



**A STUDY OF THE POLITICAL
DECISION MAKING PROCESS ON
EDUCATION IN KERALA STATE**

*An Abstract of the
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ABSTRACT



Introduction

Till education was not institutionalised, man had to find his own ways and means to educate himself. He found his own time, and spent his own resources to get educated. And those who got education reaped its benefits also. But when society wanted to reap the benefits of education, it had to institutionalize education. If 'pyal' schools came up in the village of Kerala during the pre-independence period, it was to cater to the needs of the village. If 'Madrasas' came up in the Muslim dominated areas in the state, it was to cater to that particular community. The same was in the case of early schools set up by the Christian communities. But narrow objectives and perspectives do not last long with the immense social and political changes in the society. Educational institutions owned by various religious bodies are catering education to the students of all castes and creeds now. Even the perspective of the erstwhile rulers of Kerala State got changed during the later part of 19th century. The states of Independent India, also, cannot have a narrow view when it comes to education. It has to have a macro objective while balancing its foot on a wall made up of different religions, different political parties and of their varied interests. Any decision taken against the interests of any section of the society may have its repercussions in the electoral fortunes of the ruling party. A decision taken in the interests of the people but not implemented properly also will give it the label of 'ineffective government'. In short, a key area like education has to be handled carefully mainly because of its scope.

Rationale of the Study

Education is meant for development, whether it is for an individual or the nation. Apart from the constitutional guidelines, the role of our central and state governments in the educational operations for educational development is very

significant. The various educational programmes of governments for the promotion of literacy, ensuring compulsory enrolment, evolving measures of high retention, providing physical facilities etc. are essentially for the educational development.

All these government-sponsored programmes for development take place according to the goals set up by the government. They are being implemented either by giving grant-in-aid to different agencies or by the government itself. All these actions of the governments seem to be a set of deliberate attempts to provide uniformity in educational programmes and attainment of a uniform target. It gives an impression that the framing of goals, translating them into educational programmes, providing resources etc. are all a matter of governmental decisions encompassing them in a frame work. Why then there is a disparity in the different states under the Federal Structure of the Union Governments is a question to be understood.

When Kerala and Tamil Nadu had enrolment of girls, in the year 1978, at a tune of 48.29% and 44.87% (Table 5.1) respectively, Rajasthan and Bihar remained at 24.33% and 28.94% respectively. The growth in enrolment was 3.69% and 4.22% registered by Rajasthan and Bihar in 8 years while many states had achieved tremendous growth in this aspect. The states showed wide variation in the resource allocation, also in respect to education. When Delhi made (Table 5.2) 38.3% educational expenditure of its total state expenses, Arunachal Pradesh spent only 6% of its total expenses on education in the year 1972-73. Difference was also seen among the states on the major reason for the wastage on education – i.e. dropouts. Statistics on dropouts rate in classes I to VII during 1986-87 (Table 5.3) shows that when Bihar recorded 69.4% dropouts among scheduled castes, Kerala recorded only 14.8%. Similarly when Orissa registered 75.5% dropouts among scheduled tribes, Tamil Nadu had only 6.9% dropouts.

TABLE 1
PERCENTAGE OF GIRLS ENROLMENT TO TOTAL ENROLMENT
IN DIFFERENT STATES
1978 & 1986

Sr. No.	State	Classes I to IV	
		1978	1986
1	Andhra Pradesh	41.10	47.24
2.	Assam	42.13	43.52
3.	Bihar	28.94	33.16
4.	Gujarat	39.95	43.18
5.	Haryana	32.86	41.28
6	Karnataka	43.17	44.90
7.	Kerala	48.29	49.79
8.	Madhya Pradesh	31.86	38.30
9.	Maharashtra	42.56	45.05
10.	Orissa	38.30	42.10
11	Punjab	44.68	45.58
12.	Rajasthan	24.33	28.02
13.	Tamil Nadu	44.87	45.97
14.	Uttar Pradesh	30.43	34.21
15.	West Bengal	42.02	43.44

TABLE 2
PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURE TO TOTAL STATE
BUDGET IN THE DIFFERENT STATES / UNION
TERRITORIES OF INDIA.

