helps fulfill the government rule of one school per one km, condition. Besides, it also has minor sea ports and also has good electricity and power connection. Furthermore, the population of Kannur district as per the District Census Handbook 2011 is 25, 23,003 persons and is ranked 8th in population when seen in comparison to other districts of Kerala, with regard to population. Infact, Kannur Taluk(which is the field area of this study) comprises of 31.1% of the population of Kannur district with a population of 7,84,984 persons. The sex ratio of the district is 1,136 women for 1000 men. With Kannur taluk, reflecting a sex ratio of 1180 female for 1000 male.

While understanding the populace of Kannur, it is also important to understand the social composition of the district. The three main religions of the people in the district were Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. And as per the 2011 Census the Schedule caste population in the district was 83,350 while the Scheduled Tribe population consisted of 41,371. Some of the Scheduled Castes inhabiting the district are Bandi, Boyan, Bellara, Godda, Gavara, Godagali and Panchama while the few names of the scheduled tribes inhabiting the district are Paniyan, Karimpalan, Mavilan, Kurichchan and Malavettuvan.

When the last Census was held that is in the year 2011, there were 21,38,434 literates in Kannur District, out of which 10,12,956 were male and 11,25,478 were female. The literacy rate of the whole district was 95.1 percent, which was higher than the literacy rate of the entire state of Kerala, which stood at 94 percent. Within the Kannur district the total literacy rate of Kannur Taluk in the year 2011 was 95.9%. If one were to analyse the rural urban division off the literacy rate in Kannur District, within the last two Census that is within the period of 2001-2011, the rural literacy rate increased from a 91 percent to 93.7 percent and the urban literacy rate also saw an increase from 94.1% to 95.9%. This goes to show that ‘The rate of increase of rural literacy is higher than the urban literacy during the corresponding period. Moreover, in Kannur Taluk, the “the rural female literacy rate is the highest (92.0per cent).” (District Census Handbook, 2011)



Pic 3.1. The picture depicts the political map of Kerala with division of 14 districts, made with stones and pebbles by students of Government LPS Thayatheru School of Kannur district in Kerala. Pic Credit:Author

II. School Education Structure in Kannur

Schools in the district of Kannur are broadly divided into three categories on the basis of who has authority over them. The first category is the Government schools which are owned and function under the larger control and ambit of the government. The second category comprises of the aided schools (which can to a certain extent be considered to be a public-private partnership of a sort) whereby the building is owned by the management i.e. a private player while the fees of the teachers and other logistics are taken care of and provided by the government. On other hand the third category of schools are owned and run by private players, philanthropists and the like and they come under the category of unaided schools and are also referred to as private schools.

Furthermore on the basis of sections or classes the schools are further divided into Lower Primary(LP), Upper Primary(UP) and Higher Secondary(HS).

This probes one to question as to where does the concept of uneconomic schools fit in? To answer this and inquire into this we undertake the following research

When the researcher embarked on a detailed field study, the researcher realized that the narratives from the field were rather diverse, as different section of the populace that was interviewed had a rather varied opinion based on their standing in society and the vantage point that they held. Therefore, in the following section, the researcher tries to knit the arguments from the wide-ranging field work and develop a more concrete understanding of the issue of ‘uneconomic schools.’

When it came to the awareness regarding the issue of ‘uneconomic schools’ all the 4 groups of people that were interviewed (i.e. the bureaucrats, the principals and teachers, the parents and the experts) admitted that they had heard about the existence of uneconomic schools in Kerala and were cognizant of the issues concerning them.

This encouraged the researcher to further probe into the issues that centered on this phenomenon and raise questions regarding its origin. One government official Mr. Venkat³ mentioned that this term was first used in the late 1990’s for auditing purposes and since then it has been used by and large in popular public parlance, untill June 2018, when on account of notification issued by the Government of Kerala the name was changed.

Change in Nomenclature

In the month of June 2018, the usage of the terminology had been changed from ‘uneconomic schools’ to ‘schools with less number of students’, via circular order no. GOMS NO:83/2018 –dt- 12/06/2018(circular attached in Appendix 3)

But this minor change in nomenclature did not address the core problem of schools with less number of students as these schools continued to be in existence and it needed much attention.

³ Name changed

Thus, after seeking requisite permissions when the researcher reached Kannur, the researcher was made aware of the ground reality based on the interview of the informants which has been analysed below.

Through conducting in-depth interviews with them the researcher learnt that, during 1970's and 1980's due to the large scale outward migration and large inflow of remittances, the character and nature of Kerala society began to see a transformation as the middle class began to mushroom. This transformation was basically the result of change in the financial status of the households, which was linked to the upward social mobility and was also reflective of their increased purchasing power. As a result the middle class in Kerala, began to opt for private schools for their children. This was not only because of the status symbol attached with sending children to the so called 'high class' private schools but was also a decision that was governed by the fact that private schools were offering CBSE syllabus, and the medium of communication was also English in these schools. As a result, the upcoming middle class wanted their children to have an experience of the same. Here it is important to note that 1980's was also the time when the economy of the state of Kerala was witnessing a turn-around for the better due to the increased inflow of remittances.

Dr. Ajith Kumar, an expert on education in Kerala also noted that from 1990's onwards there were three remarkable shifts that could be noted, in the context of the School Education Sector in Kerala.

First was the introduction of District Primary Education Program (DPEP). As a result of introduction of DPEP, the school education sector witnessed a turnaround as there were significant changes made to the curriculum, the infrastructure facilities were upgraded, regular teacher training provided and the like. Infact, the famous Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan and later the Samgrah Shiksha Abhiyaan have its genesis in the DPEP.

Secondly, the decentralization of governance also impacted the education sector. Government Schools began to come under the influence of Panchayats and Municipalities; as a result these grassroot level institutions began to have a greater impact on the functioning of the government schools. This was also the time when People's Plan Campaign was at the forefront in Kerala. The Peoples Plan Campaign was mainly an effort to decentralize the powers to the local government bodies with the aim of inculcating people's voices from below and engaging in grassroot governance. Infact in

the Ninth Five Year Plan(FYP) of India, each state was expected to come up with its own annual plan. This whole bottom-up approach made not only local intervention but also local supervision possible in the running of the schools, as the people, who were the beneficiaries of public goods like schooling began to have a larger say in its governance.

Furthermore, under this People's Plan Campaign the Government of Kerala undertook a very firm decision to entrust 35 percent of the development budget of the state to local governments where the local people would get to decide and implement their very own development needs and priorities and channel the funds towards those pressing causes. This initiative made sure that people from diverse background who were often the last mile recipients had a larger say in the decision making process, rather than just limiting it to a select few in the policy making circle.

Thirdly, Dr. Ajith Kumar also mentioned that over time there was a change in the focus and attention given to government school. By pointing out this he meant that there was an increased thrust given to upgrading government schools. For instance, by improvising the physical ambience etc. Thus, as a result the output or the performance indicators of the students improved sharply.

Due to the above three measures and the concerted efforts of both the government officials and the people, the accountability in the school education sector also increased. Due to this increased focus on uplifting Government and aided schools the Parent-Teachers Association(PTA) was revived and given an active role in the running of the school. This they did by canvassing for the school in the neighborhood and encouraging parents to send their children to the low-cost yet upgraded government schools. Thus, with added incentives the tax payer could find solace in the fact that it was reaching and impacting the last mile i.e. the students.

When assessing the overall trajectory of uneconomic schools in Kerala, it became evident from the state economic review of 2000 there that "was a sharp decline in total number of enrolled students from 52.19 lakh in 2001 to 51.02 Lakh in 2002, which implies that there has been a fall of 1.17 Lakh students who have been enrolled in the school education sector. In the decade before 2000 i.e. from 1992-2002 the total decline in the number of enrolled students was a staggering number of 8.05 Lakhs."(State Economic Review, 2000)

Another government official, Mr. Muraleedharan was of the view that both government and aided schools were witnessing a rise in the number of uneconomic schools. He also mentioned that among the measures undertaken to address and arrest the issue, the Education department had also set up, Block Resource Centre's (BRC) across the state.

However, interestingly although the total number of enrollment shows a declining trend there has been an increased trend towards students being enrolled in the private unaided sector. This probes one to question as to whether it is just the change in demographic dividend that is really leading to this change.

According to the State Economic Review of 2002 "Schools which do not have minimum students show an alarming increase in numbers. For the number of uneconomic schools seems to be on a constant increase from 1,406 in 1996 to 2,244 in 2000-2001 and further to 2,720 in 2002. As a result of this the number of protected teachers⁴ also increased from 2,239 in 1996 to 2,408 in 2000-2002." According to the review "these two drain public exchequer a lot and divert resources that should be useful for improving quality and for modernization." (State Economic Review, 2002)

In the year 2003-2004, there were 12,322 schools in the state of Kerala and the number of enrolled students was 48.94 Lakh and with the fall in the birth rate the number of children enrolled in primary classes began to see a decline or a downfall. As a result of this other fallouts began to rise to the fore like "excess teachers with near empty classrooms and buildings began to emerge. Thus the trend of schools with less than minimum number of students began to see a steep hike so did the number of "protected teachers".⁵ Hence these two issues began to gain greater importance in the policy making sectors of society. Thus in 2003-2004 the Kerala State School Education Commission recommended that to address the issue of "uneconomic schools" and protected teachers the following measures need to be undertaken. (State Economic Review, 2002) Here it becomes important to note the reasons leading to the rise in 'Uneconomic Schools' in Kerala.

⁴ Protected teachers are those government employees who cannot be removed because of lack of students

⁵ It is important to note that there is a direct relation between the rise in the number of uneconomic schools and the rise in the number of "protected teachers".

III. Reasons behind rise of “Uneconomic Schools”

a) Demographic Change

The 21st Century has witnessed a decline in fertility, as far as Kerala is concerned. Here it is interesting to note that the fertility level of the state is not only affected by the level of female literacy achieved in the state but there are some other socio-economic factors that impact the level of fertility.

Between 2001 to 2011, that is within the span of one decade, the total male-female literacy gap declined from 5 points to 2.5 point. There were more females who completed their graduation as compared to their male counterparts. Prakash *et al*(2018) write that “Education plays a crucial role in delaying the marriage as well as childbirth.” Theoretically speaking the education level of women could influence age at marriage in few different ways: (Reddy & Caldwell, 1988)

First, there might exist more opportunities for higher education or employment outside the home that may delay marriage for the woman outside marriage if she was educated. Second, education might enable a woman to obtain a well-educated husband or one with an urban job, and increase in search time delaying marriage. Third, the employment prospects of women improved if they were better educated. Women are able to support themselves economically while being single. Finally, education might also influence women’s ideas about marriage. (Keeley, 1977).

According to Rajan(2010)“the economic development of any country depends on its demographic trends. India has the second largest population in the world and is passing through the third stage of demographic transition, which is indicated by a reduction in birth and death rates.” As per the Census 2011 the age structure of the population is as follows:

Table 3.1: Age structure of the population

Population	Age Bracket	Percentage
Children	(0-14 age group)	23.4%
Working age	(15-59 age group)	63.9%
Elderly	(age 60 years and above)	12.6%

Source: Census 2011. Available at: <https://censusindia.gov.in/2011-Common/Archive.html>

Kerala is considered to be one of the states in India which is most densely populated. As per the Census 2011 the population density that existed in Kerala was 860 persons per square kilometer and one of the reasons for increasing urbanization in India is the shift that the state witnesses from agricultural sector to tertiary sector.

The other key factors that determine the demographic transition of a state are the number of births and the number of deaths. Rajan *et al.* (1990) write that “Demographic transition is a change from high birth and death rates to low birth and death rates. Although this has five stages Kerala is in the fourth stage which is late transitional phase with continuing decline in birth rates and slowdown in the fall in death rates.” From their study, it appears that decline in birth rate ceased in the year 2004 and if birth rate and death rate remain the same for some time then the growth rate of the population will be zero. One of the reasons for this is attributed to increase in female literacy. As the women’s literacy increases, women develop greater sensitivity to health facilities that can further help the child get better vaccinations and bring up a child in a holistic manner. As a result of this the infant mortality rate of the state of Kerala was brought low.

Thus, one of the reasons for declining student enrollment has been ascertained to be the sharp fall in the rate of growth of population since late 1970’s.

When questioned about the measures taken to address the issue previously, Mr. Ashok⁶ who works with the General Education Department, Government of Kerala, mentioned schemes, that directly impacted school facilities like improvement in infrastructure quality, digitization of schools and the like.

⁶ Name changed

He also said that the primary reason for the growth of uneconomic schools was the demographic trends in the state of Kerala whereby Kerala was at an advanced stage of demographic transition. As per a recent study done by S. IrudyaRajan, of Centre for Development Studies “Kerala was the first Indian state to achieve below replacement level fertility in 1987, and as for the year Kerala’s Total Fertility Rate(TFR) has dipped to 1.6”.(Rajan *et. al*,2018) This is because the combination of reduced mortality levels as well as fertility rates in the state of Kerala implies that there is a decline especially in the natural growth rate of Kerala’s population.

Although the study also pointed out the fact that for the last three decades the state of Kerala is witnessing a negative growth rate, especially among the 0-14 years of age bracket. But is this the sole reason for the growth of uneconomic schools in the state?

The official was of the opinion that the changing demographic dividend in the state was the major reason for schools turning uneconomic. They also claimed that the education sector is being well funded when seen in comparison to other states.

Although change in the demographic dividend due to rise of ageing population in Kerala was also one of the arguments put forth by the government officials Mr.Ashok (name changed).However, the enrolment levels in private schools didn’t witness a similar problem.The private players in school education still continued to see rise in the number of students at pre-primary and primary level. Therefore the sole responsibility of the issue of growth of uneconomic schools could not be ascribed to the change in demographic dividend.

b) Migration

Besides this another factor that has lead to the large scale changes in the society of Kerala is the migration of people of Kerala to different parts of the world, especially the Middle-East. As a result of this, India and specifically the state of Kerala became a recipient of large scale remittances which were once again invested into the large scale development of infrastructure, be it schools, hospitals etc.

The number of emigrants from Kerala was 24 Lac, as per The Kerala Migration Survey conducted by Centre for Development Studies in the year 2014. Emigration not only leads to remittances but also change in lifestyle, housing, the choices pertaining to their

children's education and the like. Because of constant migration of people mainly to the West Asian countries the average size of households has also diminished. As a result of this trend of migration, the society of Kerala is witnessing what can be called as Replacement Migration. Replacement Migration means migration that result due to age structure changes. For instance, since most of the youth in Kerala are educated they refuse to indulge in manual labour which thereby leading to the dearth of physical labour force from Kerala. As a result of which there is an inflow of migrants from different parts of the country who make up for this gap, and it is their children who also go to school in public schools of Kerala, because of easy affordability, and good quality cheap education with good facilities that is rendered to their pupils. Moreover when the researcher surveyed the parents of affluent class migrants to other countries form Malayalam ethnicity, they because of their social status mostly preferred private establishment for schooling, as the name that the school carried was more important rather than looking into the quality of school education that was rendered to them.

Thus the 21st Century has witnessed a heightened level of inflow of migrants from other states, to Kerala. Further, the influence of Gulf remittances also changed and influenced the purchasing power of the people..

Rajan et al. (2015) write that 'The high differences in wage between Kerala and other states attracted the other states inhabitants to Kerala.' As a result of this in the year 2013, the number of domestic migrant laborers in Kerala was 25 Lakhs.

Prakash(2018) writes that seeing the demographic trend soon the state of Kerala will move into an ageing population. With the youth moving out it is mainly the elderly female and widows that would be left behind. The ageing process is seen as an end in the demographic transition of Kerala. As the youth are decreasing it leads to a primary concern for state in Kerala that has to constantly deal with the changing needs of the society.

As a result of migration of parents, especially fathers move to different parts of the country and the world, which is also significantly impacting the trend of school going children. This is because they either like to relocate the family along with the children to the place of their employment, or else provide remuneration to an extent that the family back in Kerala does not have to put their children in low-fee charging government

schools. Instead they opt for high-fee charging private schools, in order to maintain the normative social status that exists in society.

Therefore this issue of migration coupled, with Kerala reaching its below replacement fertility level, leads to major policy implications for the state of Kerala which are analyzed below. It is important to note that in the state of Kerala the demographic factors such as below replacement level transition and the heightened level of education are all interlinked. The age based transition in Kerala has a ripple effect on factors like migration and education. That is, as the youth population begins to subside and ageing population begins to increase and the factors such schools which are specifically made for the younger populace begins to face a conundrum. But interestingly during the survey the researcher also came across parents who were migrant workers and were willing to send their students to government schools in Kerala be it uneconomic or regular because of the good quality education provided in Kerala as compared to the middle-east.

c) Impact of International Remittances on Private Schooling

Valatheeswaran *et al*(2018) argue that remittances often tend to have significant impact on enrollment in private schools. India has been one of the foremost recipients of international remittances over the last two decades with Kerala turning into a state that receives the highest remittances thus far. “India received an amount of US \$ 71 billion as remittances in 2014 and the figure accounts for nearly 3 per cent of the country’s gross domestic product.” (World Bank, 2014). It is also interesting to note that remittances are not evenly spread across India but few states like Kerala tend to be greater beneficiaries of the same as compared to other states leading it regional imbalances.

Meanwhile, the state government was unable to spend more on the education sector due to increasing fiscal deficit in the budget during the past two decades. The percentage share of educational expenditure in the gross state domestic product (GSDP) drastically declined from 6.2 per cent in 1990-91 to 2.5 per cent in 2014-15 (Government of Kerala, 2017). Which is although greater than the national spending nevertheless low in compared to previous years. With the paucity of government expenditure especially with regard to school education it limited the government capacity of expanding government and aided schools.

Valashteeswaran(2017) clearly writes that “the vacuum that happened to be created due to the withdrawal of state government in Kerala has been filled by unaided private schools which were run primarily with commercial motives.” Plus till couple of years back, the medium of instruction in Government schools was Malayalam and many parents wanted their children to take-off their learning in English as result of which till two years back the private unaided schools were flourishing. Plus compounded with this was the factor associated with social status, as many parents believed that sending their children to schools that were private unaided was symbolic of higher social status, thus as a result they continued sending their pupils to private schools.

Thus, studies done by Kumar and George(2009) found that remittances, along with growth in per-capita state domestic product (SDP), expansion of job markets both within India and abroad, and decrease in fertility, have played a significant role in parents’ ability to pay for the private education of their children (Kumar and George, 2009).

d) Social Status Attached With Type of Schooling

In the Kannur district, the teachers and principals like Mr. Ramachandran and Mrs Sreelatha also opined that there was an ‘unspoken’ kind of social status attached to the kind of school a parent chose to send their ward too. Plus sending one’s ward to private school in comparison to a government school or an aided school meant that the family was higher up the social ladder. Infact, the reason why admission were less in many of the government schools was because, in the nearby vicinity there were private-trust run, schools which were affiliated to religious organizations and parents preferred sending them there as it was also a ‘prestige issue’ among the members of their society.

