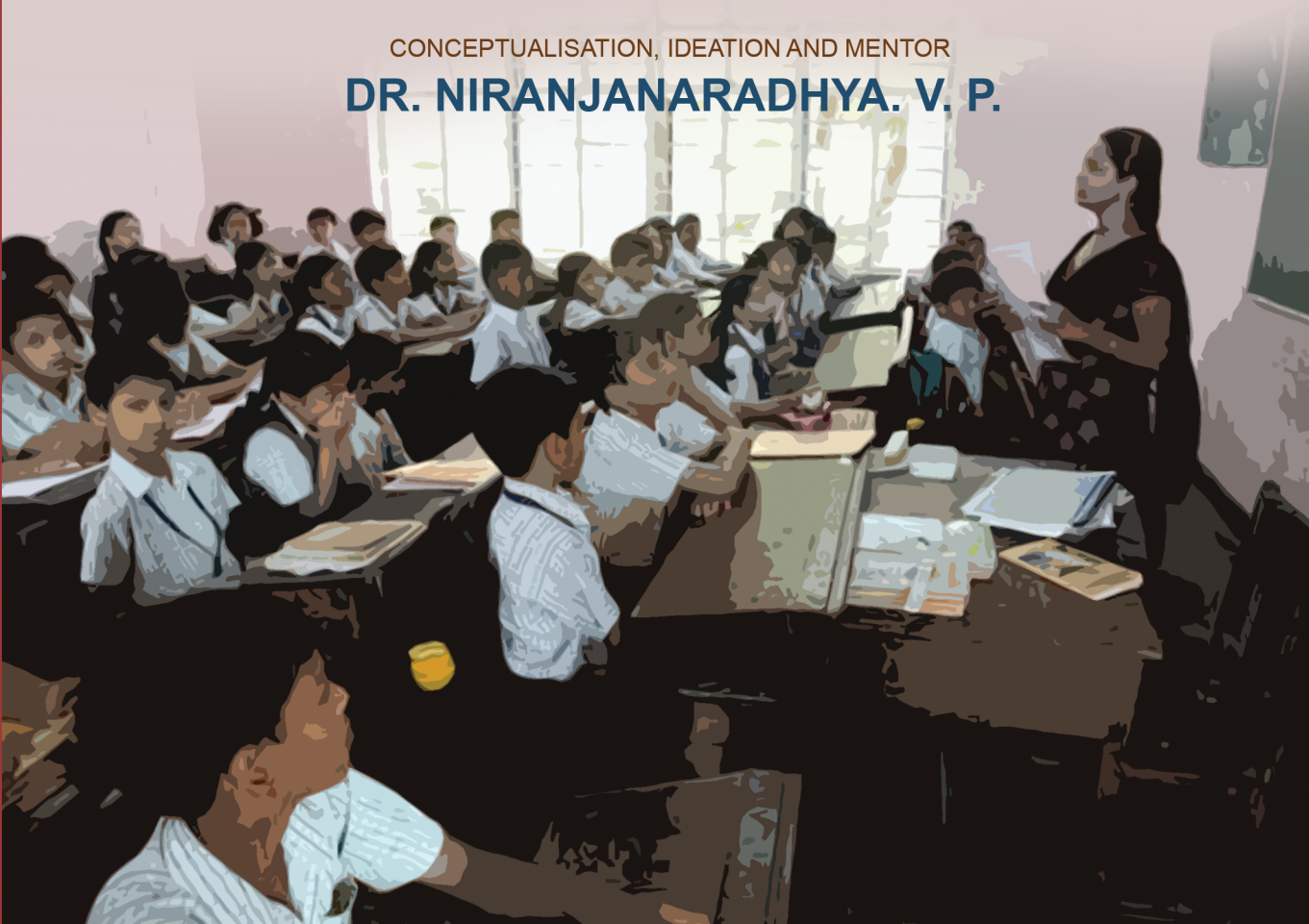


NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

A DISCUSSION PAPER TOWARDS POLICY FORMULATION

CONCEPTUALISATION, IDEATION AND MENTOR

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DATA COLLECTION
FIELD STAFF AND SDMC VOLUNTEERS

CENTRE FOR CHILD AND THE LAW
NATIONAL LAW SCHOOL OF INDIA UNIVERSITY. BENGALURU

Preamble

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens: JUSTICE, social, economic and political; LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation; IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

Article 21A - Right to Education

The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.

Article 39 - Certain Principles of Policy to be followed by the State

The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing - (e) that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength; (f) that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

Article 45 - Provision for early childhood care and education to children below the age of six years

The State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vii
PREFACE	ix
INTRODUCTION.....	1
WHAT IS EDUCATION?	3
RIGHT TO EDUCATION.....	4
A BRIEF HISTORY OF RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN INDIA.....	6
INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM IS RIDDLED WITH DISCRIMINATION	10
COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM.....	12
COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM UNDER THE INDIAN LAW	14
NEED FOR COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM	17
COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM – PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE EXISTING 10+2 STRUCTURE.....	23
FUNCTIONING OF SCHOOLS UNDER THE COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM	28
COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM AT THE GRAM PANCHAYAT LEVEL	30
Indian Administrative System – Panchayat Raj Institutions	30
Panchayat Raj Institutions and Decentralised Education Management	31
Common School System at Gram Panchayat level	31
Study to illustrate the establishment of Common School System at the Gram Panchayat Level.....	32
Objectives of the Study	32
Scope and Methodology	33
Findings of the Study	34
Illustrating the Gram Panchayat Public School.....	37
CONCLUDING REMARKS	56
REFERENCES.....	xi

LIST OF GRAPHS AND FIGURES

Figure 1: Infrastructure in 38 Government Lower Primary Schools	30
Figure 2: Infrastructure in 19 Government Higher Primary Schools	31
Figure 3: Infrastructure in 7 Government High Schools	32
Figure 4: Bannikuppe(B) Public School	37
Figure 5: Harisandra Public School	40
Figure 6: Hanchikuppe Public School	44
Figure 7: Doddamaralavadi Public School	47
Figure 8: Sulleri Public School	50

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: School Education in India	15
Table 2: Government Elementary Schools	16
Table 3: Enrolment in Government Schools of Bannikuppe(B) Gram Panchayat	33
Table 4: Enrolment in Classes V to X in Bannikuppe(B) Gram Panchayat	34
Table 5: Number of Teachers in HPS and High Schools of Bannikuppe(B) Gram Panchayat	35
Table 6: Budget allocation for HPS and High Schools in Bannikuppe(B) Gram Panchayat	36
Table 7: Enrolment in Government Schools of Harisandra Gram Panchayat	38
Table 8: Enrolment in Classes V to X in Harisandra Gram Panchayat	38
Table 9: Number of Teachers in HPS and High Schools of Harisandra Gram Panchayat	39
Table 10: Budget allocation for HPS and High Schools in Harisandra Gram Panchayat	39
Table 11: Enrolment in Government Schools of Hanchikuppe Gram Panchayat	41
Table 12: Enrolment in Classes V to X in Hanchikuppe Gram Panchayat	42
Table 13: Number of Teachers in HPS and High Schools of Hanchikuppe Gram Panchayat	42

Table 14: Budget allocation for HPS and High Schools in Hanchikuppe Gram Panchayat	43
Table 15: Enrolment in Government Schools of Doddamaralavadi Gram Panchayat	45
Table 16: Enrolment in Classes V to X in Doddamaralavadi Gram Panchayat	45
Table 17: Number of Teachers in HPS and High Schools of Doddamaralavadi Gram Panchayat	46
Table 18: Budget allocation for HPS and High Schools in Doddamaralavadi Gram Panchayat	46
Table 19: Enrolment in Government Schools of Sulleri Gram Panchayat	48
Table 20: Enrolment in Classes V to X in Sulleri Gram Panchayat	49
Table 21: Number of Teachers in HPS and High Schools of Sulleri Gram Panchayat	49
Table 22: Budget allocation for HPS and High Schools in Sulleri Gram Panchayat	49

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Krithika B.S.

Preface

In 2002, India joined the rest of the world to make education a fundamental right by amending the Constitution followed by the historic Supreme Court judgment in 1993. The consequential legislation to operationalise Article 21A was enacted in 2009 which came into effect on 1st April 2010. Now, as per the Constitutional mandate, every child in the age group of six to fourteen years in India has the fundamental right to education and the state has the prime responsibility to recognise, respect and realise the fundamental right.

As an extension of elementary education, the Sustainable Development Goals lucidly articulate a new world vision to every child and adult realising their right to education and lifelong learning as an agreed agenda of the world's governments in 2015 under Goal 4 which states, "ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning".

In this context, the Indian state should take concrete measures to address inequality, discrimination and segregation in education system. Education should be a tool in the hands of people to overcome social inequalities including all barriers to education particularly for marginalised communities focussing on Dalits, Adivasis and Minorities. Having nearly 1/3rd of its population in the age group of below 18 years, India needs more investment to build equitable schools on the recommendations of Indian Education Commission based on the principle of neighbourhood school for equitable schooling. Equitable schooling is an essential prerequisite for achieving inclusive and sustainable growth.

However, the developments in the last one and a half decades particularly the declining enrolment in government schools has resulted in the rise of number of small schools with less number of children. This in turn created a serious learning crisis in Indian schooling posing the challenges of feasibility, multi-grade teaching, ideal classroom, lack of subject-wise teachers, adequate infrastructure etc. thereby leading

to low level of learning outcomes. This crisis further led to the closure/merger of government schools endangering the public education system. The present discussion paper developed by CCL-NLSIU through its intensive participatory research with the primary stakeholders brings an alternative discourse to transform the existing system into Gram Panchayat/ Ward Public School based on neighbourhood principle as a step towards building the Common School System. We believe that the paper will serve as a basic draft to initiate the larger debate in the country to flag issues for systemic change in order to restructure the current system to ensure inclusive and quality education for all children. We appreciate and respect your comments and suggestions to move forward.

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Introduction

John Dewey¹ said “*Education is not preparation for life; Education is life itself*”. Education is the fundamental requirement not only for the individual but also for the success of democracy. It is the most important tool for social, economic and political transformation. It promotes individual freedom and empowerment and provides each person with the possibility to fully participate in the society, to access the labour market and to develop one’s potential. Education is a powerful tool by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and participate fully as citizens.

The economic theory of capability approach, which emphasizes on functional capabilities, in a nutshell advocates that development occurs when people are able to achieve what is valuable to their lives. Prof. Amartya Sen, who is the pioneer of this theory, argues therein that “development is a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy”.² Unlike various earlier western philosophical theories of development, the capability approach, not only shifts the objective of development from income to people but also uses the notion of freedom in a much broader perspective. The approach not only entails negative rights and liberties but also advocates for access to the differential positive needs thereby paving the assessment of policies based on their effectiveness in enhancing the capabilities of the people and expanding their freedoms. It is in this light that education becomes a significant constituent component of development. It is also

1 1859 – 1952; John Dewey was an American Philosopher, Psychologist and Education Reformer and a leading proponent of the Pragmatism School of thought. His contribution to the 20th century educational philosophy is of profound nature besides being the pioneer of the functionalist and behavioural approaches. He has authored many works on education including *The Child and the Curriculum* (1902), *Schools of To-Morrow* (1915), *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (1916), *Art and Education* (1929) etc.

2 Sen, A. (1999); *Development as freedom*; Oxford: Oxford University Press; Pg. 5

instrumental in displacing other negative processes like child labour, child marriage etc., and plays a significant role in empowerment of disadvantaged groups. Education enables people to invoke their rights, demand functional accountability on part of the government and authorities or join together to achieve collective goals and participate in social and political change.³

In a nutshell, education is the most potent tool for socio-economic mobility and a key instrument for building an equitable and just society by addressing the social and economic barriers present therein. As rightly observed by Prof. Amartya Sen without universalising compulsory education, no country can attain development.

³ Education For All: Is the World on Track, 2002 Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO

What is Education?

Education is the process of social life by means of which individuals and social groups learn to develop consciously within, and for the benefit of, the national and international communities, the whole of their personal capabilities, attitudes, aptitudes and knowledge.⁴ In other words, all activities by which a human group transmits to its descendants a body of knowledge and skills and a moral code which enable the group to subsist may be described as education. In this sense education refers to the transmission to a subsequent generation of those skills needed to perform tasks of daily living, and further passing on the social, cultural, spiritual and philosophical values of the particular community. As rightly stated by Prof. Martha Nussbaum, education includes but is not confined to literacy and basic mathematic and scientific training. It entails a much wider objective of enabling a person to exercise their freedom of choice, speech and expression and facilitating to have pleasurable experiences and avoid non-beneficial pain.⁵

4 Article 1(a) of UNESCO's 1974 *Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*

5 Nussbaum, Martha Craven; *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach* (2011); The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press; Pg. 33

Right to Education

Education has been unanimously accepted as a fundamental human right and a basic necessity for dignified life. It is also indispensable for the exercise of all other human rights. Given its fundamental necessity to human development, education has been legally accorded the recognition as a Fundamental Human Right both in the national and international arenas.