Sr. No.	State/Union Territory	1972-73 Budget Estimates
1	Andhra Pradesh	23.3
2	Assam	22.3
3	Bihar	18.6
4	Gujarat	23.4
5	Haryana	17.2
6	Himachal Pradesh	23.6
7	Jammu & Kashmir	11.3
8	Kerala	36.7
9.	Madhya Pradesh	29.4
10	Maharashtra	21.10
11	Manipur	26.1
12	Maghalaya	15.1
13	Mysore	22.7
14	Nagaland	12.8
15	Orissa	21.1
16	Punjab	21.9
17	Rajasthan	22.8
18	TamilNadu	26.4
19	Tripura	23.8
20	Uttar Pradesh	22.6
21	West Bengal	22.8
22.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	6.6
23	Arunachal Pradesh	6.0
24	Chandigadh	26.9
25	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	17.2
26	Delhi	38.3
27.	Goa, Daman & Diu	26.4
28	L D Islands	10.2
29	Mizoram	14.3
30	Pondicherry	28.7

All Union Territories	27.4
India	23.6
All States	23.4

TABLE 3
DROP OUT RATES OF DIFFERENT STATES :
CLASSES I TO VI (1986-87)

Sr. No.	States	Scheduled Castes (SC)%	Scheduled Tribes (ST)%
1	Bihar	69.4	73.4
2	Assam	61.5	73.8
3	West Bengal	58.0	64.7
4	Andhra Pradesh	66.4	72.4
5	Karnataka	53.0	39.4
6	Orissa	55.5	75.5
7.	Rajasthan	63.0	75.4
8	Uttar Pradesh	46.6	54.8
9	Gujarat	44.9	62.0
10	Madhya Pradesh	32.4	58.1
11.	Maharashtra	49.3	60.2
12	Punjab	51.0	--
13	Haryana	39.1	--
14	Tamil Nadu	29.1	6.9
15	Kerala	14.8	21.5

These imbalances pose several questions on the extent of governmental interventions in education i.e. how the government visualises and deal with such issues of education. In a democratic setup, it is the government which represents the people, shoulders these responsibilities. In our political setup, it is the party which perceive such issues of education existing in the society, bring it to the forum of people – i.e. the state legislature – for interactions in the issues. The deliberations in the legislature forum may lead to decisions, executing them in the form of acts or laws. Hence, it implies that the educational development across may be due to the way the polity must have perceived the needs, formulated measures, developed the frame work of programmes and their implementation. The questions arise here are : these educational imbalances in the state due to the varying governmental interventions in the states? What is this political decision

making process? Do the frequent changes of ruling parties make any impact on educational decisions? Do their decisions necessarily sensitive to field needs?

Though the educational dimensions these questions raise may require several macro studies at the national level, such studies at micro context i.e. at the state level too would be pertinent since they share a homogeneous context. In the Federal structure, states share somewhat similar decision taking bodies i.e. the legislature; though the state has to accommodate certain guidelines of the Union Government in terms of direction and on broader perspectives on education. The 42nd amendment of 1976 also encompass some such guidelines.

Why is the study focussed on Kerala?

Kerala is regarded as one of the most enlightened states of India. Kerala is declared as the first state to have 100% literacy. It maintained the highest enrolment right from the beginning of its inception for children of 6-14 years. Its achievements in education among the Scheduled Castes (Table – 5.3) and Scheduled Tribes are commendable. The fact that one-third of the state budget expenses (Table- 5.2) was on education show that how much preference the state attributed to education. The changing governments and their different ideologies was another input to select the state as the sample for the study.

Statement of the Problem.

A STUDY OF THE POLITICAL DECISION MAKING PROCESS ON EDUCATION IN KERALA STATE.

The following are the objectives of the study.

Objectives.

A study of political decision making process on education in Kerala state aims at studying

I Nature of Political decision making process on education across successive governments in terms of :

- (a) - kinds of educational proposals tabled in the legislature
- extent of participation by different political parties in evolution of major decisions
- kinds of alternatives generated for adoption
- kinds of educational decisions arrived at
- (b) continuity of emphasis given to the educational issues.
- (c) Extent of sensitivity of political decision making to the educational field operations.

