

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO STRENGTHEN
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

September 2017



**Kannada Development Authority
Government of Karnataka
Bangalore**

President's Note

In this age of human rights, it is a universal truth that education is a fundamental right of all children. There have been attempts to universalize education even before Indian Independence. Jyothiba Phule in 1882, appearing before the Hunter Commission, stressed on the need for free and compulsory education. The architects of our Constitution, who were clearly aware of the importance of the universalization of education, set education as a time-bound directive principle. As per this directive, all children should have received education by 1960. It is a matter of soul-searching that we still have not been able to achieve the goal of free and compulsory education even after 69 years of independence.

Today, the demand for free and compulsory education for children has become an international concern. Further, voices around the world have begun to insist that every child must be provided education as an integral part of Human Rights. This has brought into force several international treaties and agreements. Among these, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most significant international instrument to ensure free and compulsory education to all children is the most important international child rights instrument. This convention was brought before member countries of the UN in 1989, and it was ratified by India in December 1992. As part of this development, international pressure on the provision of free and compulsory education has begun to increase, and India is not exempt from it.

In this regard, the Supreme Court's decision in 1993 to make education a fundamental right from a directive principle is a historic one. Today, education is a fundamental right as per both national and international laws, and it is the primary responsibility of governments to help implement this right. There is an anxiety among civil society that governments are not doing enough in terms of allocating resources and spending on education, and education is not being considered as an essential component of national development. The right to education must not be limited to mere literacy in schools. An education system that ensures that all children have access to uniform and quality education must be developed, thereby building a new society based on the principles of social justice and egalitarianism; this is the fundamental demand of all progressive peoples' movements.

The Kannada Development Authority, through constant discussion amongst various stakeholders, has been consistently advising the state government on policy matters regarding the strengthening of government Kannada schools and the empowerment of the public education system. In this context, the weakening of the government school system over the last one and a half decades and the increasing privatization and commercialization of education has caused extreme concern. The Kannada Development Authority has been strongly asserting that the realization of the right to education as per the Constitution is the responsibility of the state and central governments.

There is an urgent need today to revive the public education system and create an excellent learning-centric environment in government schools to provide quality education. The status of government schools is weakening day by day, and it is becoming ever-more difficult to realize the intent of providing free and compulsory education. With this in mind, the Karnataka government constituted the Committee for Strengthening Government Schools in 2016. The composition of the committee is as follows:

The president of the Kannada Development Authority was appointed the chairperson of the committee. Prof. Chandrashekar Damle, Sri Pa Mallesh, Sri Gangadhar Kushtagi, Smt. Banu Mushtaq, and Fr. Ambrose Pinto were appointed as members. Dr. K Muralidhara was appointed the secretary. Sri TM

Kumar with his experience in the field of education and Dr. V.P Niranjanaradhya with his experience in grassroots in-depth research experience and unstinted knowledge of school education were appointed as experts. The committee performed field work in several parts of the state and collated information. The committee prepared questionnaires for surveys and also visited government schools to study the conditions on ground. Several experienced experts and friends from NGOs with extensive experience in the education sector have also provided valuable suggestions and insights. Thus, information for this report has been generated through field work expertise as well as discussion and dialog. Further, relevant statistical data were obtained from supervisory education officials of all districts. Importantly, the Kannada Development Authority compulsorily visited and directly evaluated the state of government schools in all districts to collect information. This report is a summary of the collected information. This report considers in comprehensive detail all aspects relating to the provision of care, protection, and equal and quality education to all children from birth to 18 years of age in their local environment. Importantly, the Kannada Development Authority upholds the realization and provision of quality and equal education as a fundamental right to all children of the state. The Kannada Development Authority in one united voice is pressurizing the government to take a quick decision on the matter. Our efforts can be considered fruitful if they aid in the realization of a strong public education system that can provide equal and quality education to every child in the state.

The Kannada Development Authority is particularly indebted to Dr. VP Niranjanaradhya, who has through continual research dedicated his life to the formulation and realization of a policy on uniform and quality education and also played a decisive role in conceptualizing and writing. His work as an active consultant , subject expert and an authority on school education in the country with Committee for the strengthening Government Schools has been exemplary. The Authority also thanks Sri TM Kumar and education experts who participated in various discussions.

Professor SG Siddaramaiah,
President,
Committee for Strengthening Government Schools,
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Recommendation -1

From the perspective of the safety of children and the need for a school environment that allows parents to send children to government schools without any anxiety, urgent action must be taken to repair and renovate inadequate and disused government school classrooms and fill vacant teaching posts. The merging and closure of government schools must be stopped immediately, and action must be taken to reopen all closed schools.

Rationale for the recommendation

As per Section 3(1) of the Right to Education Act, every child between the age of six and fourteen has the fundamental right to obtain free and compulsory education in the closest school. In this context, the child need not pay any tax or expenses that can prevent the child from obtaining and completing primary education. To guarantee the realization of this right, the government must ensure that schools are established in the neighborhood of every child. From the perspective of empowering government schools, the provision of basic amenities as per the Right to Education Act becomes essential in these schools.

However, the status of government schools has not changed despite the Right to Education Act being in force for seven years. For example, during 2010-11, when the Act was implemented, there were 23,109 Lower primary schools and 22,568 Higher primary schools. In 2016-17, the number of lower and higher primary schools reduced to 21, 441 and 22,454 schools, respectively. This means that after the implementation of the Act, 1168 Primary government Kannada schools and 114 senior primary schools were shut down. Further, several thousands of schools were merged under the excuse of student shortage. During the same period of time, the numbers of private unaided primary and higher primary schools increased from 2761 to 4279 and 7491 to 9159, respectively. In the last 7 years, 1778 government schools have been shut down, and 3186 private unaided schools have been established.

In view of basic amenities, particularly with respect to the status of classrooms, there were a total of 198,415 classrooms in elementary schools during 2010-11. Of these, only 135,000 classrooms were suitable for learning use, which meant that 63,415 were unsuitable. In 2016-17, the total number of elementary schools classrooms was 211,098 rooms. Of these, 137,969 were suitable for classroom use, that is, 73,129 classrooms were unsuitable. Overall, the total number of unsuitable classrooms increased from 63,415 in 2010-11 to 73, 129 in 2016-17. Further, facilities like toilets, electricity, library, drinking water, playgrounds, etc., existed only on paper and were unusable for practical purposes. In these circumstances, the question of maintenance and growth of government schools has been haunting all conscientious citizens.

As regards the issue of teachers, in 2010-11, the numbers of elementary school teachers sanctioned and discharging teaching duties were 202,483 and 189,451, respectively. These numbers correspondingly reduced to 194,718 and 166,136 in 2016-17. That is, in 2016-17, the difference between the number of sanctioned teachers and number of working teachers was 28,582.

Examining these facts in detail, the following actions must be immediately taken by the government to maintain and develop more schools to provide quality education in comparison with neighboring schools:

- The government must reopen all closed government schools.
- The property and facilities of these closed schools must not be leased or transferred to private individuals, organizations, or other government departments, and the schools must be reopened as soon as possible.
- In addition to filling teaching posts in government schools, the government must also take immediate action in providing basic amenities.

