

The history about the governance education essay

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The second section of the paper deals with why SMCs are needed. The specific concern of this section is concerned with research or theoretical framework on the relations within and between schools, communities and local governance institutions and their combined influence on access of 'good education'. The main reason for SMCs is because of its decentralization aspect and because it links 'policy framework' and the 'implementation' together. The other reason why SMCs were added into the governance structure of RTE was due to the role of 'community participation', which has proven to be successful in various situations as it gives the individuals the capacity to question. Further, the section will map the governance at the ground level with the five parameter mentioned above in the introduction and based on that it will analyse the extent to which the SMC's in both states functions. The reason for why right to education (RTE) act decided to uproot existing SDMCs and plant SMCs is best explained by Munn. The uprooting of old 'partnership' understandings in favour of newer ones operating at several levels - national, local, and school-level can be seen as government's attempt to restructure networks within the education system that will be more reliable instruments of policy implementation, or at least less resistant to central initiatives (Munn, 1991). The need for the creation of SMC comes from the intended causality between the stakeholder participation and the improved education quality and better accountability. SMC provide stakeholders particularly parent with the decision making power to bring about changes from short term to long term issues pertaining to the management and operationalization of schools. Parent's role in SMC is demarcated at the 3 levels: Parents as educators, parents as partners and parents as decision-makers. The parent's involvement as stakeholders in the <https://assignbuster.com/the-history-about-the-governance-education-essay/>

functioning of school along with teachers creates a symbiotic ambience where everyone can share their experience and could contribute in their own way in the development of school. It will create a sense of ownership among the stakeholders which would propel them to continue participating in the school processes and build sustainable and productive school system. The RTE Act envisions parents to get involved as decision-makers with an objective to make teachers and principal more accountable for education delivery which in-turn would lead towards the better learning outcomes of students. If parents become actively involved as decision-makers in school, then they would also be encouraged to get involved as educator----1. Local stakeholder perspectives although rarely considered in any depth in policy formulation, have an important but under played bearing on the realization of policy intentions. Hence SMCs serve to make the local authorities an important stakeholders to ensure education is inclusive and for its betterment.

Decentralization in Education

Decentralisation as a process is used to definition from the dictionary. With the similar ideology SMCs were to be formed in schools to ensure the governance and the ownership in the hands of the locals. This would guarantee a proper and inclusive schooling for all. Not only is it seen as a pathway for improved delivery of social services, but it has also come to stand for a mechanism to improve the democratization of decision-making for increased system efficiency (Jutting et al., 2004). Thus, decentralization can be useful in providing the desired access and improvement in the education. However, it is important to understand that decentralization does

not mean a total detachment from the control of the central or state government. Rather it means formation of a new relationship between decentralized governance between the central and local governments. In the field of education, this decentralized government would increase equitable access. If the problem of access to basic education is construed as a political and economic one, then decentralization may be seen as the response in offering citizens increased opportunities to contribute in local-decision making to improve access to education and make it a worthwhile investment especially for the poor. What is clear from the literature is that imbalances and disparities in human and resource capacity in poor countries can actually make decentralization exacerbate inequities in society (Davies et al., 2003). Education decentralization is seen as a vehicle for reinforcement of management efficiency and accountability by relocating critical decision-making of education matters in the SMCs itself. Once various SMCs have similar issues, it can be brought to the notice of BEO and later at the district level as well. Decentralization in education is done in RTE through the delegation of power from the local level that is village or local bodies to schools. Thus, RTE is responsible for the structural tweaks in the hierarchy which flows from top to bottom from centre to local bodies. Another layer of control unit in education that has emerged through the provision of the act is the school. The school and stakeholders in the schools are the new locus of authority in the whole education system. Hence, we see how post RTE the school become the basic unit of planning for school development instead of local bodies. But, entrusting the decision making power in the purview of newly formed unit is not an assurance that the power will be exercised by the same unit which is the school. However in the field of the study, it was <https://assignbuster.com/the-history-about-the-governance-education-essay/>