Emphasising this principal Ms. Lata(name changed) of GLPS Chovva said that as result of good financial backing the parents wanted upward mobility for their children and thus they wanted to send their wards to high-end private schools over public schools to maintain a ‘status symbol’.(As private schools have higher status attached to them when seen in comparison to government schools.).

Coupled with this was the idea of prestige attached with English medium schools. For instance, a school GUPS Muzhathadam had only classes 4th standard onwards. But because of the attraction towards English Medium the parents are now willing to send

their students to government schools, even if they are uneconomic, as long as they provide instruction in English Medium. Thus, the teachers also admitted that in the recent past there is significant shift from preference for English Medium over Malayalam Medium among parents. Principal of school GUPS Thavakkara, Ms. Srimati, also said that ‘the reason why more importance was being given to English medium was because, in this day and age there is a notion in society that English education is equal to better education.’ Infact, the researcher found an interesting case where one of the previously considered uneconomic school’s, which had increased the student strength and moved out of the category of uneconomic school, by starting with good quality English classes rather than changing it into English Medium. As a result of this change the student strength had skyrocketed to a number of 75, which is a significant feat for an ‘uneconomic school’

Plus interestingly the principal pointed out that although they were not English Medium School but they had good English classes.

Another school called Edachovva UPS had seen an exponential growth of students in the span of one year, i.e. from 15 students to 51. This marked significant increase and when asked the reason or the same, the principal said it was primarily because they had introduced English as a medium of instruction at lower level classes.

As mentioned before, this idea is further interwoven with the notion of social status in society. Furthermore the choice of school parents opted for especially with regard to English medium private schools was reflective of the fact that parents were aware that for their children to reach their full potential at a later stage in the job market and to contribute to the human capital they needed to be trained in English. In other words they were aware that to compete with the global players at a later stage in life, English was a desideratum for their wards. Adding to this was the notion that opting for English medium over vernacular was also a tool for upward social mobility, in society. But there are always, exception to the rule or norm as some parents also don’t see it that way.

e) Challenge of upgradation

According to the report of Kerala State School Education Commission 2003-2004, the primary reasons for the degradation of quality of school education are(State Economic Review, 2003)

- 1) Use of outmoded assumption and invalidated practices
- 2) A retrograde system of culture resisting change, sidelining the adoption of progressive practices adopted all over the world.
- 3) Insincere implementation of new policies.
- 4) Introducing new policies which have strong social implications without taking into account public confidence.
- 5) Evolving policies that completely ignore the interest of students which should be the primary focus of all educational reforms.

The fact that these issues have in itself been highlighted by the Government of Kerala in the State Economic Review goes to show that they were aware of the problems existing in the schooling system of Kerala and also that the paucity of number of students was not the main reason for the rise in the number of uneconomic schools across the state.

As mentioned earlier, the researcher had the good fortune of visiting an uneconomic school that had been turned into a regular school that was currently thriving and interview the headmistress and teachers, who explained that due to the various government schemes like Sarva Shikha Abhiyaan, poduvidyabhyasa samsamrakshanayatnam, mid-day meal scheme and free uniform the infrastructure of the school had witnessed an overall development.

As a result of which it was no longer to be listed in the category of uneconomic schools but was now a non-uneconomic schools. This made the researcher question as to why this couldn't have been done earlier that could have prevented the uneconomic schools from being closed down back in 2003, 2004 and 2005 and attempt to analyse more closely with the factors that were playing out back then.

In the year 2005 it was noted that Kerala was undergoing a unique demographic syndrome whereby its population was largely turning into, what can be understood as an "ageing population". With the proportion of child population which was falling it was believed that it impacted the enrollment of children too. For instance there had been a sharp fall in the enrollment of students from 48.94 Lakh in 2004 to 48.42 Lakh in 2005, which tends to reflect a decline of 0.52 Lakh in school education sector. As per the state economic review of 2005, in the year 2003 -04, 7 uneconomic schools i.e 4 government

and 3 aided were closed down and in the year 2004-2005, 3 uneconomic schools (i.e. 1 government and 2 aided were closed down.)

By the year 2007, as per the figures, there are 12,644 schools in Kerala. Among these 35.57% are in Government Sector, 57.66% in private aided sector and 6.77% in private unaided sector.(State Economic Review, 2006) As far as the physical infrastructure of Government schools is concerned, it had improved significantly as a result of the involvement of Local Self Government Institutions (LSGI) under the ambit of decentralized planning. As seen above, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan policy had also contributed significantly to achieving this feat. With regard to the enrollment of female students in schools of Kerala, girls constitute 49.23% of the total number of students enrolled in the year 2006-07.

Following this, by the year 2008, 99.38% of Government schools in Kerala were functioning within the ambit of a pucca building. As far as the enrollment of students in the state was concerned there has been a significant decline. This has once again been attributed to the demographic pattern that is prevalent in the state that is indicative of a low birth rate. In the year 2008-2009, there was a decline of 1.74 percent as compared to the previous year in the rate of enrollment. Furthermore by the year 2008-2009 there were 3,415 uneconomic schools in Kerala. Out of these 1,721 are government sector schools while 1,694 are in the aided sector.(State Economic Review, 2008) Interestingly enough, even then the maximum number of uneconomic schools was to be found in the district of Kannur and a peculiar feature about the uneconomic schools in Kannur is that more than 70 percent of the uneconomic schools fall under the bracket of aided lower primary schools.

Because the number of uneconomic schools is high in Kannur the number of protected teachers is also on a rise in Kannur. But the initiatives did not stop, as with the aim reaching the unreached, the year 2006-2007 also saw the introduction of a program called ViCTERS that primarily stands for Virtual Classroom Technology on EDUSAT for Rural Schools(ViCTERS), by the Government. The aim of the program is to provide high speed internet connectivity to all schools and also for implementing learning management solutions. Its two channels i.e. both interactive and non-interactive has been made fully operational.

Following this a scheme that is called 'Quality Education for Challenged Children' was envisaged in the Annual Plan of 2008-2009, with the aim of financially supporting schools and institutions which were not getting adequate financial support from the central government. Some of these schools specially catered to the needs of specially-abled children and those children who exhibit learning disabilities at an earlier stage. With regard to the Budget of 2008-2009, Rs. 5410.49 has been earmarked for the cause of education under plan and non-plan heads in 2008-2009. (State Economic Review, 2008)

As per, the economic survey of 2009-2010, Local Self-Government Institutions and programmes like SSA have contributed towards the overall development of physical infrastructure in school and provided adequate drinking water, latrine and urine facilities. As far as the enrollment of students in schools is concerned in 2008-2009, 45.46 Lakh students were enrolled in schools in the state. In 2009-2010, this has been reduced by 1.94% i.e amounting to a number of 44.58 lakh students. The cause for the same has been ascertained to the low birth rate in Kerala. The state of Kerala has achieved the distinction as the state having lowest dropout rate of students in school as compared to other states of Kerala. (State Economic Review, 2009)

But by now the number of uneconomic schools has shot up to 3,661 in Kerala. Out of these 1,839 are government schools and 1,822 belong to the aided sector. In the year 2009-2010 24.80% of uneconomic aided schools are found in the district of Kannur. However, the problem of uneconomic schools had not deterred the state government from undertaking policies that are essential for strengthening and emboldening the school system in Kerala. One such initiative is the School Resource Group (SRG) which is "a body of teachers comprising of all teachers in a school for discussing matters related to effective implementation of the curriculum. The issues that are not resolved at the SRG level are further reported to the cluster training for higher level inputs to ensure that the classroom issues are resolved professionally." (State Economic Review, 2009)

Another initiative is called the 'Noottukku Nooru Project' which is primarily a research initiative that has been undertaken by SSA in order to develop new and innovative materials as well as methodology in order to further develop unique learning strategies in English, Hindi and Mathematics. (State Economic Review, 2009)

With regard to SSA free textbooks as well as work books and evaluation tools were also provided to student studying from Second standard to 8th standard. As mentioned above

the SSA is also providing community awareness, capacity building programme and orientation to PTA's.

Moreover it is important to note that since education is a concurrent subject the funding pattern for SSA is also split between the Centre and the State. The demarcation for the SSA between the union and the state government during the 10th Year Plan was 75% from Centre and 25% from State respectively. Gradually the funding pattern between 2008-2009 became 65:35 and by 2009-2010 is 60:40. By 2010-2011 the demarcation was to be 55:45 between the centre and the state respectively.

As mentioned above, when the research scholar went to visit the district of Kannur it was interesting to note that the uneconomic schools were mainly restricted to lower primary and upper primary grades and not a single uneconomic school was to be found among Higher Secondary Schools. The scholar was informed by a government official, Mrs. Susheela (name changed) that the reason behind this was, because of existence of grade 10th and 12th standards in Higher Secondary schools most of the students or parents of students wanted their wards to cross 12th standard as a result of which they had sufficient student strength. This led to a unique situation where uneconomic schools were restricted to primarily lower primary and upper primary schools.

Another reason that has led to the filling up of seats in the higher secondary system is the introduction of Single Window System. By single window system, in this context, one means that "the state should ensure accuracy, social justice and transparency in the process of admission to higher secondary Schools. As the process of admission became very transparent, maximum number of students began to take admission into higher secondary courses." (State Economic Review, 2009)

Therein, by the year 2010, Right to Education (RTE) came into effect. It ensured that free education was provided to more than 92 Lakh out of school children in India. This Act thereby ensured that every child in the country has a right to a good quality of elementary education. Some of the main features of this Act are: (State Economic Review, 2010)

- 1) All children aged 6-14 shall have the right to free and compulsory education at a neighbourhood school.
- 2) No direct (school fees) or indirect cost on uniforms, textbooks, mid-day meals, transportation etc need to be borne by the child or parents to obtain elementary education.

- 3) The government will provide schooling free of cost until the child's elementary education is completed.
- 4) All schools must comply with certain infrastructure and teacher norms. Two trained teachers will provide for every 60 students at the primary level.
- 5) Schools should constitute school management committees comprising of local officials, parents, guardians, teachers. The School Management Committee will monitor utilization of government grants and the school environment.
- 6) The RTE among other things, further mandates inclusion of 50% women and parents of children from disadvantaged groups in School Management Committee.

Teachers had to be at the core of the process of implementation of RTE, which primarily seeks to work towards achieving a heterogeneous and democratic classroom, where all children are provided with equal opportunities to participate as equal partners.

Furthermore in order to ensure that atleast 25% of children are taken from disadvantaged or weaker sections schools have to bring out in open the list of children who have been taken in this category and at the same time ensure that diversity is maintained.

Moreover state governments as well as local bodies will have to ensure primary schools are established within one kilometer of every neighborhood. Further for children of class VI to VIII a school should be within 3 km of every neighborhood and incase of absence of schools in small hamlets the state government is required to make adequate arrangements for free transportation and at the same time provision of residential facilities.

Thus as a result of these initiatives by the Goveernment, by the year 2011 the number of schools, in Kerala had increased to 12,644. Besides that, the number of uneconomic schools reached a sky high of 4,280, which is almost one-third of the total number of schools in Kerala. Within these 2,147 are in the government sector while 2,133 are in the aided sector. The maximum number of uneconomic schools i.e.635 in number continues to be in Kannur.

As far as expenditure is concerned Rs. 9662.62 crores was earmarked for education under plan and non plan heads in 2011-12. 78.9% of total outlay on education is earmarked for elementary and secondary education.(State Economic Review, 2011)

With the onset of the new decade, beginning from around 2012-2013 onwards, enrollments of students in schools plummeted to 39.86 lakh and has decreased by 6 percent as compared to the year before. As mentioned before the reduction in enrollment was at that time simply attributed to the change in demographic pattern marked by low birth rate. By this year the number of uneconomic schools kept on increasing even if marginally. As of 2011-2012, the number of uneconomic schools had risen to 4,614, which meant a rise of 334 schools as compared to the previous year. Thus the number of uneconomic schools continues to see an increase despite the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan working simultaneously in the state in order to strengthen the schooling system of Kerala. This seems to be the case even after implementation of RTE.

By this time the time period for 12th Five Year plan had commenced and the plan clearly stated that there would be a greater push towards encouraging private sectors to establish 'larger and higher quality institutions'. Plus it also emphasized on strengthening Public-Private Partnerships. As far as the expenditure on education was concerned the percentage of allocation for school education in the annual plan 2013-2014(47.66 crore) and 2012-13(48.65 crore), had been decreased considerably from the average outlay of XIthplan(53.71 crore).(State Economic Review, 2013) Although this has been attributed to the fact that the state has achieved most of the targets in school education. But, if that was the case then why was the issue of uneconomic schools still in existence.

By the year 2012-2013 there were 12,627 schools in Kerala. It had also been reported that as of 2013 all government school in Kerala function from within a pucca building. The SSA had further played a key role in strengthening and complimenting the efforts of RTE in the country. 98.76% government schools had access to drinking water and 99.6% have urine and latrine facilities.

Despite this the enrollment of students continues to be on a decline. The enrollment of students has declined by 3.02 percent over the previous year. Furthermore the dropout ratio in Lower Primary sections(4.87 per cent) is higher than that of Upper Primary (2.15 percent) stage or Higher secondary stage. The drop-out rates in higher secondary and upper primary is almost similar.

By the year 2012-2013 the number of uneconomic schools had risen to 5,137 in number. (State Economic Review, 2013) This is stark increase from the previous year. Among the uneconomic schools that exist in Kerala in government sector during this time 76 percent

are lower primary schools and among the aided sector 82.27 percent are also lower primary schools.

But despite this skyrocketing increase in the number of uneconomic schools, there have been interventions that are also being made in the form of efforts under SSA, but if these efforts are not sustained then they would lead to cracks in the efforts. For education has played an essential role in determining the level of social development a state achieves. Even with high literacy levels there still exists some gaps when it comes to quality of education. As a result of these gaps the Kerala State Planning Board appointed an Expert Committee under the chairmanship of Prof. P.O.J Lobba who submitted the committee's recommendations by December 2015, thereby addressing several aspects related to the quality of education. Some of these aspects are with regard to: (State Economic Review, 2014)

- Monitoring of teaching, assessment and learning outcomes
- Recruitment of teachers
- School Governance
- School Infrastructure and Teaching Materials
- Synchronization of different agencies
- Preschool Education
- Children with special needs
- Arts, crafts and physical education
- Approval and accreditation to schools

After taking all these points into consideration that the Government started proactively taking steps towards strengthening the schooling system in Kerala and addressing the issue of uneconomic schools, which shall be looked into in greater detail in next chapter.

Conclusion

Thus the district of Kannur has a very unique place in the state of Kerala, especially when it comes to analyzing the schooling system in the states as the largest number of 'uneconomic' schools are found in Kannur district. Therefore, it was important to understand the reason behind the rise of such schools which would further help give a context to the policy interventions that are taking place and the need for such policy intervention at the same time. Therefore the policy interventions are analysed in a greater detail in the next chapter.

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Chapter 4.

Policy Intervention with regard to Schools

Introduction

This chapter analyses the policy interventions vis-à-vis school education in Kerala. To bring systematic clarity this chapter is divided into four major sections: While the first section looks at the larger politics that underlines, the policy making narrative in Kerala, the second section looks at the the impact of specifically the thirteenth five year plan. This is because in the last few years the Thirteenth Five Year Plan has served as a turn-around when it comes to not only strengthening the schooling system in Kerala but also at the same time arresting the growth of ‘uneconomic’ schools in Kerala. Finally the third section analyses in greater detail the various policy measures undertaken by the Government of Kerala over the span of two decades to embolden the schooling system in Kerala. This section specifically highlights the the Pothu Vidyabhyasa Samrakshna Yajnam, which specifically focuses on arresting the growth of ‘uneconomic’ schools in Kerala. Finally this chapter brings into fore the voices of government officials who are the key actors in bringing about policy interventions and at the same time also highlights the efforts made by them.

I. Politics of Public Policy

In order to understand how educational policies in Kerala fit into the socio-political narrative of the society, one needs to look at the political and societal context in which Kerala finds itself. The society of Kerala has often seen different communities based on caste and religious affiliations participate in politics. Although many of them find their origins in social reform movement that began during the independence struggle but many still continue to exist although their intentions and motives have witnessed a sea change, since then. Menon (1995) writes that “A breakaway faction of the Congress called the Kerala Congress came into being in 1964, as the champion of the so-called Christian cause in Kerala. It is only since the 1980s that Hindu political groups have made a serious attempt to participate in the political process. Both the Hindu Munnani and the Bharatiya Janata Party(BJP), in spite of their limited presence, have added a new dimension to politics in Kerala”.

Since the 2000’s the Congress led–United Democratic Front and the Communist Party of India(Marxist) led Left Democratic Front have often wrestled for holding onto the realms

of power in the state of Kerala. J. Devika (2007) writes that “In Kerala, anxieties have, indeed been palpable as the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M), triumphant in the 2001 elections, riding the wave of a "people's man", V S Achuthanandan, seems to be increasingly veering towards neo-liberalism.” Here it is important to note the Kerala is not only a state with heightened level’s of literacy but also is a hallmark of society that is steadily urbanizing and is media conscious at the same time. Infact it is interesting to take note of the fact that with the onset of the 21st century an emerging new avatar in Kerala politics is the role of the “oppositional civil society”, in which the “new social movements” have found their roots.

Although the trend of developmentalism tends to have de-politicizing effects that is not the case in Kerala. With higher the rate of development the greater is the level of political awareness leading to more informed participation in socio-political movements, thereby keeping the parties or governments in power on their tender hooks.

Usually earmarked as bipolar politics between UDF and LDF, what characterizes the nature of politics in Kerala is the anti-incumbency nature of Politics. Especially since 2000’s, one hardly sees the same government repeating itself twice in consecutive elections. The pendulum always seems to swing between LDF and UDF. However the policies initiated by one government are not completely negated by the other but in most cases are carried forward with some changes here and there. One such example in the beginning of the Century is the People’s Plan Campaign which has been described below.