The Right to Education is a universal entitlement to education, a human right that is recognized as one worldwide. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was the first instrument to provide recognition to the right to education. It not only provided that education at elementary and fundamental stages should be free and compulsory but also stated that *“education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.”*⁶ According to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights the right to education includes the right to free, compulsory primary education for all, an obligation to develop secondary education accessible to all, in particular by the progressive introduction of free secondary education, as well as an obligation to develop equitable access to higher education, ideally by the progressive introduction of free higher education.⁷ The right to education also includes a responsibility to provide basic education for individuals who have not completed primary education. In addition to these access to education provisions, the right to education encompasses the obligation to rule out discrimination at all levels of the educational system, to set minimum standards and to improve quality

⁶ Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

⁷ As derived from Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

of education. Further, the Sustainable Development Goals under Goal 4 provides to *“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”*.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 is an important piece of international legal instrument that recognises and safeguards the right to education of children in particular. The Convention among others provides for free and compulsory primary education to all children; development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education making them available and accessible to all children and introduction of free education and financial assistance in case of need and calls the state parties to take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.⁸ The Convention further provides that the education of children is to be directed towards, among others, “the development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential” and “the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin”.⁹

The Convention against Discrimination in Education, 1960¹⁰; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969¹¹; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979¹²; International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990¹³; Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006¹⁴ are some of the other major international instruments that recognise the right to education for all without any discrimination.

8 Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989

9 Article 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989

10 UNESCO Convention; It is to be noted that India has not ratified this convention.

11 Article 5(e)(v) and Article 7

12 Article 10

13 Article 30, Article 43(1)(a) and (b), Article 45(1)(a) and (b)

14 Article 24

A brief history of Right to Education in India

In India, education has been given due importance right since the period of Vedas. However, in the ancient and medieval periods, education in India was considered to be the privilege of the upper classes and was beyond the reach of the common public. Education during this time was closely related to religion. In a while, with the advent of the British in India, the traditional system of education was slowly replaced by English based education which mainly focused on training people for engagement in the English administrative system. The Wood's Despatch of 1854¹⁵, the Hunter Commission's Report¹⁶

15 The British Parliament constituted a Selection Committee to enquire into the Progress of education in India and suggest reforms in 1853. The suggestions of the Committee were issued as a Charter of Education on July 19, 1854, popularly known as the Wood's Despatch of 1854. Establishment of education department in every province, universities on the model of the London University in big cities such as Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, at least one government school in every district; grant-in-aid to affiliated private schools, training to Indian natives in their mother tongue and provision for a systematic method of education from primary level to the university level were some of the major recommendations of the Despatch.

16 Lord Ripon, the then viceroy of India, appointed the Indian Education Commission on 3rd February 1882, with Sir Willium Hunter as its Chairman to review the progress of education in the country since the Despatch of 1854 and therefore, the Commission was popularly known as the Hunter Commission. The Hunter Commission wanted to reorganize education in India and brought out the neglect to the primary and secondary education in the country. The commission recommended that the responsibility for the Primary Education must be given to the Local Boards and Municipal Boards. Recognition of primary education as education of the masses, use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction, provision of primary education in backward areas, Transfer of control of primary education to local bodies, introduction of the system of payment by result, freedom in selecting text books, adjusting school hours and holidays according to local needs, establishment of normal schools in each division, maintenance of separate fund for primary education, assisting local body by grant-in-aid system, inclusion of more practical subjects and various co-curricular activities, opening of night schools etc. were the basic recommendations made by Hunter Commission in 1882 regarding the Primary Education in India.

and the Sadler Commission's Report¹⁷ which acknowledged the neglect of education in India, mark the early genesis of right to education in India. Later a resolution urging the Government to provide free and compulsory status to primary education, which was initially moved by Mr. Gokhale in 1910, was passed in 1917 under the auspices of Shri. Vittalbhai Patel and it came to be known as the Patel Act¹⁸. With the passage of time, the struggle for free and compulsory education eventually got integrated into the freedom movement. In the 20th century, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Jyothirao Phule and other freedom fighters advocated for universal education. They emphasised that education is not the privilege of a particular section or few classes of the society but is a right of the masses. The Wardha Scheme of Education, 1937¹⁹ and the Sargent Scheme of Education, 1944²⁰ can be said to be the landmark developments in the history of free and compulsory education in India. While the Wardha Scheme of Education gave rise to the fundamental concept of "Basic education" and advocated its importance, the Sargent Scheme can be said to be the first attempt to formulate a National Education Policy. All these developments paved the way for the recognition of primary education as a right in the post-independence era.

- 17 The Calcutta University Commission, popularly known as the Sadler Commission, was constituted in 1917 under the chairmanship of Dr. Michael E. Sadler to study and report on the problem of university education. The Committee held the view that the improvement of secondary education was imperative for the improvement of university education and brought to light the issues plaguing the secondary education in India. Though the Committee dealt with only the University of Calcutta, the problems studied by the Committee were more or less similar all over the country.
- 18 In 1910, Gopal Krishna Gokhale moved a resolution urging the Government to provide free and compulsory status to primary education, which unfortunately did not see the light of the day. This Bill, which was initially moved by Mr. Gokhale in 1910, was passed in 1917 under the auspices of Shri. Vittalbhai Patel and it came to be known as the Patel Act.
- 19 The Wardha Scheme of Education can be said to be the brain child of Mahatma Gandhi as the first attempt to promote indigenous education in India through the medium of mother tongue. Having realised that the British system of education could not serve the socio-economic needs of the Indian society, Mahatma Gandhi presented before the 1931 Round Table Conference at London, the ineffectiveness of the Indian primary education system. Post the enforcement of the Government of India Act, 1935, Mahatma Gandhi advocated the scheme of basic education through mother tongue which was discussed in the 1937 Wardha Education Conference. The Scheme proposed for free and compulsory education through the medium of mother-tongue at least for seven years throughout the nation. Dr. Zakir Hussain Committee was then set up to formulate a detailed education plan based on the resolutions adopted in the conference. The first report of this committee was submitted in 1937 and came to be known as the Wardha Scheme of Education.
- 20 The Hunter Commission report, Sadler Commission Report and then the Wardha Scheme of Education all threw light upon the seriousness of the situation pertaining to education in India. This forced the British Government to constitute a committee to formulate a scheme to bring about educational reforms in the country. The Scheme dealt with varied aspects of education right from pre-primary stage to the university level. Among others, the Scheme provided for free pre-primary education for children in the age group of 3 to 6 years, free and compulsory primary/basic education for children aged 6 to 14 years, medium of education to be the mother tongue etc.

After independence, Article 45 was included in Part IV (Directive Principles of State Policy) of the Constitution of India making it the responsibility of the State to provide education to all within a time period of 10 years from the date of adoption. Though being the only time-bound provision in the Constitution, it was not given the necessary consideration in the specified time period of 10 years, i.e., from 1950 to 1960. However, the goal remained elusive after 10 years from the commencement of the constitution and led to the appointment of the Education Commission popularly known as the Kothari Commission. Some of the major recommendations of the Kothari Commission include, the provision of free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14 years; implementation of the three-language formula with special emphasis on promotion of international languages including English; adoption of a common school system of education to promote social cohesion and national integration; special emphasis on education of girls, children with special needs (physical and mentally handicapped children), children belonging to backward classes including tribal communities; expansion of facilities for secondary and higher education to all areas; gradually increase the expenditure for education to 6% of the national income; and review progress and recommend guidelines for future development of the education system in the country.²¹

Efforts to provide qualitative education facilities gained momentum based on the recommendations of the commission and the first national policy on education was formulated in 1968 which was further revised in the year 1986 and later modified in 1992. Operation Blackboard in 1987-88, District Primary Education Program (DPEP) of 1994 and in 2001 Sarva Shikshana Abhiyan (SSA) was launched for achieving Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) in a time bound manner which also laid emphasis on girl education and education of Schedule Caste (SC) and Schedule Tribe (ST) children and children with special needs.

Subsequently, for the first time in Indian history, right to education was recognised as a constitutional right by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of *Mohini Jain v. State of Karnataka*²² in 1992. The Hon'ble Court observed that the right to education is integrated in the right to life guaranteed under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution and hence, the right to education, though is not specifically enumerated in Part III of the Constitution, is still a fundamental right of all. This was again reiterated in the case of *Unni Krishnan v. State of Andhra Pradesh & Others*²³ when the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India declared that “*Right to Education is a fundamental right flowing from Article 21 of the Constitution*”.

21 Report of the Education Commission, 1964-1966, Pgs. xiii to xviii

22 AIR 1992 SC 1858

23 (1993) 1 SCC 645

As a result of the aforementioned two judgments and in order to provide for right to access education, **Article 21A** of the Constitution of India was inserted through the Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002, to give effect to the then Article 45 of the Constitution which was amended to make it the responsibility of the State to provide for early childhood care and education to all children below the age of 6 years. Under Article 21A, it is the duty of the State to provide by law “*free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years.*” Pursuant to Article 21A of the Constitution, the Parliament enacted the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 to ensure free elementary education to all children of the nation which came into force on 01.04.2010. It is a child centric legislation which intends not only to guarantee right to free and compulsory education to children, but also envisages imparting of quality education by providing required infrastructure and compliance of specified norms and standards in the schools. It has been enacted primarily to remove all barriers (including financial barriers) which impede access to education.

While the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 ensures education for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years, the legislation is riddled with certain major shortcomings. One of the major limitations of the legislation is that it fails to make provision for compulsory pre-school education and also excludes the education of children above the age of 14 years. Without the proper foundation of pre-primary education, it will be very challenging for the children to cope with the learnings of the primary level. Also, an incomplete education ending at VIII standard can in no way said to be an acceptable minimum standard of education. Further, the Act also fails to provide for an effective mechanism for grievance redressal at the ground level for it might not be a feasible option for all children to approach the Local Authority or the SCPCR in case of any grievance. Another significant aspect to be noted here is that the interpretation of the Act is completely diluted. While the legislation encompasses various provisions pertaining to elementary education, the Act is interpreted only on the basis of Section 12(1)(c) which provides for reservation of 25% seats in private unaided schools for children from weaker sections and disadvantaged groups. Another misconception is that the Right to Education Act and the norms, standards and guidelines therein are applicable only to private schools whereas the reality is that the Act is equally applicable to all schools whether private or government. All these drawbacks, among others, are not only weakening the essence of the legislation but are also resulting in widening the social, cultural and economic gaps leading to increased discrimination in the society.

Indian Education System is riddled with Discrimination

India being a multi-cultural and multi-lingual country, the social segregation is much prevalent in our society, and the educational sector is no exception to this. According to the Education Commission, “One of the important social objectives of education is to equalize opportunity, enabling the backward or underprivileged classes and individuals to use education as a tool for improvement of their social and economic condition”²⁴.

The most important and urgent reform needed in education is to transform it, to relate it to the life, needs and aspirations of the people and thereby make it a powerful instrument of social, economic and cultural transformation, necessary for realization of the national goals. For this purpose the commission while upholding “*Education as an Instrument of Change*”, suggested the following objectives of education²⁵:

- (a) Increasing productivity.
- (b) Social and national integration.
- (c) Accelerating the process of modernization.
- (d) Developing social, moral and spiritual values.

The present educational system in our country, instead of bringing social groups and classes together, is tending to increase social segregation and class distinctions. The schools for the masses (generally maintained by the government) are of poorer quality than those run by private bodies. Good schools are not within the reach of a common man’s pocket. This is one of the major weaknesses of the existing educational system. There has been a fundamental difference between poor and medium-elite student’s

24 Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66; Para 6.01; Pg. 181

25 Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66; Para 1.20; Pg. 8

education in India throughout. Elite-middle class send their children to convent schools, while poor are unable to pay high fees demanded by elite schools.²⁶ The present disparity prevalent in education system widens the social segregation instead of bridging it.

It is a truism to say that most government-owned schools are still in the same condition they were thirty years ago. The sanitation services, drinking water and other facilities remain a dream. When teachers do not come regularly to school, one can imagine what student attendance is. Regrettably this is the real situation of the schools across the nation.

In 1999, the PROBE reported the forms of social discrimination operating in the Indian school system. A system of multiple tracks has emerged providing different types of schooling opportunities to different sections of population. Poor and the disadvantaged section going to government schools and the well-off students go to the private schools; some go to formal schools, but those for whom the formal system is not 'suitable' are going to the 'informal' or non-formal educational centres. There is a hierarchy of schools catering to different groups.²⁷

In order to overcome these disparities, a common equitable quality education is to be ensured to every child of the nation irrespective of his/her economic class, caste, gender, disability, religion or any other discriminatory factor. In the words of the Education Commission, *"If our educational system is to become a powerful instrument of national development in general, and social and national integration in particular, we must march towards the goal of a Common School System of public education."*²⁸

26 Acharya Ramamurti Committee Report, 1986

27 Public report on Basic education in India, 1999, Chapter IV, Para 4.4

28 Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66; Para 1.38; Pg. 15

Common School System

The concept of Common School System (CSS) also called a neighbourhood school, was advocated in post-civil war as a 'right' and institutionalized in the early 1900s. Common School System (CSS) may be a new concept for India, but it's not new to the world. It has been operating successfully in Cuba, USA, UK, China and Russia. The Common School System in India was originally advocated by the Education Commission (1964-66), under the chairmanship of Dr. D.S. Kothari.