observed that several complex power relations existed in the schools of both the states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. This was due to the overlapping power domains of the old management committees and the newly formed SMCs. SBCs (School Betterment Committees) in Karnataka and VECs (Village Educational Committees) in Tamil Nadu are not only existential but exercised substantial power in comparison to SMCs. In other words, despite the legal delegation of power to SMC's, the old structure continues to be the real power house in education system. This move from existing committees to the formation of new ones can be linked to the path dependency theory. The path dependency theory mentions that any new institution cannot work autonomously without the getting affected by the institution existed prior to it. Thus, it can be said that newer institutions emerge from the pre-existing ones with the aim to make the earlier one better or more efficiently. This is similar to the emergence of SMCs. This is the theoretical understanding of how decentralisation must work. However, the field data shows.. In the main, developing country education systems that have pressed forward with decentralization have not readily devolved power and control over education management, financial administration and teacher management to the local level. (CREATE). Hence the process is bottle necked due to this lack of devolution of power and the crucial decision making procees which is still in the hand s of the higher-ups. Yet, decentralization has led to a raised awareness and commitment among local players to take more active role in addressing problems of education. The next shall look at this awareness aspect in detail.

Understanding the ‘ community’

In order to understand what community participation means, it is important to understand what community means. Linking community to school is an important aspect of participation. Sam Redding has analysed the relation between school and community that can be understood at different levels. The first being the school as a community and second one is the school in the community. As school consists of linguistically and ethnically diverse families, the school acts as a community. The school in itself is a community of its members such as teachers, administrators, staff, students, and their families. SMCs can take lead in building community of the school. Thus the paper sees the school as community unto themselves. It is seen that before the formation of SMCs, both the school and public were two separate entities. It is considered important that the teachers must initiate contact and come out from their ivory tower schools. They must interact with the students’ families outside the ‘ school’ intended level in order to convince them to send their children to schools. On failing to persuade, they were obliged to rescue children from the stifling attitudes of their milieu and ensure that education is provided to them. Hence, there was a need for participation from the teachers’ side to encourage the ‘ community’ for their cooperation in ensuring that the children get education. The school is often discussed in terms of its relationship to the community, suggesting that the school is something apart from community. In fact, the school exists within a mosaic of overlapping communities and is in itself, capable of functioning as a community. A community is a group of people associated with one another who share common values. Geography does not make community, nor does membership, nor casual affiliation. When the school functions as a

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community rather than in a community, its constituents (students, parents, teachers and staff) associate with one another and share common values about the education of children. At the root, members of the school community assume responsibility for one another. The children become their children, and parents are not external agents but full partners in the education of their children and of each other's children. Teachers are not isolated practitioners of pedagogy, but professionals integrated into the web of community and buoyed by common purpose. However, we can't assume that community is always benign and supportive. Just like many families, it can be oppressive too. A community may hold on to value system that is patriarchal, repressive, exclusive and undemocratic. So, it is important that community should be linked to an ideology (ideology based on principles of democracy, equality, inclusiveness). So here, community is not fully autonomous. The powers have been devolved to it. The powers can be devolved to it through constitution, laws etc. SMCs have got it powers through RTE Act and State RTE rules. Therefore, it has to work under the democratic framework setup by the state. It has to structurally and functionally mould as per state directives.

Community participation

Community participation involves democratic decentralization of power and there is a division of responsibilities in such communities. When responsibilities are clearly defined the work can be done more openly by the participants. It encourages citizens to cumulatively work for the welfare of the community. Furthermore, in community participation there is no discrimination based on colour, race, sex, age, prior community involvement,

level of education, occupation, handicap, religion etc. Community participation is one of the key ingredients of an empowered community. It is a condition for success. Research has documented that communities that engage citizens deeply into the work of community development raise more resources, achieve more results and develop in a more holistic and ultimately more beneficial way. Community participation is therefore critical to community's success.