II Trends in political decision making on education in Kerala

- (a) across successive elected governments.
- (b) before and after the 42nd constitutional amendment, 1976.

Explanation of Terms.

1. Political Decision-Making Process on Education.

This process involves the presentation of the perceived educational needs at the legislature by the elected representatives, the interactions on the needs by the legislators of different political parties, generation of alternatives for the issues discussed, selection of alternatives - till the execution of the decisions by passing the bill, Acts or amendments.

2. Sensitivity of Political Decision making process

The extent of concern showed by the political decision making on various educational issues in respect to the field realities.

Delimitation of the Study.

1. The study is limited to the decision making process at political level i.e. at the legislative level and in the state of Kerala during the 30 years of post re-organization period.

2. Only one bill, the Kerala Education Bill, 1957 is analysed in the study due to two reasons. (i) The Kerala Education Bill, 1957 is historical due to its scope as described in Chapter IV. (ii) It is considered as one of the most prominent Bills among the educational bills of the State articulated immediately after the State's re-organization.

Methodology

A brief summary of methodology is presented here.

For objective – I.

Documents, records, manifestos of political parties, Gazettes and Gazetteers of Kerala Government, Bills and Acts of the state assembly, various reports and surveys were the main source of study for objective I. Unstructured interviews with political figures and educational experts also were other sources which provided data.

The written documents were thoroughly scrutinized for the content analysis and the data obtained from the unstructured interviews supplemented the

data arrived from the content analysis. A criteria table and sensitivity scale (graph) were made to see the extent of emphasis the various issues had in the assemblies. While a profile was made to see the various aspects of education which came up in the successive assemblies, numerical data were analysed to see to what extent the emphasis was given to the educational issues and how sensitive was political decision making to the educational field operations.

For Objective II.

Most of the source of objective I was applicable for objective II also. The profile of the various governments prepared for the first objective was extensively used for the objective II also. Another source was the constitution of India. The ~~narrative~~ descriptive data were analysed mainly to understand the trends in the political decision making across the successive governments and especially before and after 1976. Numerical data were analysed to explain some trends on a few issues. Percentage analysis was done for the qualitative data whenever necessary.

Findings of the Study.

In this section the findings of the study are presented in a very concise manner. The pattern of the presentation is in order with the objectives. Objective wise findings are presented hereunder :

1. On Kerala Legislative Assembly. (1957-1990)

The First Session of the first assembly of the re-organized state of Kerala was addressed by the Governor on 27th April 1957. Since then Kerala has had eight elections, hence eight legislative assemblies with a total of 80 sessions and 1794 sittings during 1957-1990. The first legislative assembly had 126 members and the number rose to 141 by the 8th assembly. The eight assemblies of the said period saw the presentation of around 68 educational (mostly amendment) Bills and

around 66 educational Acts. 9 different Chief Ministers headed their governments during the period.



2. The Political parties or political fronts which headed the state.

After each election, the state was run by either one of the two major political parties i.e. the Communists led by the CPI (M) or CPI or the Congress alone and some times with their allies. The Communists also found their allies, sometimes in a fraction of Muslim League or even in a Fraction of Congress. The Congress governments, also, were not much different. They also found their allies, sometimes in fractions of Communists or in a fraction of Muslim League. The political arena has witnessed, several times, either the ideology descends to that of opportunism or opportunism giving no space for ideology. The people of Kerala never voted for the same party or front continuously to power. This was in contrast to what was happening in many other states like Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh where the people gave mandate to Congress party continuously during that period.

The various governments of different ideologies and their political decisions on education .

