Unique Models for Access to Schools:

The Context of text

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AbstractThe paper examines a variety of models from around the globe that aim to universalize education and that have been successful in including the disadvantaged in the formal school system. It examines their causes of emergence, the factors that contributed to their success, the extent to which they can be applied in the Indian context. The Ecological systems theory, developed by psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner, serves as the foundation for the study's thematic conceptual framework. This theory helps in understanding what models works in a particular place and what doesn't work, the role of the other-than-school factors (Context) needs to be considered while framing the policy (Text) for access to schools, why different paths were taken to reach the same goal of Universalization of School education.

Some of the models that were examined in the former part of the paper include the "Schools of Tomorrow" in Rio de Janeiro (Escolas do Amanha), "Escuela Nueva" in Columbia, "Community schools" in the United States and in the United Kingdom, "Fey Alegria" and "Escolas do Amanha" in Venezuela, the latter part of the paper includes the initiatives in India that has the essence of the above initiatives and how far they were successful in the nation. This study will provide a base for further policy analysis on the access of school education that aims in universalization of formal School Education for all its citizens.

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Keywords: Universalization, Fey Alegria, Escuela Nueva, Schools of tomorrow, Ecological systems theory.

Introduction

Today, the sight of kids in school uniforms is no longer a luxury that only few can afford. Even in the most isolated, rural regions of our nation, education has come a long way. Education has multiple ways in which it can contribute to the development of the underprivileged. By engaging in beneficial activities, it can address the community's perceived needs and interests, transforming academic study into a life preparation process. In order to promote conscientization, education can also place a focus on functional literacy and numeracy.

Additionally, it can broaden one's perspective on science and provide a foundational understanding of how nature and society work, all while ensuring that one has the practical knowledge and skills necessary for taking care of one's family and running the household. If the TVET sector can find a place that makes sense in the school and higher education curricula, there may be an increase in employment opportunities in the rural sector.

By giving people access to basic education through the schools, we can help them maintain their high levels of productivity by giving them specialized training, making them aware of hygiene and health issues, and keeping them up to date on knowledge and technology. A minimum basic standard level of education is required to be aware of one's rights and responsibilities that deals with instances of corruption, malpractice, and fraud, and remove poverty in addition to having a positive correlation with wages.

It becomes necessary for the already struggling population to enroll and compete in the mainstream educational system in order to diversify their income sources, increase their chances for personal development, stay current with current events,

and stay connected to the outside world. But even in the educationally advanced states and their districts, pockets of educationally undeveloped and backward areas exist, that are in dire need of school education for their upliftment, but they are unable to access it for a number of reasons.

Interdependence, which results in a closed economy and the dominance of social conventions and customs in governing their activities, is one peculiar aspect of the unreached community. A unified strategy is required to comprehend the dynamics of the groups existing in society and their unique challenges and needs. A mere school building or qualified teachers sometimes is not enough to ensure the entry of all sections of society into the formal education system. Their particular issues need particular kinds of solutions.

Challenges in Access to School Education

Education remains a right out of reach for many, millions of school-going children remains out of school in the world. As per the Humanium organization, 759 million adults are still illiterate and for the age group 5-12, 72 million children are not even enrolled. This data only talks about basic literacy, not even education, quality education is still a goal far to achieve. The question that arises is-even if government in many nations sponsor free education, why people are not opting for it?

There are a number of reasons why children prefer to stay out of formal education, mostly in the under-developed and developing nations. There are gaps in Supply as well as the demand side. The administration and management might have certain irregularities, the policy provisions might be too rigid. If once the primary education is skipped, then higher education is not possible, it is not something that can be started from anywhere, there is a proper sequence that needs to be followed for step-by-step learning.

At times there aren't enough schools. Many of the poorest countries in the world do not have access to the adequate financial resources necessary to create schools. Providing schooling materials along with recruiting and training teachers cost money, and aid from fellow countries generally is not sufficient enough to establish an education system for all children.

Access to education can be challenged due to the difficult geographical locations that are not ideal for small children. There might be severe weather conditions, rough terrain, desert, poor roads or transportation system. Like in Philippines to access nearest primary school one has to travel very far, In India, there are certain terrain are hard to climb, or desert areas in Rajasthan which become too hot to cross after school is over in the afternoon.

Another significant factor that keeps children away from getting education is their disability. There are now more options than ever to provide education for those with disabilities thanks to ongoing technological advancements. For instance, an article from Pundit describes new computer programs that can convert assignments into Braille for blind students automatically, significantly easing their reading of the same materials as their sighted classmates. Accessibility must be considered when developing technology, lesson plans, classroom layouts, and other elements.