Community Participation in pre RTE era

Decentralized planning and management of elementary education was a goal set by the National Policy on Education of 1986. The policy visualized direct community involvement in the form of Village Education Committees (VECs) for management of elementary education. Most of the initiatives towards the formation of school committees were not a true aspiration of local community as most of them were designed and operationalized through international aid strategies. Many villagers were not aware about existence of VECs during operationalization of World Bank funded District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). Lack of awareness among VEC members about their roles and functions, time constraint, social structure, illiteracy, lack of communication, irregular capacity building and so on, were causes of malfunctioning of VECs during DPEP days (Bhattacharya, 2001). The new Scheme in 2001 was introduced under the banner of SSA. It was mandated in the SSA framework about the responsibility of governments at the local, the state and the national level to work in decentralized governance framework to provide facilities on a priority basis for poor and marginalized sections with more attention to Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). Set

of reforms as envisaged in SSA such as improvement in curriculum, teachers, management, school environment, supervision and learners' assessment etc., became key strategies for mainstreaming disadvantaged communities, but these reforms were not contextualized and redesigned to suit the local needs. The task force report by Raja Ramanna Committee (2000), constituted by Karnataka Government, and acted as precursor for conceptualization of present day SDMCs in Karnataka. It replaced the VECs in Karnataka. The SDMCs formed met with some issues. Powers were delegated to school head teacher who is also secretary of the SDMC; s/he acted as supreme authority taking decisions on behalf of SDMC members. No PRI members were seen taking part at SDMC meetings and proceedings. This was very problematic as SDMCs found not sharing their school development plans, which had adverse repercussions on the entire educational planning cycle (p18. IRMA 2009). Further absence of local participation in SDMCs has led to phenomenon of ' elite capture', unjust distributional outcomes and initiatives without long term plans, thus failing to achieve expected developmental goals in an efficient manner (Kumar V. A, 2006).

Community Participation in post RTE era

This policy was the basis for the ' Right to Education' Act, 2009. This right had various safeguards for the betterment of education including the levels of free and compulsory education, involving the local communities in the functioning of schools through SMCs and reservation in private schools and so on. Current Participation in SMC is hindered by various factors. Various studies have shown the reluctance among the community members to take active interest in educational needs of their children (Pradeep Ramavath,

2012). This demand for a holistic and long term strategy. In TN the RTE rules established SMCs but did not replace VECs. This causes confusion among the members about the function of the SMCs. Further it leads to duplication of work and inefficiency. The power structure in the society where by the people has internalized to get dominated by few sections is reflected in some places in SMCs also. For instance, in Karnataka rural School the chairman of SMC is relatively well off compare to other members. TN Rules have tried to make the structure more inclusive. According to TN rules for the post of chairman preference has to be given to the female. This is reflected in the TN rural schools with female SC as the chairman. The power relation is also reflected through the non-implementation of the democratic voting process. Either the HM handpicks some parents on the basis of their place of living or based on showing of hands. Lack of Knowledge about the technical aspects of the school management issues make the parents to not to take interest in the matters and left those stuffs at the disposal of HM. Further, other reasons of lack of interest among parents include illiteracy, lack of enthusiasm for change and to participate, belief that the HM can and shall handle all the needed decisions, because of lack of attendance at times meetings of SMCs do not even happen. Occupations include Laborers at Brick factory, Work in Municipality, Cook, Housewife, wage labor etc. Migration is another important issue that affects this participation. Training given by government for SMC members are also not attended by them because they are not interested. HM remain extra burdened due to the SDMCs functions it has to monitor and supervise because of the lack of participation from the parents' endCommunity EmpowermentEmpowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process <https://assignbuster.com/the-history-about-the-governance-education-essay/>

that fosters power (that is, the capacity to implement) in people, for practise in their own lives, their communities, and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important. (Journal of Extension, October 1999)Community Empowerment is a holistic concept which is the sum total of many other processes like community participation, awareness generation, and education and so on. Hence, empowering the stakeholders involved in the functioning of the school functioning is one of the main objective of the creation of SMC. SMCs are the avenues where stakeholders can engage themselves in managing and regulating the critical processes of school governance. Though it is a long drawn process once achieved it forms a loop which strengthens all the units connected in the educational hierarchy. The positive aspect of such empowerment is that it is initiated from the bottom of the educational hierarchy by the ' agency' (actors) directly involved in the decision making process which feedbacks into the education structure resulting in the positive systemic changes. The resultant of a fully empowered community is a matured society. -NAMASHALE reading.