The data of the study reveals that matters of primary education received attention of all the governments irrespective of what ideology the persons at the helm of affairs held. The emphasis received on matters like free primary education, schemes like free provisions for betterment of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other weaker sections, programmes for girls education etc. stands witness to this argument. The fact that the governments continued bearing the entire expenses of school education including the salary of the staff prove that those governments stuck to the decision of improving education at the State expense. The matters of the higher education are also not proving differently. It means, irrespective of the ideology they held, the decisions of the various governments on education was more or less on the same track, even though the implementation of the decisions

were draining the state's treasury. After all every political party is aware of the role they have to play when they are in power. An enlightened and educated mass assesses the performance of their governments. It necessitates them to be at their best while they are ruling or not.

Another important aspect is the compulsion of the main ruling party when they are in a front. They have to be concerned about the interests of the political partners-of-their front. Imposing of the one's ideology on the other or even the programmes on the other may cause a discord. Conciliatory approaches are needed often. Hence decisions taken are often in tune with the other partners. After all, general public is the watchdog. A better educational decision taken by any political party do not have to hurt anyone as long as it is going to bear fruits for the people. This political decision, in turn, brighten their prospects in the ensuing election. So, if every political party tries to be the best while taking educational decisions, it } may not be just for the interest of the people but for themselves also.

The political decision making process on education –

(i) The needs perceived by the legislators on the proposals of Education Bill, 1957.

1. There was no uniformity existing in education in Kerala during the pre- reorganization period. The education in Cochin, Travancore and Malabar were administrated under different Acts. When compulsory primary education was prevalent in some areas of Travancore, it was extremely lopsided in some areas of Malabar. The ruling party and other legislators perceived the need for a uniformity in administration as well as the growth in education.

2. Majority of the schools were run by private agencies. The people's representatives felt the need of state control on them so that it would not only eliminate the existing irregularities but also would bring them to the path of the

state's objective on education. They knew that only the might of the state government is able to bring the strong agencies of education under one set of laws.

3. The members felt the need of a large-scale State endeavour to spread the education in the state. There was a need of totally free elementary education since that would encourage the poor to send their wards to the school. They, in fact, wanted the state to do more than the free education. They felt that the State should provide even free meals, free books etc. to the poor children. They felt that a universal elementary education would not be possible without solving the educational problems of the poor children of the state.

4. The elected representatives felt that there is a need of associating the local people in the running of schools. They were aware that since the local representatives knew each and every family, they would be the correct choice to convince the parents to send their children to school. There were thousands of children in the state between the age of 6-14 who were either dropouts or had not even enrolled on any school due to varied reasons.

5. The government felt the need of constituting a nodal body to advise it on matters of educational policy and administration. They were of the view that the nodal body should have the experts from technical, social and science education.

(ii) The kinds of educational proposals tabled by the government in the form of Kerala education Bill -1957.

The proposals are presented in a concise form.

1. For the purpose of providing general education or special education, the government may establish, maintain aided schools or recognise any school that

is providing general education. All the existing schools would be under the regulation of this Act.

2. For the purpose of advising the government on the matters pertaining to educational policy and administration of the department of education, the government may constitute a State Education Advisory Board.

3. The manager of every educational agency has to submit a statement containing a list of all movable and immovable properties of the school to the government within a stipulated time, failing which the defaulter can be punished by a fine.

4. Any sale, mortgage, lease, pledge, charge or transfer of any school property cannot be done without the previous written permission of the government. Any default is liable for punishment by a fine or imprisonment.

5. Any educational agency can appoint their own manager who has to keep the school records updated and are liable for inspection. He cannot close down the school except in the manner prescribed by the government and in the event of it being closed, he has to hand over the records to the government. Any default is punishable with a fine.

6. Any arrears to be recovered from a manager of the educational agency will be done in the form of revenue recovery.

7. The government may give the salary of teachers, maintenance grant or grants-in-aid to the schools which are recognised.

8. The managers of school may appoint teachers who are enlisted in the state register. No other appointment can be done. The government would fix the qualification of teachers.

9. The aided schoolteachers will get pension and other benefits similar to that of government schools.

10. In case of a retrenchment of teachers, the government may direct the managers to appoint them in their schools as when as vacancy arises. The manager is bound to follow the order.

11. In the public interest, the government may take over any aided school. Compensation will be paid to the educational agency as per the estimate of the collector.