"A Common School System means a system of education providing education of an equitable quality to all children irrespective of caste, creed, community, language, gender, economic condition, social status and physical and mental ability."²⁹ The application of common minimum norms of quality education by all schools in the system is the key concept for commonness of the Common School System.³⁰ The Bihar Common School System Commission Report says that the most fundamental among the minimum norms is the principle of equality and social justice enshrined in the Indian Constitution, which the Common School System in India must respect and promote.³¹

As envisaged by the Education Commission, the concept of neighbourhood schools is central to the Common School System. The Education Commission Report recommended that each school within the Common School System should be attended by all the children in the neighbourhood.³² The instrumentality of Common School System is the neighbourhood school funded solely by the government but controlled by the neighbourhood. The Common School System will open the window of access to

29 Report of the Common School System Commission (CSSC) of Bihar, 2007

30 Report of the CSSC, 2007 Chapter 3, p. 29

31 *ibid*, p.29

32 Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66; Para 10.19; Pg. 471

quality education depending on talent rather than wealth or class. Education will be free for every student, with no tuition fee being charged. The common school system would be open to all children irrespective of social, economic and other differences; adequate standards would be maintained and average parents would not ordinarily feel the need of sending their children to expensive schools outside the system.³³

To summarise in the words of the Education Commission, “A Common School System will include all schools conducted by government and local authorities and all recognized and aided private schools. It should be maintained at an adequate level of quality and efficiency so that no parent would ordinarily feel any need to send his child to the institutions outside the system, such as independent or unrecognized schools. This is the goal which the country should strive to reach, and a number of steps will have to be taken for its early realization” including ensuring the elimination of discrimination among teachers working in different managements in terms of their privileges, qualifications, recruitment, conditions of service etc.; provision of education free of tuition-fees at school stage; integration of schools of local bodies and private organisations with those of the State Governments; adoption of the neighbourhood school plan and establishment of District Education Boards to ensure that the minimum conditions necessary for the successful working of educational institutions are provided in every institution within the common system of public education irrespective of its management and the segregation between the schools for the poor and the underprivileged classes and those for the rich and the privileged ones are eliminated.³⁴

33 1968 Education Policy

34 Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66; Para 10.05; Pgs. 462-464

Common School System under the Indian Law

The concept of Common School System, as such, was not given heed to while drafting the Constitution of India. The right to education itself was not declared as a right. Rather, it was made the responsibility of the State under Article 45. However, by reading Article 45 of the then Constitution of India along with the Preamble and Article 14 of the Constitution, it can be noted that the Indian Constitution did to certain extent advocate that it is the responsibility of the State to provide education to all children equally without any discrimination. The notion Common School System refers to a state-financed common quality education. This can be essentially considered to be the foundation for the genesis of the concept of Common School System in India.

As noted earlier, the Common School System was introduced in India for the first time by the Education Commission of 1964-66. Since then, though unsuccessfully implemented, the necessity and importance of the Common School System has been acknowledged in a series of policies and legislations. The 1968 Policy on Education accepted the recommendation of the Education Commission and envisaged the establishment of a strong public education system through the Common School System for the promotion of social harmony and equality of education. Later, in the context of the national system of education, the National Policy on Education, 1986 restated the determination of the Government to take effective measures in the direction of the Common School System. According to the National Policy on Education, 1986, “The concept of a National System of Education implies that, up to a given level, all students, irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex, have access to education of a comparable quality”.³⁵ However, no measures were announced either in the Programme of Action (POA), 1986 or the modified POA, 1992 to implement the policy on the common school

³⁵ MHRD 1998, p. 5

system. The CABE committee had called for neighbourhood schools, qualitative improvement of education in public sector and identification of the target areas. While reviewing the implementation of the 1986 policy, the Acharya Ramamurti Committee (1990) considered the development of Common School System to be a very vital component of the overall strategy for securing equity and social justice in education. Nevertheless, the recommendations of the Ramamurti Committee did not find any place when the 1986 National Policy was modified in 1992.

Subsequently, the 83rd Constitutional Amendment Bill also provided for the establishment of the Common School System in the second sub-clause of Article 21A dealing with enforcement of the fundamental right. However, this clause was cleverly deleted in the subsequent Bills and the Constitution 86th Amendment Act enacted to declare right to education of children as a fundamental right made the right subject to the enactment of a law by the State. Also, it is important to note that though the phrase of “Common School System” has not been used anywhere in the Article, it promotes the concept in its spirit as Article 21A provides for right to free and compulsory education to all which forms the very essence of the Common School System as recommended by the Education Commission and subsequently accepted and acknowledged by the Education Policies of 1968 and 1986.

Further, Article 21A of the Constitution of India, which declares right to free and compulsory education of children as a fundamental right, contemplated the enactment of a law to discharge of the obligation of the State under Article 21A. As a result, the Parliament of India enacted the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 to protect and give effect to the right of the children to education as enshrined in Article 21A of the Constitution by ensuring free elementary education to all children of the nation. The Right to Education Act, 2009, which is child centric in nature, has been enacted primarily to remove all barriers (including financial barriers) which impede access to education keeping in mind the crucial role of Universal Elementary Education for strengthening the social fabric of democracy through provision of equal opportunities to all. Though, the qualifying phrase of Common School System is not used anywhere in the Act, it provides for all the essential features of the Common School System. To mention a few,

- The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 envisages that each child must have access to a neighbourhood school. It provides for right (entitlement) of children to free and compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education in a neighbourhood school.

- The word “Free” in the long title to the Act stands for removal by the State of any financial barrier that prevents a child from completing 8 years of schooling. The word “Compulsory” in that title stands for compulsion on the State and the parental duty to send children to school.
- It clarifies that ‘compulsory education’ means obligation of the appropriate government to provide free elementary education and ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education to every child in the six to fourteen age group.
- The Act makes it the responsibility of the Appropriate Government and local authorities to provide free and compulsory education to children.
- It envisages imparting of quality education by providing basic facilities, required infrastructure and compliance of specified norms and standards in the schools.

Thus, the legal framework of India has throughout emphasized the importance of the Common School System and provides for its establishment in its quintessence even though the term has not been used much. However, the implementation of the same has been minimal. As noted by the NPERC, the Common School System still remains a concept even though mooted by the Education Commission over 45 years ago and the failure to implement the Common School System is further accentuating the educational disparities.³⁶

³⁶ Common School System; available at <http://www.teindia.nic.in/mhrd/50yrsedu/g/52/C6/52C60801.htm> last accessed on 28.11.2017

Need for Common School System

Access and Quality form the two basic aspects of Right to Education. While ensuring *access to education* is a precondition for full realization of the right to education, *Quality of education* is the other side of the coin. If without access it is not possible to guarantee the right to education, low quality will also not serve the purpose. Thus, both access and quality hold equal importance in the realisation of the right to education.

In this background, it is pertinent to note that since the inception of the struggle for right to education in India, access to education has been given due importance. The focus was more upon bringing all children to schools owing to the fact that large number of children remained out of reach of the education system. With the limelight being more on access, the quality of education became gradually side-lined. A close study of all the efforts of the Government right from the National Education Policy, 1968 to the current Right of Children to Free and Compulsory education Act, 2009 including schemes such as SSA, Operation Blackboard etc., clearly portray that they have failed to provide the necessary attention to the quality of education in their eagerness to achieve universal enrolment. As a result, the current public education system is riddled with copious issues like lack of basic infrastructure like separate useable toilets for boys and girls, clean and safe drinking water, age-appropriate desks and benches etc., in schools, shortage of teachers, untrained teachers and so on. All these issues not only affect the quality of education imparted but also lead to dwindling number of children in Government schools. The ASER 2014 has illustrated the dismal state of public education in terms of learning outcomes and portrays how this has led to the increasing privatisation and commercialisation of education thereby resulting in the gradual closure of government schools due to lack of adequate enrolments.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Right to Education Mr. Kishore Singh, in his report on Privatisation of Education³⁷ submitted in September, 2014 has argued that the privatization of education has proved detrimental to the concept of fundamental right to education to millions of children in the world as the costs associated with private schools are exacerbating inequality in societies by often excluding the poor and marginalized groups from going to private schools. He has further reiterated that the State is both guarantor and regulator of education which is not only a fundamental human right but also a noble cause. Provision of basic education free of costs is not only a core obligation of the State; but also a moral imperative. As a solution, he has advocated for strengthening of public education system for the implementation of Right to Education.

Looking at the Indian scenario, the status of Government schools is depreciating by the day. The reduction in the percentage of Government Elementary schools in the country from 78.2% in 2010-11 to 74.3% in 2015-16 while the percentage of private schools has increased from 19.4% in 2010-11 to 23.1% in 2015-16 well explains the condition of public education system in the country.³⁸ While 4.27% of Government Elementary schools have single classroom, 7.5% of all schools have only one teacher.³⁹

37 <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N14/546/82/PDF/N1454682.pdf?OpenElement>

38 Elementary Education in India: Progress Towards UEE - Flash Statistics, NUEPA & GoI, New Delhi, 2005-06 to 2015-16; available at [http://udise.in/Downloads/Publications/Documents/Flash_Statistics-2015-16_\(Elementary\).pdf](http://udise.in/Downloads/Publications/Documents/Flash_Statistics-2015-16_(Elementary).pdf) last accessed on 20.11.2017

39 Elementary Education in India: Progress Towards UEE – Analytical tables, NUEPA & GoI, New Delhi, 2015-16, Table 1.25, Pg. 46; available at http://udise.in/Downloads/Publications/Documents/Analytical_Table_2015-16.pdf last accessed on 20.11.2017

A bird's view into the school education in India as of 2015 is as follows:⁴⁰

Table 1: School Education in India

Indicators		Elementary Schools	Secondary Schools	Higher Secondary Schools
Enrolment in Government Schools		59.44	44.43	35.74
CWSN Enrolment		1.16	0.56	0.25
Gross Enrolment Ratio		96.91	80.01	56.16
Net Enrolment Ratio		88.94	51.26	32.30
Drop-out Rates		4.10	17.06	-
Retention Rate		70.70	57.42	-
PTR		24	27	37
Average number of classrooms		5.1	3.5	4.6
Single-classroom schools		4.27	1.21	1.87
Condition of Classrooms	Good	81.82	86.58	90.60
	Minor	10.26	7.35	6.26
	Major	7.92	6.07	3.14
Student-Classroom Ratio		27	46	47
Boundary wall		64.89	83.96	89.5
Ramp		61.83	75.12	75.54
Electricity Connection		61.67	89.65	92.88
Computer		25.97%	68.56	72.28
CWSN friendly toilet		23.08		
Playground		60.56	78.01	79.47
Library		82.69	90.88	92.32
Boys Toilet		95.43	98.1	98.72
Girls Toilet		97.58	98.57	98.99
Drinking water facility		95.78	99.89	99.24

40 UDISE 2015

Table 2: Government Elementary Schools⁴¹

Indicators	Value
Enrolment in Government schools out of total enrolment	59.44%
Average number of classrooms	4.2
Schools having single classroom	4.27%
Functional Girls' Toilet	48.78%
Functional Boys' Toilet	48.70%
Kitchen-shed for preparation of MDM	80.02%
Average number of teachers per school	4.3
Schools having Student-classroom ratio more than 30 (Primary level)	23.45%
Schools having Student-classroom ratio more than 35 (Upper-Primary level)	27.06%
Pupil-Teacher Ratio	25
Schools having Pupil-teacher ratio more than 30 (Primary level)	26.28%
Schools having Pupil-teacher ratio more than 35 (Upper-Primary level)	14.41%
Contractual Teachers to total teachers	14.26%

A brief look at the above figures clearly portrays that the public education system is in a considerably perturbing condition with a good portion of children opting for private educational institutions. Also, the infrastructural and other facilities in Government schools are not up to the mark as illustrated by Table 2 above. This can be said to be one of the reasons for children and parents to gradually move towards private institutions.

41 Elementary Education in India: Progress Towards UEE - Flash Statistics, NUEPA & GoI, New Delhi, 2005-06 to 2015-16; available at [http://udise.in/Downloads/Publications/Documents/Flash_Statistics-2015-16_\(Elementary\).pdf](http://udise.in/Downloads/Publications/Documents/Flash_Statistics-2015-16_(Elementary).pdf) last accessed on 20.11.2017

This along with the stratified education system is not only weakening the public system of education in the country but is also leading to more and more inequalities in the society.

As recommended by the Education Commission, Common School System is the sole means through which the public education system can be strengthened in a way so as to achieve social and national integration by overcoming the existing disparities. The common school must be opened to all children irrespective of caste, creed, community and economic or social status. As observed by the Education Commission and quoted by the CSSC in its report, "In its first place, a neighbourhood school will provide good education to children because sharing life with common people is an essential ingredient of good education. Secondly, the establishment of such schools will compel rich, privileged and powerful classes to take interest in the system of public education and thereby bring about its early improvement".⁴²

The Common School System acts as a tool for social transformation. It will weaken the disparity and inequality in education as well as destroy all the discriminatory walls created by caste, creed, class and social and economic status or gender bias prevalent in our education system. Thus, the Education Commission (1964-66) had recommended a Common School System of Public Education as the basis of building the National System of Education with a view to "bring the different social classes and groups together and thus promote the emergence of an egalitarian and integrated society." The Commission warned that "instead of doing so, education itself is tending to increase social segregation and to perpetuate and widen class distinctions." It further noted that "this is bad not only for the children of the poor but also for the children of the rich and the privileged groups" since "by segregating their children, such privileged parents prevent them from sharing the life and experiences of the children of the poor and coming into contact with the realities of life and also render the education of their own children anaemic and incomplete."