Education community participation awarenessStakeholder's empowermentDecision making by the stakeholdersDevelopment of schoolStrengthening of educational systemMatured communityThe objective of empowerment envisioned of stakeholder by RTE through SMC seems to be a distant goal. Rationale behind this state of which were inferred by our team are two pronged: first are the fragile processes that leads to empowerment and second is the second is the debile process of accountability. Case study of ramamani: Ramamani is a chairperson of Kothakondapalli upper primary school. She is a 35 years who is fluent in kannada and tamil languages with the educational qualification till 10th. Before the introduction of RTE, she was

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a housewife but post RTE because of her interest in school activities; she was handpicked by HM as chairperson. She is regularly attendant of SMC meetings and participates in the proposing and settling of the issues rose during meetings. Though Ramamani lacks factual awareness regarding SMC composition, fixing of SMC meeting and other important details, she has fair knowledge of what is expected out of SMCs. Though, she has felt the sense of participation but the sense of empowerment is missing. Case study of headmaster (murugeshpalaya school): NAME: She is pivotal to all the decision taken in the school. Since, she joined the school, the picture of the school in terms of infrastructure and quality of education imparted in the school has improved manifolds. After detailed interaction with her, she kept on reiterating the following statement, "... we are here (I am here to do all the things, no need of parents to do anything), parents don't trouble me (they don't interfere in my work)". This was in response to the inquisitiveness of the role played by parents SDMC members in the decision making process of school., of headmaster...(only indi empowered not the community)....

Accountability

"...

we as responsible civil society members need to make the government accountable through social audits, filing right to information applications and demanding our children's right to quality elementary education." -Parth Shah One of the major influences of decentralisation in school management through SMCs as a service delivery mechanism is that it produces accountability. Participation in education is seen as another means to ensure accountability of decentralised institutions. The need for accountability is felt more in make

of communities interacting with the management rather the state intervening because it leads to a short route of accountability which is more desirable than the longer route and SMCs ensure this shorter route is played out for the betterment of schools. Like Yamini Aiyar questions in her... whether the current system for financing elementary education in India deliver on the RTE promise. She believes that SMCs were mandated in the RTE to ensure that the decentralised decision-making facilitates the accountability in the financial trait. However, she goes on to show SMCs have failed to ensure this accountability and gives recommendations about the same. However, this paper argues that parent ownership and participation can ensure that accountability is maintained through the parents' involvement with the schools. This accountability can be understood from two separate angles. One is through, how community impacts the accountability of SMCs and the school and the other one is how SMCs ensure that accountability is maintained. In the former case, accountability is enhanced only through community empowerment and through participation. The increased availability and transparency of information among the community and the SMC members ensures that there is citizen involvement because they can now demand for change in the functioning of schools where they find issues. Moreover, the information/awareness of the SMC and its functioning gives them a power or a voice to expose the inequalities and challenges they feel exist or learn to exercise their choice for better SMC functioning. This is one aspect of accountability. The latter one ensures that the teachers are accountable to the SMC members and SMC members can raise their concerns about the infrastructure decisions and the head masters and others need to be accountable to the members. The theoretical

underpinning is that accountability is part of a wider philosophy of decentralisation of decision making and responsibility, including ‘ information for accountability’ policies which argue that local access to information about school quality as a lever for change (Bruns et al., 2011). Thus as the power of the clients in this case the community, the SMCs. In understanding the fiscal accountability in the funds received by SMCs, it is understood there is both vertical accountability and horizontal accountability. The funds are handed over from the BEO or SSA to the chairman or Head master who is responsible for all the allocation of money and they are accountable to the SSA and BEO. This is vertical accountability. However, the SMC members also are at power to question the use of funds. Hence, there is an inter-play of accountability that exists.