12. The government may take over any educational institution for the purpose of standardising education or improve the level of literacy or for an effective management. Proper compensation will be done for it after deducting any amount, which is given as aid to purchase or maintain the property.

13. Local Education Authorities may be constituted for the purpose of associating people with the administration of education. It shall be the duty of this committee to enforce the provision of the Act regarding compulsory attendance of the children.

14. It shall be the duty of the guardian to send a child to school unless the child is sick or staying at a distance of more than 1 mile from school or receiving education elsewhere. If a guardian or any other person come in the way of regular attendance of a child, he shall be punished.

15. The Government shall provide free education to all children of primary classes and in cases of poor children, the government would provide free meals and books at the recommendation of the local committees.

They are not essential to Kerala

The various proposals presented in the form of different clauses in the bill in fact reflect the needs perceived by the members of the House and the polity who are also a party to the House. The proposals made on free education, control on educational agencies, taking over of school managements, proposal on state register of teachers, formation of local education committees as well as State Education Advisory Board etc. stand as evidences to this conclusion. In short, the proposals are nothing but the reflections of issues which are existing in the state.

(iii) The extent of participation and various alternatives proposed by the members.

The proposals above had to face 310 amendments before its enactments. Many such amendments were significant. Certain significant matters in education generated very extensive participation. 42 alternatives were registered in the matter of taking over of management of schools by the government. The proposal of the select committee was very significant here when it said that any such take - over had to be supported by a resolution in the assembly. This proposal was further strengthened by a member when the amendment said that no notification of taking over of a school should be issued unless the proposal for the taking over is supported by a resolution of the legislative assembly. 26 alternatives were proposed on the matter of establishment of Local Educational Authorities. This was a matter the members had the apprehension that politics would enter in to education. It was this major concern that 18 members proposed the deletion of this clause from the Bill. The concern of the members reflected in this matter when one member very clearly stated on what should be the quality not the qualification of a Local Committee member, who is supposed to be involved in the administration of the school.

Another Important aspect, which brought in extensive participation, was on appointment of teachers in aided schools. 38 alternatives came in this matter. When there was demand for more representation for backward communities was

raised, the demands for appointment on the basis of merit too were echoed. A 'teacher concerned' legislative House also echoed widely on the matter of their salary. 20 amendments were registered in this matter. The amendments were very assertive in its demand for parity in salary and all other benefits of the private aided schoolteachers with the benefits of the staff of government schools.

The analysis of the data on the extent of participation of members on matters of education presented in the education bill reveal that there was extensive participation of the members. Though this may be mainly due to the concern they had on education, an angle of political compulsions also cannot be ruled out. This was evident when alternatives were proposed to the extent that any take over of private schools would not become a cakewalk for the government. All the proposals of imprisonment to the defaulting managers were removed from the provisions. Another important matter to notice is 'to what extent the political parties can think of controlling the minority educational institutions when these communities hold a good rapport and support among some of the political parties'. When parties like Kerala Congress has good rapport among Christians and their institutions, it is not much different about Indian Union Muslim League having their mass support among the Muslims. So, the extent these parties can think of befriending their supporters is, understandably, limited.

(iv) The decisions arrived at the political decision making process.

Passing of an "Act" is the logical end of a political decision making process. The enactment of Kerala Education Act, 1958 was very significant since it was the accomplishment of many need-based proposals made in the House. Decisions were made on all major aspects specified in the Bill. Decisions, in the form of provisions in the Act, were taken on enrolment of students for primary education, appointment-salary-safety-security and other benefits of teaching and non-teaching staff, control on educational agencies, formation of bodies like State Education Advisory Board, Local Education Committee etc. The decisions arrived

at were not only directional but also operational to a large extent. The decisions arrived at on the control of educational agencies, benefits to the teachers, betterment of primary children, especially that of the weaker sections reflect the needs existed in the community and which were absorbed by the representatives of the people.

At the same time, it can be seen that the educational proposals in the Bill refined to a good extent during the process of enactment. The ambiguity on Educational Advisory Board and Local Education Committees were removed. Strict punishment, wherever envisaged, were written off. The role of the court on matters of provisions in the Act were clearly defined. In short, the educational proposals during the process of political decision making underwent a great deal of refining.