Thus, it is the need of the hour to take effective measures to implement the provisions of National Policy on Education, 1968 and National Policy on Education, 1986 in regard to Common School System. To this end, disparities between schools should be ended as early as possible by upgrading the quality of ordinary schools and providing amenities for achieving minimum levels of learning. Both the Centre and the State should take determined action in this regard. The privileged schools should accept social accountability by sharing their facilities and resources with other institutions, taking up

42 CSSC Report, 2007 Chapter 3 para 10.18

community activities, and facilitating access to children of the disadvantaged groups. If these evils are to be eliminated and the education system is to become a powerful instrument of national development in general, and social and national integration in particular, we must move towards the goal of a common school system of public education.⁴³

43 Education Commission, 1966

Common School System – Proposed changes in the existing 10+2 Structure⁴⁴

As already stated, the issue of privatisation and commercialisation of education can be addressed only with the establishment of the Common School System with the Government as the sole provider of education. With the goal of achieving universal equitable quality education to all children across the country, we strongly advocate the establishment of a common school system with the following organisational structure:

→ Lower Primary Schools

- The lower primary education be divided into three grades as follows:
 - Grade 0 comprising of pre-primary classes LKG and UKG.
 - Grade 1 comprising of Classes I and II.
 - Grade 2 comprising of Classes III and IV.
- A Lower Primary School (LPS) comprising of Grades 0, 1 and 2 shall be established at the habitation level i.e., every village or hamlet in the rural setup and every area in the urban setup.
- The Lower Primary School so established shall have the following facilities:
 - One classroom for each Grade.
 - The school shall be established on a minimum of 1 acre land which shall be completely utilised for school purposes.
 - The facility of mid-day meals shall be available in the school in accordance with the Mid-day Meal Scheme and as contemplated by the RTE Act.

⁴⁴ The proposed structure has been derived and developed on the basis of the structure proposed in CCL's Kannada Publication "sama samaajakkaagi samaana Shaalaa ShikShaNa"

- The school shall comprise of a store room.
 - The school shall have a fully equipped library open for the use of children.
 - The school should have separate useable toilets for girls and boys that are useable by children with special needs.
 - There shall be the facility of safe drinking water in the school.
 - Each school shall have playground along with a separate space for indoor games.
 - Each school shall have facilities to provide easy access and usage to children with special needs.
 - There shall be the availability of an office, a staff room and a head-teacher's room (each separate).
 - The school shall also comprise of all those infrastructural facilities as mandated by the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.
- There shall be a minimum of 3 teachers in the school with minimum one teacher for each Grade.
 - At least one teacher shall be from Science background.
 - The school shall have minimum one attendant and one clerk.
 - There shall be so many mid-day meal workers as necessary according to the law.
 - The school shall conform to all the other norms under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.

→ **Anganawadi Centre in the LPS Premises**

- The Anganawadi centres established under the ICDS scheme shall function in the premises of the Lower Primary School so as to enable the pre-school education of children in the age group of 3 to 6 years (Grade 0).
- The functioning of the Anganawadi centres will continue to be under the auspices of the Department of Women and Child Development in accordance with the ICDS scheme.
- Care shall be taken so as to ensure that the care component which forms a vital function of the Anganawadi Centres is not lost.
- The Anganawadi centres shall be rationalised in the lines of crèches/day-care

centres accessible to all children in the age-group of 0 to 6 years with in-built education component without any compromise on the care component and nursing of children.

- ☐ Children in the age-group of 0-3 years will be completely under the care of Anganawadi cum Day-care centres.
- ☐ Children in the age group of 3 to 6 years will obtain education in the Lower Primary School under Grade 0 while their health, nutrition and other care will be looked over by the Anganawadi cum Day-care centres.
- The Anganawadi cum crèches/day-care centres shall be equipped with the following staff:
 - ☐ Trained personnel who can provide informal pre-school teaching to children in the age group of 0 to 3 years and enable the early stimulation of all children up to 6 years of age.
 - ☐ At least 1 trained health worker.
 - ☐ Adequate number of attendants.
- The Anganawadi cum crèches/day-care centres shall be established on a minimum of 4 Guntas land area and comprise of the following minimum infrastructure:
 - ☐ Learning space – adequate rooms for learning with adequate space.
 - ☐ Resting area
 - ☐ Kitchen
 - ☐ Indoor and Outdoor playing areas with age-appropriate play materials
 - ☐ Safe drinking water
 - ☐ Separate useable toilets for boys and girls.
 - ☐ Strong and safe building with compound wall
 - ☐ Electricity supply
- The Anganawadi cum crèches/day-care centres are to provide for the following basic facilities in addition to the services under ICDS:
 - ☐ Nutritional support for expecting and lactating mothers
 - ☐ Nutritional and health care support for children in the age-group of 0 to 6 years.
 - ☐ Informal Pre-school education for children from 1 to 3 years

- ☐ Assistance in immunisation and vaccination services for all children
- ☐ Emergency medication
- ☐ Age-appropriate toys, play and learning materials
- ☐ Child friendly environment to enable early stimulation of children.

→ **Higher Primary and High School**

- A school shall be established in each Gram Panchayat or Ward, as the case may be, comprising of higher primary through secondary school i.e., from Class V to Class XII. In other words, a Higher Primary School along with High School and Pre-university College shall be established at the Gram Panchayat or Ward level known as the Gram Panchayat/ Ward Public School.
- The school shall be established on minimum 3 acres of land, the whole of which shall be the property of the school.
- The school shall comprise of the following facilities:
 - ☐ One classroom for each class and for every 40 students.
 - ☐ The school shall have a fully equipped library open for the use of children.
 - ☐ The school should have separate useable toilets for girls and boys that are useable by children with special needs.
 - ☐ There shall be the facility of safe drinking water in the school.
 - ☐ Each school shall entail a strong and safe building with a compound wall and CWSN-friendly facilities to provide them free and safe access.
 - ☐ Each school shall have playground along with a separate space for indoor games.
 - ☐ There shall be the availability of an office, a staff room and a head-teacher's room (each separate).
 - ☐ The facility of mid-day meals shall be available in the school in accordance with the Mid-day Meal Scheme and as contemplated by the RTE Act.
 - ☐ The school shall comprise of a store room, kitchen and dining area.
 - ☐ There shall be a computer lab and science and other labs with adequate number of all necessary equipment in each such school.
 - ☐ Spaces for NCC, Scouts and Guides, Arts and Crafts, Agricultural and gardening skills, physical education and other co-curricular and extra-

curricular activities shall be made available in the school.

- ☐ There shall be an auditorium, a convention centre and adequate space for resting.
- ☐ The school shall have the supply of electricity, telephone and e-mail facilities.
- ☐ The school shall also comprise of all those infrastructural facilities as mandated by the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.
- Teachers
 - ☐ One teacher for every 40 students shall be appointed in the school.
 - ☐ There shall be present subject-wise and class-wise teachers.
 - ☐ One teacher each for Physical Education, Art, Music, Computer Science etc., shall be there in each such school.
 - ☐ All the teachers shall be permanent full-time staff.
- The Gram Panchayat/ Ward Public School shall comprise of hostel facilities with separate hostels for boys and girls. The hostels shall have minimum basic facilities like safe drinking water, sufficient number of useable toilets, electricity, food and other health safety measures.
- The school shall also comprise of residential quarters for teachers and other staff.
- The school shall employ as many helpers and attendants as necessary based on the number of students in the school.
- The school shall employ one clerk of 1st Grade and two each of 2nd and 4th Grades.
- Travel facilities for the students and teachers of the school are to be provided.
- The land available in the school premises shall be used for organic farming to grow fruits and vegetables that are necessary for the preparation of mid-day meals with the assistance of the high school children and the students of higher primary school to the extent possible.
- The school shall conform to all the other norms under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.

Functioning of schools under the Common School System

→ Universal Enrolment

The main goal of the Common School System is to provide quality education to all children and attain universal enrolment. In this direction, the following measures will be put in place:

- The mapping of schools is to be done at fixed intervals and the public is to be informed about the school in which the children of a particular locality can be enrolled.
- All children are to be compulsorily enrolled in the neighbourhood school.
- Steps are to be taken to ensure non-discrimination of children during admission and then later in the school.
- If any case of transfer of a child from one place to another arises, it is to be immediately communicated to the concerned authorities and the child is to be provided admission without any delay in the school of that new place to which transferred.

→ Feeder Schools

- A feeder primary school is a primary school within a designated area, which works in conjunction with a secondary school within that area in order to facilitate the placing of children upon reaching the appropriate age for secondary school. Feeder schools are those which feed students through from nursery to primary and then onto secondary education, depending on the schools operating within that system in a particular area.

- Under the Common School System,
 - All children enrolled in the Anganawadi centre shall directly obtain admission in the corresponding Lower Primary School. In other words, these children are not required to apply for admission in the school.
 - Likewise, all lower primary schools within the Panchayat/ Ward shall act as Feeder Schools for the Gram Panchayat/ Ward Public School wherein all children studying in the lower primary schools of the Gram Panchayat/ Ward shall directly obtain admission for Class V in their respective Gram Panchayat/ Ward Public School. No fresh admission process shall be required for the enrolment of these children for higher primary classes.
- The schools under the Common School System shall be co-owned by the Government and the Community with both of them being responsible for the management and administration of the schools. The Government will be the sole provider of education through the medium of Government schools with the community participation which is of equal importance. The schools will operate with the neighbourhood principle and they will provide and promote inclusive education.
- **School Management Committees**
 - A School Management Committee comprising of parents of children studying in the school, teachers, children, Gram Panchayat/ ward representative shall be constituted in each Gram Panchayat/ Ward Public School in lines with the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.
 - The Committee so constituted shall, inter-alia, be responsible for monitoring the management and effective functioning of the school, managing and overseeing the proper utilisation of the funds received by the school, ensuring universal enrolment in the panchayat/ ward and perform any other functions as may be prescribed under the law.
- All the rules and norms relating to education as contemplated under the Constitution of India, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 and the corresponding rules, regulations, notifications and bye-laws shall apply to all the schools under the Common School System.

Common School System at the Gram Panchayat Level

Common School System in simple words implies state-funded education. The State is both guarantor and regulator of education which is not only a fundamental human right but also a noble cause. Provision of basic education free of costs is not only a core obligation of the State; but also a moral imperative.⁴⁵

Indian Administrative System – Panchayat Raj Institutions

In India, a decentralised form of administration and governance is followed. At local level, decentralised planning is being carried out by Institutions of Self-Governance which are known locally as Panchayat Raj Institutions. The main responsibility of these Panchayat Raj Institutions is to accelerate the pace of development and involve all people in this process so that the needs of the people and their aspirations for development are fulfilled.

Panchayat Raj is a system of governance which comprises the basic unit of administration. The 73rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution gave Constitutional status to the Panchayat Raj Institutions. It introduced a three tier system of governance under the Panchayat Raj Institutions and appended the 11th Schedule to the Constitution which broadly defined the functions of these bodies.

The passing of the Constitution (Seventy - Third Amendment) Act, 1992 defined the powers of the State Governments vis-a-vis the Panchayat Raj Institutions. In order to implement these constitutional standards, the Government of Karnataka enacted the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act, 1993 replacing the earlier enactments on the Panchayat

⁴⁵ Report on Privatisation of Education by UN Special Rapporteur on Right to Education, September 2014; available at <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N14/546/82/PDF/N1454682.pdf?OpenElement>

Raj Institutions. The 1993 Act came into force on 10th May, 1993. The Act established three tier Panchayat Raj Institutions:

1. Gram Panchayat at the Village level
2. Taluk Panchayat at the Taluk or block level
3. Zilla Panchayat at the District level.

Panchayat Raj Institutions and Decentralised Education Management

The Constitution visualises Panchayats as institutions of self-governance. With about 3 million elected representatives at all levels of the Panchayat, it is one of the biggest democracies in the world where village level democratic structures are functioning for their development. The Indian Constitution in its XI Schedule defines the powers and functions of the Panchayat Raj Institutions at various levels. Entry 17 of the XI Schedule to the Indian Constitution makes it the responsibility of the Panchayat institutions to provide education, including primary and secondary schools, within its limits when read with Article 243G of the Constitution. Further, the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act, 1993 makes it the duty of the Gram Panchayats to ensure completion of primary education by all children within the Panchayat vide Section 58 read with Schedule I of the Act.

Additionally, with the enactment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 ensuring the right to quality education of children, the responsibility of the implementation of the Act is given to the local authorities at the fundamental level. The local authorities in the Indian setup include the Gram Panchayats, Taluk Panchayats and Zilla Panchayats as discussed above.

According to the Indian Constitution, Panchayats should be given powers and authority to function as institutions of self-government. It, thus, requires all state governments to revitalise local representative institutions. Powers and responsibilities are delegated to Panchayats at the appropriate level. With the Gram Panchayats being at the fundamental level of the Panchayat Raj System, the Gram Panchayats are considered to be the first level of self-government which is directly involved with the community. Hence, the Gram Panchayats are entrusted with various basic functions which are key to rural development, one of which is education.

Common School System at Gram Panchayat level

As already discussed, Gram Panchayats are the first level of self-government. Hence, the establishment of Common School System starts at this level.