Recommendation 2

Pre-primary education must be immediately provided in government lower and higher primary schools.

Rationale for recommendation

A primary reason for the reducing numbers in government Primary and Higher primary schools is the absence of the system of pre-primary education.

Section 11 of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, states that in order to prepare children who have completed 3 years of age for primary education and provide basic infant care till six years of age, the government must make suitable arrangements to follow the pre-primary class 1 (LKG) and pre-primary class 2 (UKG) model.

In this context, the government must take immediate action to begin pre-primary classes in government lower-higher primary schools.

Recommendation 3

Teachers in government schools must essentially focus on teaching, and they must be relieved from all non-teaching responsibilities.

Rationale for recommendation

As per Section 27 of the Right to Education Act, 2009, teachers must not be mandated to perform non-teaching-related duties other than 10-year census, disaster management, or based on the situation, those related to local body elections, state legislature elections, and Assembly elections.

However, in reality, the workload of government school teachers is entirely different. Two teachers are appointed for the teaching of primary classes. One teacher is expected to follow the play-way (Nali-Kali) method and handle classes 1 to 3 daily. The second teacher is expected to teach 3 language classes, 3 optional subjects, physical education, etc. (a total of 12 subjects) in a single day for classes 4 and 5. Along with teaching, the responsibilities of the headmaster also need to be discharged. Similarly in Higher primary schools, 3 to 4 teachers are posted to address the needs of students from classes 1 to 7. Of these, one teacher is expected to follow the play-way method for the lower classes. If the remaining teachers share the workload of teaching classes 4 to 7 (3 languages + 3 optional subjects + physical education × 4 classes = 28 subjects), one teacher is expected to teach 9 subjects a day. One of these teachers must necessarily assume the duties of the headmaster also. Further, in English-medium schools, these teachers are also expected to teach in English for classes 6 and 7. The following list provides examples of non-teaching related work handled by teachers:

1. Akshara Dasoha (midday meal scheme) and record maintenance
2. Ksheera Bhagya (milk scheme) and record maintenance
3. Aadhar registration and record maintenance
4. Distribution of medicines and record keeping
5. Student fees and distribution of shoes, bicycles, uniforms, and textbooks and record keeping
6. Maintenance of school records due to lack of non-teaching staff
7. Adequate use of finances from various aid schemes
8. Records of financial expenditure of aid schemes
9. Maintenance of school account with the bank
10. Booth Letter Officer (BLO) responsibilities
11. Interaction with Social Welfare and Backward Classes Departments
12. Maintenance of toilets and drinking water facilities
13. Other unexpected programs
14. Election duties
15. Census
16. Caste census
17. Children census
18. Handling unrelated workshops and training during school hours

19. Providing constant updates to CRP and Education Department
20. Deployment to single-teacher schools

The impression of parents is that such workloads form obstacles to teaching, and that teaching time in government schools is constantly reducing. Thus, they consider the option of private schools. This is also ground reality.

Due to all these reasons, the government must take serious note of the issue and take immediate action to curb the extra workload of government school teachers and allow them to focus on teaching and learning.

Recommendation 4

To improve the quality of government schools, it is necessary to appoint at least one teacher per class and one teacher per subject. Until the ideal student-teacher ratio is achieved, based on evaluations of current student-teacher ratio, the minimum number of subject matter teachers must be appointed.

Rationale for recommendation

In government schools, there is only a single teacher handling the entire class for a day. As per educational psychology, a good teacher can enable students to concentrate on a topic for only about 30 to 40 minutes. Children also cannot focus on a single topic for long periods of time. However, in government schools, there is only one teacher who teaches various subjects to all classes during the entire day. The current approach is for one teacher to use the play-way (Nali-Kali) method and teach multiple classes. However, this does not lead to effective teaching or learning. The teacher and students will both find the process monotonous. This will also reduce the students' pace of learning and reduce the teacher's enthusiasm for teaching. From the viewpoint of strengthening of government schools, the play-way (Nali-Kali) method and multiple-class teaching must be abolished, and the government must implement class-wise teaching.

Currently, a single teacher is forced to teach all subjects for classes 1 to 5 in Lower Primary government schools. In Higher primary schools, only one teacher handles 3 to 4 subjects. As per the science of teaching, a single teacher can suitably understand and teach only one or two concepts underlying a subject. If a single teacher teaches multiple subjects, the quality of teaching will not be to the expected mark. Overall, government school teachers today are subject to pressure, stress, and anxiety. This in turn directly affecting student learning. All these reasons are forcing the teacher to turn away from the activity of teaching. This is the situation today in a majority of our government schools.

If a single teacher is not assigned to a single subject, high-quality government school education is likely to remain a pipe dream. The Right to Education Act aims for all round development of the child. However, on closely examining the various aspects of the education system, we note that such development is not occurring. It is urgently required to develop and implement a system that can provide all round development of the child.

Recommendation 5

Support systems must be implemented and strengthened for teachers to be given timely guidance and training to involve themselves in active learning processes and upgrade their professional skills.

Rationale for recommendation

As per Section 24 of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, a teacher must discharge the following responsibilities:

1. Orderliness and punctuality in discharging duties;
2. Teaching and completion of syllabus as per the subtopics of Section 29(2) of the Act;
3. Timely completion the syllabus;
4. Additional teaching (if required) based on the evaluation of the child's competence;
5. Updating of the child's attendance, learning ability, progress and providing other relevant information to the parents through continual parent-teacher meetings;
6. Discharge other duties based on orders;

Although the Right to Education Act clearly specifies the duties of the teacher, the educational system setup does not allow the discharging of his/her duties in a disciplined or skillful manner. On the one hand, teachers are tied up by the non-teaching duties listed in Recommendation 3. On the other hand, the support systems to develop and strengthen the continual growth and supervision of the teacher's working style, accountability, and industriousness are inactive.

Institutions that are supposed to increase the quality of learning, such as Cluster Resource Centers, Block Resource Centers, DIET, CTE, Institute for Advanced Education Studies, SISLEP, and DSERT have become inactive.

Actually, the teachers appointed to government schools are talented individuals who are the product of statewide competitive exams. Their salary and job security are excellent. Despite this, it is true that the progress of government school children has drastically decreased. The percentage of students who can correctly perform simple reading, writing, and arithmetic is not greater than 40%. Even disregarding

student ability in optional subjects, the number of students who can clearly speak Kannada is reducing day by day.

This is because teachers are not part of processes that allow them to continually upgrade their skills. Teachers are not being exposed to technology-based training, official English language teaching, or workshops on updating their skills. Further, workshops conducted by the department are a matter of mere formality. Most importantly, the supervisory powers of the system have declined, and the system has derailed in a way. Consequently, there is no continual supervision of learning, means of learning, and learning methods. If we do not improve the systems of learning, the quality of learning will not improve.

Although government school teachers are highly competent initially, they stagnate within a few years. This is why they need to be continually evaluated. The teachers need to be continually evaluated for quality. Based on feedback by parents, teachers who are found inadequate must be provided training. Teachers who still do not show improvement must not be provided increments in salary. Suspension of promotions must be utilized to bring accountability.