In short, a theoretical concept of this study i.e. the political decision making process in education is getting a practical articulation here. This underwent a few logical steps:

1. Educational necessities were perceived by the political parties.
2. They were presented in the representative forum of the people in the form of proposals.
3. The proposals underwent discussions, cross-examinations in the legislature.
4. The proposals underwent elimination and assimilation in the House.
5. The proposals were passed in the form of decisions of Acts.

The various aspects of the Kerala Education Bill underwent these logical steps before attaining its form i.e. decisions on the various provisions of the Kerala Education Act 1958.

- (v) On continuity of emphasis given to the educational issues by the successive governments.

The data derived from the profile of various governments show that two broad areas i.e. school education and college (general) education had constant emphasis in the proceedings of state legislatures. Three issues, picked up due to their recurrence across assemblies, are analysed to see their emphasis. This emphasis, here, is seen in terms of resource allocation since the emphasis in terms of educational proposals made on these issues and decisions taken are widely covered under “ trends in political decision making on education in Kerala” of objective II. The issues picked up were ‘strengthening of primary education in the state’, ‘education of weaker sections, and ‘strengthening the University (general) education in the state.

Right from the re-organization of the state, primary education enjoyed a larger share of resources kept aside by the state for education. When the government spent 1088.31 lakhs in 1960-61 for primary education the corresponding figures of secondary and university education were 292.64 lakhs and 89.39 lakhs respectively. The expenditure on primary education grew by 149.7% in 20 years when it reached Rs.2717.13 lakhs in 1980-81. Looking at the cost per primary pupil also, it substantiates that the governments were giving a continuous emphasis to the primary education. When the cost per pupil was Rs.49.30 in 1965-66, it was Rs. 85.91 in 1970-71, Rs.170.02 in 1975-76, Rs.265.24 in 1980-81 and Rs.479.23 in 1985-86 – showing a phenomenal growth of 872% increase in cost per pupil during two decades. The successive governments spent a major share of amount meant for education on primary education. When primary education covered 68% of the total expenses on school education in 1974-75, in 1980 it covered 57% of the total expenses on education.

Analysis shows that the emphasis the state governments bestowed on primary education had its fruits too. The state reported cent per cent enrolment in 1969 in the field of primary education. The state also reported almost 100% enrolment in 1981. Even though, it was the endeavour of each government to open more and more schools for primary education, they resorted to shift system to

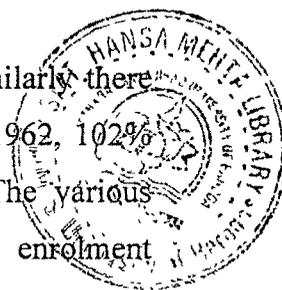
accommodate each and every child. No other state had experimented shift system in primary education in the country till then.

The various educational facilities enjoyed by the students of weaker sections were the reflection of the concern expressed by the various governments. All students belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes were exempted from payment of all kinds of fees at all stages of education for two years in each class without any restriction to the income of their parents. These students were given lumpsum grants at various proportions. Welfare hostels were set up for the students of weaker sections. According to a 1971 report, lumpsum grants were given to the students of backward sections ranging from Rs.2 to Rs.90 per month in the pre-matriculation classes. Another report of 1986 states that during 1985-86, pre-matric scholarships were given to 6,08,026 students of scheduled castes, incurring an expenditure of Rs.386.32 lakhs. The government distributed clothes to 4548 students and provided hostel accommodation to 3331 students. Among the scheduled tribes, scholarship and lumpsum payments were given to 51064 students of pre-matric level.

The various measures taken by successive governments in respect to the emphasis they gave on the better education for children of weaker section bore results in the long run. The Universalisation of primary education including all castes and sections is a pointer to this fact. Statistics reveal that education among the weaker sections in the state was always ahead in the country. This would not have been possible without the need-perception of people's representatives and the successful measures the various governments undertook.