Each Gram Panchayat comprises of certain number of habitations within its limits. Under the proposed Common School System, there will be a Lower Primary School established in each habitation and one Higher Primary School along with High School will be established for the entire Gram Panchayat as the Gram Panchayat Public School.

The advantages of such a system can be briefed as follows:

- All the students distributed amongst the various schools within the Gram Panchayat will be attending one school thereby a considerable student strength can be achieved in the school instead of a handful of children spread out in nominal numbers to different schools.
- This will also facilitate in providing all the necessary facilities to the school by mobilising the budget allotted for educational purpose and concentration of the budget on one single school with significant student strength rather than breaking it up for different schools with very less or no students.
- This system will help in the appointment of subject-wise and class-wise teachers as is necessary and which is posing as a big challenge in the current system.
- The problem of availability of land can be overcome.
- This system will create a more inclusive environment wherein children from all strata of the society will be educated together in one space thereby upholding the socialist and secular ideals of the Constitution of India as opposed to the existing stratified, discriminatory and disintegrated system of education. Equality of all and fraternity among all can be achieved by making justice the universal norm.

The situation can be best explained with illustrations. Hence, let us consider 5 Gram Panchayats from the Ramanagara District of State of Karnataka for illustrating the establishment of the common school system and benefits of the same.

Study to illustrate the establishment of Common School System at the Gram Panchayat Level

A small scale study was undertaken to understand the dynamics of establishing the proposed structure of the Common School System. A brief description of the study and the consequential findings can be stated as follows.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to understand the intricacies of establishing the afore-proposed structure of the Common School System at the Gram Panchayat level.

Other underlying objectives included:

- Understanding the magnitude of enrolment in Government schools.
- Studying the extent of implementation of the principles and norms under Right to Education Act, 2009 in government schools.
- Understanding the financial dynamics of Government schools in terms of budget allotment by the Government.
- Examining the availability of information relating to children and their education in the Gram Panchayats.

Scope and Methodology

- The study was conducted in the Ramanagara District of the State of Karnataka.
- Doctrinal researches as well as the field research methods were adopted during the study.
- *Sampling*
 - o Random sampling method was adopted to select one Gram Panchayat from each taluk in the District. The Bannikuppe(B) Gram Panchayat from Ramanagara Taluk was also included in the study by virtue of it being the field of operation of the Centre.
 - o All schools from primary to higher secondary within the selected Gram Panchayat were subjects of the study.
 - o A brief outlay of the study sampling is as follows:

<i>Number of Gram Panchayats</i>	5
Number of Lower Primary Schools	38
Number of Higher Primary Schools	20
Number of High Schools	12
Number of Pre-University Colleges	2
<i>Total number of schools covered from I std. to XII std.</i>	72

- *Respondents*
 - o At the school level, the head-teacher of each school was interviewed to collect data regarding that school.

- o The Gram Panchayat President of each Gram Panchayat was interviewed to understand the over educational status within the Gram Panchayat.
- Tools
 - o Two structured questionnaires for the collection of data from the Head-teachers of schools and the Gram Panchayat President were prepared for collection of data.
- *Data Collection*
 - o One-on-one interviews were conducted with the Head-teachers and the Gram Panchayat Presidents to collect the primary data in the format of the questionnaire prepared.
 - o Secondary data available from government websites and district websites were also made use of.
 - o Study of various research reports, newspaper articles and scholarly articles relating to right to education and common school system were also undertaken.

Findings of the Study

The primary data was collected from 72 schools from 5 Gram Panchayats in the Ramanagara District through structured questionnaires. The data was collected primarily to assess the enrolment and infrastructure of government schools and how the Common School System can help improve the condition of these schools.

Infrastructural Facilities in Government Schools

- The infrastructural facilities in the Government Schools are not up to the mark as portrayed in Figures 1 and 2.
- While considerable number of lower primary schools have safe and strong building, compound wall, separate toilets for boys and girls, kitchen and utensils, most of the schools lack basic facilities like sufficient number of classrooms, safe drinking water, playground, staffroom, head-teacher room, facilities for children with special needs, library, storeroom and sports room.
- While 9 out of 38 Lower Primary Schools were found to be single-teacher schools, only 1 Higher Primary School was found to have class-wise teachers.

However, PTR is maintained in all 19 Higher Primary Schools and in 29 out of 38 lower primary schools.

- Attenders and Clerks were seen to be appointed only in high schools. It was found that none of the lower primary schools had an attender or a clerk while only 1 Higher Primary School had an attender. However, it is a different scenario in high schools. 2 and 5 schools out of 7 high schools had attenders and clerks respectively.
- It was found that 9 out of 38 lower primary schools had desks and benches and teaching and learning materials and play materials are available in 14 and 8 schools respectively. Likewise, while 6 out of 19 higher primary schools were found to have age-appropriate desks and benches and TLM, none of the higher primary schools were found to have sufficient number of age-appropriate play materials. Similarly, 6, 5 and 5 out of 7 high schools had sufficient number of age-appropriate desks and benches, TLM and play materials respectively.
- The figures below clearly indicate that much attention is needed in the direction of improvement of infrastructural facilities in government schools.

Figure 1: Infrastructure in 38 Government Lower Primary Schools

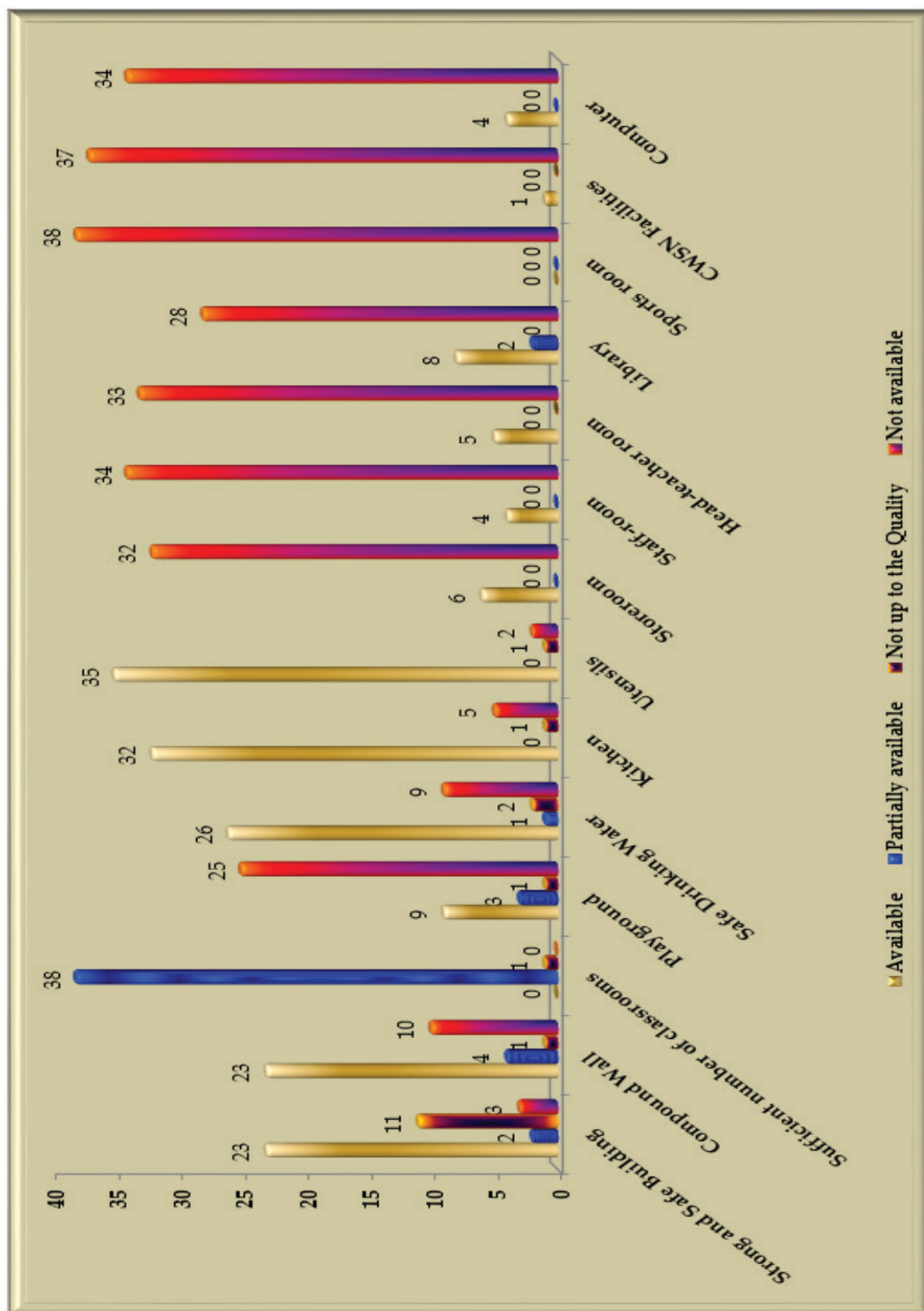


Figure 2: Infrastructure in 19 Government Higher Primary Schools

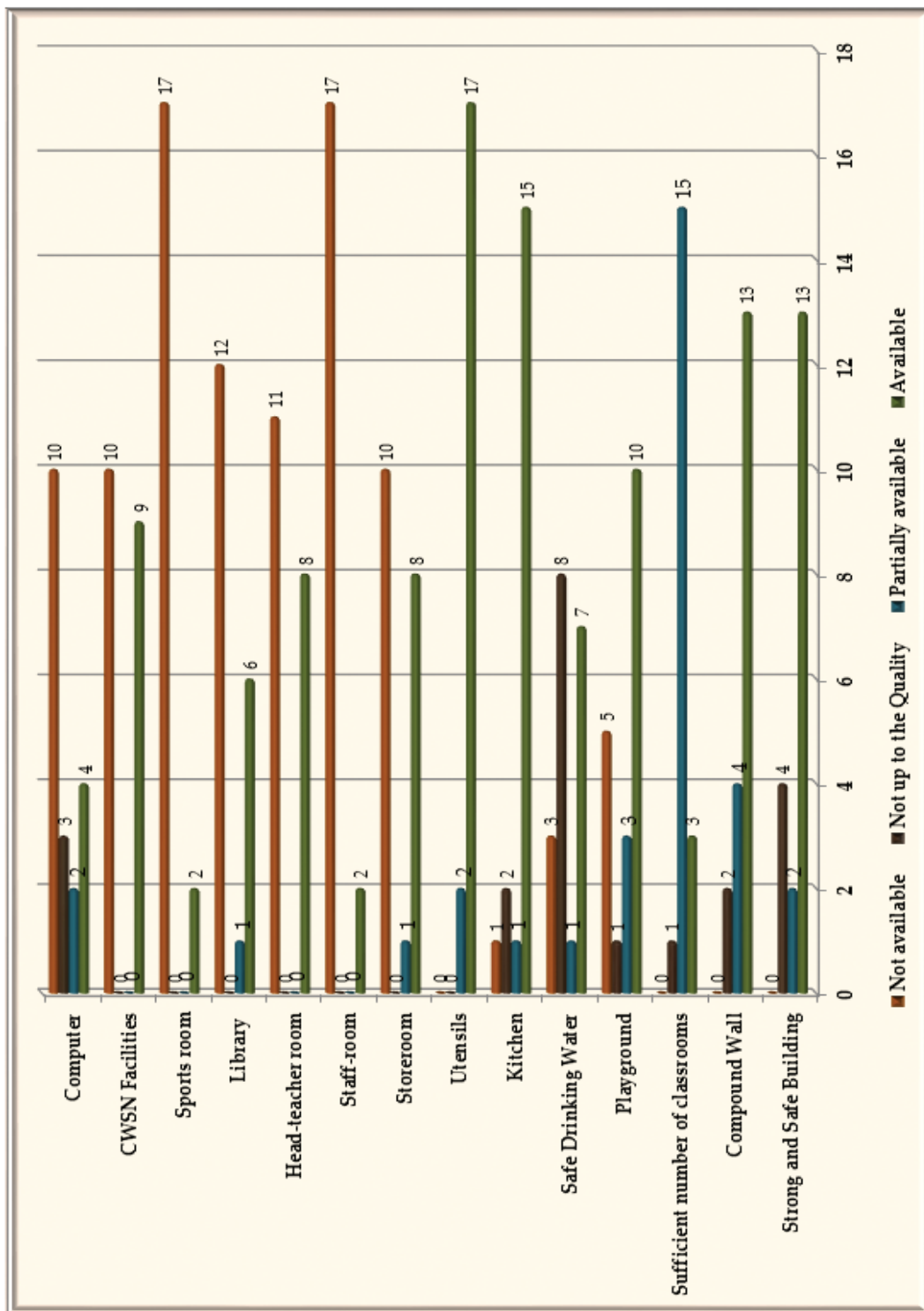
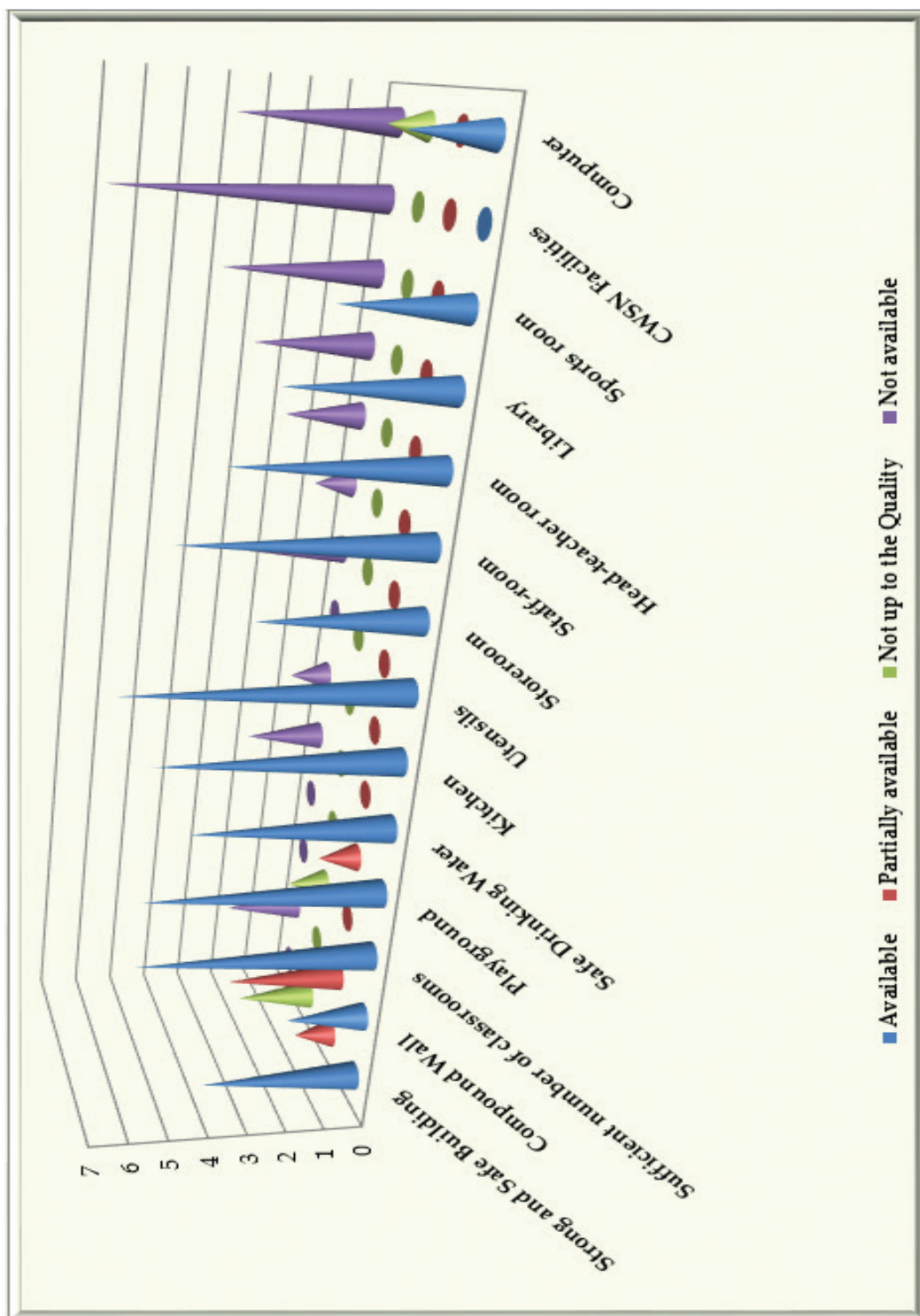