Answerability must not be limited only to teachers. The staff of institutions responsible for quality of education, i.e., Cluster Centers, Block Resource Centers, DIET, CTE, Institute for Advanced Education Studies, SISLEP, and DSERT must be held responsible for shortcomings at every stage and made answerable. In this manner, the government should take steps on a war footing to again instill public faith in government schools.

Recommendation 6

As part of information communication technology (ICT), contemporary new technologies, e-libraries, e-books, etc. must be adopted in government schools.

Rationale for recommendation

Another reason for the lack of quality in government schools is the lack of application of technology. Although the education department has mandated and implemented ICT stages 1, 2, and 3, there is no information on its utility. Several investigations have supported the idea that technology can improve the quality of education. Technology can be applied in many ways for education:

1. The use of Kannada software to study various subjects
2. Multifaceted learning
3. Education radio and television
4. Internet-based learning

5. Use of technology for learning processes
6. The use of technology as part of the learning process of teachers
7. Teaching and learning materials
8. Technology as part of desk research
9. Maximum use of audio-visual technology
10. Educational websites
11. Media

Teachers must be encouraged to use current technology and also be provided comprehensive information on future challenges and developments.

Recommendation 7

Teachers with training in English must teach English effectively as a language from class 1.

Rationale for recommendation

The extensive use of English in private schools is the main reason for the divide between government and private schools. In government schools, children learn English as a language from class 5. Since English is the primary medium of instruction from pre-primary in private schools, there is the illusion that English is the language of the market. This is why people from all classes are enthused in sending their children to English-medium convent schools.

The government must honor the wish of parents of children studying in government schools to have their children master the English language. In this regard, English must be made as one of the compulsory languages in government schools.

If children are taught English from class 1 onwards, it is possible to attract more students to government schools. Together with the teaching of Kannada, government schools can be increasingly empowered. English teachers must have received special training, and the government must organize special workshops in this regard.

Initially, in collaboration with the Regional Institute of English, South Zone Bangalore, government school teachers must be trained on how English can be taught efficiently. It is a matter of regret that the education department has not been able to exploit the services of this institute that was set up in Karnataka for the express purpose of teaching English. In this context, in collaboration with the Institute of English, the education department must increase the capability of teachers to teach English better.

Recommendation 8

The school development and supervisory committees must be strengthened and emergency measures must be taken to bring government and government-aided schools on par with private schools in the neighborhood. The government must identify and felicitate excellently performing block, district, and state-level school development and supervisory committees.

Rationale for recommendation

As per Sections 21 and 22 of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, other than for unaided schools, it is obligatory to constitute school development committees comprising local elected representatives, parents of the government school children, and teachers of every government school and implement school development schemes. A minimum of 75% of the members must be parents of the school children and parents of underprivileged and backward community children. Further, 50% of the members must be women. This committee must supervise the functioning of the school and prepare and recommend development schemes;

- Supervise the utilization of aid from appropriate government or local authority or other sources; and
- Carry out other ordered works

Since 2001, the Centre for Child and the Law of the National School of Law School India University has taken on the task of strengthening school development and supervisory committees. Over the last decade, the Centre for Child and Law of has effectively coordinated with all the school development and supervisory committees through a common platform at the Panchayat, block, district, and state levels.

In this context, the government must take urgent action in strengthening school development and supervisory committees to transform government schools and bring them on par with private schools. The government must identify and felicitate excellently performing school development and supervisory committees at the panchayat, block, district, and state levels.

Recommendation- 9

An ordinance must be passed for all elected representatives and government servants to compulsorily send their children to government and government-aided schools to ensure that government and government aided schools are on par with neighboring private schools.

Rationale for recommendation

In 2015, the Allahabad High Court, in the context of the appointment of teachers, commented on the pathetic state of primary education and expressed the opinion that in several cases the education department and department officials were responsible for this state of affairs. Neglect by officials and a disorganized system have pushed teacher appointment out of focus. The court expressed its opinion that all these reasons had led to further deterioration of the education system.

The court categorized government schools into three classes/categories. Some public schools particularly catering to the rich and specially privileged classes serve only the educational needs of the upper classes, bureaucrats, ministers, elected members of Lok Sabha and Vidhana Sabha, and the upper-middle classes. The children of these people can obtain education in such schools. Enrollment in these schools is difficult and requires considerable financial resources. A majority of people cannot afford these schools. Such schools have excellent infrastructure, teaching faculty, and other facilities. These can be called the schools of the rich and elite. The second class of schools run by individuals or private institutions addresses the needs of lower-middle-class children. While the infrastructure, facilities, and teaching staff do not compare with those of the elite schools, they are relatively better. These schools can be termed as schools of the semi-elite. The third category is formed by the primary schools run by the state government. These schools can be called as the schools for the common people. These schools cater to the demographic of the city and village denizens and those who cannot afford the two abovementioned classes of schools. These schools provide education to about 90% of the children. The court opined that the crux of the problem lies with these schools.

Our Constitution recognizes education till the eighth standard as a fundamental right. Despite 65 years of independence, basic infrastructure and facilities still do not exist in schools. Children are struggling for drinking water and clean toilets. Classrooms are in a state of pathetic disrepair. Several classes are held in open grounds. Buildings appear as if they can fall any moment. Despite large amounts of money being allocated to welfare, the state of affairs of basic education has not improved for children of the poor.

It is not difficult to discover the reasons for this lack of improvement. The reasons are very clear although state governments are unable to discern them. The administrative system has truly not engaged with the schools. The financially well-off send their children to the elite or semi-elite schools. They do not even think about sending their children to schools run by the state government.

Government servants including district commissioners and police commissioners ensure that their children receive education in the first two categories of schools. They completely exclude the third

category that caters to the common people. Consequently, the administrative system has no actual interest or concern regarding the basic requirements or management of such schools. Such schools are merely political instruments and have been unable to fulfill their actual goals. The third category of schools only addresses the primary education of the children of the very poor.

Thus, those who draw government salaries or avail government facilities must compulsorily send their children to the government schools of the common people and not the elite or semi-elite schools. Any individual found in violation of this rule must be strictly punished. Only when those who administer government schools send their children to such schools can we see real progress. This can create an environment where the children of the common people can find opportunities to mix with children from elite and semi-elite backgrounds and increase their self-confidence. This will aid a bottom-upward revolution in society. Since the children mix from the very beginning, this will form the prologue to the inculcation of diverse values. Importantly, when government servants and authorities are forced to send their children to government schools, they will take great interest in fulfilling the requirements of such schools and ensure that these schools rise to prominence. If they do not do so, the education of their children will be adversely affected.

The judgment of the Allahabad High Court applies word for word to our state also. For these reasons, the government must promulgate an ordinance to ensure that along with members of the school development and supervisory committee, government servants, semi-government servants, local government employees, elected representatives, and others drawing government salaries or availing government/public facilities must compulsorily send their children to government or government aided schools to ensure that such schools are on par with private schools in the neighborhood.