For many families, financial restraints become a major obstacle that doesn't allow their children to attend school on a regular basis. Attending school comes with additional expenses beyond tuition fees. Millions of families simply cannot afford the money required for school supplies, uniforms, books, and transportation. The root causes of financial crises are difficult to address, and eradicating poverty is not an easy or quick problem to solve.

Education may have a very low value in certain areas, that keeps the younger generation remain uninterested and out of the school. In certain under developed, impoverished nations, children prefer to learn their ancestral skill set to earn

livelihood, rather than attending school and rote learning irrelevant education. Like what is the purpose of learning traffic rules if you are placed in a very remote area with no roads and no income to go to city in the near future and family is facing challenge in earning livelihood?

Lack of relevancy is another reason as explained above. The essence of school gets lost when a child learns something that one can never apply, or not discuss/ make the family understand what he/she learned in school, all the alien education makes them either to not enter or to leave the school early.

Affordability and opportunity cost remain a major reason for the children not to access the reachable school premises. Over 300 million children ageing between 5-17 are either involved in the practice of child labor or employment all over the world. The main reason is financial support to family for food, shelter, clothes and other basic facilities.

Casteism, racism, marginalization of minorities, discriminations in the mainstream schools, deprivation of basic facilities in the existing ecosystem negatively impacts the accessibility of schools. Recently a low caste child was beaten to death by the teacher in government school of Rajasthan, (India) for touching the pot to drink water. These practices further push other members of the society to take their children out of school. The passive stand of authorities, injustice, delayed justice, active discrimination further pushes them to enter into the world of crime rather than education.

Children often feel unsafe while going and returning from home to school because of environmental, animal, or human hazards. There are many ways to overcome this obstacle, including using technology, creating lessons for at-home learning, assigning older or abler students to mentor or tutor nearby lower-level students, giving students access to bicycles or other safe modes of transportation, and more.

Social instability, war ridden areas, attack on schools, lack of security, is another reason. Few years back in Pakistan a school was attacked by the terrorists, that lead to so many deaths of children. The impacts of these incidents on the victim families and their neighbors are very deep and it gives them a reason to stay away from schools.

And many more reasons are there that keeps the children out of school and turns into a cyclic trap that further promotes or forces illiteracy on their coming generations. The governments of various nations and international organizations try to turn every stone to change the scenario. Some of these efforts are studied in the next section.

Conceptual Framework

The ecological systems theory, put forth by psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner, explains how various environmental systems have an impact on human development. The opportunities and risks linked to how youth use their free time outside of the regular school day are of interest to researchers, policy makers, and practitioners. Organized activities, such as after-school programs, extracurricular activities, and events hosted by community-based organizations, are one of the main places where young people spend their free time. Ecological systems theory has been extensively used in research on after-school programs to understand how programs encourage the positive, healthy development of young people from diverse backgrounds.

According to Bronfenbrenner, there are four interconnected categories of environmental systems: macro, exo, meso, and microsystems. These levels range from more substantial, distal settings that indirectly affect development to smaller, proximal settings where people interact directly.

The microsystem, which includes the environments where people interact directly, is the ecological level that is closest to the individual. Sports, academic clubs,

community service initiatives, and youth groups with religious affiliations are just a few of the organized extracurricular activities that make up one microsystem. The mesosystem, which is the next level in Bronfenbrenner's ecological hierarchy and involves processes that take place between the various microsystems that people are embedded in, is a moving forward level. Numerous microsystems engage in interactions with activities to influence development. The main microsystems influencing organized after-school activities for youth are families and schools.

The microsystems in which people are involved but not directly embedded make up the exosystem, which is the next outermost level. The other people involved in an individual's life act as a "trickle-down" mechanism for the exosystem to have an impact on development. In terms of extracurricular activities, research at the exosystem level is rather scant, but one particular area of study sheds light on how parents influence their kids' activities. As a result of their prior involvement in activities, parents play an important role. Children frequently engage in the same activities that their parents did when they were kids because parents frequently expose them to those activities.

All these elements of the external ecosystem theory explain how the external ecosystem impacts the children's school education.

Global Models to reach the unreached

All over the world, there are a variety of initiatives that took place to reach the unreached to include them in the mainstream education system.

'Academies' in London:

These are privately run, publicly funded institutions that are exempt from adhering to the federal curriculum. They are arranged in official collaborative structures. Schools that were failing were replaced with new ones, and after that, they were taken out of local government control and put under the management of a

government-approved "sponsor" in the form of a not-for-profit trust that was given financial support by the sponsor. An updated version of the "converter academy" is introduced within this.