The University (general) education was another major issue after the primary education which held continuous emphasis across the governments. It picked up a tremendous speed in enrolment and number of institutions. The substantial allocation of resources paved the way for an acceleration in enrolment and the setting up of new colleges. University education saw a ten-fold increase of

resource allocation in 10 years and 62-fold increase in 24 years. Similarly, there was an increase of 69% Arts and Science Colleges in 5 years from 1962, 102% increase in 10 years, 120% in 15 years and 166% in 20 years. The various governmental measures mopped up the enrolment too. When the enrolment showed an increase of 325% from 1960-61, it leaped to 572% by 1983-84. It was always the endeavour of the people in power and the other representatives of the people to be sensitive to the demands for higher education of the people.



(vi) On the extent of sensitivity of political decision making to the educational field operations

According to the Kerala Education Act, 1958, government had to provide primary education at its stipulated measure when it said that a child could be exempted from attending his school if there was no government or private school within a distance of one mile measured along the nearest road from the residence of the child which the child can attend. Reports of 1978 indicated that the state was not far away from accomplishing this objective when there was on an average one school per sq. km and another report stated that there existed one school for every 2400 people. Universalisation of primary education's accomplishment is another parameter to state that the state could achieve these objectives. This was possible only due to the sensitivity it had about the field operational necessities.

Was the government sensitive to the field operational factors when it decided to set local educational committee to implement compulsory primary education? It seems that the government showed its insensitivity in this matter. It might not have thought about the enormous task of setting such a political committee across the state. It is also very difficult for any government to assume the amount of repercussions it would have resulted by the reactions of hundreds of educational agencies who ran a major portion of educational institutions of the state. After all, how can any government ensure that such committees would not become political?

This insensitivity in terms of its incapacity on field operational factors also can be seen in the clause regarding the taking over of management of aided schools. It is doubtful whether the government thought of its feasibility when the private sectors was controlling more than 50% of educational institutions at all times. The private educational agencies were running 70.2% of high schools in 1961-62, 69.3% in 1966-67, 68.1% in 1970-71, 62.8% in 1975-76 and 64.5% in 1979-80. In the of Upper Primary Schools, the private agencies were holding 71% of schools in 1961-62, 68.6% in 1966-67, 68.2% in 1970-71, 66.2% in 1975-76 and 67.4% in 1979-80. While in the case of primary schools, the primary agencies were holding 58% in 1961-62, 58.7% on 1966-67, 59.3% in 1970-71, 58.3% in 1975-76 and 59.2% in 1979-80. The deep rooted educational agencies of minorities would have fought with each and every government who would resort to such an action, if the related provisions were not freezed. Even other wise which political party can think of befriending the educational agencies who, often, have their bases in one or the other religious communities – may be Christians, Muslims of Hindus?

It shows that any political decision making on education insensitive or incapable to the operational field factors may not achieve its objective.

(vii) On the trends of decision making.

(A) Across Successive elected governments.

The four issues picked up from the two areas of education in school education and University education (general) underwent a thorough scrutiny here.

The extent of decision making on the four issues – (1) strengthening of primary education in the state (2) facilities including emoluments for the school staff (3) education of weaker sections and (4) college education in general studies were analysed to see the trend across the governments, whether there existed a trend or not in terms of these issues.

It can be seen that primary education had its prominence from the first assembly itself. The successive governments implemented various measures to achieve the objectives of universal primary education and to improve the quality of education. The different governments which came in power introduced various measures to increase the enrolment of students and reduce the dropouts. The trend of giving utmost importance to primary education by various governments continued through various programmes. Those measures of various governments were :

(1) Restructuring of educational department, steps to bring in a uniform system of education at the primary level and implementing free primary education were the major programmes of First ministry.

(2) A total remission of fees, a free noon-day meal for primary students, re-organisation of education department and measures to improve quality of education were the major programmes of Second ministry.

(3) Constructing of number of school buildings, taking steps to improve girls education, taking steps to curb wastage in education and steps to improve retention apart from continuation of free primary education were the major educational measures of Third ministry.