Recommendation 10

The central government must allocate a minimum of 10% of its net resources and the state government must allocate a minimum of its 25% of its budget to maintain, develop, and empower the public education system along the lines of the private schools.

Rationale for recommendation

There are not enough teachers! There is no clean drinking water! There are no playgrounds! There is a lack of sports equipment! Even when there are toilets, there is no water! There is no proper environment to foster quality education! There is no basic learning infrastructure! There are no benches or desks! There are no good classrooms! There are no basic facilities for differently abled children! Etc.

The above list of problems is both oft-heard and current reality. The RTE Act (2009) implemented for free and compulsory education as the fundamental right of every child has been in force for seven years as of April 1, 2017. However, very few schools have the basic facilities required by the RTE Act. Consequently, it is expected that more money from the budget would be allocated to fulfill the criteria of the Act. However, the government is itself in opposition with this expectation, and this is not new. In 1964-66, the education commission recommended the allocation of 6% of the net national resources for education. Thus far, no government has followed this recommendation of the education commission. Further, governments have failed in allocating budgets for the basic implementation of social acts passed in the Parliament.

On the one hand, we have the unrestrained and commercial growth of private education. On the other hand, we have governments who failed to perceive education as a social good and provide quality education along the lines of private schools. Consequently, lakhs of government schools are on the verge of closure. In this situation, governments must provide the minimum funds to maintain and develop government schools so that they can provide basic quality of free education. The financial aid provided to government and government aided schools must be increased by at least a lakh to one-and-a-half lakh rupees.

Against this background, the central government must allocate a minimum of 10% of its net resources and the state government must allocate a minimum of its 25% of its budget to maintain, develop, and empower the public education system along the lines of the private schools

Recommendation 11

The foundational framework of textbook/curriculum creation and composition must uphold the constitutional values of equality, independence, justice, brotherhood, secularism, dignity, plurality, and an exploitation-free egalitarian society. Textbooks must reach the concerned schools at least 15 days before the beginning of the academic year.

Rationale for recommendation

The process of “Constitutionalizing” is more important than “Saffronization,” “Islamization,” or “Congressization” during the framing and composing of textbooks and curricula. The process of education is not excluded from this ideal. In the context of revising textbooks, we must consider certain fundamental questions: What are the main objectives of education? What sort of knowledge and experiences are required for achieving these objectives? How do we construct such knowledge and

experience? What are the tools required for this process? What are the methods to ensure that our objectives are achieved? We must ask these questions of ourselves before beginning the process of textbook composition.

In this context, we must also consider that learning must be burden-free and child-friendly and must not inculcate a sense of fear in the child. In the words of the Yashpal Committee, the basic problem with today's education system is that we are mistaking the collection of information of knowledge. This committee, which was formed for textbook composition and curriculum creation, made one very important recommendation: "In the process of composing textbooks and setting the curriculum, decentralization must play a key role and teacher involvement in the process must be increased. Here, decentralization means the creation and adoption of curriculum that is relevant to the local reality at the levels of the state, district, concerned local authority, school headmasters, and teachers. Like the incorporation of textbooks and learning tools, encouragement must be given to determine and create learning tools to address the various dimensions of the curriculum." Thus, during the process of textbook and curriculum revision, we must prioritize experiential learning over information-based knowledge.

Normally, the process of textbook and curriculum creation for the social sciences raises philosophical questions, friction, and questions. When composing textbooks for social sciences in this context, independence, faith, mutual respect, respect of plurality, and the inculcation of humane values in people form the great responsibilities of social science. Social science students must be made aware of the forces that look to destroy the abovementioned values.

As we all know, India is a democracy, and we need to develop an education system that can strengthen democracy. In particular, from the perspectives of equality and social justice, children must be provided with the knowledge necessary to analyze society.

As part of contemporary concerns, when discussing gender issues in the context of historical incidents, the examination of events in the light of contemporary feminism must be an indivisible component. This requires the freeing of knowledge construction and development from the patriarchal system. There is a general framework for the reviewing of the concepts of human rights. This framework recommends the need to expose young children to these universal values via age-appropriate jargon.

At the high school stage, social science must include special aspects of history, geography, political science, and economics. The student must be provided deep knowledge to analyze the social, economic, political, and cultural challenges facing contemporary India and make his/her estimate. Keeping in mind upheavals in our understanding of knowledge, discussions on India must consider Adivasis, Dalits, and

other minority populations. There must be an attempt to integrate the child's daily life with lessons. The Indian freedom movement, modern Indian issues, and events of global prominence must be incorporated into history. The fundamental intent of history must be the enabling of children to learn more about their world and how diverse historical issues have shaped their personalities. Children must be taught to comparatively evaluate how authority and power have been used in the present and past and enable the investigation of contemporary changes and continual processes. Geography must be taught from the perspective of development along with the preservation, appreciation, and concern of nature.

Most importantly, the focal points of political science must be the values of equality, independence, justice, brotherhood, secularism, dignity, plurality, and exploitation-free egalitarian society, which underlie the foundation of the Indian constitution. At this stage, when introducing economics to children, the viewpoint of the common people must be considered when choosing topics.

Overall, as regard the revision of textbooks, the current methods of building knowledge, topics, analysis, worldview, and thinking approach must be completely overhauled. For these changes to be realized there must be a simultaneous change in the basic approach of the teacher and the classroom learning process. Without these considerations, textbook revision as a mere formality will not lead to any improvements in the education system.

Recommendation 12

The levying of a capitation fee or the holding of entrance tests for children or parents by private unaided schools must be immediately stopped.

Rationale for recommendation

As per Section 13(1) of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2009), no school can collect a capitation fee. Further, the child or the parents cannot be subjected to any sort of test or examination.

As per Section 13(2)(b), if a capitation fee has been found to be accepted, the violator can be fined by up to 10 times the capitation fee. The holding of an entrance test for a child can attract a fine of Rs. 25000 for a first violation and up to Rs. 50000 for subsequent violations.

The allocation process of 25% of seats to underprivileged and poor children by specific category or unaided private schools as per Section 12(1) (c) is as complex as the admission procedure for the rest 75%. The implementation of the full RTE quota of 25% by such schools also affects the remaining 75%, and the government must take note of this. For example, as per Section 2(b), every school must publish the annual fee for the academic year on the notice board. Any other form of payment, donation, or gift to

the school outside of this fee will be deemed as capitation fee. As per Section 13(1), the acceptance of capitation fees is not allowed. As per Section 13(2), any violation of Section 13(1) will attract a fine of 10 times the capitation fee.

Further, children admitted under both the RTE quota and otherwise are subjected to exploitation and oppression, as is evident from frequent media reports. Many parents lead lives of anxiety fearing the adverse effects of reporting such incidents. It is a matter of regret that the intent of the Act has not been realized despite the Act being in force for 7 years. Consequently, the Act must not be restricted Section 12(1) (c), and a blueprint must be prepared for complete implementation of the Act from the next academic year.