The late 1990’s and early 2000’s in Kerala was marked by what is known as the ‘People’s Planning Programme’ in Kerala. It is a planning program where government spearheaded lakhs of people, in order to mobilize them for the planning process which was previously unheard of in the developing world. What was reflective of here was a synergy between state and society in Kerala. The people’s campaign that was launched in the state of Kerala was undertaken under the larger stewardship of the State Planning Board which also brought about the yearly state economic review among other things. The People’s Planning Programme was initiated from the year 1997-98 onwards. This was coinciding with the formulation of the ninth plan that was taking place at the national level. Thus under the ambit of the people’s plan the state decided to devolve 40 percent of the state’s development funds to the three-tier panchayats . This effort would therein enhance the participation of the people in the governance of the state. For this the Kerala Sastra

Sahitya Parishad provided the required organization support at the grassroots level. The Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad is a non-governmental organization that has pro-left inclinations. Women emerged as the prominent actors in the campaign as well. Thus as a result, soon it became mandatory that out of the entire fund that was allotted 10 percent funds were set apart for women by the panchayats. It was interesting to note that the people's plan campaign was working on strict time frame, especially with regard to the completion of the annual projects. Commenting on the 'plan campaign', Heller(2000) says that "If the political opening for decentralization was orchestrated by the CPM from above, it is civil society that provided the critical ideological and mobilization resources for the campaign."

As a result of this, people's campaign saw a significant rise and growth in the number of various rural institutions that were to be found across the state. After LDF lost power the Congress led UDF that came to power by the middle of the year 2001 was also committed towards the continuance of the same programme, i.e Peoples Plan Program. It is important to note that associational life in Kerala has received a greater and significant push once the participatory planning was initiated within the state. This has,thereby played a significant role in strengthening the civil society in the state which due to its higher literacy rate is also more socially aware of the happening in the societies and is active and informed about the policies that effect, impact and influence them.

Despite the change in government, the number of welfare policies increased stretching the scarce resources of the state. Moreover, policies aimed at economic growth and development either became conspicuous by their absence or if they existed became prey to petty party politics, throwing the state to the throes of financial crisis.

In Kerala, Prabhash(2004) writes that "public policies have usually emerged as byproducts of popular mobilization from below as well as from state sponsored initiatives from above." Interestingly this began at a time when such patterns were absent at all India level. Therefore instead of a clearly demarcated top-down centered approach it also started to slowly infuse bottom-up approach.

As far as schools were concerned, a unique practice in Kerala is that when it comes to management of aided schools, the management appoints the teaching and-non-teaching staff and Government pays their salary. Now with the mushrooming of unaided institution and fall in birth rates, these schools are falling short of students, rendering teachers

jobless. Until a few years ago, the practice was to retain them as 'protected teachers' in the parent schools with full salary. However, considering its 'uneconomic' nature, it was later decided to accommodate them in existing vacancies in Government Schools. However, this did not have a significant impact on the schooling system in the state.

Thus, because of these issues there was a pressing need to look at the inter-linkages between planning and education in Kerala, especially with regard to the 13th Five Year Plan, that served to turn-around the direction in which the 'uneconomic' schools were heading.

II. Impact of Thirteenth Five Year Plan on Education

As per the 13th Five Year Plan of the State of Kerala(2017-2022), education is to be counted as one of the main four mission of Government of Kerala. Here it is important to note that Kerala is the only state in India that has decided to continue with the Five Year Plan.The latest being Thirteenth Five Year Plan, spanning from 2017-2022. Kerala continued with the Five Year Plan while at the centre the Planning Commission was dissolved and replaced with Niti Aayog.

With the key focus of 13th Five Year Plan, being to enhance quality and upgrade the existing educational infrastructure to attain international standards, with special attention being given to making Kerala's education system more and more inclusive. Moreover special attention is also to be given to children belonging to marginalized sections as well as those children who are specially-abled, both physically and mentally. The 13th Five Year Plan of the state also aims to make school education attainable by every child in Kerala irrespective of their economic background, or the region to which they belong or their social group.

According to the 13th Five Year Plan of Kerala "The bedrock of Kerala's development achievements has been school education, as it has been instrumental in making progress in other fields possible."(State Planning Board, Government of Kerala, 2018) As seen in the previous chapters in Kerala, the link between mass schooling and mass education was established very early on, in comparison to rest of the country.

In the year 2015-2016, when the field work of this study was taking place, there were 12,882 schools in the state of Kerala. Out of the 12,882 schools 36 percent i.e. 4,619,

were government schools and 55 percent i.e 7,140 came under the bracket of aided schools and 9percent which accounted to a number of 1,123, were unaided schools. Within Kerala then there were 1,373, schools which offer another syllabus other than the state syllabus. The break-up or sub division of the same is given here:

Table 4.1: Number of schools as per different syllabus

Type of School vis-à-vis syllabus	No. of schools
CBSE Schools	1,178
ICSE Schools	148
Kendriya Vidyalayas	33
Jawahar Navodayas	14

Source: Thirteenth Five Year Plan (2017-2022), Government of Kerala

The focus of the 13th Five Year Plan when it comes to school education was, improvement of quality and promotion of inclusion at all levels. Especially including the “socially oppressed communities and children with physical and intellectual disabilities and other special needs” (State Planning Board, Government of Kerala, 2018). By quality it means not only academic excellence but also provision and upscaling of infrastructure to meet high standards.

The 13th Five Year Plan also envisioned introducing ‘new technical specifications’ (State Planning Board, Government of Kerala, 2018) as far as the schools infrastructure was concerned and also made large scale investment with regard to development of “new generation of public schools in Kerala.”(State Planning Board, Government of Kerala, 2018) The education policy with regard to schooling, as per the thirteenth five year plan was to focus on introducing new syllabus, pedagogy as well as teaching methods. As mentioned above it will not only focus on inclusivity among all sections of society but will also “aim to modernize norms of school conduct and social behavior”(State Planning Board, Government of Kerala, 2018).

It will also focus on extra-curricular activities involving, sports, artistic and other multifarious activities that would eventually lead to the overall holistic growth of the student. The focus of the school education policy will not only be on student but will also

aim to enhance the teacher training and administration of various schools as they are instrumental in not only imparting education but also in overseeing the holistic growth of the students. Keeping in tune with this new schemes such as setting up of focus on biodiversity initiatives in schools, Sraddha, Autism Parks, Vidyarangam was also envisaged. (Which have been mentioned in greater detail below)

The target of the 13th Five Year Plan involves enhancing the infrastructure of all the Government schools by shifting them from rented building to their own independent buildings as well as improving the common facilities are concerned. The plan also aims to develop a scientific temper among students and also to inculcate in them literary as well as artistic skills. Thereby, aiming at their holistic growth and development.

While at the formulation of the 13th Five Year plan the ongoing initiatives in the field of education focused on five areas that is 'infrastructure, modernization and governance, student centric activities, monitoring and academic excellence'. (State Planning Board, Government of Kerala, 2018) With the 13th Five Year Plan 7 brand new programmes had been started, in the year 2017-2018. These are:

Sraddha- These are remedial teaching lessons undertaken with the aim of helping underperforming teaching students reach their full potential. These classes are also held on Saturday's as well as on Public Holidays.

Vidyarangam- Being the General Education Departments, cultural wing, it helps empower students in the cultural & literary aspects of their growth. This is divided into two main aspects i.e.

- a) Vidyarangam Kalasahitya Vedi (school level literary club)
- b) Vidyarangam Magazine (Sole publication of General Education Department)

This program involves publishing the work of students, conducting literary competitions, learning based journeys to historical as well as cultural sites.

Study on faltering areas in Education Sector- Under this program, issues that need special attention within the purview of school education are studied. For eg:

“Causes of Dropout of Students in Wayanad District” was started in the year 2017-2018.

Kerala School Kalolsavam- Also translated as School Arts Festival of Kerala is basically an annual event which is organized by the Government of Kerala and it features various art competitions for school students (particularly the High School and Higher Secondary School students) in the state. Although RTE and Kerala State Child Rights Protection Commission prohibit collection of money from students for Kerala School Kalolsavam it has turned into a financial burden for the department. As a result, for conducting Kaolsavam, plan funds were earmarked at sub-district, district and state level.

Free provision of school uniform- Beginning from 2017-2018, the Government of Kerala has started supplying handloom cloth for uniform for students in class 1st to 8th standard.

Biodiversity campus in school- This scheme has two fold aims. Firstly, to conserve the natural resources in the vicinity and secondly to spread awareness about the surroundings to the children and public as far as possible. This involves not only creating bio-diversity parks within schools but also conducting workshops as well as seminars on the same, and giving incentives to the schools which perform the best with regard to this area.

Autism Park- The aim of having autism parks is to help autistic children shed idiosyncracies pertaining to their behavior and thereby encourage them towards social participation and build up and strengthen there communication levels. This scheme is not only restricted to the children with autism but also provides support to parents and teachers to enable them to cope with various demands of the children and to involve them in the learning and understanding process. It involves among other things, speech as well as language therapy, behavior modification, management of cognitive behavior, counseling to both children as well as parents, remedial teaching, physiotherapy and the like.

The Thirteenth Five Year Plan not only restricts itself to these above mentioned programs but goes a step further by providing female friendly toilets and rooms, and also providing

counseling techniques for adolescents-to female teachers, exposure through trips to scientifically crucial places etc.

III. Policy Interventions

a) Pothu Vidyabhyasa Samrakshna Yajnam (Public Education Rejuvenation Scheme)

Thus with the 13th Five Year Plan, the cause of education was earmarked as a key area for state intervention in India. Some of these interventions began through “PothuVidyabhyasaSamrakshnaYajnam”, in order to upgrade the classrooms and curriculum and keep them in tune with the needs of the changing times. During the last years few years i.e. from 2017 onwards there has been an unique trend whereby there has been a reverse flow or what can be understood as a reverse migration of students from unaided schools to government and Government-aided schools which are symbolic of the fact that the government initiatives are beginning to be accepted amongst the masses.(As will be seen in greater detail in the next chapter) This throws open the question i.e. when societal shifts happen then policy shifts happen or is it that reverse is the case, or is it a cycle or is it both simultaneous.

Although there is no, black and white answer to the above mentioned question but from what can be understood from the above trend analysis is that when policies were being shifted in a manner to strengthen the education system in the state and address the issue of uneconomic schools, it began to have a trickle-down effect and the choices being made by the populace of the society also began to witness a slow and steady change.

Reflective of this fact is that, as per the National Achievement Survey(NAS) Report the last two years have witnessed a quality improvement of Education in Kerala. (State Economic Review, 2018)

As far as the Pothuvidyabhyassa Samrakshna Yajnam is concerned it has achieved better results not only with regard to increasing the enrollment in schools but has also focused on the quality of education. The NAS Report that was conducted from 2017-2018 and among other things found that performance of students of Kerala is significantly above national average in all subjects and in all classes except science and social sciences in

class 8. And also that the performance of students in Govt schools of Kerala is significantly higher than the aided schools especially in standard 3rd and 5th while there is no significant difference in standard 8th.

While upgrading schools and classrooms to smart classrooms in order to make student tech-savvy, is just one aspect of the PothuVidhyabhayasaSarakshanaYajnam (The Public Education Rejuvenation Scheme), an effort is also being made to develop public schools as Centres of Excellence. In order to do so Kerala Infrastructure and Investment Fund (KIIFB) spends an amount of nearly 5 crores in each of these schools. As far as the construction is concerned, it is undertaken by utilizing the development fund that falls within the ambit of people's representatives as well as by raising funds from people's associations and also by utilizing the funds that are with the local bodies. The schools that are being transformed into Centres of Excellence will also have dining hall, auditorium, proper kitchen, laboratories and along with it, will also be equipped with smart classrooms.

Recently, while dedicating 90 Schools as Centres of Excellence in the state the CM Pinarayi Vijayan said that⁷

The changes in the field of school education were being implemented keeping in mind the next generation. In past, the society discussed the closure of government schools but now they have become Centres of Excellence, as the number of students coming to study here has also increased. (Vijayan,2020)

Another project that was undertaken to strengthen the schools in Kerala was called 'Ente' (My School), which has been discussed below.

b) Innovative Project: 'Ente'(My) School- A Model Project On Comprehensive Education

This initiative was primarily started by the government with the aim of imparting quality as well as comprehensive education in both government as well as aided schools. This project has been implemented in 115 schools of Kannur district. It mainly focuses on the

⁷ As mentioned in the newspaper Hindu on 14th October 2020. Available at: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/all-schools-to-be-centres-of-excellence-pinarayi/article36458274.ece>

problems of schools which are situated in remote places and are deprived of infrastructural facilities and are addressed through convergence of MP, MLA Funds and funds from local bodies, PTA initiatives and other sponsorships. In all these 115 schools, attractive school buildings, classrooms, clean toilets, access to drinking water, computer labs and libraries have been made available. The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has also been introduced in these schools and the students and classrooms are better equipped to deal with the issues of ICT. Furthermore ICT and digital technology are incorporated as a part of learning of all subjects.

Learning English Language has also been given adequate importance and as a result of it “English theatre” has also been accepted in all schools. This Ente Project is primarily a model project that is implemented in other schools in a comprehensive manner.

Folloing this, in the year 2016, there were 12,882, schools in Kerala out of which 4,619 (36 percent) are government schools 7,140(55 percent) are aided schools and 1,123(9 percent) are unaided schools. (State Economic Review, 2016)

The enrollment of students, however, continued to remain low. This could be one of the reasons why the uneconomic schools are on a rise. However in the year 2016,

“In a major relief to the students of uneconomic schools in Kerala that were facing the threat of closure Kerala government had undertaken four such schools including a 140 year old school in Kozhikode district that had been ordered to be shut down by the Kerala High Court. Though the government had approached the Supreme Court against the Malaparamba Aided Upper Primary School management’s decision to close it down, the apex court dismissed its appeal against the high court order to close down the school. Further, a cabinet meeting took the decision of taking over 4 uneconomic aided schools considering the future of the students and widespread protests against the closure.”(State Economic Review, 2016)

But whether this was a precedent for the future of uneconomic schools, still had to be seen. “Despite these efforts by the year 2016, the number of uneconomic schools continued to rise and there were 5,715 uneconomic schools in the state of Kerala, which was a hike of 142 schools as compared to the previous year.”(State Economic Review, 2016)

Thus by the year 2017, there was a pertinent need to address the elephant in the room, that is the issue of rising number of uneconomic schools. The year 2017 was also the year, the state of Kerala launched the thirteenth five year plan.

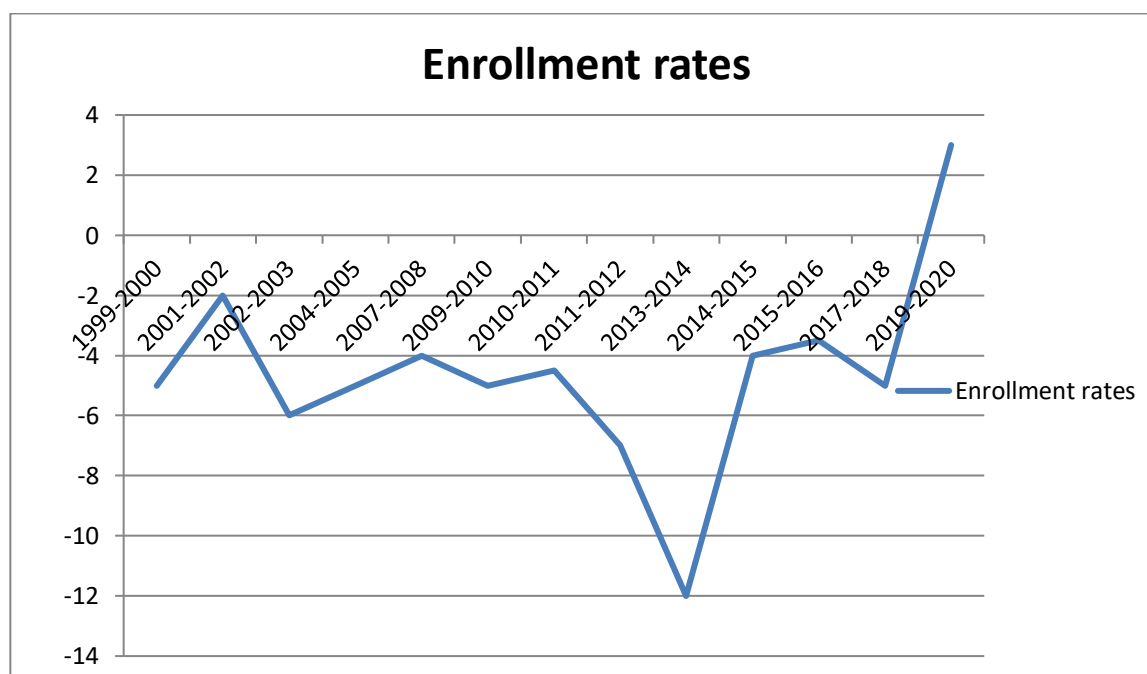
In the year 2018 there were 12,971 schools in the state of Kerala out of which 4,695 were govt schools, 7,216 were aided schools and 1060 were unaided schools. Interestingly now the enrollment trend of students in schools witnessed an increase, especially to 37.03 Lakh from 36.8 Lakh in 2018. Therefore, the state economic review of 2019 states that in the last two years a positive change happened in terms of enrollment of students in Government and aided schools and this feat has been accredited to the new policy called Pothu Vidyabhyasa Samrakshna Yajnam. The State Economic Review (2019) also clearly states that “due to demographic reasons naturally the student’s enrollment would decrease as the growth rate of population in the state as per 2011 census was only 4.9 percent. Hence the increase in enrollment to the public schools is because people’s preferences for government or aided school are increasing as far as new admissions of students are concerned”. (State Economic Review, 2019) This is also because of all the facilities that are now being made available in the government schools, from scholarship to new uniform and free textbooks, so much so that the lure of unaided or private schools has now begun to decline. Plus parents are also becoming aware of the low quality of education being imparted in private schools and as a result the status symbol of sending ones child to private school or unaided school with high fees and comparatively low quality of education no longer hold torch to the parents.(As can be seen from the above interview analysis of parents) The following table shows the net increase in the number of students in schools, ever-since Pothu Vidyabyasa Samrakshna Yajnam began to be implemented.

Table 4.2: Net increase in enrolment of students in schools from 2016-17 to 2018-19

From 2016-17 to 2017-18								
Government	5,703	354	1,346	667	8,070	-5,192	-2,409	469
Aided	6,495	-1,243	216	1,302	6,770	-5,798	-17,143	-16,171
Un Aided	-1,122	63	-128	615	-572	-2,834	-1,729	-5,135
Grand Total	11,076	-826	1,434	2,584	14,268	-13,824	-21,281	-20,837
From 2017-18 to 2018-19								
Government	5,784	7,889	2,342	4,434	20,449	5,567	-6,755	19,261
Aided	4,294	8,644	1,007	2,005	15,950	7,927	-10,789	13,088
Un Aided	-1,572	-834	-1,010	-408	-3,824	-2,499	-2,948	-9,271
Grand Total	8,506	15,699	2,339	6,031	32,575	10,995	-20,492	23,078

Source: State Economic Review 2019, State Planning Board, Government of Kerala

Graph 4.1. Change in the enrollment rates of student



The above graph is reflective of the enrollment rates in uneconomic schools from 2000 onwards.