With the aid of this program, schools that were already performing well could become academy-status institutions of their own volition without the need for a sponsor to assume management of the institution. A dedication to diversity of provision served as the foundation for the policy management of schools receiving government funding. The improvement of schools can undoubtedly be aided by school diversity and choice, which also facilitates the admission of underprivileged students with different needs and expectations. It aids in eradicating the rigid culture of acceptance of failure.

'New school structure' and 'charter schools' in New York: Over 160 public schools, mostly big high schools, were shut down in the less fortunate areas. They opened up new, so-called "small schools of choice" in their place, which were structurally distinct from the earlier ones. New employees were hired, and structural changes in the way instruction was carried out were made. These employees were placed in high-poverty, relatively underprivileged community areas where learning was nearly impossible.

On the other hand, charter schools are publicly funded, open to all students, frequently supported by private donors, and not under the traditional control of school boards. Governments granted charters, which were then periodically renewed. Closing the earlier, more "factory-style" higher schools was primarily motivated by the notion that "when a culture of failure is ingrained, the only option is to sweep the board clean." The SSCs made it simpler to attend to the needs of particular children. They fostered in the schools a "no excuses culture."

Community schools in the United States: According to Peter Block, the word "community" implies both ownership and membership. There are around 5,000

community schools existing. These are publicly funded "elementary or secondary school that collaborates with its local educational agency and community-based organisations, non-profit organisations, and other public or private entities to provide a coordinated and integrated set of comprehensive academic, social, and health services that respond to the needs of its students, students' family members, and community members". Community school is a school that offers both public and private services for academics, family support, health facilities, etc. The partnerships at the school that are "results-focused" are built around a set of mutually agreed-upon results and outcomes and are based on identified needs.

It primarily focuses on the low-income communities, and have an approach that stands for family and community engagement, integrated student support, collaborative leadership, expanded learning time and increase of opportunities.

'The schools of tomorrow' in Rio de Janeiro: The focus of the (Escolas do Amanha) Schools for Tomorrow model is primarily on addressing ethos and cultural issues. At-risk districts and schools were the focus of basic education reforms in Rio. The students from "favelas" (low-income neighborhoods frequently run by drug traffickers and other criminal elements) were the focus of attention. These areas receive specialized support, including special infrastructure improvements, books and materials, and hardship pay for teachers, as a result of their high rates of drop-outs and poor performance on standardized tests.

In addition to providing facilities for sports, culture, and social welfare, it promoted an entirely different culture.

6 pillars support these institutions:

• Making sure that they attend school full-time. They spend at least 8 hours a day on-site at school, whether it's for extracurricular activities like sports or science or cultural ones like art. They avoid engaging in criminal activity as a result.

• With the aid of science labs and knowledgeable instructors, they promote science courses.

• Increasing access to basic healthcare, with the help of a hardworking group of nurses working in collaboration with the city's Department of Health.

• Increasing the size of the educational district and strengthening ties to the local community.

• Increasing the teachers' capacity by providing them with more instruction in the necessary subjects.

• Offering remedial courses to some students who require them.

According to the residents of these areas who were interviewed, these schools are the only places where their kids can go to escape the upsetting surroundings in which they were raised. They are doing business in hostile environments.

Fey Alegria (Faith and Joy in English) Model of Venezuela:

Fey Alegria as a concept emerged in Caracas, Venezuela in 1955. By 2009, it had an enrolment of 1,508,465 students, out of which 551,270 these were in formal education, 56,902 in semi-distance and radio education, 563,212 in non-formal and alternative education, with 1,206 school centres and these numbers are still growing. It describes itself as "a movement for integral popular education and social development, whose activities are directed to the most underprivileged and excluded sectors of the population." It operates as an NGO that promotes education. Due to their high demand and limited capacity, Fey Alegria schools receive a lot of applications for their few available seats. First preference is given to the child from the less fortunate family. Fey Alegria excels in qualitative assessments in addition to teaching a lot of underprivileged kids.

It is characterised by the convergence of seven characteristics: a focus on community development; a focus on bridging cleavages and links between various groups; the encouragement of a very strong and cogent popular education ideology

among its participants; the development of a sense of family and community in schools (which includes the stability of teachers); the promotion of democratic participation in schools; partnerships between governments and civil society; and the targeting of very poor communities with special programmes.