Recommendation 13

From the perspective of empowerment of government schools:

- 1) The fees by paid by the government to private schools for the RTE quota of 25% must be stopped and redirected for the empowerment of government schools**
- 2) The fees of the students entering private schools under the RTE quota must be reimbursed by the private schools themselves as social responsibility.**

Rationale for recommendation

The government is spending thousands of crores as fees for students admitted to private schools as per the RTE Act. This amount is increasing every year. Since this is a very large amount, private schools must be ordered to reimburse this amount as a form of corporate social responsibility (CSR).

The government must take appropriate action to completely implement the RTE Act. In the name of education as a social service, private institutions or individuals acquire land, buildings, electricity, water, roads, and other essential infrastructure for free or discounted rates from the government. The government must collect full information regarding the facilities availed by the schools. Consequently, the provision of 25% of seats to the underprivileged and poor children by these schools becomes a social responsibility. Therefore, the reimbursement of fees by the government for the RTE quota must be stopped immediately, and this money should be redirected to the empowerment of government schools. As per several judgments of the Supreme Court, the provision of education to children by private institutions must be a non-profit service, and the government must frame laws to prevent education from becoming profitable business.

(B) The RTE Act has 39 sections along with an appendix. These 39 sections cover both regular children as well children with special needs and those with no access to any sort of education. The sections clearly spell out the responsibilities of the central, state, and local authorities. A feature of the RTE Act is that despite it being a legal ruling, it is written in very simple jargon so that everyone, particularly all concerned government officials, can understand the import of the Act.

The education department has focused at large on facilitating the 25% RTE admission quota by private unaided schools to children from financially backward backgrounds and children of Disadvantage groups. The other 38 sections have been completely neglected.

Despite the 25% RTE quota in private schools being declared as a fundamental right, it has remained a pipedream for children. Private unaided schools begin their business 6 to 7 months before the beginning of the academic year without any restrictions. The privatization of education is spreading unimpeded. For example, although children can avail of RTE in neighboring schools, it is not uncommon to see children travel a minimum of 10 to 25 km to schools. Despite the law promising education as a fundamental right in neighboring schools, this is not yet a ground reality. The education department has failed to implement this law.

Recommendation 14

- A) It is compulsory for all schools to obtain an accreditation certificate from the state government. The accreditation must be made annually renewable. Violators should face proceedings as per the law.**
- B) The RTE Act contains 39 sections, but the education department has only focused on one section and neglected the other 38. This has led to unregulated commercialization of education. Therefore, all 39 sections of the RTE Act must be compulsorily implemented.**

Rationale for recommendation

After implementation of the RTE Act, as per the appropriate government rules, schools must obtain accreditation certificates via submission of the appropriate application and registration forms. Schools cannot function without this accreditation certificate. However, even after 5 years of the Act being in force, a majority of schools have not obtained accreditation from the government.

As per Section 18(5), any individual or institution who runs a school without accreditation or a school whose accreditation has been de-recognized will attract a fine of up to Rs. 100000/-. Continued violation will attract a fine of up to Rs. 10000/- per day. As per current government statistics, nearly 1200 schools

are functioning without permission. All these schools must face government action as per Section 18(5). Without immediate action, there is all possibility that such schools will admit more children and operate outside the ambit of the law.

Another important issue is that the Act had provided a time limit till March 31, 2015, to ensure that schools only hired trained teachers. However, it is surprising that the government has not bothered to collect data on how many private unaided school teachers have received training, how many require training, and what is needed to be done to train teachers by March 31, 2015. Schools with ineligible untrained teachers and those failing to qualify as per the clauses of Section 19 (Appendix) and schools with permission before implementation of the Act not measuring up to these criteria should not be accredited. But government silence on the matter has given leeway to several suspicions. Against this backdrop, the government must immediately effectively and comprehensively implement all sections of the RTE Act. In this context, a blueprint must be prepared for comprehensive execution of the RTE Act.

Recommendation 15

The Language Learning Act of 2015 must be compulsorily implemented. A supervisory committee must be instituted to ensure that the Kannada Learning Act and rules are effectively implemented in private schools.

Rationale for recommendation

Education has become privatized, and in the current environment of the lack of regulation of private institutions, a majority of private schools are not even teaching Kannada as a language. Kannada is being dominated by Sanskrit, Hindi, and English. Provision of education without the use of Kannada language at the primary education stage can be considered as a betrayal of nativity. Only when every school teaches Kannada (as either a primary or secondary language) can Kannada survive as a language. To prevent the extinction of the Kannada language, the Language Act 2015 must be compulsorily enacted.

Our neighboring state of Tamil Nadu has already implemented the Language Act 10 years ago. The Kerala government, inspired by our Language Act 2015, has implemented a similar act in only three months. It is a matter of deep regret that the Language Act of 2015 has still not been implemented in Karnataka.

The Deputy Director of the Public Education Department already presides over a supervisory committee to implement the RTE Act.

To supplement this committee, the education department must institute supervisory committees at the district and taluk levels to implement the Kannada Language Act. This supervisory committee must comprise representatives of the Kannada Sahitya Parishat, education experts, social workers, and legal experts, and one of these members will preside over this supervisory committee. At least two members of this committee must be women. At the district level, the secretary of this committee will be the deputy director of public education of the concerned district level, and at the taluk level, the education secretary will be the member secretary of the committee. This responsibility will be handled at the state level by the Kannada Development Authority.

Recommendation 16

Primary education must be provided in the language spoken in the child's environment or the state's language. From this perspective, the state governments must bear pressure on the central government to make suitable amendments to the constitution and nationalize education and make applicable a national education policy.

Rationale for recommendation

If primary education is to be implemented in the mother tongue, when examining the relevant legal aspects, judgments cannot be made only from the perspective of the law. The situation must be examined in the context of social, economic, and cultural dimensions. Further, the issue must be critically examined from the perspectives of psychology and research on language-related learning. This kind of approach is termed as a multidisciplinary approach.

In the context of the current education system, the very definition of mother tongue must be revisited. India is a multilingual union of states. In Karnataka, even the language spoken at home is different from the spoken language. Kodava, Tulu, Konkani, Beary, Arebhashe, Lambani, etc. and other such languages have no script. These are all "mother tongues" of these communities. Among these languages spoken in various regions, the standard language in Karnataka is Kannada. This is the state language, and it has a script. Everyone uses Kannada as the spoken language along with its script. As per language-based reorganization of states, Kannada has been announced as the official language of the state. The Constitution recognizes Kannada as the official language. This is why Kannada and its script form the regional language of Karnataka, the state language of Karnataka. This language must be declared as the environmental language of the state and the natural mother tongue. This background needs to be understood when reexamining the definition of the mother tongue in terms of the political standpoint. The old definitions based on linguistics are undergoing a natural change with changing times. Thus, with

regards to the educational and official language of the administration, we must objectively define the environmental language or the state language as the mother tongue of the land. The qualities of the intention underlying the reorganization of the Indian union along language lines must be understood in this manner. In the context of the classifications of home language, mother language, family language, community language, regional language and state language, the declaration of the state language as the mother tongue of the land most scientifically supplements the language-based classification policy of the Indian union.

It is necessary for parents to uphold and respect the mother language spoken by the child in the home and the local environment. If instead, another language (such as English) replaces the mother language as the language of education, this will be a form of self-deception and a violation of a natural human right.