Source: State Economic Review 2019

c) Introduction of HI-TECH Classrooms

The aspect of upgrading the schools to HI-tech schools is taking place under the erstwhile IT @ School initiative later known as KITE Program, which is elaborated below.

IT @ SCHOOL

The IT @ School Project which had its genesis in IT in Education-Vision guideline which was presented to Government of Kerala in late 2000. After considering it, the Government of Kerala(GOK) initiated the process of inculcating IT in the curricula of schools in Kerala. This was done with the aim of training school teachers in IT and to in-turn, turn them into master trainers. Thus was born IT@School project in Kerala, quite early on in 2001, itself. At first it was implemented in 2 phases:

Phase I (2002-2005)

In the first phase an exponential number of 15 Lakh students and above were given the privilege of undertaking computer studies. In addition to that almost 25,540 computer facilities were installed in 2,699 schools and above.

IT also became a mandatory subject to be taught in the state schools as a part of their curricula. This enabled development of IT infrastructure in Schools. This also facilitated a smooth, simpler and updated teaching and learning process which is enjoyable even by young students.

Phase II (2005-2008)

As a part of this project virtual classrooms have been installed and schools have been equipped with laptops, LCD Projectors as well as with broad band facility

The effort of upgrading the schools to Hi-Tech standard also involves E-Learning as well as digitized content collection and introduction of digital interactive textbooks.

As this project was continuing by the late 2017, IT @ School Project transformed into a company under the Department of Education of Kerala and ever since then it has been known as Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education a.k.a. KITE.

Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education

Interestingly, this is not new, infact in Kerala the beginning of ICT technology in Kerala dates back to 2001-2002 when the state government had established IT at school as a project under General Education Department.



Picture 4.1: Here Ms. Divya (name changed), of GLPS Chovva school can be seen using a projector, which was given under the KITE initiative, to teach students. Pic Credit: Author

KITE is a unique initiative of the Kerala Government in the sense that it also happened to be one of the first Special Purpose Vehicle⁸ company to get its funding from Kerala Infrastructure and Investment Fund Board (KIIFB).

Some of the positive aspects/features of KITE are:

It is the nodal agency that runs EDUSAT⁹ network. It also runs a channels called Versatile ICT Enabled Resource for Students (VICTERS)¹⁰ Furthermore, it also runs various

⁸ A Special Purpose Vehicle Company basically means a legal entity that is created with the aim of fulfilling a very specific, narrow and temporary objectives. To be more specific ""The Special Purpose Entity is a fenced organization having limited predefined purposes and a legal personality".

training programmes like ICT Training, Hardware Training, Internet Training, IT training for visually challenged, training in Camera Handling, ICT enabled content training a programme known as ANTS (Animation Training Programme for Students) Under this, the Government of Kerala also started the E-Governance initiative. For instance like the ‘Single Window Admission System, computerization of noon-mid day meal program, provision of pre-metric scholarship was also made online.’ Also the initiation of SPARK (Service Payroll Administrative Repository for Kerala) was done by them. They also launched the ‘SchoolWiki’ portal which as the name reflects takes inspiration from Wikipedia.

‘School Wiki’ is an innovative portal that is completely in Malayalam language and it is a comprehensive database that gives information about schools in Kerala as well as reflects student outcome and educational contents which are usually prepared by School teachers in Kerala. KITE also managed to open several free software application to enhance education in the state like the examination software, Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) which is custom made for students who specially require special form of attention from the teachers. KITE has also developed a free software with the aim of training teachers who are visually challenged in Kerala. It also conducted campaigns across the state of Kerala to raise awareness regarding everyday use of computer and its software called LINUX. They have also developed a software called “Total Physical Fitness Programme” which consists of the fitness details of approximately 30 Lakh students which can in-turn be used for further action.

A unique program within the KITE initiative is the “Little KITE’s” program which is by far the ‘largest student IT Network in India.’ Under this programme latest IT related topics and concepts like Programming, E-Governance, Robotics, Malayalam Computing etc are also taught. Within the purview of ‘Little KITE’ program IT camps are also held occasionally across the state.

Besides equipping each classroom with latest ICT gadgets like laptops, multimedia, projectors, (as can be seen above) and sound systems, networking etc KITE has also facilitated the access of Samgra Resource Portal which has over 20,000 digital resources

⁹ EDUSAT is a communications satellite launched by the ISRO in 2004 and is the first satellite that was built by India to cater exclusively to the education sector.

¹⁰ It offers a virtual as well as interactive classroom experience wherein the students and their teachers get an opportunity to communicate with subject experts and educationists quite directly

for all classrooms. From standard 1 to standard 12 high speeds, broadband has also been provided to all classrooms through the KITE initiative. School teachers have also been technologically equipped and empowered to use them. Even the Sampoorna school management software has also been brought to utilization under the KITE Programme.(State Economic Review, 2018)

As a part of this initiative the Kerala government has also launched little KITES IT clubs in order to ingrain genuine interest in school students by giving them modules on the latest happenings in the Information Technology world, like Robotics, Malayalam Computing, Programming, E-commerce etc. The intrinsic idea behind them is to introduce the student in the area of developing software etc.

Another project under the SSA was the 'Hello English' project which was launched around 2017 and was implemented by 2018. It aimed to enhance the proficiency and confidence level of students in speaking English.

By the year 2019 it can be clearly understood that Kerala entering a new phase with regard to demand on Educational facilities and educational quality. According to the Approach Paper of the Thirteenth Plan, it pointed out that public institutions in Kerala must cope with the changing needs that are emerging in the modern society, especially with regard to changing demographic pattern.

Today, Kerala is investing in 'new-generation public schools' with good infrastructure and hi-tech facilities, with the aim of making best possible school education available to every possible child in the state of Kerala. Under the "Nava Kerala Mission" that was launched by the Left Democratic Front Government with the aim of upgrading the four key sectors i.e Health, Education, Agriculture and Housing. Under this "Nava Kerala Mission" One of the key focus areas has been on "enrichment of academic and social aspects of school education"

In reality the mission has managed to bring together a diverse group of people including teachers, parents, alumni and peoples representatives towards the goal of creating high quality public institutions in the state of Kerala. As far as the enrollment is concerned, interestingly between 2016-17 to 2019-20 the proportion of students enrolled in government schools increased by one percentage point i.e. from 30.4 percent to 31.4 percent. As can be seen here:

Table 4.3 Net increase in enrolment of students in schools from 2016-17 to 2019-2020

From 2016-17 to 2017-18								
Government	5703	3629	3615	2641	15588	5475	38789	59852
Government-aided	6495	6474	6296	5934	25199	58670	12844	96713
Grand Total	12198	10103	9911	8575	40787	64145	51633	156565
From 2017-18 to 2018-19								
Government	5784	5815	5603	5729	22931	12229	35484	70644
Aided	4294	8623	8546	7723	29186	67483	18658	115327
Grand Total	10078	14438	14149	13452	52117	79712	54142	185971
From 2018-19 to 2019-20								
Government	-168	5578	5483	5330	16223	12616	36376	65215
Aided	-3222	7626	7742	7266	19412	63312	15619	98343
Grand Total	-3390	13204	13225	12596	35635	75928	51995	163558

Source: State Economic Review 2020, State Planning Board, Government of Kerala

In the year 2018 special support in the form of finances is also provided 150 year old heritage schools. (State Economic Review, 2019)

Further in order to wipe out complete illiteracy, Programmes like ‘Aksharalaksham’, ‘Aksharasagaram’ for the coastal regions, ‘Samagra’ for the SC category, ‘Navachetana’ for ST category, ‘changathi’ for migrant labourers from other states, ‘Samanwaya’ for transgenders have been implemented.

Furthermore, all the text books for respective academic year are supplied to the schools before the closing date of previous academic year. The bio diversity parks mentioned above started functioning in 12,000 schools in the State.

Talent Labs have also been set up to ripen and identify the various inherent talents in the students. Focusing on this agenda, several programmes like “*Malayalathilakkam*” (to enrich the talents of the students in Malayalam language), “*Hello English*” (to enhance the English language skills in the students), “*Sureeli Hindi*” (to nurture the Hindi language) have been implemented by the general education department under the Learning Enhancement Programme of Samagra Shiksha Kerala. These activities improved the language learning capacity of students and as a result they have the opportunity to acquire knowledge and communication skills in at least three languages. Another program i.e. ‘Kunjuvayana, Kunjezhuthu’ programme is being prepared to attain the mother tongue proficiency in the learners of class I, II and III. The NAS report had raised concerns that students in primary classes, across the country were not achieving the basic learning outcomes and skills in Mathematics before reaching higher classes. Against this backdrop, in schools of Kerala, have implemented the programme “*Ganitha Vijayam*” for primary students that firms up mathematical concepts.

‘Sastrayanam’ project is also instituted for students who have an extraordinary aptitude in science. ‘Sasthrajalakam’ has been framed for the students who has special fondness to science subjects. ‘Sastrapadham’ is being organized to inculcate the science aptitude and awareness for the plus one students. Science parks are also setup for Upper Primary school students.

Another aspect is the Block Resource Centre’s are basically established in each and every block of each and every district. It comes under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan Programme (now Samagra Shiksha) and its main aim is to conduct in-service teacher training and to also provide a great deal of academic support to teachers as well as to schools on a regular basis.

When interviewing the parents and the headmasters/headmistress the scholar also learnt that in some of the government schools, teachers who were trained at the Block Resource Centre were also being sent to these schools every week to teach and train the specially-abled students in the school.

Besides this, as per the framework that has been devised for the implementation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Block Resource Centres had the following roles to play:

Block Resource Centres is a richly endowed with academic resource where the teachers could find ample amount of reference material. Further, it also continues to serve as a place where human resources are strengthened especially by inviting key resource persons and experts from nearby Universities or Colleges, Non-Governmental Organizations as well as other education oriented institutions to tap into an area of expertise, with the aim of helping and equipping teachers especially at primary as well as upper primary levels of schooling.

It is also a space where teachers training as well as monthly meetings are held in order to discuss issues faced by teachers and academics in general. And also to design strategies that can help improve the school performance. It also entails making regular visits to schools in the area where they try to address the pedagogic issues that emerge from time-to-time and also find constructive solutions to issues that relate to a school’s development. They also set up performance indicators that help track as well as strengthen a school’s performance. Moreover at BRC they also have consultation with various members of the Panchayat as well as Community members and emerge with ways,

mechanisms and ideas to enhance the overall quality of schools leading to improvement of schools. This would further entail creating a 'Quality Improvement Plan' which would be done in a time bound manner under the SSA.

It also involves monitoring the level of quality and the progress being made with regard to using tools to monitor quality, and this would be done in collaboration with a District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) that is close by.

This leads one to question, what is a DIET and the role that it plays in provision and promotion of school education.

d) District Institute for Education and Training (DIET)

DIETS are educational institutes that primarily operate at the district level and oversee the planning, research as well as implementation of various educational programs at the state level. There is one DIET in each and every district of India, implying that there are overall 14 DIET's in Kerala. These DIET's are also instrumental in coordination as well as execution of various education related government policies at the district level. It also oversees, the recurrent orientation of teachers both at the primary and elementary level and also aids to the everchanging innovative and dynamic teaching methods at school level. In other words it also trains teachers on new innovations from time to time.

The various departments that function under the DIET are:

- Pre-Service Teacher Education (PSTE)
- Curriculum Material Development and Evaluation (CMDE)
- Planning and Management (P&M)
- Work Experience (WE)
- In-Service Programmes Field Interaction, Innovation and Co-ordination (IFIC)
- Educational Technology (ET)
- District Resource Unit (DRU)
- Administrative Branch

Thus the DIET serves as an important step towards upgrading the schools and training the teachers.

IV. Efforts and Voices of Government Officials

Ms.Nirmala(name changed) a government official with Education department of Kannur also mentioned that this trend of growth of uneconomic schools has been taking place since 1990's, and in order to arrest this phenomenon, the government has brought about digitization of classrooms and schools, as well as replaced old and redundant infrastructure with new and improved infrastructure. This has eventually led to improvement in quality and standard of the teaching-learning process and as a result of the incentives being provided like scholarships etc, there is a trend of reverse migration from private schools to public schools in the recent past. She also mentioned even though the ratio of funding between Centre and State or education is 60:40, the Government of Kerala makes sure that every dime reaches the last mile. And this can be seen in the form of services being provided to the students like Mid-Day meal scheme etc.¹¹

Mr. Narendran(name changed) a government official with General Education Department, Government of Kerala, also mentioned that they keep the RTE Rules in mind while executing the policies and are very proactive in making sure that the education being provided at school level is very inclusive and that not a single child is left behind.

Furthermore at the district level, the Deputy Director of Education(DDE) Ms. Archana also mentioned how plethora of measures were being undertaken with the aim of not only upgrading public schools in the district of Kannur but also with the intention of drawing more and more students to government schools as against the previous phenomenon, where people were transferring their pupils from public to private schools. Some of the measures that she mentioned included providing free new books and new uniforms to the students on the last day of the academic calendar, so that they were well equipped in advance to join the new academic session in the school with full fervour. Moreover the protection was not only restricted to students but teachers also. This is done in order to attract more students to government schools. In schools in which there were 15 plus students were provided with full salary while teachers where students were less than 15 in count were provided with daily wages, but if they were public schools they came under protected teachers ambit and did not lose their job, because of dearth of students.

¹¹In fact at the time of the interview being conducted there were talks of introducing a scheme for provision of breakfast too in public schools.

Ms. Archana(name changed) also said that the recently launched the Public Education Rejuvenation Scheme also known as PothuVidyabhayasaSamrakshnaYajnam will not only arrest the phenomenon of growth of uneconomic schools but will also bring to the fore the talents and gifts of the students and would keep in mind a wholistic approach of involving the society in a constructive way.

This Public Education Rejuvenation Scheme has served as a trailblazer towards positively changing the character of public schools and has also helped rebuild the trust of the Kerala populace in government schools. Although seen as a subset of Government of Kerala's Nava Kerala Mission, this scheme has managed to literally carve a niche in the society and reinvigorate the life of the populace fo Kerala, especially the pupils.

As a result of this program, households that had been previously hesitant to send their wards to public schools are now seeing the ground level benefits of the same, and have started transferring their students from private run schools to government schools not only because of pure economical reasons but also because they can see their wards blooming in these schools rather than getting lost in the crowd.

Thus this program has managed to creatively involve different sections of society in the school education process.

Furthermore, a special fund called the Challenge fund has also been set up for aided schools. Just like we have entered into an era of 'smart' technology, as a result there are problems that also emerge with fast paced change in technology. In order to address this issue Call Centre type set-up has been established in order to rapidly address hardware complaints that arise from schools, so that there is no long-term hindrance in the teaching-learning process at schools.¹²Attempts are also being made through policy initiatives to inculcate a reading habit in children at a very young age, through a medium of reading cards.The government has also released a 'support guide' for digital classes, which came especially handy during the pandemic, when classes were completely shifted to online mode.

When it comes to the funding aspect, Mr. Ramesh(name changed), a government official said that besides International, National and State funding, the local MLA's also use their

¹²With the turning classrooms into HI-Tech based setups, helped the students and teachers to smoothly transition into 'virtual' teaching and learning set-up during the COVID times

funds to construct and upgrade school buildings and to raise them to International standards. As a result the officials make sure that every penny reaches the last mile.

Mr.Suresh(name changed), an another government official also said that with these concerted efforts of the state and the community the academic capability of both the students and teachers has seen a tremendous improvement. In order to continue improving the standards of the public schools in the state an Academic Master Plan was formulated with the intent of uplifting the overall educational institute in novel ways that can help it keep in tune with the changing dynamics of the future.

Under this Academic Master Plan a mentoring scheme was started with the aim of providing much needed support to each student. The intent behind beginning this initiative is to hone and sync the student's emotional as well as social skills with their academic capabilities. Moreover, in order to ensure a holistic assessment of students, a 'Sahitam Portal' was also started which was primarily going to be student centric. Under this program the teacher who is also the mentor will not only observe but also study and record the academic achievements of the students along with the socio-linguistic skills of the students, their level of social awareness as well as their scientific and other aptitudes. Furthermore,incase the student needs more specific help, then the teacher/mentor will also plan a corrective activity that will enable the child to learn better by understanding and contextualizing the learning difficulties the student faces due to their diverse social background. This will not only make the student eager to learn but will be a more inclusive method as well of teaching and learning at school level.

In order to undertake this mentorship task more effectively, teachers will also be made to undergo a psychological training. This intervention will not only be restricted to teachers but will also involve parents by guiding them regarding their children's capabilities, and would also include the latest technology involving, data analytics, artificial intelligence etc. Besides the use of the portal, the teachers/mentors will also take one-on-one effort, by trying to understand the students social background and state of affairs by engaging in informal talks as well as by visiting their house and observing the students at more close quarters.

They officials also highlighted some of the schemes that they were implementing in order to enhance the skills of the students like Hello English.

Hello English

It is a project under SarvaSiksha Abhiyan, which has been initiated by Kerala from the year 2016-2017 onwards. The aim of the project is to build confidence in young students belonging to both primary as well as upper primary classes to use English Language. This is being done by training and equipping teachers in schools to impart the English language in a more effective manner to school students. The techniques and methods used in the Hello English Programme have been at first put through trials at both District and State levels, with a group of 50 teachers and involving above 500 students. Thus it has not transferred from direct paper to class, but has gone through trials of feasibility.

It's basically a hands-down initiative, where students tend to learn basically by 'doing Hello English workshops both individually and in groups with the support and guidance of their teacher.'(State Economic Review, 2018) As a result of this workshop 'approach' of imparting English to students, the classroom scenario instead of being a top-down approach tends to turn into an interactive session which is often reflective of an interactive environment, buzzing with various activities of students. It usually involves creative drawing, picture interaction, drama games, games based on themes, listening to narration, story theatre, re-telling a story, miming an event, action song as well as choreography etc. As a result of this approach, students get multifold opportunities to express their various talents through the medium of English. Thus, here the teachers role is not only restricted to an instructor, but diversifies into a guide, a facilitator, a classroom manager and a counselor and co-partner in learning English. Thereby, a students reading and learning is not only restricted to textbooks but also other non-curricula based English books, and students are also encouraged to have journal enteries and contribute to class newspapers. The projects has not only raised the confidence level of students but has also been considered as one among the best Learning Enhancement Programme(LEP) by Ministry of Education(MoE) Government of India.