There is a lot of flexibility in the management of these schools. In Latin America, they run with public funds and are privately managed, whereas in Venezuela, since 1990's Government takes care of the salaries of teachers in these schools (Martiniello, 2001, pp. 9). Decentralization in planning, budgeting, decision-making is a main component of these schools, where the initiatives start from the school level, and the principle have the autonomy to prioritize the sequence of budget allocation.

Escuela Nueva of Columbia: It is a term that means New School, that started in 1976 with the financial help of UNICEF and USAID. This model has gained recognition of the three most successful public policy reforms in the world by the World Bank in 1989. It is a flexible educational model that supports people in their efforts to improve their lives by addressing the needs of populations that are widely dispersed or transitory as a result of social or employment factors.

It is described as a primary education system that combines curriculum, community, administrative-financial, and training strategies. This system enables the delivery of a complete primary education as well as qualitative improvement in the country's rural schools. It addresses the technical problems of rural education; the content of the books is relevant and adaptable to local areas in which the students are placed. There are components of workshops, teacher study groups, school visits, internships, etc. for teacher trainings. The teachers are prepared in a manner where they think of these school centres as a point of information exchange for community empowerment and integration.

The students learn at their own pace, with multi-grade learning through the help of guidebooks of mathematics, languages, science and social science subjects, but major learning is through discussions among students and guidance of teachers. As per the latest data available there are 20,000 rural schools in Columbia only, and they are present in 19 countries worldwide.

Decentralisation and Deregulation in Education in Finland: Major management, administrative, and regulatory responsibilities for public education have been given to municipalities in Finland. Every year, the school network is updated. Between 1990 and 2007, primarily in rural areas, 1,300 elementary and secondary schools at the basic education level were closed as a result of this restructuring/up-dation of the educational system and in 2008, 95 comprehensive schools were shut down, while 2988 schools were still operational. These schools had a range of student populations: 25 had fewer than 20 students, 34 had 20 to 49 students, and 36 had more than 50 students (Education Statistics Finland 2008).

Decentralized management and constant check with the resources available and societal needs had made it possible to gain the trust of the local societies in which they are placed and built a social cohesion at various levels. There are provisions for supervision, monitoring and self-assessment by the municipalities, schools and external parties of the State to check the quality of education and related services. Its main focus remains on the atmosphere or ecosystem of the school, learning conditions of the classroom, teacher selection, training and recruitment provisions, sensitive management of the student's social backgrounds and learning levels with freedom of modification in the national curriculum as per the local needs.

India's initiatives

All of the aforementioned models are remedies for specific issues that the country or region is experiencing. Thus, only their main points of the problem and the solution can be copied and pasted.

This can't be done with a single method, as the demands, developmental level, belief system, ideology of every area will be different. So, a combination of various methods and techniques will be needed, as per the requirements of the settings in which they will be adopted. Every approach should evolve from lessons of earlier indigenous experiences, rather than an imposition from afar. Until unless the provider and receiver have a common vision, there will always remain a gap.

For the inclusion of all the disadvantaged, marginalized section of society in India, a number of programs were initiated that worked well, and resulted in almost 100 percent enrollment rate in India. To ensure that everyone had access to high-quality education, numerous policy planning initiatives and programs—including the DPEP, SSA, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, operation Blackboard, the Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project, the Shiksha Karmi Project, the Lok Jumbish Project, Revamped Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme, Revamped Eklavya Model Residential School Scheme, Unnat Bharat Abhiyan Digital initiatives like: E-pathshala, Diksha, MOOCs on the SWAYAM platform, SWAYAM-PRABHA DTH-TV channels and others—were processed and put into place.

These deal with the access to education for girls, women, SC, ST, and other underprivileged groups of the population was also a priority, the Special Focus Districts, Educationally Backward Blocks, LWE Affected Districts, and Aspirational Districts that were given preference under this plan. It encourages states to improve education in underserved areas. rural girls, primarily from the SC, ST, OBC, Minority, and other disadvantaged sections of society.

Even after achieving a near 100 percent enrolment, India still had a long way to go in the quality of Education provided. Enrollment alone cannot offer a guarantee that every child is receiving a quality education, the drop-out rates are high, there is teacher and student absenteeism, discrimination within the school premises on the grounds of caste, color and gender, and the list of challenges goes on. Only free

education will not help, the government schools should reach to a point where there should be a competition in the admission level, rather than No Detention policy to hide the low-level learnings of students. This is only possible when the problem is studied at the local level and their specific solutions are found with the sharing of not only responsibility but also autonomy in decision making at the local level of administration and management.

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