In 1949, in the Regional Education Conference, in discussions with regard to the medium of instruction, it was decided that the child's mother tongue must be the medium of educational instruction. Further, it was decided that if a school had more than 40 children speaking a mother tongue other than the regional/state language or a class had more than 10 such children, appropriate steps must be taken to appoint a separate teacher to teach such children in their mother tongue. As a continuation to this conference, Article 350(a) was included as per the Seventh Amendment to the Constitution in 1956. The only article in the Constitution that refers to the mother tongue is Article 350(a). (The article states that every state and every local authority in the state must take appropriate steps to provide education to minority language communities in their own mother tongue. The President of India can give a presidential order to ensure such a facility is provided in a state if required.)

Kannada is definitely the language of the majority population and also the mother tongue of a majority of the people in Karnataka. Kannada will naturally be the mother tongue or first language of a child growing up in Karnataka with Kannadiga parents. Through the anxiety-free speaking of the mother tongue, a child will experience a peaceful childhood as well as socialization. If a child is given the option to choose the medium of instruction, there is no doubt that the child will choose Kannada. But concealment of this bitter truth and allowing parents to make the choice of the mother tongue will be against the interests of the child and a violation of the child's right to expression. As per the Declaration of International Language Rights and the fundamental principles of the United Nations Children's Rights, this will form a negation of the "highest interests" of the child. (Refer to Article 3 of the United Nations Child Rights Treaty.)

If the choice of the medium of instruction is left to the one-sided judgment of the parents and profit-mongering private institutions, there is no doubt of the grave danger to our language, way of life, culture,

and particularly the very identity of the environmental language. Further, the transformation of education into a marketplace will further extend the hierarchy and inequality present in the education system.

It is absolutely necessary to find a suitable solution to the problem of the medium of instruction. Today, the stress is on a multilingual-formula rather than a bi-lingual or monolingual formula in education. It is the responsibility of each one of us to uphold the right of a child to obtain education in the mother tongue.

But this will require the government to formulate a suitable policy since such the choice of medium of instruction is an organizational and policy-based issue. The unity of India, which is a linguistically diverse country, must be upheld by including all national languages as languages of education. (Refer to the Preamble of the Constitution of India.)

In this context, it is better to re-examine the framework of the medium of instruction and relevant policy. When examining the legal options available with regard to the learning and the medium of instruction, one has to consider the various human rights enunciated by the UN's Declaration of Human Rights. Against this backdrop, it is particularly required to examine certain sections of the Declaration of Language Learning Rights, 1996.

Sections 23 to 30 of Part 3 of the Declaration of 1996 specify how communities can adopt the mother tongue at various levels of education. As per Section 24 of the Declaration, "Every language community has the right to determine the medium of instruction in its state at every learning stage: pre-primary, primary, high school, technical, professional, and adult education."

This is the right of every community as per the legal framework of the UN Human Rights. Our courts and legal experts must consider this right while discussing/deciding on community language issues. In the context of our country, it is a universal truth that in building a healthy society, everyone should have equal educational opportunities. There is an intimate relationship between education and the concepts of egalitarianism and social justice, which form the foundation of our Constitution. It is impossible to separate education and these two concepts. As regards the fundamentals of education, there is no doubt that the language and medium of instruction are decisive factors in strengthening the education system.

The Constitution has not specifically stated that the choice of the medium of instruction lies with parents/guardians. On the other hand, as per the UN Declaration of Child Human Rights, Section 12 states that a mature child should be able to choose the medium of instruction. (Refer to Section 12 of the UN Child Rights Treaty.)

The National Council of Educational Research and Training, which is considered the authority on education, has discussed in detail about the medium of instruction and language learning under the national curriculum framework. Paragraph 3.1.2 of this framework states that “every child enters school equipped with excellent language competence and full-fledged communication skills developed through interaction with family members and the surrounding environment. The children would have attained proficiency in language vocabulary, sentence construction, structure, and language complexity. A child will also have knowledge of what to speak, how to speak, and where to speak. Thus, it is necessary to take orderly steps to strengthen learning in Indian languages (National Curriculum Framework, 2005).”

In this regard, the Karnataka government’s step to make the mother tongue as the medium of instruction is suitable in all aspects. The abovementioned national and UN policy frameworks are in line with this move of the Karnataka government. In this context, the government has two clear opportunities. First, education is both a state and central matter, and thus, both the state and center have equal rights in framing legal policy. The state must make the most of this opportunity, and as per Section 29(2) of the RTE Act, 2009, formulate a new language policy and take steps to implement it. As per Section 29(2), such a policy will aid in realizing the following constitutional values: overall development of the child, knowledge competence and progress, complete development of physical and mental abilities, child-friendly and child-centric activities and environment, experiential learning, and lessening of fear, shock, and anxiety to allow open expression of opinion.

For all this to be realized, the medium of instruction should be the child’s environmental mother tongue. There is the possibility of a state having more than one mother tongue. In such a situation, the state government should take steps to provide education in the child’s mother tongue as far as possible. The government must consider the population of language speakers and child population to arrive at a decision. Section 29(2) (f) has been included to help the government’s decision in the abovementioned matter and not to neglect the majority language as the medium of instruction. Appropriate steps must be taken to implement the Act from the coming academic year.

The state government with the support of other state governments must bring to bear pressure on the central government to ensure that the mother tongue forms the medium of instruction from nursery to high school. The elected Members of Parliament from the state must actively pursue this matter.

Finally, the medium of instruction must not remain a topic of education but must be implemented at all levels. Kannada, which is the language of the land, must become the language of administration at all levels. Further, the state government must consider education as the only viable foundation to save and develop Kannada from the perspective of the welfare of the language and the state. All children must be

provided quality education at the school level based on an egalitarian school education system through the formulation and implementation of a comprehensive education and language policy. In the light of ending the discrimination arising from the current education system, the root of the problem must be located and long-term solutions must be determined. Only a comprehensive education policy of mother-tongue-based medium of instruction providing egalitarian education, standing on the foundation of equality and social justice, can form a long-term solution to the complexities and intricacies of the problem.

Recommendation 17

Revitalization of Anganwadi centers:

- A) Basic infrastructure must be provided to transform the existing anganwadi centers into child-care centers.**
- B) Infant-care centers must be opened in every village of the state. Every child of age 1 to 3+ years must be admitted to these centers. Trained teachers and assistants must be appointed to these centers. Additionally, timely health support should be made available. Further, basic infrastructure must be made available.**

Rationale for recommendation

Education begins at home. A child is introduced to the family through the mother, and through interacting with the family members, enters social life. As soon as the child completes 3 years of age, it is to be admitted to the anganwadi center. However, most of the children do not get admitted to the anganwadi centers. Depending on their socioeconomic background, they are admitted to various institutions like pre-nursery, upper and lower kindergarten, Montessori, etc. This cruel practice divides the children in the most formative stage of their life.