Conclusion

Here it is important to note that, it was not only the added incentives and facilities, that helped draw people and their children to Government schools but also the quality of education given in government schools was also good.

Thus as a result of the concerted efforts and the programmes undertaken by the Government to revive public education in Kerala has led to a huge improvement in enrolment in government and government-aided schools in Kerala. “Compared to the previous years, around 1,56,565 new students sought admission in government and government-aided schools in Kerala during the academic year 2017-18, overall in the state of Kerala. The corresponding numbers were 1,85,971 for the year 2018-19 and 1,63,558 for the year 2019-20. Such a phenomenon has occurred for the first time in the field of general education in Kerala after the academic year 1991-92” (Kerala State Planning Board, 2019).

This trend of reverse migration of school students from private schools to public schools will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

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Chapter 5.

Back to Public and Aided Schools: Emergence of Reverse Migration



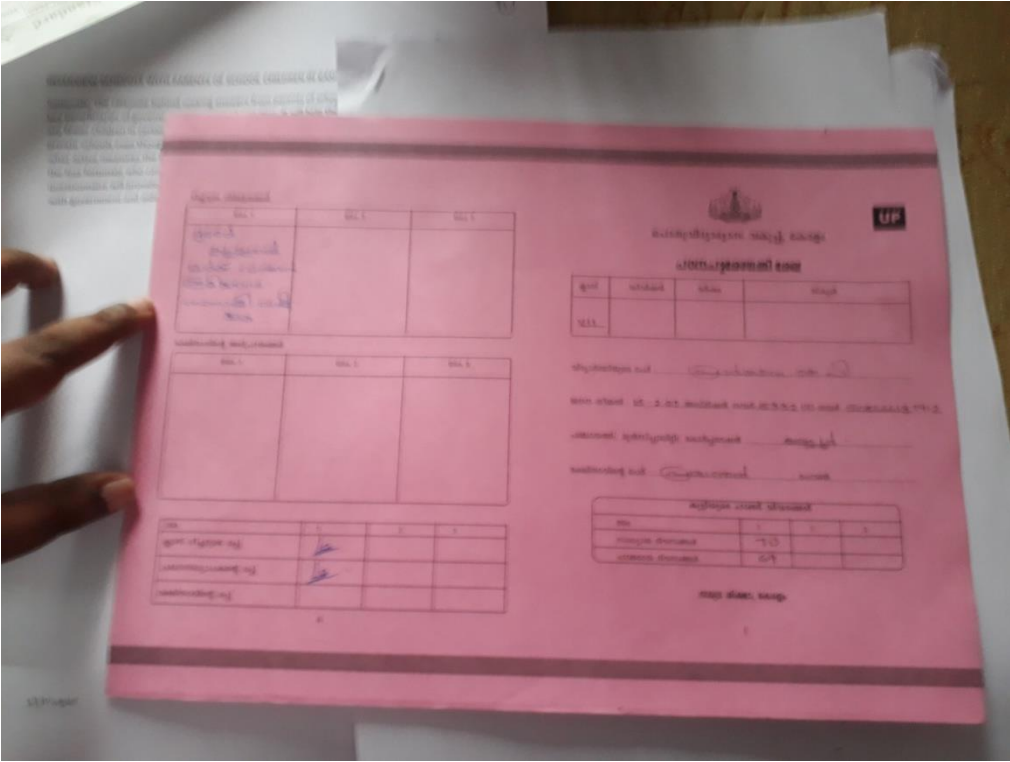
Picture 5.1. Depicting a map of Kerala in Gourivilasam UPS, in Kannur .Pic Credit: Author

Introduction

The constitutional commitment that pertains to universalisation of elementary education stands fulfilled in Kerala as Kerala managed to enroll almost all children within the age group of 6-14 years. And the retention of all the children who are enrolled is another objective of SarvaShikhsaAbhiyaan, which has also been fully achieved. Although the GoI’s target was to be fulfilled by 2009 for LP and 2010 for UP, the state of Kerala had already managed to achieve the goal in advance. Also, the drop-out rate in schools has also reduced due to the government interventions. Furthermore, the Sarva Shikha Abhiyaan also attempts to remove the gender gaps as well as the gaps that exist between different social categories in a school set-up. Kerala has managed to achieve parity in the

enrollment rate of girls to boys in Kerala. Moreover the enrollment of SC/ST children is almost at par with the students of General category. The SSA also mainly focuses on the improvement of quality of education. This tends to be usually reflected in the improvement and rise of learning levels of students who are enrolled at the school level. In order to achieve this, various measures that have been adopted entail the following:

- a) Training and re-training of teachers
- b) Revision of Curriculum
- c) Examination Reform
- d) Involvement of academic experts in planning and implementation of quality education measures
- e) Introduction of grading system
- f) Systematic monitoring of quality improvement programs



Picture 5.2. Grade sheet of a student from Gourivilasam UPS School. Which also previously came under the list of 'uneconomic school'. Pic Credit: Author

Thus to further understand this phenomenon of reverse migration better this chapter is broadly divided into five sections. While the first section looks at the factors leading to reverse migration of students from private schools to government and aided schools, the second section looks at international remittances as a form of Human Capital Investment. Meanwhile, the third section looks at the public-private dynamics that plays out in school education sector. And the fourth section looks at privatization and it's impact on Right to Education. Finally, the fifth section looks into state's responsibility of provision of education.

I. Factors Leading To Reverse Migration of Students from Private Schools

The researcher also had the privilege of visiting and interviewing the principal of a school which had in the last one year transformed from being uneconomic to regular school. When asked the reason behind the transformation, the principal Ms. Shilaja quoted several factors, behind the change like for instance pre-primary sections had been started in the school, which resulted in increase in the number of students over the span of one year. Within one year(i.e.2018) the number of students in this newly turned regular school was 111.(Which is a significant increase, considering only one year back it was counted as an 'uneconomic' school). The principal also mentioned that after launching off the Pothu Vidhyabhyasa Samrakshan Program or the Public education Rejuvenation Scheme(used interchangeably), the condition of the school had significantly improved and there was hardly any drop-out.

Another uneconomic school in the vicinity of Kannur North, called Elayavoor Dharmodayam had with the intent of turning this fate of things around, recently introduced a small library shelf, and also smart classrooms. This was done inorder to better equip the students, irrespective of their numbers.

The principal Ms. Rajani(name changed), mentioned that most of the students in her school belonged to lower economic strata in society, as in they were children of migrant workers, whose jobs being geographically fluid in nature, they found it hard to retain students for a long time.

a) Participatory approach to schooling

A sense of community ownership, with regards to schools has also been created. There has been an effort to involve the surrounding community members including an active participation and thorough involvement of School Support Group at Panchayat Level, District level and Block Level leaders, which has added the momentum to increase the levels of public participation.

Further, with regard to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan around 450 Innovative Education Centre's have been created that has led to the reduction in social deprivation as well as an attainment of greater equality of opportunity for students belonging to all the communities including those in remote areas as well as those areas that are to a certain extent inaccessible.

There has also been a larger focus on education of girl child as well as SC/ST education that has been enriched and imparted through remedial educational classes, special coaching centres that has led to the alleviation of students from deprived sections of society.

Another positive aspect of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan was the component of inclusive education for disabled children, which was identified through various medical camps. Every year around 1 Lakh children are identified and assistive appliances are distributed to them. When the researcher visited one of the uneconomic schools i.e Edachovva UPS a student with hearing disability was also being trained with others students in the same premises and when the researcher visited the next time the student had been provided a hearing aid in order to develop his capacities better. Therefore it is important to note that since the year 2004-05, there were around 895 out of school specially abled children who were being given home based tuition and now they are returning to schools and joining regular students as a result of government policies and intervention.

Moreover, as a result of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan there has been a big push towards the improvement of school infrastructure which provides the students with a good environment for learning. With regard to school infrastructure, in the comparatively backward areas the facility of proper building was provided to 148, building-less schools plus 1,967, additional classrooms had been constructed. Moreover the drinking water facility had been provided to 20,139 schools. To enhance the school infrastructure

boundary walls have been built, and the buildings have been adequately electrified and separation of classroom has led to remarkable improvement.

b) Equipped teachers

Under the ambit of Computer-aided learning programme, computers have been installed in upper primary schools. During the time period of 2003-2005 around 3000 teachers were given profound training with regard to computers. Furthermore computers were also installed in schools with the aid that was provided through MP/MLA funds. And to further improve the quality of education, a workbook preparation was done for standards IV to VII. With regard to quality planning as well as academic support, 3 level of resource group i.e State Level Resource Group, District Level Resource Group, and Block Level Resource Group have been constituted. They are considered to have strengthened the ability of teachers as well as experience. Around 3000 experts were involved in the process. The outcome of this was preparation of modules and assessment of the impact of training.

Thus as a result of the overall capacity building programme that have been undertaken over the last several years at the State, District and Block Resource Centre Level has led to the overall enhancement in efficiency of all those personnel who are involved in providing school education.(Annual Report 2004-05, SSA)

c) Change in the Attitude of Parents with Regard to Teaching-Learning Process

The researcher met Ms. Sridevi, who was a mother of three young boys, who had transferred her ward from private schools to government school. She admitted the reason for her opting for government school was that while CBSE syllabus is more 'book-focused' education set-up, the State Board syllabus which is usually channeled through government schools focuses on a more holistic and overall growth spectrum of the child. Her ward initially was admitted to a private school, but as they learned more about the benefits of Government school based set up and curricula and the fact that they especially cater to the needs of each and every child individually they decided to transfer their ward from a private school to a government one. She also said that along with academic activities the government schools focused on sports and other activities with equal thrust.

Another parent Ms. Valsala, who had similarly transferred her ward from Private school to government said that initially she was unaware of the benefits but only got to know about the privileges of bringing up their child in government school, when parents and teachers from nearby government schools came to her house for canvassing. She mentioned that the canvassing efforts were not only restricted to going from house to house, but also to anganwadi's. She also said that the fact that her child could access electronics based equipments in smart classrooms, was a great opportunity for her child to grow. They believed that having access to smart classrooms at a young age helped the child keep up with the changing times.(especially with the onset of 4th Industrial Revolution which is based on technology).And in Government schools, when the student crosses 10th standard exam there are more benefits, like increased scholarship etc, there in the government set up, there is also a talent search exam, which helps students who might not be gifted academically, but are talented in art, music and other cultural practices, come to the fore. Another parent Ms. Bindu opined that, it is not like government school is lagging behind, as many government schools are also introducing English Medium at primary level. Plus now some schools through various means are managing to have a mode of transportation like school bus etc. Parents overtime noticed that their children were well equipped to handle studies on their own and needed no tuition and very little monitoring or supervision as far as managing their studies was concerned. They also mentioned that the student speaks Malayalam very well, maintains his or her own diary, does homework on their own very well and also gets scholarship. Thereby, easing the family's financial burden to a certain extent.



Picture 5.3: A classroom with teaching in progress in Elayavoor South LPS, which comes under the uneconomic list in Kannur. Pic Credit:Author

Some parents also said that children are usually fussy eaters, and since the student strength was small the teacher gave particular care to students in the form of ensuring that they finished their mid-day meals.



Pic 5.4: A photo of students enjoying their mid-day meals in LPS Chovva School in Kannur. Pic Credit:Author

Plus the teachers could relate to parents on a casual basis rather than having a formal structure, which made accessibility for the parents easier.

d) Generational attachment

One of the key reasons why parents were willing to send their wards to public schools again was because, of generational attachment. For instance the father and the grandfather had also studied in the same school so they seemed to exhibit a kind of sentimental attachment towards the school. Another reason was that the parents of the pupils, like Mr. Raveesh, Mrs. Rita¹³ believed that the teachers in government schools (even if the schools were listed as uneconomic) were quite well qualified when seen in comparison to private school teachers. This was because the government school teachers had to undergo rigorous training in order to be selected and even after getting selected the government

¹³ Names changed

school teachers had to undergo several training modules in order to upgrade themselves and keep in sync with the changing schemes and needs of the students, as time progressed. But this was not the case with private school teachers. This shows that some parents were very much concerned about the quality of education being provided to their children. Another reason they quoted was the low Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR). As uneconomic schools had less number of students enrolled in them as a result the parents like Mrs. Ambika, Mrs. Vinaya and Mrs. Devika were of the opinion that their children would be getting more attention, rather than getting lost in the crowd, which at times tends to be the case when Pupil-Teacher Ratio is high. That is the reason why even in RTE, the Pupil Teacher Ratio is to be maintained at 30:1. (Plus it also becomes challenging to maintain large number of students by one single teacher.)

A parent Mr. Ranjit, also opined that in the beginning there used to be only few incentives like Mid-Day Meal Schemes etc, with talks in policy circles taking place regarding inclusion of breakfast also in the school menu. (although this is yet to come to fruition). Mr. Sivaram, a principal of Devatharkandy Public School claimed that now along with Mid-Day Meal's, free textbooks and uniforms are primarily being given to attract students to public/government schools and the students are also being given nutritious mid-day meal, with two days of egg and two days of milk per week, and that there is a tentative decision to start breakfast for students at school as well.

Parent of a student, Mr. Unnikrishnan also said

“That since the facilities and quality of education being rendered was good, even in government school, he had no qualms regarding sending his ward to uneconomic schools, even if the government school was branded as ‘uneconomic’.”

All these factors added weight-age to their belief that government schools (even if considered or called uneconomic) gave good quality education to their pupils. This was further proven by the fact that parents could see that their wards' academic qualities as well as talents were being groomed and honed so well under the aegis of government school teacher, that they saw no reason to shift their wards to private schools because of societal pressure concerning status of a family being attached to the kind of school they send their ward to.

The parents like Ms. Aishwarya and Ms. Eliamma also said the reason for them opting for government school over private was not solely governed by monetary or economic reasons, but also by the fact that the studies and the quality of education in government schools was good.¹⁴

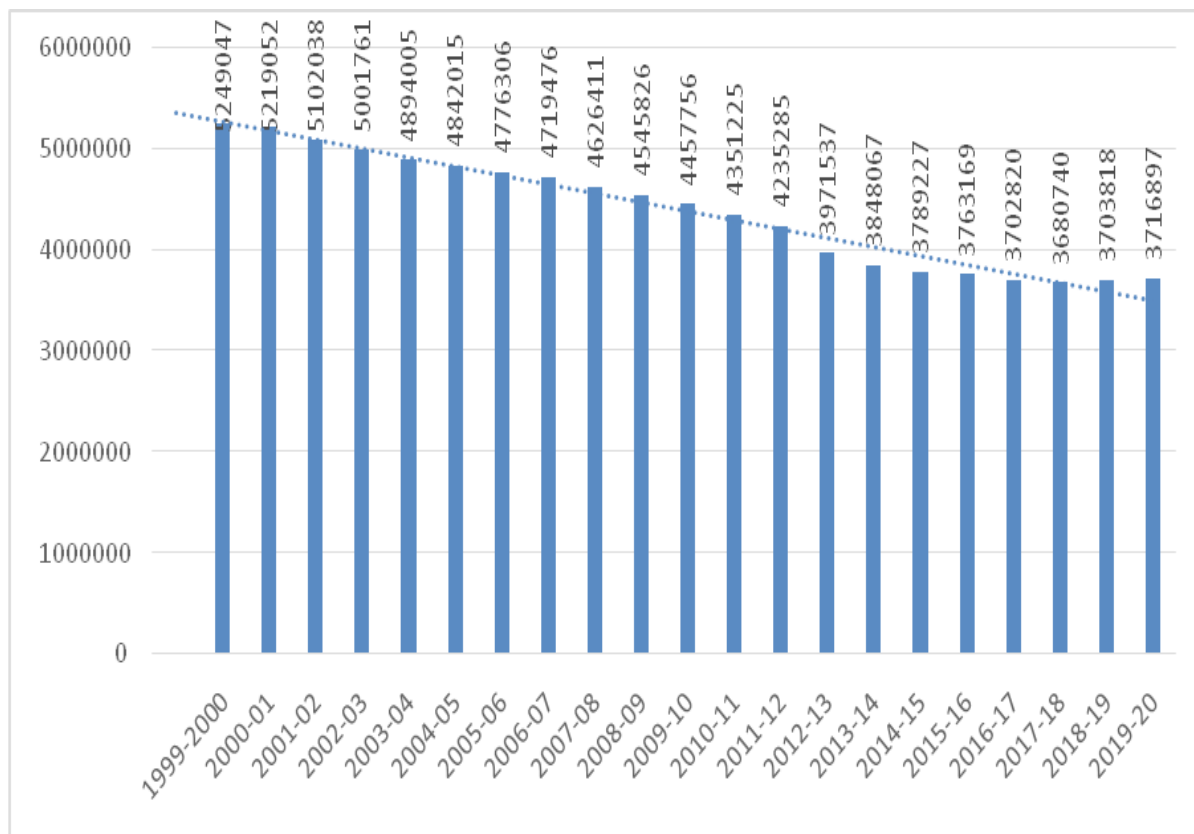
A young mother of two boys, MsPushapalata claimed that in the government school (even though it was 'uneconomic'), the learning environment was good, and her toddlers had 'lokgaparijayam' (i.e. awareness about the larger society and the world, in general). This school i.e Gowrivilasam¹⁵ (which was considered uneconomic) had youth festivals, teachers days etc and at a young age her children knew a lot about figures like Gandhi etc which other children in her society didn't know, at least to that extent.

Another parent Mr.Suresh, also said that his ward was initially quite shy but has now blossomed into a very confident child who actively engages in academic and extracurricular activities as well, and is now even receiving awards in various competitions. For this he gave credit to the committed teachers in government schools who made sure that not a single student lagged behind, in spite of their idiosyncrasies. They also unanimously said that they have no issues with their wards getting trained under Kerala State Board as they deem it to be quite good. Further they also mentioned that they have no intention of shifting their wards to CBSE led schools, irrespective of the fact that the schools in which their wards were currently enrolled in was uneconomic. Also agreeing to the fact that the current school has improved significantly over the years in terms of facilities and pupils have started returning from private schools and once again, started taking admission in government schools. That is the reason why the number of students in government schools has gradually begun to decrease and some 'uneconomic' schools are turning into regular schools. This is also reflected in the graph:

¹⁴Only financially weak people send their children to government schools being a popular perception is not true as people who could afford private schools also chose to send their wards to government schools.

¹⁵ Name changed

Graph 5.1 Students' Strength in the Public Schools in Kerala, (1999-2020)



Source: An Evaluation of the Impact of Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign in Kerala by Dr. CS Venkiteswaran et al. 2020

Thereby giving credit to the Public Education Rejuvenation Scheme, (Pothu Vidyabhyasa Samraskhna Yajnam) that has been seen as a success both by the government and the people alike.