Figure 3: Infrastructure in 7 Government High Schools



Illustrating the Gram Panchayat Public School

Bannikuppe (B) Panchayat

Bannikuppe (B) Panchayat is located in the Ramanagara Taluk of the Ramanagara District in the Bidadi Hobli of the State of Karnataka. The Panchayat is located at a distance of 35 kms from Bangalore off Bangalore-Mysore Highway. The village of Bannikuppe is the headquarters of the Panchayat.

Bannikuppe (B) Panchayat is comprised of 26 habitations. Out of these 26 habitations, 8 are revenue villages while other 18 are hamlets. The Panchayat comprises of a geographical area of 3,492 hectares with a population of around 7,873.

The Bannikuppe (B) Gram Panchayat encloses a total of 15 schools and 16 Anganawadi centres. Amongst the 15 schools, 8 are Lower Primary Schools, 6 are Higher Primary Schools and 1 is a High School.

The details of enrolment for the academic year 2017 - 2018 of all Government schools in the Panchayat may be summarised as follows:

Table 3: Enrolment in Government Schools of Bannikuppe(B) Gram Panchayat

SI No.	Village Name	Kind of School	Number of Children Enrolled in 2017 - 2018		
			Male	Female	Total
1	Borehalli LPS	LPS	6	3	9
2	Bettangere LPS	LPS	10	13	23
3	Mutturayanapura LPS	LPS	9	3	12
4	K. Karenahalli LPS	LPS	10	9	19
5	Siddabhovipalya LPS	LPS	7	15	22
6	Mutturayanagudipalya LPS	LPS	13	14	27
7	Kempadyapanahalli LPS	LPS	11	11	22
8	Jadenahalli LPS	LPS	1	4	5
9	Vajarahalli HPS	HPS	7	9	16
10	Bairagi Colony HPS	HPS	18	22	40
11	Bannikuppe HPS	HPS	38	41	79
12	Kakaramanahalli HPS	HPS	20	20	40
13	Hakki-Pikki Colony HPS	HPS	19	24	43
14	Gankal HPS	HPS	35	38	73
15	Gankal High School	High School	47	46	93

Source: Survey conducted by FEP, CCL - NLSIU as in August, 2017

Considering only the students of HPS and High School (Classes V to X), the enrolment data is as follows:

Table 4: Enrolment in Classes V to X in Bannikuppe(B) Gram Panchayat

Sl No.	School Name	Number of Children Enrolled in 2017 - 2018		
		Boys	Girls	Total
1.	Vajarahalli HPS	1	5	6
2.	Bairagi Colony HPS	8	11	19
3.	Bannikuppe HPS	16	25	41
4.	Kakaramanahalli HPS	13	13	26
5.	Hakki-Pikki Colony HPS	10	16	26
6.	Gankal HPS	24	30	54
7.	Ganakal High School	47	46	93
TOTAL		119	146	265

From the above table, it can be seen that each HPS comprises of only a handful of students enrolled. However, the infrastructure and the facilities to be provided to all the schools are the same. Though in principle it is true that all the basic facilities are to be provided to all children in all schools, practically it is not feasible to spend huge amount of money for schools which have very less or no student strength. It will be practically very difficult to achieve this. Hence, if one single Public School comprising of classes V to XII is established for the entire Bannikuppe (B) Gram Panchayat, instead of 6 different HPS and another separate High School, all the 265 eligible students will be attending this one school and an opportunity can also be created for these children to continue their studies till class XII without much difficulty. Also, significant student strength of around 265 students will be ensured in the school.

A similar scenario pertains to the availability of number of teachers in the schools.

The number of teachers in Higher Primary and High Schools of the Bannikuppe(B) Panchayat are as follows:

Table 5: Number of Teachers in HPS and High Schools of Bannikuppe(B) Gram Panchayat

Sl No.	School Name	Number of Teachers for 2017-2018		
		Male	Female	Total
1.	Vajarahalli HPS	0	3	3
2.	Bairagi Colony HPS	0	4	4
3.	Bannikuppe HPS	3	2	5
4.	Kakaramanahalli HPS	3	1	4
5.	Hakki-Pikki Colony HPS	1	3	4
6.	Gankal HPS	0	4	4
7.	Ganakal High School	5	3	8
TOTAL		12	20	32

Source: Survey conducted by FEP, CCL - NLSIU as in August, 2017

The above table clearly portrays that each HPS has a nominal number of teachers which are not sufficient to provide subject-wise and class-wise teachers in the schools. However, if all the schools are merged and one Public School for the Panchayat is established, all 24 teachers can be appointed in this school. Along with these 24 teachers, 8 teachers of the High School will also be working in the same Public School. As a result, the Bannikuppe(B) Public School will comprise of a total of 32 teachers. This will enable for the appointment of subject-wise and class-wise teachers and also meet the Pupil-Teacher Ratio.

Further, considering the budget point of view, it is a known reality that the money allotted for the maintenance of each school is very less compared to the actual requirement. As a result, poor maintenance of government schools is the present state of affairs. This is one of the major reasons for the low admissions in government schools and consequent decline in the number of these schools. Same is the case with respect to the schools of the Bannikuppe(B) Gram Panchayat.

As already noted above, Bannikuppe(B) Panchayat has 6 Higher Primary Schools and 1 High School within its limits. As an account of division of the available nominal budget for maintenance of schools among 7 different schools, the money available for

each school is far less from the required amount as portrayed in the table below. Hence, it has been very difficult and to certain extent impossible to maintain these schools in a good manner and consequently, none of the 7 schools is up to the expected standards.

Table 6: Budget allocation for HPS and High Schools in Bannikuppe(B) Gram Panchayat

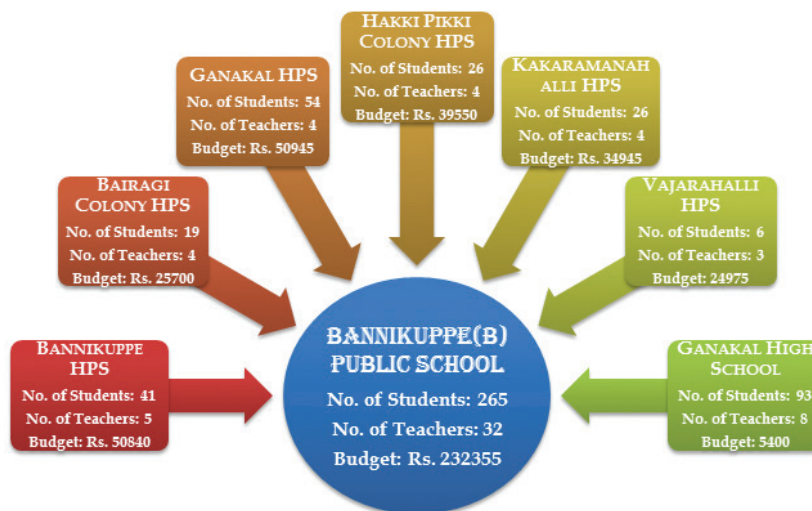
Sl No.	School Name	Budget allocated for the previous academic year	Purpose
1.	Vajarahalli HPS	24975	Maintenance, Uniform, Shoe-socks, Educational Programmes, School Budget
2.	Bairagi Colony HPS	25700	Maintenance, Uniform, Educational Programmes, School Budget
3.	Bannikuppe HPS	50840	Maintenance, Uniform, Shoe-socks, School Budget
4.	Kakaramanahalli HPS	34945	Maintenance, Uniform, Shoe-socks, School Budget
5.	Hakki-Pikki Colony HPS	39550	Maintenance, Uniform, Shoe-socks, Educational Programmes, School Budget
6.	Gankal HPS	50945	Maintenance, Uniform, Shoe-socks, School Budget
7.	Ganakal High School	5400	Uniforms
TOTAL		232355	

Source: Survey conducted by FEP, CCL - NLSIU as in August, 2017

On the other hand, if all these 7 schools are merged and one Public school for the Panchayat comprising of Classes V to XII is established as necessitated by the Common School System, the combined budget of around Rs. 2,32,355/- available for all these schools can be completely utilised for the proper functioning of this one school. This will facilitate the provision of all the necessary basic facilities in the school as entailed by the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 and the corresponding rules and other policies.

The above scenario can be graphically portrayed as follows:

Figure 4: Bannikuppe(B) Public School



Harisandra Panchayat

Harisandra Panchayat is located in the Ramanagara Taluk of the Ramanagara District in the Kasaba Hobli of the State of Karnataka. The Panchayat is located at a distance of 9 Kms from the District and Taluk Headquarters. The Panchayat includes 21 habitations out of which, 4 are revenue villages and 17 are hamlets. The Panchayat comprises of a geographical area of 3,492 hectares with a population of around 7,780.

The Harisandra Gram Panchayat encloses a total of 17 schools and 13 Anganawadi centres. Amongst the 17 schools, 9 are Lower Primary Schools, 5 are Higher Primary Schools and 3 are High Schools.