Anganwadis run by the Women and Child Welfare Department appoint anganwadi workers without a trained background to take care of children. Only a tenth-standard education forms the basis of selection. These workers therefore do not deliver methodical training to the children. Therefore, the child's stay at the anganwadi in no way stimulates its learning capabilities and also does not prepare the child to receive further education. Thus, there is no organic connection between pre-nursery and primary education. Many functioning centers in Karnataka do not have their own buildings. Depending on the situation, many centers operate in rented premises or buildings provided by donors. Many buildings do not even have toilets, drinking water, kitchen, dining area, and sleeping areas.

Anganwadi workers must focus on nutrition and health and child development. As part of this, they must provide information and care on pregnancy, delivery, the importance of breast feeding, campaigns like pulse polio, HIV, tuberculosis, etc. However, these workers are also burdened by tasks such as census, elections, organization of women self-help groups, and providing information to girls who have attained puberty. Consequently, their primary responsibility of childcare and development suffers. The workers also do not receive proper salaries, job security, pension, and medical and insurance benefits. This insecurity reduces their efficiency in taking care of children. Further, they are unable to work towards comprehensive child development. Due to these reasons, pre-primary education is not available for children in anganwadis. Anganwadis and primary education fall under different departments. This leads to lack of coordination and an absence of an organic relationship. Pre-primary education instead of being a springboard for children's primary education is now directionless.

Crèches

Infant care refers to child development and requirements spanning the period from birth to 3+ years of age. Families and communities are partially addressing the needs of infants. The government should formulate and implement a comprehensive policy which addresses child health, nutrition, socialization, and emotional growth. Initially, social and cultural values are inculcated in the child through the family and community. We have to provide a social atmosphere that fosters all-round development of the child. Traditional ways of child-care must be understood. This must stimulate the children to go to school with good health and nutrition and also instill curiosity in them. This will enable the child to negotiate the society and lay a foundation for lifelong learning.

Infant-care centers can find solutions to reduce infant mortality rates. Infections immediately after birth can be prevented by vaccination. The centers can provide constructive solutions to anemia due to lack of hemoglobin, long-term malnourishment, stunted growth, and the avoidance of psychological and health disorders.

Childhood is a very important phase. Learning in the formative years will last a lifetime. Infant-care centers can provide a good environment from birth to the age of 3+. Up to two years of age, a child spends time with its family. Infant-care workers should be appointed based on the need of the population, and their services must be available at the doorstep. This will improve the immune capacity of children even before they enter anganwadi centers. This ensures good development of the child within two years of age.

Infant-care centers must focus on providing good healthcare and also a creative environment that will instill curiosity towards learning. Every center should have a minimum of 4 guntas of land. Three guntas must be allocated to classrooms, rest areas, kitchen, and indoor space for activities. Toys and educational aids must be provided. The centers should have a proper compound and uninterrupted electricity supply. Along with these facilities, the centers should provide the proper nutrition for psychological and physical well-being of the child. In this manner, infant-care centers can train the child to adapt to the pre-education environment.

A center should have 3 workers. One must be a trained health worker, another must be trained in pre-primary education, and the third must be a trained attendant. The health workers should take care of the health issues of children up to age 2, pregnant, and post-pregnant women. The center must be equipped with vaccinations etc. The trained teacher must spend more time playing with the children. The attendant should take care of the kitchen and make best use of the facilities provided by the government.

The food and food materials provided by infant-care centers should be of good quality. There should be no change of the food patterns. The food provided to the child should be conducive to the atmosphere of the center. Food supplied to the children must be certified by doctors

Recommendation 18

At the levels of primary junior, senior, middle and high schools, quality education must be ensured. To bring these schools on par with private schools, basic learning amenities should be the primary concern. There must be constant updating of learning tools and texts.

- A) Extra-curricular-Music, drama, fine arts, physical education, gardening, handicraft, etc. must taught by trained teachers.**
- B) Basic amenities: Every class must have a classroom, potable water, functioning toilets, open ground, indoor auditorium, sports equipment, computer labs, state-of-art labs, and a theatre. All these are indicative of qualitative education.**
- C) After pre-primary, Standards 1 to 4 must be designated as Primaryprimary schools. There must be 4 teachers: one each for English, Mathematics, mother tongue, and Environmental Studies.**

Rationale for recommendation

Standards 1 to 5 have been classified under Primary education as per the policy of the Primary Education Department of the state. Primary education is a very important phase of every child. As per Constitutional

assurance, all state governments are implementing education policies in a time-bound manner. Primary schools have been established in populous areas. However, are these primary education centers providing quality education? If not, why and what are the reasons? What should be done to address the problem? We are not taking these questions seriously. Hence, students of classes 1 to 5 in rural community schools and government schools are not receiving quality education. The current situation can be described as follows:

We can observe three patterns of teaching and learning methods in classes 1 to 5 in Lower Primary schools.

1. The play and learn (Nali-Kali) method for classes 1 to 3
2. Play-way (Kali-Nali) method for class 4
3. Chaitanya method for class 5

Teachers are appointed based on student strength in government schools. As per the existing RTE Act, from class 1 to 5, if the total strength is 60, 2 teachers must be appointed. A school strength of 61-90 will require 3 teachers, 91-120 will require 4 teachers, and 120-200 students will require 5 teachers. Beyond 200 students, one teacher must be appointed for every 40 children. One teacher must be the headmaster. But is it possible for a child to get a good education without subject-wise and class-wise teachers? Is this not an unscientific policy? Should not class-wise and subject-wise teaching be provided regardless of the strength of the students? Is it possible to reduce the number of teachers because of small student numbers? Is it possible for 1 or 2 teachers in primary schools to teach 17 subjects to classes 1 to 5?

Further, only two teachers are working in most primary schools. One of them is also burdened with the headmaster's responsibilities, which includes report preparation and submission to the department, building construction and repairs, management of midday meals, census, elections, Ksheera Bhagya scheme, etc. Such administrative and other responsibilities are burdening teachers. The problems of women teachers are much worse. Is it possible to provide quality education when non-teaching responsibilities are more than teaching responsibilities?

The situation of basic amenities is very poor. Potable water, toilets, playground, labs, library, kitchen, and other such facilities are not available. Finally, the departmental supervision system is very confusing. The job charts of CRP, BRP, BRC, BEO, DDPI (administration) and DDPI (development) are not mentioned clearly. This confusion is leading to redundancy and many a time works at cross purposes. This also negatively affects the teachers' mindset.

Overall, the lack of class-wise teachers, lack of classrooms, teaching of multiple classes, establishing of more schools without foresight, and importantly, approving the establishment of private schools near government schools has disgraced the government schools. This has led to the reduction in admissions to government schools and lent support to the privatization and commercialization of education. As per the current system, classes 1 to 4 form the Primary and class 5 is part of the higher primary school. There must be 4 teachers, 2 for languages (English and mother tongue), 1 for mathematics, and 1 for environmental science. One headmaster or principal must manage all the administrative responsibilities. Support for admission and administrative work requires one second division clerk. One attendant (D-group worker) is required to keep the premises clean. Thus, pre-nursery must be made part of primary education. This will ensure quality education and the creation of good physical infrastructure. For this purpose, every institution requires 1 acre of land. A school building must have a minimum of 7 classrooms, principal's room, staff room, children's rest area, kitchen, dining area, toilets, potable water facility, library, open and indoor sports areas, proper compound, sports equipment, garden, and uninterrupted power supply. With all these facilities, why would parents want to send their children to private schools? The establishment of such facilities can reduce privatization and commercialization of education.