Parents in several cases sent both their wards (like both boys and girls) to the same government school, thereby highlighting that there was no discrimination by parents between their male child and female child as far as the provision of education was concerned.

One (grand) parent Mr. Vilasan, even said that besides the school being close to their home, their daughter also studied in this school, so they wanted their grandchild also to go to the same school as they could see the benefits of the same. Plus in these schools the

teachers had close interaction with the parents and constantly kept them updated about the growth trajectory of their ward. These parents also said that the Government schools were being made at par with private schools, in all aspects they would still prefer sending their wards to government schools, as the ‘anukuliangkal’ (i.e. benefits) were more in Government over Private. They also mentioned that the Parents-Teacher Association was a very proactive body and that their meetings were held at quite regular intervals.

Another mother, Ms. Nirmla, who sends her daughter to government school, said she prefers the school, because of close proximity to the house, the surroundings are safe and familiar, for her daughter, and the school is easy to contact and the teachers quite approachable, plus the academic workload is not so intense that the student feels overburdened at a young age.

This goes to show that parents have been given plethora of reasons to admit their wards to government and aided schools, even if they are earmarked as ‘uneconomic’ or school with less number of students

e) Special Attention to Children with Special Needs

As a part of the government initiative, teachers who were given special training at the Block Resource Centre (BRC) were sent to the public schools minimum twice a week, in order to give special attention to specially-abled students and help them to be at par with other students. This special care and attention given to these students encouraged the parents to delist their pupils from private schools, and enlist them in public schools i.e. government schools, because they believed that their children were also being given equal attention in public schools. This made sure that no child was left behind, irrespective of their academic capabilities. The teachers also mentioned that the specially abled students faced some challenges in getting entry into private schools and even if they did, they weren't given adequate attention, but this was not the case in public schools, as can be seen in this case-study:



Picture 5.5.: Ms. Ayesha Malik with her son Vinay. Ms.Ayesha Malik also happened to be the President of Parent-Teachers Association(PTA) of her son's school Ganapathivilasam Public School for two years in a row.Pic Credit:Author

Ms. Ayesha Malik(name changed) belonged to a minority community and having a child who was specially abled and with mental health issues, she said, she was naturally quite concerned about which school to admit her child in. And it was at the same time important for her to make sure that her child is not left behind. And she found this perfect fit in this government school, that even though was termed 'uneconomic' initially, had all the aspects and facilities that her child needed. For instance, the school made sure that two teachers who were given special training at Block Resource Centres(BRC) would regularly visit the school on regular basis and help teach and acquaint the specially abled student in the school with their peers. This really helped her child to break out the shell and mingle with other students of his age. She said, when she had previously admitted her

child to an unaided/private school, seeing the ‘glamour’ of that school, she realized her ward was literally missing out on a lot, as there were constant issues of comparison etc, there and the student found it hard to relate to other and vice-versa. But in this school everybody was more sensitive, to the needs of specially-abled students, even though it was a regular school.

The other parents also echoed the fact that the government school(despite being ‘uneconomic’), ensured the holistic development of their child.

Plus they said that the public/government schools would have a series of extra-curricular activities lined up for the students like science fair, and they also engaged in steps to start a small biodiversity park in school premises, where they would not only restrict the students to ‘spoon feeding text book material’¹⁶ but would also engage in teaching them life skills by encouraging each and every student to participate.

Furthermore they also noted that in private schools, as the student kept being promoted in the classes, the students school fees, also went up, which while many could afford, there were also sections of parents who couldn’t afford this higher fee and expenses. As a result, in the academic year in which the interview was being conducted i.e. 2017-2018 the school called Elyavoor South, saw two students return from private schools, and take enrollment in government led schools, despite the school being ‘uneconomic’. They also added that the initial out-migration from government schools was also because of the ‘external attraction’ of private schools, like new buildings, coat-tie, for uniform etc. But now that even public schools have started upgrading themselves, there is a reversal in trend.

This goes to show that government or aided school were eagerly upgrading themselves in order to pose as a stiff competition to private schools and thereby attract more students. This further shows that it is not exactly a demographic issue, per se although the demographic dividend does play an important role, but is not the main reason behind the phenomenon of uneconomic schools.

Mr.Devan of UPS Edachhova also admitted that although there was a scare, when the previous governments were in power that the ‘uneconomic schools’ will be shut down, but now that is not the case, as can be seen with the current government and the above

¹⁶ As said by teacher Ms. Manisha during the interview taken on October 12th 2018

mentioned program i.e. Pothu Vidyabhyasa Samrakshana Yajnam that efforts are being vociferously made to strengthen and upgrade public schools.

In another school, called Elyavoor Dharmodayam, the principal Mr. Rajesh, himself added that the main reason for increase in out migration from government schools to private schools was because private schools provided CBSE based education while government schools were more inclined towards state board. And parents want their wards to be at par with national curriculum. Plus he also mentioned that in private schools they more or less start with English Medium instruction at pre primary or LKG-UKG level, which initiates the students into English mode of communication at an early stage. Interestingly the principal also mentioned that, there was no case of drop-out from schools so far and irrespective of the number of students the teachers continue to be protected in both government and aided schools. As far as the reversal of trend is concerned he mentioned that it has been a much recent phenomenon, around 2017 onwards.

It was after this initiative called Public Education Rejuvenation Scheme was undertaken in the year 2017, that some of the uneconomic schools began to be transformed into regular schools as they saw an intake of more pupils. It was as a result of this that the researcher visited Gourivilasam school, which was previously counted as an uneconomic school, but had recently transformed into a regular school.

f) Introduction of Pre-Primary Classes

In an effort to turn the tide around with regard to the dismal picture of ‘uneconomic’ schools, various steps were being undertaken like introducing pre-primary classes in the same school, so that students who are enrolled in the pre-primary classes can carry on in the same school, instead of shifting schools and moving to so-called ‘lucrative’ private-run school

This was echoed by GUPS Devatharakandy, school principal Mr. Balachandran, it was interesting to learn their outlook that that previously his school had no pre-primary but now it has been added. He said the reason for the school turning uneconomic was primarily because the people of the neighbouring communities, where his school was placed, belonged to privileged backgrounds and they preferred sending their children to private unaided schools, as a result a number of unaided schools emerged in the neighborhood and the attraction to sending their wards to aided school diminished.

Further, he said that although they were protected but they would not get the benefit of permanent teachers, like vacation pay or be paid for Saturday or Sunday's. He also said that the PTA, in aided schools was also actively involved in VigasanaSamithi(i.e a committee for development of the school)

In another aided school, called Daevathoor Primary School(name changed) in Kannur district of Kerala, the headmistress Ms. Sujatha, had been in teaching position for last 25 years and would prefer teaching in an aided school. She mentioned that in private schools, even if the 'set-up' or outward appearance was better, but the quality of education was poor, but unfortunately a lot of parents don't monitor that closely. Further she also mentioned that the new teachers who were appointed in these aided yet uneconomic schools, were appointed on daily wages. She also mentioned that slowly but gradually they can see a reversal in the trend as parents are proactively getting their children re-admitted to aided and government schools.

The credit for this she says goes to the PTA, who although are not from financially privileged background, but canvass actively, as a result of which currently their 1st standard has 29 students. When she took charge the facilities in school were not great, but with her and the PTA's concerted efforts the campaigning was now in full force. She also mentioned that the previous governments would usually shut down schools with less than 15 students or merge two or three schools together. Although her school had been given extension for one more year and the situation in the recent past was improving significantly at least in academic terms. When asked about the change in nomenclature, she mentioned that the change in terms used doesn't change the ground reality that they face, of shortage of students in schools.

This goes to show that schools which have been deemed 'uneconomic' in nature haven't accepted their fate with complacency as it is but quite on the contrary they are making concerted efforts in collaboration with the government, parents, alumni and various other stakeholders to constantly attract more students to the school.

Finally, in Ganapathivilasam LPS Chovva, the principal Ms. Sreelatha(name changed), mentioned that with passing of time parents are increasing opting to send their ward to CBSE affiliated schools rather than State Board oriented schools. This had also lead to a dearth of students in her school.

Thus, although affiliation with boards are not being changed but the various stakeholders at school level are trying their level best to arrest the transfer of students from their ‘uneconomic’ schools and instead bring more students to their school.

g) Teacher’s Commitment and Motivation

In GUPS Muzhathadam the total number of students was 47. The headmaster Mr. Chandrashekhar(name changed) had been in teaching profession for 36 years, and it was after clearing the PSC Government exam that he shifted to Government school. He said, he was quite driven to teach and train the students, irrespective of their numbers in classroom ‘as school is not a factory and if they were to tutor one student and if he turned out to be next Nobel Laureate CV Raman, then it would be worth it’.

In another uneconomic school called Ganapathi Vilasam School, the principal Mrs. Divya claimed that she would also prefer continuing her career in a government school, not because of the pay and protection, but also for a socially better cause, as students who were enrolling in the uneconomic schools were not coming from a high-end socially privileged background, as a result she felt it was important to provide them with good quality education in order to uplift them and make them at par with others.

While on the other hand in one of the schools, the headmistress Ms.Rita had been in the teaching profession for 32 years, and although she admitted that she was satisfied with the pay, but was not satisfied with the circumstances. She said this was because, as there were less number of students so as a result teachers lacked motivation to teach.¹⁷

These two differing narratives from the field goes to show that the drive and the level of motivation for teachers with very few number of pupils might not be the same, as some teachers might feel unable to use their full potential when there are only a handful of students in the entire school. Plus it might also impact the socialization of the students as they might not have many batchmates or classmates to associate themselves with, thereby influencing there peer life. This is the reason why they were trying to scout for more students in the vicinity of the schools and get them admitted into the so-called ‘uneconomic schools’ as this will not only raise the bar of motivation of teachers but will also help parents attain high quality education for their children at low cost.

¹⁷ In her school the total strength of teachers was 12 .

The position of teachers in both aided and unaided schools was protected even if the school had a very limited student strength, and was considered uneconomic. This basically means that, they did not lose their jobs despite the dearth of students and that their salaries were also protected. Furthermore, the teachers in government schools were 'Experienced, skilled and able to handle diverse section of students'¹⁸. Although the students enrolling in this school hailed mainly from economically lower middle class background, but that wasn't an issue considering the benefits they were accruing. In other words, it was also interesting to note that even though some of the parents were not so academically qualified and although they were not coming from economically privileged background, but they were conscious of the fact that the teacher in government schools were more qualified than private sector.

By the virtue of being headmaster and headmistress they were already seasoned professionals with a work experience ranging from 22 years to 36 years. On an average they were more or less satisfied with their current pay and position (although the issue of motivation has been discussed in detail, below). Most of them like Mrs. Veneetha, Mrs. Jyotsna, Mr. Dileep¹⁹ also mentioned that they would prefer teaching in a government school any day over private school, even if the government school was branded as 'uneconomic' or 'school with less number of students'. Among other things one of the reasons for this was also because they would also get a good salary of Rs.40,000 p.m. in government set up along with Saturday and Sunday as holidays and other 'anukuliyanal', benefits like pension, PF, etc as against a teacher from private school whose salary would be roughly around Rs.9000p.m, coupled with no security.

h) Impact of Pothu Vidyabhyasa Samarakshana Yajnam (Public Education Rejuvenation Scheme)

As a result of this exponential growth in the number of uneconomic schools in the last twenty years the Communist Party of India(Marxist) led Left Democratic Front had initiated the PothuVidyabhyasaSamrakshanaYajnam, i.e. Public Education Rejuvenation Schemes which has helped arrest this growth. The faculty and those employed in the 'uneconomic schools' mentioned how as a consequence of this scheme in the last two years what they are witnessing is a trend of reverse migration, as due to the concerted

¹⁸ As mentioned by PTA President Mrs. Ayesha Malik (name changed)

¹⁹ Name changed to protect identity

efforts of the Parent-Teachers Association(PTA) through the modicum of canvassing etc, has enriched the awareness of parents pertaining to the benefits of sending their ward to public schools be it ‘regular or uneconomic’ in nature. These efforts have sensitized the parents to such a great extent that they have slowly and gradually started withdrawing their students from private run schools and getting them admitted in government schools including those that are considered ‘uneconomic’.

Under this program, there is not only free provision of books and uniform in public schools but also a significant number of scholarships are also being given to students in public schools. The PTA’s role is not only restricted to canvassing but by also sharing the positive narratives of how they as well as their ward has benefitted, from sending their children to government run schools. For instance, in an ‘uneconomic school’ called GUPS Muzhathadam, when parents were facing an issue of dropping off and picking up their ward from school premises due to the conflicting schedules, the teachers acted in a concerted manner with the parents and alumni and were able to pool in the resources and afford the first school bus for the students of the school.(See pic Below)



Picture 5.6: The first school bus provided for the students by PTA, of GUPS Muzathadam, which comes under an “uneconomic school” list. Pic Credit:Author

Plus, now the parents are equally involved in addressing the challenges and issues that are faced by the school at administrative level, which not only engages them but also lets them, have a say in the functioning of the school, where their ward is enrolled. This kind of close involvement also helps them not only monitor the activities in the school, but

also helps them keep the administrative process accountable. It also helps them come up with innovative solutions to pressing problems facing the school.

As a result the conditions of schools have improved to a great extent, when seen in comparison to before, when schools were shutting down permanently. Thus the effort is being made to upgrade these schools so that they can attract more students.

i) Specific Reasons for Reverse Migration

The researcher also had the privilege of interacting with parents who had transferred their wards from private schools to so called 'uneconomic schools'. Their opinions were not only reflective of the change in choices but also the larger policy shift that is taking place, especially with the latest government trying to strengthen the public schools. While the narratives below reflect the microcosm in which these changes are taking place but at a macro-level it is driven by the change in policies that are taking place at the governmental level. Therefore this section will briefly look at the cases where the reverse migration, of students from private to public schools has taken place and interweave it with narratives at the government level, and try to understand how both are inter-linked.

Overall these positive changes were reflective of the fact that the government had overtime taken cognizance of the abysmal situation a large number of 'uneconomic schools' were in and thereby they had instead of closing down the schools (and thereby washing their hands of them) had begun to take proactive steps to strengthen not only the structure but also the functioning of these schools. And as a result slowly yet steadily things were beginning to turn around.

j) Cost Factor

Another factor of difference behind the private unaided and government schools in Kerala is the cost. In both government and private aided schools no fees are charged at the lower primary level but a bare minimum fee is often charged at the upper primary and high-school level. But besides this they also give other school facilities like free uniform, free noon meal etc. In contrast to this in private unaided schools parents have to pay all expenses starting from registration fees to donations, tuition fees, private tuition, uniform, textbooks, notebooks, transportation, cultural programmes and educational tours, that

usually tends to place a greater financial burden on lower and middle income bracket families who at a time have more than one child to support.

As a result of this is households are unable to invest more resources into children's education as households do not have sufficient funds and further, unable to borrow money to finance children education. This indicates that households' educational investment is vulnerable to negative income shocks. Against this backdrop, that it is important to study the interlinkage and effect of remittances on the choice of children's schooling between private and government schools in Kerala.

Inflow of remittances also often leads to, students moving from government to private schools where parents believe that their pupils will get good quality education. However here it is important to note that the cost that is levied in private schools is comparatively higher leading to a bigger burden on households. It is here that the role of remittances comes into play. Remittances tend to reduce the cost of education and tends to and allow families to send their children to private schools (Salas, 2014).

Though the study done by Valatheswaran(2018) found that remittance-receiving households have a higher probability of being enrolled in private schools at lower-primary, upper primary and higher secondary education levels, but the researcher found that that was not exactly the case in the last two-three years. For it depends primarily on the level of income of the migrant worker. If the emigrant is not a white collar worker thenhe will still try and send his/her ward to the government school or aided school unlike the migrants who fall in the higher income bracket. Therefore this generalization about the emigrants primarily sending their children to higher end schools need not necessarily stand true.

II. Remittances as a form of Human Capital Investment

It is important to note that remittances that are received by a household tend to play a crucial role in determining a child's enrollment in private or public school. Further, by disaggregating the data into different schooling levels, Valatheeswaran *et.al*(2018) found that remittances have significant and positive impact across schooling level. As seen at the ground level remittances reduce the household budget constraints and allow them to send their children to private school. Private education poses economic burden on the families (especially low and middle income families) as the cost of

schooling is very high.”Therefore one factor that helped towards retention in public schools is, using English as a medium of instruction at lower level classes. Although education is a priority for parents in Kerala but how they plan to spend on it depends on individuals earning capacity and household needs.

Thus after analyzing the school choices, it becomes important to see how public-private dynamics plays out in school education.

III. The Public-Private Dynamic in School Education

While analyzing this, one often wonders is the state truly trying to withdraw from education sector. Although currently there has been a great deal of discussion on Public-Private Partnership, and both the Central Government and the State Government are investing crores into education sector. Then what do we make of this debate? It is important to note that the reason why educational policies are the central focus is because they not only impact an individual but also the society at large. There has also been a great deal of discussion about how private sector is unable to deliver education to the needy and poor which leads to a greater voice against privatization of education

Highlighting this Kishore Singh(2014) argues that education is not only a fundamental right but also falls under the ambit of core responsibility of Government. But at the same time making most of the limitations of the government, there is a mushrooming of private providers with both enterprises as well as individual proprietors entering into the field. As a result of this the government initiatives is often met with a stiff competition from the private players especially in the field of education sector and therefore it can be said that privatization is making inroads into the field of education sector as well, thereby making education which was a welfare commodity into a sphere with profit motive and incentive.

Singh(2014) further writes that ‘under the spell of neoliberal ideology, states are in fact withdrawing in favour of privatisation in education which aggravates marginalization and exclusion in education, and creates inequities in society.’ Thereby, bringing to light the question as to whether education can be viewed as an entitlement or a right?

Therefore, public policies should look exegetically into the multifarious repercussions of letting private players play a significant role in education and bring about an order whereby there are strong sanctions on the private players for indulging in abusive

practices like donation etc.. The ambit of private players not only involves entrepreneurs and industrialist but also other non-state actors like religious institutions, non-governmental actors, trusts etc According to the Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group on the Post-2015 Development Framework for Education (2012), “neo-liberal globalization has placed education squarely in the headlamps of the private sector.”

Scholars who look into neo-liberal debates are often of the view that one of the several results of neo-liberal globalization is the ‘State withdrawal in favor of privatization’ with ‘market anchored conceptions of schooling’ thereby hinting at gradual departure from the welfare state model. With, public provisioning of education being mostly in rudimentary state especially in developing countries the private players have found this as a lucrative opportunity to fill into this gap by catering to the middle class of the society.

Singh(2014) further writes that “although education is the core responsibility of the government private players are playing a significantly larger role as a result of underperforming government or public aided schools”.