The details of enrolment for the academic year 2017 - 2018 of all Government schools in the Panchayat may be summarised as follows:

Table 7: Enrolment in Government Schools of Harisandra Gram Panchayat

Sl No.	Village Name	Kind of School	Number of Children Enrolled in 2017 - 2018		
			Male	Female	Total
1	LPS Bejjarahallikatte	LPS	4	6	10
2	GLPS Chikkegowdanadoddi	LPS	5	12	17
3	GLPS Hanumantegowdanadoddi	LPS	9	8	17

4	LPS Hallimaala	LPS	13	13	26
5	LPS Jeegenahalli	LPS	24	25	49
6	LPS Madara Saabaradoddi	LPS	16	10	26
7	LPS Ramagiri	LPS	22	11	33
8	Govt Urdu LPS Vaderahalli	LPS	5	4	9
9	LPS Tibbegowdanadoddi	LPS	5	4	9
10	GHPS Harisandra	HPS	13	13	26
11	GHPS Padarahalli	HPS	37	33	70
12	GHPS Palabovidoddi	HPS	35	32	67
13	GHPS Timmegowdanadoddi	HPS	32	18	50
14	GHPS Vaderahalli	HPS	31	26	57
15	Govt. High School Padarahalli	High School	41	46	87
16	Govt. High School Harisandra	High School	36	45	81

Source: Survey conducted by FEP, CCL - NLSIU as in August, 2017

Considering only the students of HPS and High School (Classes V to X), the enrolment data is as follows:

Table 8: Enrolment in Classes V to X in Harisandra Gram Panchayat

SI No.	School Name	Number of Children Enrolled in 2017 - 2018		
		Boys	Girls	Total
1	GHPS Harisandra	13	13	26
2	GHPS Padarahalli	25	25	50
3	GHPS Palabovidoddi	23	14	37
4	GHPS Timmegowdanadoddi	16	10	26
5	GHPS Vaderahalli	23	21	44
6	Govt. High School Padarahalli	48	39	87
7	Govt. High School Harisandra	36	45	81
TOTAL		184	167	351

The number of teachers in Higher Primary and High Schools of the Harisandra Panchayat are as follows:

Table 9: Number of Teachers in HPS and High Schools of Harisandra Gram Panchayat

Sl No.	School Name	Number of Teachers for 2017-2018		
		Male	Female	Total
1	GHPS Harisandra	0	2	2
2	GHPS Padarahalli	1	3	4
3	GHPS Palabovidoddi	1	4	5
4	GHPS Timmegowdanadoddi	2	2	4
5	GHPS Vaderahalli	1	3	4
6	Govt. High School Padarahalli	2	6	8
7	Govt. High School Harisandra	2	4	6
TOTAL		9	24	33

Source: Survey conducted by FEP, CCL - NLSIU as in August, 2017

The budget allocations for these schools are as follows:

Table 10: Budget allocation for HPS and High Schools in Harisandra Gram Panchayat

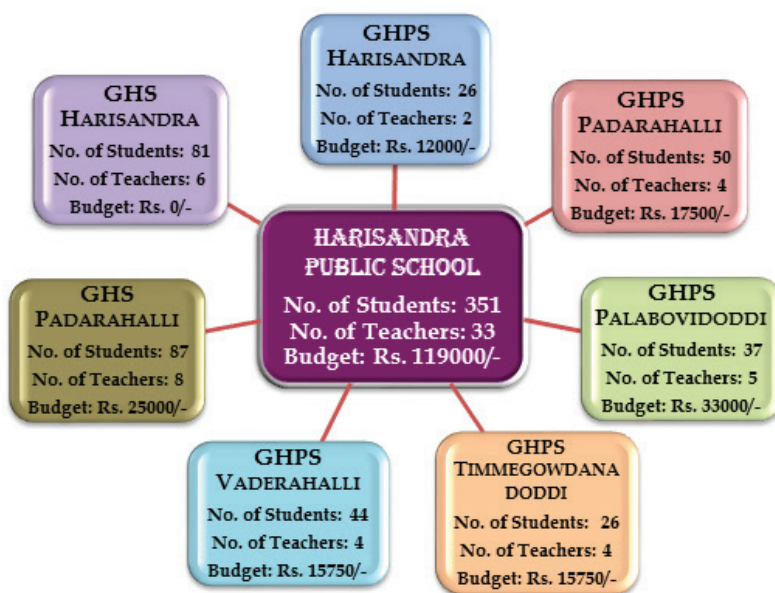
Sl No.	School Name	Budget allocated for 2017-2018	Purpose
1	GHPS Harisandra	12000	Maintenance, SDMC
2	GHPS Padarahalli	17500	SDMC
3	GHPS Palabovidoddi	33000	Utensils, Maintenance, SDMC for uniform and shoe-socks
4	GHPS Timmegowdanadoddi	15750	Maintenance, SDMC
5	GHPS Vaderahalli	15750	Maintenance, SDMC
6	Govt. High School Padarahalli	25000	SSA
7	Govt. High School Harisandra	0	No Grants received in 2017-2018
TOTAL		119000	

Source: Survey conducted by FEP, CCL - NLSIU as in August, 2017

The above picture clearly portrays the trifling number of children and teachers in each of the 7 schools. The budget allocation is also nominal for each school. However, if one Public School comprising of classes V to XII as entailed by the Common School System is established in the Panchayat combining these 7 schools, the enrolment and the number of teachers will raise to 351 and 33 respectively. This will enable the provision of class-wise and subject-wise teachers and also address the issue of low enrolment rates in government schools. Also, the pooling in of the budget allocated to these 8 schools to this one Public school will ensure the availability of around Rs. 1,19,000/- (at the current rate) for the effective functioning of the school each year. This kind of budget will facilitate the provision of good quality facilities in the school and also the availability of more number of teachers will help improve the quality of education. This might also attract the 102 children of the Panchayat who are currently studying in an aided school to this Public School thereby further increasing the enrolment in the school.

The above scenario can be graphically portrayed as follows:

Figure 5: Harisandra Public School



Hanchikuppe Panchayat

Hanchikuppe Panchayat is located in the Magadi Taluk of the Ramanagara District in the Madbal Hobli of the State of Karnataka. The Panchayat is located at a distance of

10 kms from the Taluk Headquarters and around 25 kms from the District Headquarters. The Panchayat includes 32 habitations out of which, 11 are revenue villages and 21 are hamlets. The panchayat also houses 7 wards. The Panchayat comprises of a geographical area of 5474.49 hectares with a population of around 6543.

The Hanchikuppe Gram Panchayat encloses a total of 14 schools and 11 Anganawadi centres. Amongst the 14 schools, 9 are Lower Primary Schools, 3 are Higher Primary Schools and 2 High Schools. 1 Government Pre-university College is also present in the Panchayat.

The details of enrolment for the academic year 2017 - 2018 of all Government schools in the Panchayat may be summarised as follows:

Table 11: Enrolment in Government Schools of Hanchikuppe Gram Panchayat

Sl No.	Village Name	Kind of School	Number of Children Enrolled in 2017 - 2018		
			Male	Female	Total
1	GLPS Aane Kempayyanadoddi	LPS	3	3	6
2	GLPS Avverahalli	LPS	4	1	5
3	GLPS Guddahalli	LPS	6	9	15
4	GLPS K.V.Tandya	LPS	9	7	16
5	Urdu LPS Hanchikuppe	LPS	3	7	10
6	GLPS Jodagatte	LPS	8	9	17
7	GLPS Maaregowdanadoddi	LPS	4	10	14
8	GLPS Nayakanapalya	LPS	13	8	21
9	GLPS Savandurga	LPS	3	2	5
10	GHPS Karalamangala	HPS	8	14	22
11	GHPS Manchanabele	HPS	25	28	53
12	Govt. Model HPS Veeregowdanadoddi	HPS	51	56	107
13	Govt. High School Manchanabele	High School	33	52	85
14	Govt. High School Veeregowdanadoddi	High School	49	67	116
15	Govt. PU College Manchanabele	PUC	19	27	46

Source: Survey conducted by FEP, CCL - NLSIU as in August, 2017

Considering only the students of HPS, High School and Pre-University College (Classes V to XII), the enrolment data is as follows:

Table 12: Enrolment in Classes V to X in Hanchikuppe Gram Panchayat

Sl No.	School Name	Number of Children Enrolled in 2017 - 2018		
		Boys	Girls	Total
1	GHPs Karalamangala	5	7	12
2	GHPs Manchanabele	16	19	35
3	Govt. Model HPS Veeregowdanadoddi	36	41	77
4	Govt. High School Manchanabele	33	52	85
5	Govt. High School Veeregowdanadoddi	49	67	116
6	Govt. PU College Manchanabele	19	27	46
TOTAL		158	213	371

The number of teachers in Higher Primary and High Schools of the Hanchikuppe Panchayat are as follows:

Table 13: Number of Teachers in HPS and High Schools of Hanchikuppe Gram Panchayat

Sl No.	School Name	Number of Teachers for 2017-2018		
		Male	Female	Total
1	GHPs Karalamangala	3	2	5
2	GHPs Manchanabele	2	2	4
3	Govt. Model HPS Veeregowdanadoddi	1	4	5
4	Govt. High School Manchanabele	2	6	8
5	Govt. High School Veeregowdanadoddi	2	4	6
TOTAL		10	18	28

Source: Survey conducted by FEP, CCL - NLSIU as in August, 2017

The budget allocations for these schools are as follows:

Table 14: Budget allocation for HPS and High Schools in Hanchikuppe Gram Panchayat

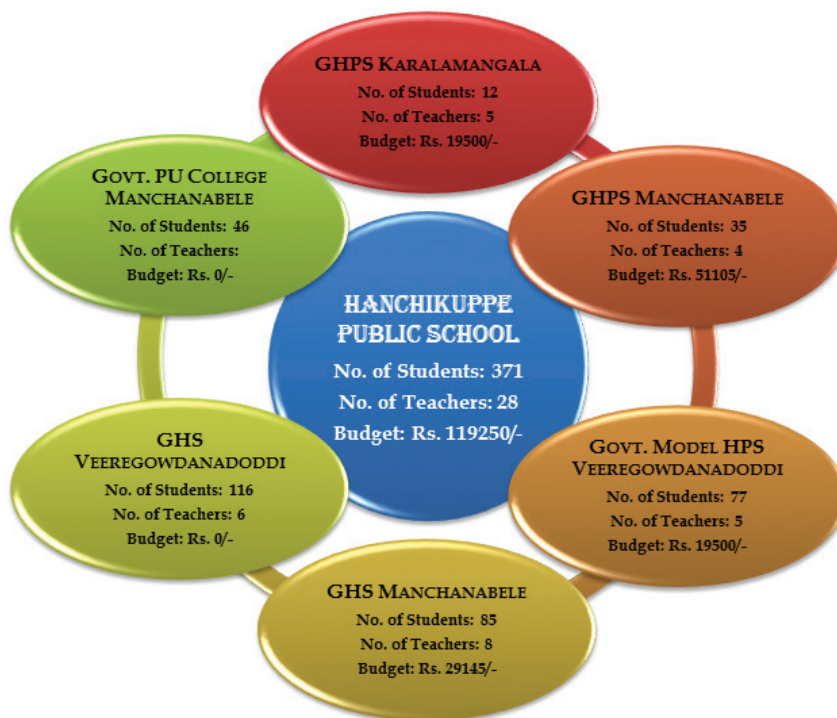
Sl No.	School Name	Budget allocated for the previous academic year	Purpose
1	GHPs Karalamangala	19500	Maintenance, SDMC
2	GHPs Manchanabele	51105	Maintenance, Utensils, Uniform, Shoe-socks, School Budget given to SDMC
3	Govt. Model HPS Veeregowdanadoddi	19500	SDMC
4	Govt. High School Manchanabele	29145	RMSA for Exam Fess, Uniform, Shoe-socks
5	Govt. High School Veeregowdanadoddi	0	No funds received in 2017-2018
6	Govt. PU College Manchanabele	0	No funds received in 2017-2018
TOTAL		119250	

Source: Survey conducted by FEP, CCL - NLSIU as in August, 2017

The above picture clearly portrays the small number of children and teachers in each of the 6 schools. The budget allocation is also nominal for each school. It is also to be noted that the budget is being released based on the necessity of the school and no fixed grants are being released for the school maintenance each year. However, if one Public School comprising of classes V to XII as entailed by the Common School System is established in the Panchayat combining these 6 schools, the enrolment and the number of teachers will raise to 371 and 28 respectively. Along with these 28 teachers, the teachers of Govt. PU College will also be working in the same school. This will enable the provision of class-wise and subject-wise teachers and also address the issue of low enrolment rates in government schools. Also, the pooling in of the budget allocated to these 6 schools to this one Public school will ensure the availability of around Rs. 119250/- at the current rate for the effective functioning of the school each year.

The above scenario can be graphically portrayed as follows:

Figure 6: Hanchikuppe Public School



Doddamaralavadi Panchayat

Doddamaralavadi Panchayat is located in the Kanakapura Taluk of the Ramanagara District in the Maralavadi Hobli of the State of Karnataka. The Panchayat is located at a distance of 18 kms from the Taluk Headquarters and around 49 kms from the District Headquarters. The Panchayat includes 17 habitations out of which, 2 are revenue villages while other 15 are hamlets. The Panchayat comprises of a population of around 8500.

The Doddamaralavadi Gram Panchayat encloses a total of 13 schools and 18 Anganawadi centres. Amongst the 13 schools, 7 are Lower Primary Schools, 2 are Higher Primary Schools and 4 High Schools. Among these only 1 HPS and 1 High School are Government Schools while the rest are aided or private schools. 1 Government Pre-university College is also present in the Panchayat.