After age 4, children from pre-primary will need to have an organic connection with primary education. To achieve this, pre-primary education must be included under the primary education department. This will ensure quality education in government schools.

Recommendation 19

Every village/panchayat/town/ward must establish state-of-art schools on par with central schools in line with Kendriya Vidyalayas.

Rationale for recommendation currently, class 8 has been included with classes 1 to 7 and this has been designated as Higher primary. However, the situation of such schools is not different from Primary schools. This has increased problems instead, and children are deprived of quality education. As regards classes 1 to 7, classes 1 to 4 are "Primary," and classes 5 to 7 are "Higher primary." The feeder system has been removed and Primary schools have been modified into primary schools. Consequently, the strength of students (who would earlier come from 4 to 5 feeder schools) has gradually dropped in these modified primary schools. In some schools, for classes 1 to 7, 3 or 4 teachers handle 7 classes and teach 27 to 30 subjects. One of these has to be the headmaster, who is burdened with all administrative, maintenance, HR, and supervision works. The rest of the teachers must teach more than 10 subjects. They must also often participate in elections, census, and other non-teaching activities. This setup completely

derails the comprehension and quality of education. If there are no teachers to teach core subjects, where can we find teachers to teach optional subjects? There is no proper timetable, and there are no teachers. Other than some schools in taluks and hoblis, all other government schools suffer from lack of teachers of music, physical education, art, etc.

As regards basic amenities, every class must have a classroom, potable water, functioning toilets, open ground, indoor auditorium, sports equipment, computer labs, state-of-art labs, and a theatre. As per the records of the education department, many schools have toilets, but they are not functional. Libraries are unusable. There is no electricity in several schools. There are no teachers to impart education corresponding to these facilities. This has led to systemic failure of the education system. Further, there are many schools with different affiliations, such as International, ICSE, CBSE, and prestigious private unaided English medium schools. There are also smaller private unaided English medium schools, aided schools, schools run by local bodies, government schools, etc. The government schools have been forced to compete with the private schools. Education has come to mean the expansion of the market and profit making, which has led to unhealthy competition amongst children. Section 29 of the RTE Act stresses on the holistic development of children, knowledge competition, nurturing of talent, physical and mental development, children-centric activities, an environment conducive to curiosity and research bent, but these have been denied. Many students have an inferiority complex with regard to the mother tongue along with cultural shock and anxiety. Is it not possible for a child to obtain education without these? In such a biased and discriminatory system, how is it possible for children to prepare themselves to move to high school education? Instead, Higher primary, middle, high school and pre-university must be merged as classes 5 to 12 and established under the ambit of gram panchayat/town/ward based on cooperative principles. These schools should be called gram panchayat/town/ward public schools. These schools must run classes 5 to 12 and must not show any manner of discrimination. Suitable amenities and facilities must be provided. Every school should be granted 3 acres of land. Every school must have a principal's room, staff room, and based on the central school model, children's rest area, kitchen, dining area, toilets (separate for boys and girls), potable water facility, library, open and indoor sports arena, proper compound, sports equipment, garden, uninterrupted power supply, ramps for differently abled children, bus facility, staff and student quarters, Scouts and NCC, craft room, e-mail facilities, Doordarshan, first-aid room, fire extinguishers, and such amenities. Such schools, in pursuit of quality education, will turn into small societies building the nation. This will particularly help rural girl students to pursue higher education. From birth to 18 years of age, all children irrespective of caste, creed, gender, socioeconomic conditions, will receive common and quality education. The proposed gram panchayat/ward public schools will have classes 5 to 12.

Education must be uniform and adapted to local realities. In such schools, public exams will be held only for class 12. All subjects must be taught and no student must be deprived of any subject. All students must study all subjects till class 12. This will help them to find their area of interest for further education. This new system will stimulate their competence, thinking power, decision making, and responsibility. Each student will be exposed to all subjects, and he/she can then choose an area of interest. The system should offer free and compulsory education till the age of 18. Children will then grow up in a fearless, competition-free environment. Further, continuous monitoring and guidance will create a learning culture. This model will also not financially burden the parents/guardians. More importantly, children can acquire quality education in their local neighborhood. Such public schools will also address the needs of differently abled children. This new system will give birth to 6000 to 7000 new public schools instead of the present multiple classifications of schools. From class 5 to 12, quality education will be available under one roof. This will pave the path for a new education system in India.

Recommendation 20

In the name of adoption and public-private partnership, any deviations from fundamental principles and or modifications to school premises should be stopped immediately.

Rationale for recommendation

Education being a fundamental right, the government has a responsibility to make education as a tool for bringing in social change.

As per Kishore Singh, special correspondent for the UN General Assembly on Educational Rights, “The adverse effect of privatization and commercialization of education is the diminishing universalization of education.” Privatization of education denies education to poor people and those deprived of it. Entry to private institutions is not based on merit or eligibility; rather it is dependent on one’s ability to pay a huge fee. This practice violates the UN Human Rights Resolution Treaty. The rich, though less competent, can afford better education than eligible poor.

- On the one hand, there is commercialization of education, and on the other, in the name of developing schools, government schools are being handed over to corporates, NGOs, and private parties with the excuse of school empowerment. There are accusations that many of the major decisions related to education, instead of being taken by officials and stakeholders, are being taken by corporates in their boardrooms.
- In many places, the school and its premises are being used by corporates, NGOs, and other private parties for their own interests.

- In the light of these developments, steps must be taken to appropriately punish such wrong-doers. Care must be taken in identifying and encouraging people or organizations with good intent in empowering these schools.

Recommendation 21

A state and district level committee has to be formed to effectively implement the recommendations made by the Committee for the Empowerment of Government Schools.

Rationale for recommendation

The recommendations made by the Empowerment Committee can not only improve the quality of education but also act as a guiding light in providing equal education to all. As this not only applies to government schools but also to private institutions, there is a need for a monitoring committee to create balance in the system. A state-level committee and sub-committees at the district level must be constituted in this regard.

The education minister must be appointed the president of the state committee, which should also comprise members nominated by the government, officials, educationists, and social workers.

The district commissioner must be the president of district level committee, which must comprise members including the Zilla Parishad Chief Secretaries, educationists from the district, and social workers.

Committee for Strengthening of Government Schools	
Prof. S G Siddaramaiah, President, KDA	President
Prof. Chandrashekara Damle	Member
Sri. P Mallesh	Member
Sri. Gangadhara Kustagi	Member
Smt. Bhanu Mushtaq	Member
Fr. Ambrose Pinto	Member
Dr. K. Muralidhara (Secretary, KDA)	Member Secretary

Special Subject Experts

Dr. V P Niranjanaadhya

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Child and the Law, National Law school of India University

Sri. T M Kumar

Sri. R N Chandrashekara

Special Note: This is English Translation of the Kannada Report .For any omissions and Commissions, please refer the original Kannada Report