IV. Privatisation and its Impact on Right to Education

With the world largely moving towards a neo-liberal paradigm, privatization and the role of private players permeates into almost every aspect of education sector, be it policy making to at the administrative apparatus as well as out of school activities like private tutoring. It is important to note that as per this paradigm, student is often viewed as a consumer and education as a consumer good. As a result of this trend what ensues is that there is a ‘selling’ of education rather than ‘providing’ of education for free. Thus school is seen as a means for profit rather than as a modicum of social good. Public policies, therefore, need to take a deep dive into analyzing what are the various repercussions of privatization of education and how it differs from making education a human right as a states responsibility.

That is with the Right to Education(RTE) being a basic human right of every child, when private players charge exorbitant fees to provide good quality education, it completely flies in the face of non-discriminatory practices such as economic condition being a criteria for provision of right to education. As the students belonging from disadvantaged sections can no longer afford such exorbitant fees in order to avail their basic right to education.

Here education plays a crucial role in playing an equalizing force between the rich and the poor, by shrinking the gap between the have and the have nots and since the state is considered to be the custodian of quality education as a public good they must continue to play a upper hand in providing good quality education to all.

V. State's Responsibility of Provision of Education

State plays a crucial role in regulating the various private providers of education. Education is primarily states responsibility not only because it is a welfare good but since countries are signatory to the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights wherein Article 13 of which states that 'States as having principal responsibility for the direct provision of education in most circumstances; States parties recognize, for example, that the development of a system of schools at all levels shall be actively pursued' (Article 13 (2) (e)).

In order to do this State must not only regulate the private players but also maintain a transparent as well an effective system to look into the effective functioning of the private players. The state must not only limit itself to prescribing rules but also penalize the private providers and take strict measures against them who do not obey rules. For a slack on the part of the government can significantly affect the future of the nation. Singh(2014) argues that "One of the most significant failures of states in face of the privatisation of education is the lack of oversight and regulating mechanisms". As a result of lack of monitoring, illegal practices mushroom thereby impacting the society at large. He further argues that "Education is unfortunately becoming a victim of corruption and corruption by private providers remains unscathed due to the lack of financial regulations, lack of scrutiny of their operations and of control mechanisms. As a result, delivery of primary or basic education can be made as a family business by running a school in a private house" (Singh, 2014)

Since the concept of business is by default profit-oriented, education when seen as a family business run with profit motive can have detrimental effects on society and the children and their families at large. Therefore prioritizing the subject of education as an important and essential tool of public service is "imperative to stop society being tipped irrevocably into a world that only caters to the needs of the privileged few."(Singh, 2014)

It is important to note that the concept of privatisation is often co-related with shrinking of public investment. Singh(2014) writes that “As a result of increasing privatisation there is a decline in public spending especially on education budget. Therefore to avoid this states must devote maximum public funds to education as a high development priority as a matter of norm.”Hence while Private-Public Partnership is formed at multiple levels it is important at the same time to preserve the responsibility that the society and state owes towards education.

But what besets the private sector is a lack of regulatory mechanisms or existence of inadequate monitoring mechanisms.‘The mercantailisation of education and its uncontrolled liberalization open to all operators for lucrative purposes or objectives is contrary to international commitments by States and national values, and it must be stopped, and sanctioned.’(Singh, 2015) The states have the obligation under human rights law to establish conditions and standards for private education providers and maintain a transparent and effective system to monitor these standards with sanctions in case of abusive practices.

It is unfortunate that education is becoming a victim of corruption at multiple levels and the corruption mostly by private providers goes unnoticed due to deficit of control mechanisms. Until the leash is tightened on the private players the quality of education provided to the pupils might suffer a lack. Some instances of corruption that have been noted while in the field are appointment of teachers in aided schools after receiving lumpsome donations. All this goes back to the point mentioned above i.e. when education is seen through the lens of business intent, then the motive instead of being welfare-oriented, becomes profit-oriented.

Thus education should not only be seen as a private responsibility of a select few but rather as a social responsibility that involves primarily, parents, the community in which the school is located, students and teachers. If this were the case then accountability and transparency would also increase and schooling would not be centered in the hand of select few private providers.

Conclusion

Thus as a result of various policy interventions, at the grassroots level the researcher could witness a significant change towards reverse migration of students from private run schools to government and aided schools. This further encouraged the researcher to look into the public private dynamic and fathom that privatization of education, and the issue of social justice in the form of right to education, does not go hand in hand.

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CONCLUSIONS

This thesis attempted to explain the emerging policy shifts in the primary education sector in India in general and Kerala in particular. The study also analyzed how the Government of Kerala has addressed the issue of 'uneconomic' schools through various policy measures. Based on semi-ethnographic field analysis this study attempted to understand perspectives of the teachers, parents, and officials.

This study is an important contribution to the field of policy as there are no academic analysis available on the subject. This thesis tries to fill up this gap by providing an empirical analysis of schools in Kerala.

With consistently exhibiting the highest level of literacy amongst all Indian states and also ranking number one in the recent School Education Quality Index(SEQI) launched by NITI Aayog, the state of Kerala has time and again proven that it's schooling system is one of a kind unique model that is capable of delivering. Thus, despite crossing the average threshold of most of the development indicators and especially being constantly rated number one in several charts like literacy, HDI, SEQI, has an Achilles heel in the form 'uneconomic' schools.

Therefore this thesis attempts to understand the phenomenon of 'uneconomic' schools in Kerala while placing it in the larger context of India and the world. Hence from the first chapter the author/researcher attempts to show how evolution of India's school education policy has taken place over the years, ever since the first education minister Maulana Azad came to power till the National Policy on Education 1986 and Program of Action in 1992 were undertaken, including analyses of schemes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the like. It also brought to light the role that international actors like World Bank, UNICEF and UNESCO, have played and continue to play in influencing the national education policies, thereby giving a hint of neo-colonialism in the field of education. After this it also looked at the political economy of external funding and how external aid serves as the cord that ties the Global actors to the Indian Policies and allows them to make inroads into India. Following this the second chapter provided an historical analysis of Kerala's education and revealed how the government's emphasis on education resulted in the rise in literacy levels in Malabar region, making it possible for the state to perform extremely well on various Human Development Indicators. It also shows how the erstwhile rulers of Kerala were keen on advancing modern education in the state, earlier on itself. Thereby it throws light at the pre independence endeavors towards strengthening the education

system and also the role of masses and mass movements in generating public awareness regarding the need of education. Finally, the second chapter also analysed the efforts made in the post-independence era in Kerala, with Kerala being the frontrunner in introducing the Kerala Education Act 1958 and other laws pertaining to education. Then this chapter tethers together the Global and National Policies and how they play out at the state level in Kerala. The third chapter then took a deeper dive into the district of Kannur where the largest concentration of ‘uneconomic’ schools is to be found. The empirical analysis of schools in Kannur district presented in this study also showed that with the increasing problem of schools being shut down in the name of being ‘uneconomic’, had given rise to greater questions, i.e. is having less number of students in a class a sufficient enough reason to close down schools. It was also interesting to see that the phenomenon of schools with the less number of children occurred despite the fact that the government continued to be a crucial actor in providing school education and implemented various programs funded by the union government and international agencies. Therefore this chapter analysed the reasons that led to the rise of uneconomic schools, some of which were issues like demographic change, out-bound migration, impact of international remittances on private schooling, social status attached with the type of schooling and the challenge posed by the need for upgrading schools.

One such issue that has been analysed here is that the primary schools were not able to catch up with the changing socio-economic conditions of the region. They were also unable to fulfill the rising aspirations of parents. This resulted into the problem of children moving out from government schools as well as aided schools and shifting to private schools.

Thus, although the government in power over the two decades brought about policies like HI-Tech classroom etc in order to strengthen the schooling system in Kerala, it was only in the year 2017, with the launching of Pothu Vidyabhyasa Samrakshana Yajnam (Public Education Rejuvenation Scheme) that special attention was given to ‘uneconomic’ schools with the aim of reviving and strengthening them.

As a result of concerted actions by policy makers and the people and direct interventions on the part of the government slowly yet steadily, this scheme had helped arrest the growth of uneconomic schools. This has been the key takeaway from chapter four. As a consequence of these above mentioned above, there is a reverse migration of pupils

taking place from high-fee charging private schools to minimum fee charging government and aided schools, in the state of Kerala. Further, as a part of this research while the author was conducting interviews in the field, the parents of the pupils informed the researcher of several factors that was leading to this reversal in trend lately. Some of the factors were an innovative and participatory approach to schooling, generational attachment, introduction of English classes and Pre-primary classes, teachers approachability, passion and drive towards investing in each and every student, with special focus and attention being given to specially-abled students in an attempt to amalgamate the specially-abled students with other classmates. Plus the focus on co-curricular activities, leading to a holistic growth of the child were counted as one among several reason drawing the students to government and aided schools, even if they were counted as 'uneconomic' in the official list.

The presented evidence in this study has shown that a renewed interest in policies meant for upgradation and improvement of public schools has helped reversing this phenomenon. It also shows that timely change in public policies is required to keep people's trust intact in public institutions like schools.

It was not until the last 5 years i.e. from 2017 onwards that the government took serious measures to address this issue and arrest the growth of uneconomic schools. Though the government did intervene earlier, but the uneconomic schools needed a more robust intervention. This proactive policy shift occurred only in the recent past.

To understand the policies pertaining to school education in India, especially in the neo-liberal era, it goes without saying that one needs to factor in, the global influences as the world is shrinking into a global village at quite a rapid pace. It is in this context, that the role of international players like UNESCO and World Bank comes into the picture. India being a signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as espoused by United Nations, has also shown tremendous leadership in the field of school education by recognizing Right to Education as a Fundamental Right as per the Constitution. However, in line with changes at the global level India and Kerala has also promoted private education. The state has also been trying to make itself a ripe destination for private players to make inroads and invest in education, especially school education, where continuous returns and profits are guaranteed.

Here it is important to note that, the private players do not simply view school education from social welfare lens. In fact, the vantage point of private players tends to coincide with the Human Capital Theory, which views education as an investment that will at a later stage reap greater returns. This is where the state needs to step in, as private players tend to exhibit a tendency to usurp the role played by the state, with regard to provision of school education, in the name of prestige and some advanced facilities. They also tend to charge exorbitant fees, which many parents with higher aspirations for their children struggle to afford. Therefore, the question that arises is that does this kind of privatized education serve the common man or a selected few.

Furthermore, the logic that drives these private players is of investment and return vis-à-vis school education, which clearly hints at commodification of school education, where student is seen as a purchaser/buyer and education as the commodity that is being sold. This in effect dilutes the sacro-sanctity attached to school education wherein, it is to be seen as a welfare service. In fact, with the inroads made by the private sector in the field of school education, it has diversified the options available to the parents of pupils at large. Moreover with the changing times, sending one's ward to a private run school is considered to be a hallmark of highclass, or upward social mobility. Therefore, there is a pressing need to take cognizance of the burgeoning role of private players in provision of school education and arrest this trend so that the difference between those who can afford education in private schools and those who cannot is not that greatly exaggerated and made stark.

During the field work, the researcher also came across a popular perception that private schools meant high quality education, which has been time and again debunked with a sound rationale, by various respondents of this study. Parents at large were beginning to send their children to private schools, even if they were struggling to afford its high fee structure, leading to public schools being shut down. It was in order to change this perception that various schemes have been launched by the government, like Public Education Rejuvenation Scheme.

Therefore, through this research the findings this study show that there was no single one root cause that could shoulder the responsibility of rising number of uneconomic schools. But interestingly, although the previous government in power was to trying to close down the schools that were considered 'uneconomic', but with the change in power the present

Government under LDF launched a Nava Kerala Mission, the subset of which was PothuVidyabhyasaSamrakshnaYajnamie Public Education Rejuvenation Scheme, tried to arrest this growth in the number of 'uneconomic' schools and bring about a reversal in trend by encouraging more and more last mile beneficiaries like Parents of school children to transfer their wards from Private run schools to Government run public and aided schools. This in itself is a tremendous policy shift with regard to school education in Kerala.

Although this policy has encouraged the parents to reconsider their choice of school preference, but at the time this study was taking place at the field level, the reversal in trend from private schools to government or aided schools was just beginning to take place as parents were just beginning to take note of the larger benefits accrued from sending their pupils to government and government aided schools. It is also important here to mention that the state has not ignored this issue or brushed it under the carpet, instead it has tried to address the issue in an upfront manner and bring about a sea tide of change in the way schooling is carried out in Kerala, especially with regard to government and aided schools. This they have done this by introducing Bio-diversity parks, Autism parks, talent labs etc. Thus exhibiting the fact that one of the key concerns of the government is enhancing the education sector further, by launching it as one of the key aspects under the Nava Kerala Mission(which in total consists of 4 main sectors namely, health, housing, agriculture and education) .

This goes to show that with adequate solution focused intervention from the policy makers any issue can be turned around in the society.

Further as far as proving the hypothesis was concerned, especially hypothesis number one that stated that increasing role of market is leading to a new phenomenon of government tacitly withdrawing from its role of provision of school education leading to the rise of uneconomic schools; this did not seem to be the case because the government officials were of the opinion that the government was investing heavily in education sector, especially school education. Infact, the government officials also mentioned that on an average their annual budgetary expenses towards education was 2.3 to 2.5 percent which was more than most of the states in India. Therefore, the officials agreed that even though private sector was making inroads and they were aware of it, yet the officials clearly expounded that there was no way that they were withdrawing, instead they were investing

more and more and were at the same time coming up with ingenious policies like Public Education Rejuvenation Scheme in order to strengthen not only the schools, but also embolden the role played by the state in provision of good quality school education.

And as far as the second hypothesis was concerned i.e. the policy shift in school education is closely related with the change in ruling party of Kerala. This proved true, because as mentioned above and also in the chapters, that under the previous government led by United Democratic Front(UDF), it had attempted in the past to bring about closure of ‘uneconomic’ schools, but it was with the coming of LDF to power in the last two elections that they began to take cognizance of the issue and bring about a U-Turn from the previous policies that were undertaken by the previous government, by introducing the above mentioned Public Education Rejuvenation Scheme, so that the schools which fell under the list of ‘uneconomic’ schools will no longer be closed but would be instead strengthened and made viable by providing excellent infrastructure and other facilities.

Interestingly another feature that needs to be taken into account with regard to school education in Kerala is the use of technology in imparting school education, right at the turn off the century. Therefore with COVID-19 pandemic descending over the whole world, and students all over the world being forced into a mode of virtual learning, the students in schools of Kerala could more smoothly transition into the technology based learning due to the initiatives that were started by the Government of Kerala, earlier on.

Finally this thesis also analyses the Public-Private dynamic, that plays out in school education sector. It shows through the analysis of the policies pertaining to education, that how both the public sector and the private sector in education can co-exist simultaneously. Although private sector in schooling is governed by profit motive, in contrast to the government and aided schools which are more welfare centric, but as long as the expansion of private sector in school education is concerned, as far as it is closely regulated by the state, they can continue to co-exist in manner that the child who is the last mile recipient of school education, stands to gain and benefit, from his or her schooling experience, irrespective of the school they are admitted into.

This study, hence, throws light at the overall picture of school education in Kerala, with special focus on ‘uneconomic schools’. It is mainly because of the pro-activeness of the policy makers and their timely interventions through various policies-that are in-sync with the changing times- that Kerala as a state has continuously managed to be in the

limelight for its education sector. With a populace which is aware and conscious of not only their rights but also their duties and various provision provided to them that Kerala as a state has managed to not only take cognizance of the issue at hand, in the education sector i.e. of uneconomic schools, but has also, within a short span of implementing the policies seen a change in the people's perception when it comes to the choice of school for their ward. The credit for this change goes not only to the government in power and policy makers but also the experts, principals, teachers, parents and most importantly children. For without the concerted effort of all the above mentioned actors, Kerala as a state would not have been able to achieve such a tremendous feat in education as it has managed today. It is because of their rich experience that today students can enroll themselves in any government or aided schools without feeling left out in comparison to their peers in society.

Thus from this study we can glean that although the private players, have made inroads, into the society of Kerala, over a span of few decades, but the government sector has not withdrawn from its duty of providing good quality education to the children, as they continue to be focused on keeping the welfare of the people in mind while making policies so that nobody in the state gets left behind.

Hence, the policy shifts that have been taking place with regard to school education sector in Kerala, specifically have been instrumental in strengthening the schooling system in the state and bringing more and more students to government and aided school, where they can not only avail good facilities at a low-cost price but also evolve into a holistic and well grounded person who will further contribute to the advancement and development of the nation and the society at large. Although that policies that are being implemented in the state of Kerala have not been bereft of national and global influences, but this only goes to show that we are living in a globalizing world, the hallmark of which is interconnectedness. Thus it is neither possible nor viable to exist in water-tight compartments as a nation and society, that is aloof from other countries. As a consequence the shifts that take place at the global and national level with regard to educational policies have a direct impact on the grassroots. This is even more true for India which espouses a system of co-operative federalism and with education coming under concurrent list both the union and the state have a say in what reaches the last mile. Thus for policies to keep up with the changing times, the policy makers need to address the core issue that affects it's populace and in this case it would be the pupil.

Finally it can be said that the policy recourse undertaken by the state to address the issue of 'uneconomic' schools has been more than effective and this shows a policy shift that is taking place in Kerala is definitely for the betterment of the masses.