The details of enrolment for the academic year 2017 - 2018 of all Government schools in the Panchayat may be summarised as follows:

**Table 15: Enrolment in Government Schools of Doddamaralavadi
Gram Panchayat**

Sl No.	Village Name	Kind of School	Number of Children Enrolled in 2017 - 2018		
			Male	Female	Total
1	GLPS Aanehosahalli	LPS	9	9	18
2	LPS Chikkamaralavaadi	LPS	5	4	9
3	GLPS Devarahalli	LPS	20	23	43
4	GULPS Doddamaralavaadi	LPS	5	4	9
5	GLPS Hanumanthapura	LPS	11	11	22
6	LPS Krishnabhovidoddi	LPS	7	7	14
7	GLPS Kulumedoddi	LPS	6	3	9
8	Govt. Model Primary School Doddamaralavaadi	HPS	99	109	208
9	Govt. High School, Doddamaralavaadi	High School	94	66	160
10	Govt. PU College, Doddamaralavaadi	PUC	21	22	43

Source: Survey conducted by FEP, CCL - NLSIU as in August, 2017

Considering only the students of HPS, High School and Pre-University College (Classes V to XII), the enrolment data is as follows:

**Table 16: Enrolment in Classes V to X in Doddamaralavadi
Gram Panchayat**

Sl No.	School Name	Number of Children Enrolled in 2017 - 2018		
		Boys	Girls	Total
1	Govt. Model Primary School Doddamaralavaadi	91	77	168
2	Govt. High School, Doddamaralavaadi	65	93	158
3	Govt. PU College, Doddamaralavaadi	21	22	43
TOTAL		177	192	369

The number of teachers in Higher Primary and High Schools of the Doddamaralavadi Panchayat are as follows:

Table 17: Number of Teachers in HPS and High Schools of Doddamaralavadi Gram Panchayat

Sl No.	School Name	Number of Teachers for 2017-2018		
		Male	Female	Total
1	Govt. Model Primary School Doddamaralavaadi	4	4	8
2	Govt. High School, Doddamaralavaadi	4	4	8
3	Govt. PU College, Doddamaralavaadi	2	5	7
TOTAL		10	13	23

Source: Survey conducted by FEP, CCL - NLSIU as in August, 2017

The budget allocations for these schools are as follows:

Table 18: Budget allocation for HPS and High Schools in Doddamaralavadi Gram Panchayat

Sl No.	School Name	Budget allocated for the previous academic year	Purpose
1	Govt. Model Primary School Doddamaralavaadi	22000	Maintenance, School Budget
2	Govt. High School, Doddamaralavaadi	31400	RMSA
3	Govt. PU College, Doddamaralavaadi	0	-
TOTAL		53400	

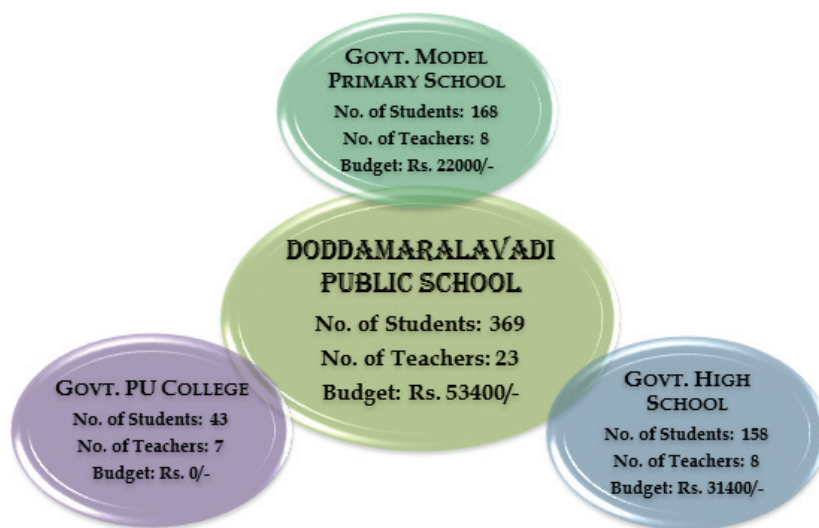
Source: Survey conducted by FEP, CCL - NLSIU as in August, 2017

The Doddamaralavaadi Gram Panchayat, unlike the other panchayats studied, has 1 HPS, 1 High School and 1 PU College for the entire Panchayat. The enrolment in these schools is also quite promising. However, when read with the fact that around 404 children of the Panchayat (from classes V to X) are studying in private-unaided

or government aided schools in the Panchayat, it sends a negative message about the government schools. The budget allocation to each of these schools is also nominal. However, if one Public School comprising of classes V to XII as entailed by the Common School System is established in the Panchayat combining these 3 schools not only the enrolment and the number of teachers will raise to 369 and 23 respectively but will also pave way for providing easy access along with better infrastructure in schools. The pooling in of the budget allocated to these 3 schools to this one Public school will ensure the availability of around Rs. 53,400/- for the effective functioning of the school each year as compared to half the amount per school as is available now.

The above scenario can be graphically portrayed as follows:

Figure 7: Doddamaralavadi Public School



Sulleri Gram Panchayat

Sulleri Gram Panchayat is located in the Channapattana Taluk of the Ramanagara District in the Virupakshapura Hobli of the State of Karnataka. The Panchayat is located at a distance of 12 kms from the Taluk Headquarters. The Panchayat includes a total of 9 habitations. The Panchayat comprises of a population of around 6238.

The Sulleri Gram Panchayat encloses a total of 11 schools and 13 Anganawadi centres. Amongst the 11 schools, 5 are Lower Primary Schools, 4 are Higher Primary Schools and 2 High Schools. Among the 2 High Schools, 1 is an Aided school.

The details of enrolment for the academic year 2017 - 2018 of all Government schools in the Panchayat may be summarised as follows:

Table 19: Enrolment in Government Schools of Sulleri Gram Panchayat

Sl No.	Village Name	Kind of School	Number of Children Enrolled in 2017 - 2018		
			Male	Female	Total
1	LPS Ankushanahalli	LPS	5	9	14
2	GLPS Chakkalurdoddi	LPS	3	3	6
3	GLPS Harohalli	LPS	1	4	5
4	GLPS Mengaahalli	LPS	1	8	9
5	GLPS Saadahalli	LPS	5	5	10
6	GHPS A.V.Halli	HPS	16	21	37
7	GHPS Chakkaluru	HPS	20	16	36
8	GHPS Krishnapura	HPS	36	42	78
9	GHPS Sulleri	HPS	28	16	44
10	Govt. High School Krishnapura	High School	36	31	67

Source: Survey conducted by FEP, CCL - NLSIU as in August, 2017

Considering only the students of HPS and High School (Classes V to X), the enrolment data is as follows:

Table 20: Enrolment in Classes V to X in Sulleri Gram Panchayat

Sl No.	School Name	Number of Children Enrolled in 2017 - 2018		
		Boys	Girls	Total
1	GHPS A.V.Halli	9	9	18
2	GHPS Chakkaluru	15	6	21
3	GHPS Krishnapura	18	18	36
4	GHPS Sulleri	9	12	21
5	Govt. High School Krishnapura	36	31	67
TOTAL		87	76	163

The number of teachers in Higher Primary and High Schools of the Sulleri Panchayat are as follows:

Table 21: Number of Teachers in HPS and High Schools of Sulleri Gram Panchayat

SI No.	School Name	Number of Teachers for 2017-2018		
		Male	Female	Total
1	GHPS A.V.Halli	0	3	3
2	GHPS Chakkaluru	2	2	4
3	GHPS Krishnapura	2	1	3
4	GHPS Sulleri	0	4	4
5	Govt. High School Krishnapura	6	1	7
TOTAL		10	11	21

Source: Survey conducted by FEP, CCL - NLSIU as in August, 2017

The budget allocations for these schools are as follows:

Table 22: Budget allocation for HPS and High Schools in Sulleri Gram Panchayat

SI No.	School Name	Budget allocated for the previous academic year	Purpose
1	GHPS A.V.Halli	22000	Infrastructure, Maintenance
2	GHPS Chakkaluru	27000	Infrastructure, Utensils, SDMC
3	GHPS Krishnapura	0	Not received
4	GHPS Sulleri	27000	Utensils, Maintenance
5	Govt. High School Krishnapura	0	Not received
TOTAL		76000	

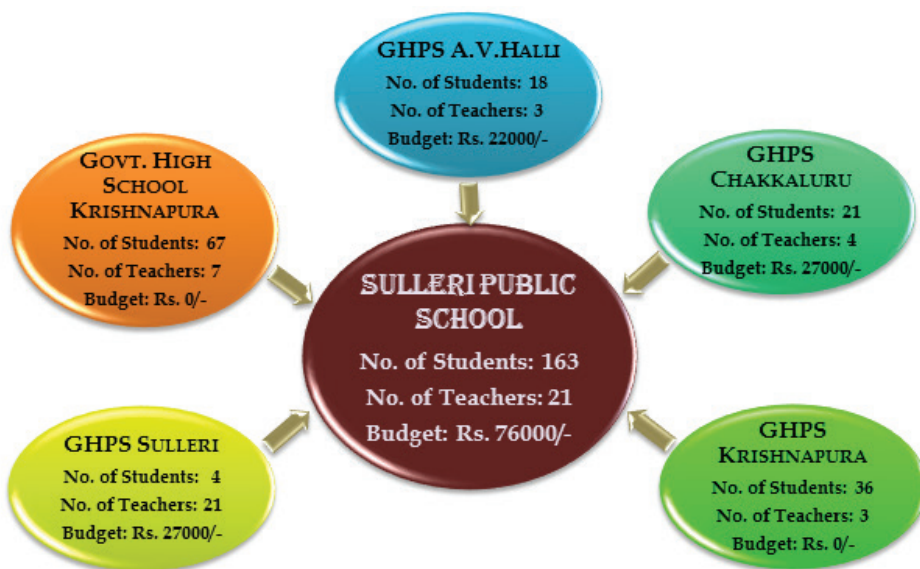
Source: Survey conducted by FEP, CCL - NLSIU as in August, 2017

The above picture clearly portrays the trifling number of children and teachers in each of the 8 schools. The budget allocation is also nominal for each school. However, if one Public School comprising of classes V to XII as entailed by the Common School System is established in the Panchayat combining these 5 schools, the enrolment and the

number of teachers will raise to 163 and 21 respectively. This will enable the provision of class-wise and subject-wise teachers to all classes thereby improving the quality of education. Also, the pooling in of the budget allocated to these 5 schools to this one Public school will ensure the availability of around Rs. 76,000/- for the effective functioning of the school each year as compared to the nominal Rs. 22000/- available now. This will help provide better infrastructure in the school and also adoption of modern technology like smart classes etc.

The above scenario can be graphically portrayed as follows:

Figure 8: Sulleri Public School



Summarising the findings...

The establishment of a Gram Panchayat Public School will definitely pave way for a strong public education system by facilitating the provision of good quality infrastructure and other basic facilities in the government schools across the nation. Also, such a system will ensure the availability of enough number of teachers for all subjects and for all classes in all the schools. Another major advantage of this system is that children need not go in search of admission to a different school till they complete XII standard as education of all classes from V through XII will be available in the same school. Further, with the feeder school concept in place, all children studying in the lower primary schools of the panchayat will automatically get enrolled in the respective Panchayat's Public School soon after they complete IV standard without any new admission process being required. Thus, uninterrupted access to education from pre-primary to XII standard is ensured to all children. Also, since one school providing quality education will be established in each panchayat, the necessity for parents to enrol their children to private institutions in search of quality education will reduce. Thus, almost all children within the Panchayat from all strata of the society will attend the same school, thereby, helping bridge the gaps in the society and promote social integrity and fraternity among children.

In a nutshell, by establishing a Gram Panchayat Public School as proposed by the Common School System, it will be easier to provide quality education to all children through inclusive education and also save our education system from the clutches of privatisation and commercialisation by saving, strengthening and promoting government schools. Such a move will consequently transform the government schools into model public schools that will march the nation in the direction of its growth with education of children as its chief weapon.

Concluding Remarks

To sum up, effective measures need to be taken to implement the provisions of National Policy on Education, 1968 and National Policy on Education, 1986 with regard to Common School System. To this end, disparities between schools should be ended as early as possible by upgrading the quality of ordinary schools and providing amenities for achieving minimum levels of learning. Both the Centre and the State should take determined action in this regard. The privileged schools should accept social accountability by sharing their facilities and resources with other institutions, taking up community activities, and facilitating access to children of the disadvantaged groups. The establishment of a common school system with neighbourhood school principle in the proposed manner facilitates the providing of quality education to all children of the society without any discrimination and thereby the achievement of the constitutional goal of universal equitable quality education across the nation. This will pave way for an innovation in the educational structure of the nation for no developed or developing country has ever achieved Universal Elementary Education or, for that matter, Universal Secondary Education, without a strong state-funded and state-regulated Common School System. India is unlikely to be an exception to this historical and global experience, notwithstanding the ambition of the Indian State to become a 'superpower' by 2020! Thus, the agenda of 'Empowerment of Government Schools' for creation of a Common School System must receive topmost priority in the national political agenda. To conclude in the words of J. P. Naik, "*the recommendation of the commission regarding the common school system is the integral part of the programme to promote the education of the poor, reduce its dual character in which have receive one type of education and have-nots another, and to create a socially cohesive and egalitarian society*".⁴⁶

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THE CONSTITUTION (EIGHTY-SIXTH AMENDMENT) ACT, 2002*

An Act further to amend the Constitution of India

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Fifty-third Year of the Republic of India as follows:-

1. Short title and commencement-

(1) This Act may be called the Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002.

(2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

2. Insertion of new Article 21A- After Article 21 of the Constitution, the following article shall be inserted, namely:-

Right to education –

“21A. The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.”

3. Substitution of new article for Article 45 - For Article 45 of the Constitution, the following article shall be substituted, namely:-

Provision for early childhood care and education to children below the age of six years -

“45. The State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years.”

4. Amendment of Article 51A.- In Article 51A of the Constitution, after clause (j), the following clause shall be added, namely:-

“(k)who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years.”

*Received the Assent of the President on 12th December, 2002.

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