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APPENDIX I: LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED (2017 to 2019)

1. Mr. Aji Phillip, Deputy Secretary General Education, Government of Kerala, Trivandrum, Kerala
2. Mr. K.V. Muraleedharan, Special Secretary to General education Department, Government of Kerala, Trivandrum, Kerala
3. Ms. Nirmala Devi, Deputy Director of Education(2018),Kannur District, Government of Kerala, Kannur, Kerala
4. Dr. N. Ajith Kumar, Director, Centre for Socio-Economic and Environmental Studies, Kochi, Kerala
5. Prof. K.K. George, Centre for Socio-Economic and Environmental Studies, Kochi, Kerala
6. Prof.J. Prabhash, former Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of Kerala
7. Ms. Rajitha,Headmistress, Government UP School Thavakarra, Kannur, Kerala
8. Mr. Balakrishnan M., Headmaster, Government UP School Devatharakandy, Kannur, Kerala
9. Ms.Bindu, Headmistress, Ganapathivilasam LP School, Kannur, Kerala
10. Mr.U.K.Balachandran, Headmaster, Elyavoor South LP School, Kannur, Kerala
11. Ms. Shailaja T.V., Headmistress, Government LP School Thayatheru, Kannur, Kerala
12. Ms. Anitha P., Headmistress, Government LP School Chovva, Kannur, Kerala
13. Ms. Anand Kumari, Headmistress, Gourivilasam UP School, Kannur, Kerala
14. Mr. Mohanan, Headmaster,Government UP School Muzhathamadam, Kannur, Kerala
15. Ms. Pushpalata, Headmistress, Edachovva UP School, Kannur, Kerala
16. Ms. Reesha, Headmistress, Elyavoor Dharmodhaya LP School, Kannur, Kerala
17. Ms. Rakhi, Teacher, Edachovva UP School, Kannur, Kerala
18. Ms.Mini, Teacher, Edachovva UP School, Kannur, Kerala
19. Ms.Laseetha, Teacher, Gourivilasam UP School, Kannur, Kerala
20. Ms.Shabna, President of Parent Teacher Association, Gourivilasam UP School, Kannur, Kerala
21. Ms.Radhika Manoj, President of Parent Teacher Association, Government UP School Muzhathamadam, Kannur, Kerala
22. Ms.Uma, Parent of a student & Homemaker, Gourivilasam UP School, Kannur, Kerala
23. Ms.Sindu Ranjit, Parent of a student & Radiographer, Gourivilasam UP School, Kannur, Kerala

24. Ms.Homuabiba, Parent of a student & Homemaker, Government LP School Chovva, Kannur, Kerala
25. Ms.Remya, Parent of a student & Homemaker, Gourivilasam UP School, Kannur, Kerala
26. Mr.Siddi, Parent of a student & Cook, Gourivilasam UP School, Kannur, Kerala
27. Ms.Dilna, Parent of a student & Homemaker, Government UP School Muzhathamadam, Kannur, Kerala
28. Ms.Salma, Parent of a student & Homemaker, Government LP School Chovva, Kannur, Kerala
29. Ms.Sameera, Parent of a student & Homemaker, Government LP School Chovva, Kannur, Kerala
30. Ms.Zubeida, Parent of a student & Cook, Government LP School Chovva, Kannur, Kerala
31. Ms.Safia, Parent of a student & Homemaker, Government LP School Chovva, Kannur, Kerala
32. Ms.Jaseela, Parent of a student & Homemaker, Gourivilasam UP School, Kannur, Kerala
33. Ms.Shabna, Parent of a student & Homemaker, Gourivilasam UP School, Kannur, Kerala
34. Mr.Naufal, Parent of a student & Emigrant worker, Government UP School Muzhathamadam, Kannur, Kerala
35. Ms.Shreja, Parent of a student & Homemaker, Government UP School Muzhathamadam, Kannur, Kerala
36. Ms.Shailaja, Parent of a student & Homemaker, Edachovva UP School, Kannur, Kerala
37. Ms.Priya, Parent of a student & Homemaker, Edachovva UP School, Kannur, Kerala
38. Ms.Sahida, Parent of a student & Homemaker, Gourivilasam UP School, Kannur, Kerala
39. Ms.Lasija, Parent of a student & Homemaker, Gourivilasam UP School, Kannur, Kerala
40. Ms.Indu, Parent of a student & Homemaker, Edachovva UP School, Kannur, Kerala
41. Mr.Latheesh, Parent of a student & LIC Agent, Government UP School Muzhathamadam, Kannur, Kerala
42. Ms.Sheila, Parent of a student & Homemaker, Edachovva UP School, Kannur, Kerala

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRES

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR GOVERNEMENT OFFICIALS

Rationale: The rationale behind approaching the government officials and posing these set of questions is to understand from the government perspective the reason why the schools are becoming uneconomic, the reason why they are termed as uneconomic and the measures that are being undertaken by the government to rectify this situation. This questionnaire also has a section on government policies being undertaken by the government from 2000 onwards as well as questions on budget allocation (in general). The reason for probing into this is to understand the use of the terminology uneconomic followed by trying to get the government officials perspective on the same and an idea of to what extent the policies from both the centre and the state are being implemented over a period of time. This will help in getting concrete data for second and third chapter that focus on understanding the school education scenario in Kerala as well as the third chapter that deals with policy shifts.

SECTION I: DETAILS OF THE RESPONDENT

Name

Age

Gender

Position

Duration of Service

SECTION II: UNECONOMIC SCHOOLS

With regard to the discourse on school education one often comes across the term "uneconomic schools". What does the government mean by the term uneconomic?(especially vis a vis government schools)

What in your view are the reasons for schools turning uneconomic?(especially in Kannur)

Since how long has this trend been taking place of schools becoming uneconomic?

What efforts have the previous governments undertaken to address this issue?

What active measures is the government taking to stall this trend? Or are they even interested in curtailing this trend.

In their view is the trend of schools becoming uneconomic higher in Government schools or in aided schools? Why so?

Have the policies being implemented by the centre and the state been instrumental in freezing the phenomenon of schools becoming uneconomic?

What active measures have been undertaken since 2000 onwards to address this issue?

Why is the no. of uneconomic schools so high in Kannur?

What happen to the teachers and students of a school once it is branded as “uneconomic”?

SECTION II: GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND BUDGET ALLOCATION

What are the current policies being implemented vis-à-vis school education in Kerala?

Considering that education is a concurrent subject, which of these policies are being superimposed by the centre and which all by the state?

What is the ratio of funding distribution between the centre and the state as far as educational policies are concerned?

What were the government policies vis -a- vis schools being undertaken in the previous government (Especially since 2000)

Has the budget allocation for schools been increasing over a period of time or has it remained stagnant or has it decreased?

If so then in their perspective what is the reason for the same?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR EXPERTS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION IN KERALA

Rationale: This schedule would provide a more in-depth understanding into the measures being taken by the government vis a vis schools and especially uneconomic schools. It will also help understand about the funding strategy of the government and also the reasoning behind their funding activities as far as schooling is concerned. It will provide a more detailed analysis of the why and how of government schemes as far as school are concerned both with regard to the policies adopted by the state government as well as the central government. This section will help in the sixth chapter by providing adequate material to understand the interplay between the market forces and the state.

SECTION I: DETAILS OF RESPONDENTS

NAME:

AGE:

GENDER:

INSTITUTE OF AFFLIATION:

POSITION :

SECTION II: GOVERNMENT MEASURES VIS A VIS UNECONOMIC SCHOOLS

Are they aware of the schools becoming or turning uneconomic? What are your views on the same?

What steps do you think is the government undertaking to address these issues?

Was the situation like this under previous governments?

Why is there a shift towards the private sector?

Do you think that the current government as well as the previous government has taken cognizance of this issue? If yes, then what steps have they undertaken to address this issue?

Steps taken by current government

Steps taken by previous government:

Do you think that the market forces are proactively playing a greater role in providing education in comparison to the state or the government?

Do you think this shift towards the private sector needs to be addressed? If yes, then how?

What in your suggestion are the measures that can be taken to address this issue of schools becoming uneconomic?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH TEACHERS AND HEADMASTERS/HEADMISTRESS OF GOVERNEMENT, AIDED AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Rationale: This schedule will help provide the information of what the providers of knowledge or the so called middlemen between the government and the children perceive about the trend of schools becoming uneconomic. It might throw some more light into the research as they are recipients from both the tail ends of the system, the government as well as the children

SECTION I: DETAILS OF RESPONDENT

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Schools Name:

Teaching position or classes:

Duration/ How long have they been a teacher for?

SECTION II: PRESENT POSITION

How long have they been teaching in this particular school for?

If they have shifted then what made them shift?

Are they satisfied with their present pay and position?

Would they prefer government over aided or private schools? If yes or no, then what are the reasons for the same?

SECTION III-UNECONOMIC SCHOOLS

Have they come across the term uneconomic schools?

What do they think are the reason for the no. of increase in the uneconomic schools?

What are the reason for increase in drop-out rate in these schools vis a vis other schools?

What usually happens to the teachers of uneconomic schools?

Despite various government schemes benefitting the children, why is there a shift towards private schools?

What active measures are being taken by the PTA to address this issue?

What were the measures taken by previous governments (especially since 2000) to address this issue?

Is the condition better now or has it worsened?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH PARENTS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN IN KANNUR

Rationale: The rationale behind seeking answers from parents of school children is because they are the key beneficiaries of government schemes and activities. It will help the researcher understand why there are fewer children in certain schools like government schools and why the trajectory is more towards private schools even though the fee structure is high in private schools. It will also help understand what active measures the PTA is taking to curtail this trend and also what are the options available for the less fortunate who cannot afford to send their children to well established private schools. This questionnaire will provide information for the third and fourth chapter chapters that specifically deal with government and aided schools.

SECTION I: RESPONDENT DETAILS

Name :

Age:

Gender:

Occupation:

Religion:

How many children in school:

What kind of School do they go to? Govt/Aided/Private

SECTION II: PRIVATE SCHOOLS OVER GOVERNMENT OR AIDED SCHOOLS

Do they prefer Government Board or CBSE for their children? Why, so?

Why are parents/ you not wanting to send your children to government and aided schools despite the medium of instruction being English and the fees being very low?

Isn't the midday meal scheme an incentive for you to send your kids to government or aided schools?

Isn't free uniform and textbooks a reason why you would be more interested in sending your kids to government schools?

If the infrastructure facilities in government or aided schools were improved would they still prefer private schools over government schools?

SECTION III: PARENTS PERSPECTIVE ON UNECONOMIC SCHOOLS

Are they aware of the schools becoming uneconomic?

What do you think about the trend of schools becoming uneconomic? What do you think are the reasons for this taking place?

Should the authorities be taking measures to curtail this trend? If yes then what measures can be taken?

If uneconomic schools were made at par with best run private schools. Which one would they still prefer for their children? Why?

According to them what happens to children once a school becomes uneconomic? Shouldn't the Parents Teacher Association take active steps to curtail this? If they have been taking steps then what are those steps? If you could elucidate on them.

APPENDIX III: GOVERNMENT CIRCULAR



കേരള സർക്കാർ

സംഗ്രഹം

പൊ.വി.വ-മതിയായ എണ്ണം കുട്ടികളില്ലാത്ത വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളിലെ അധ്യാപക നിയമനങ്ങൾക്ക് മാർഗ്ഗനിർദ്ദേശം പുറപ്പെടുവിച്ച് - ഉത്തരവാകുന്നു.

പൊതുവിദ്യാഭ്യാസ (ജെ) വകുപ്പ്

സ.ഉ (എം.എസ്) നം.83/2018/പൊവിവ തിരുവനന്തപുരം, തീയതി 12/06/2018

- പരാമർശം:-
1. പൊതുവിദ്യാഭ്യാസ ഡയറക്ടറുടെ 12-01-2018-ലെ എച്ച്/2/74897/2017/DPI നമ്പർ കത്ത്.
 2. പൊതുവിദ്യാഭ്യാസ ഡയറക്ടറുടെ 12-02-2018 ലെ എച്ച്/2/81772/2017/DPI നമ്പർ കത്ത്

ഉത്തരവ്

"അൺ ഇക്കണോമിക് സ്കൂളുകൾ" എന്നറിയപ്പെട്ടുവന്നിരുന്ന സംസ്ഥാനത്തെ സ്കൂളുകളിലെ നിയമനം, നിയമനാംഗീകാരം, സ്ഥലംമാറ്റം തുടങ്ങിയ വിഷയങ്ങളിൽ നിലവിലിരിക്കുന്ന ഉപോദ്യോഗികളിൽ കാലോചിതമായ മാറ്റങ്ങൾ വരുത്തുന്നതു സംബന്ധിച്ച് പൊതുവിദ്യാഭ്യാസ ഡയറക്ടർ പരാമർശം പ്രകാരം ചില നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ സമർപ്പിച്ചിരുന്നു. സർക്കാർ ഇക്കാര്യം വിശദമായി പരിശോധിച്ചതിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ ചുവടെപ്പറയുന്ന മാർഗ്ഗനിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ പുറപ്പെടുവിച്ച് ഉത്തരവാകുന്നു:-

1. സംസ്ഥാനത്തെ സർക്കാർ/എയ്ഡഡ് ലോവർ പ്രൈമറി, അപ്പർ പ്രൈമറി, ഹൈസ്കൂളുകളിൽ ഒരു സ്റ്റാൻഡേർഡിലെ ശരാശരി കുട്ടികളുടെ ചുരുങ്ങിയ എണ്ണം ഇനിമുതൽ 15 ആയി നിജപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്നു. ഒരു സ്റ്റാൻഡേർഡിലെ ശരാശരി കുട്ടികളുടെ എണ്ണം 15-ൽ കുറവല്ലെങ്കിൽ പ്രസ്തുത സ്കൂളിൽ മതിയായ എണ്ണം കുട്ടികൾ ഉണ്ടെന്നു കണക്കാക്കാം. ഇത്തരം വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളിലേക്കുള്ള നിയമനങ്ങൾ മാനേജർക്ക് കെ.ഇ.ആറിലെ വ്യവസ്ഥകൾക്കു വിധേയമായി നടത്താവുന്നതാണ്. ഇതു സംബന്ധിച്ച കെ.ഇ.ആർ ദേദഗതി പിന്നീട് പുറപ്പെടുവിക്കുന്നതാണ്.
2. സംസ്ഥാനത്തെ ഒരു വിദ്യാലയത്തിനും ഇനി മുതൽ "അൺഇക്കണോമിക് (അനാദായകരം)" എന്ന വിശേഷണം നൽകരുത്. വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ ഓഫീസർമാർ നടത്തുന്ന കത്തിടപാടുകളിലും റിപ്പോർട്ടുകളിലുമൊന്നും ഇനി മുതൽ പ്രസ്തുത പദം ഉപയോഗിക്കരുത്. പകരം, ഒരു ക്ലാസ്സിൽ ശരാശരി 15-ൽ കുറവാണ് കുട്ടികളുടെ എണ്ണമെങ്കിൽ അത്തരം വിദ്യാലയം ഇനിമുതൽ "മതിയായ എണ്ണം കുട്ടികളില്ലാത്ത വിദ്യാലയം" എന്നറിയപ്പെടുന്നതാണ്.
3. ഒരു ക്ലാസ്സിൽ ശരാശരി 15-ൽ കുറവ് കുട്ടികളുള്ള വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളിൽ താഴെപറയുന്ന നിബന്ധനകൾക്കനുസൃതമായി നിയമനങ്ങൾ നടത്താവുന്നതാണ്:-
 - I. പ്രഥമാധ്യാപക തസ്തികയിലേക്ക് പ്രൊമോഷൻ നിയമനം നടത്താവുന്നതാണ്.
 - II. കുട്ടികളുടെ ക്ലാസ് ശരാശരി പതിനഞ്ചോ അതിൽ കൂടുതലോ ഉള്ള ഒരു വിദ്യാലയത്തിലും ഒഴിവു ലഭ്യമല്ലെങ്കിൽ അതേ മാനേജ്മെന്റിലെ തസ്തിക നഷ്ടമായ സംരക്ഷിതാധ്യാപകരെ/ റിട്രെയ്ഡ് അധ്യാപകരെ നിയമിക്കാവുന്നതാണ്. ഇതുസംബന്ധമായ ഒരു സത്യപ്രസ്താവന പൊതുവിദ്യാഭ്യാസ ഡയറക്ടർ നിഷ്കർഷിക്കുന്ന പ്രൊഫോർമയിൽ മാനേജർ ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ ഓഫീസർക്ക് നൽകേണ്ടതാണ്.
 - III. ഇത്തരം വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളിലെ പുതിയ നിയമനങ്ങളെല്ലാം ദിനവേതനാടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ മാത്രമായിരിക്കും. 51 B അവകാശികളുടെ നിയമനവും പുതിയ നിയമനമായി കണക്കാക്കി ദിവസവേതനാടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ അംഗീകാരം നൽകാവുന്നതാണ്.
 - IV. ഇത്തരം വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളിൽ നിന്ന് മതിയായ എണ്ണം കുട്ടികളുള്ള സ്കൂളിലേയ്ക്ക് സ്ഥലംമാറ്റം നടത്താവുന്നതാണ്.

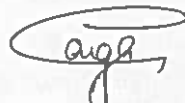
മതിയായ എണ്ണം കുട്ടികളുള്ള സ്കൂളിൽ നിന്ന് ഇത്തരം വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളിലേക്ക് സ്ഥലംമാറ്റം അനുവദനീയമല്ല.

VI. ഒരേ മാനേജ്മെന്റിന്റെ കീഴിലുള്ള മതിയായ എണ്ണം കുട്ടികളില്ലാത്ത ഒന്നിലധികം വിദ്യാലയങ്ങൾക്കിടയ്ക്കുള്ള സ്ഥലംമാറ്റം നടത്താവുന്നതാണ്.

മേൽ പറഞ്ഞ മാർഗ്ഗനിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾക്ക് 2018 - 19 അധ്യയന വർഷാരംഭം മുതൽ പ്രാബല്യം ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കുന്നതാണ്.

(ഗവർണ്ണറുടെ ഉത്തരവിൻ പ്രകാരം)
എച്ച്. നജീബ്
ജോയിന്റ് സെക്രട്ടറി

പൊതുവിദ്യാഭ്യാസ ഡയറക്ടർ, തിരുവനന്തപുരം.
എല്ലാ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ ഡെപ്യൂട്ടി ഡയറക്ടർമാർക്കും, ജില്ലാ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ ഓഫീസർമാർക്കും,
ഉപജില്ലാ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ ഓഫീസർമാർക്കും (പൊതുവിദ്യാഭ്യാസ ഡയറക്ടർ മുഖേന)
ഡയറക്ടർ, ഐ.റ്റി @ സ്കൂൾ, തിരുവനന്തപുരം,
(വെബ് സൈറ്റിൽ പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിക്കുന്നതിനായി)
ഡയറക്ടർ, വെബ് & ന്യൂമീഡിയ (വെബ് സൈറ്റിൽ പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിക്കുന്നതിനായി)
പ്രിൻസിപ്പൽ അക്കൗണ്ടന്റ് ജനറൽ (ആഡിറ്റ്), കേരള, തിരുവനന്തപുരം
അക്കൗണ്ടന്റ് ജനറൽ (എ & ഇ), കേരള തിരുവനന്തപുരം.
പൊതുവിദ്യാഭ്യാസ വകുപ്പിലെ എല്ലാ ഓഫീസർമാർക്കും, സെക്ഷനുകൾക്കും
കരുതൽ ഫയൽ / ഓഫീസ് കോപ്പി.

ഉത്തരവിൻ പ്രകാരം

സെക്ഷൻ ഓഫീസർ

പകർപ്പ്: ബഹു. വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ വകുപ്പ് മന്ത്രിയുടെ പി.എസ് ന്
പൊതുവിദ്യാഭ്യാസ സെക്രട്ടറിയുടെ പി.എ ക്ക്ക്.