(4) Restructuring of educational department, steps to improve health condition of students, continuation of free CARE (an American Aid Organization) programmes were the major measures of Fourth ministry.

(5) Various incentives to students of weaker sections, measures to promote girls' education, opening up of many schools were among the major programmes of ministries of fifth assembly.

(6) Setting up of new schools, upgradation of curriculum, and skill upgradation of teachers were among the major programmes of ministeries of Sixth Assembly.

(7) Improving the quality of education, replacing CARE etc. were the major programmes of the seventh ministry.

(8) Thrust on operation Black Board, DIET, up gradation of science education etc. were some of the major programmes of the eighth ministry

An analysis of the data of assembly procedures show that the various legislative assemblies and their respective governments were showing considerable concern regarding the teaching and non-teaching staff of schools. Various governments had proposed several programmes for them. They included:

- 1) Measures to implement standardisation of salary of teachers all throughout the state by the first ministry and provided the salary from the government treasury.
- 2) Measures to provide provident fund to the aided school teachers by the second ministry.
- 3) Setting up a 'teacher's welfare fund', providing inservice training to the teachers' etc, by the Fourth ministry.
- 4) Various schemes to uplift the conditions of school staff during the fifth assembly.
- 5) Measures to root-out corruption, skill up gradation of teachers during the sixth assembly.
- 6) Measures to revise the pay of school staff during the seventh assembly.

7) Various housing schemes for teachers and pay revision of the school staff during the eighth assembly.

The trend analysis across the governments reveals the concern for the weaker sections and the various steps taken to improve the conditions of students of weaker sections. These measures included:

- 1) Taking care of welfare schools meant for Harijan students, providing free noon - day meal for the poor young ones by the First Ministry.
- 2) The restarting of free noonday meal scheme and maintaining of Harijan Welfare Hostels by the second government.
- 3) Various measures in terms of education for the handicapped by the third ministry.
- 4) Setting up of many schools in the localities of weaker sections, setting books banks etc. for them and monitoring health conditions of younger ones by the fourth ministry.
- 5) Setting up of Schools in the areas of weaker sections, getting a welfare fund aiming the students of weaker sections, hostel facilities to these deprived ones etc. by the ministries of the fifth assembly.
- 6) Setting up of schools in back ward areas, helping out the failed tribal students etc. during the ministries of sixth assembly.
- 7) Continuation of the welfare measures by the seventh ministry
- 8) Setting up a time bound programme to remove the hurdles on the way of students of weaker sections by the ministry of eighth assembly.

The trend of emphasis on University education (general), though at a low pace in the beginning, had an upbeat later. Various measures were taken by the successive governments to bring up the university education. They included:

- 1) re-organisation of higher education by the first ministry.
- 2) Providing UGC scale to the teaching and non-teaching staff by the second ministry.
- 3) Setting up of Calicut University, measures to cope with increasing in enrolment through shift system by third ministry.
- 4) Measures to remove corruption in higher education and irregularities in admission and appointments, direct payment of salaries to college staff, measures to deal with increase in enrolment, measures to help the students of weaker sections etc. by the fourth ministry.
- 5) Measures like allocating more seats, more shift system, opening more colleges, dealing with rush for higher education etc. during the ministries of fifth assembly.
- 6) Measures to remove irregularities in examination in higher education, sanctioning of more colleges in needy areas, steps to deal with the rush for higher education during the ministries of sixth assembly.
- 7) Measures to set up more universities in the state, setting up of more book banks for students of weaker sections etc. during the seventh assembly.
- 8) Setting up of more colleges during the period of eighth assembly.

The trend picture reveals that the above aspects of education were getting continuous emphasis irrespective of the kind of government. It is needless to say that the various decisions taken by different governments and measures taken by them were the reflections of the concern echoed in those respective legislative assemblies. It is a matter of appreciation that certain aspects of education which needed continuation of emphasis could really get it. Primary education and concern for students of weaker sections stand example to this conclusion. Any apathy of elected governments would have brought down the success story of the state on these aspects.

(B) On trends in decision making - before and after the constitutional amendment – 1976.

Four identified issues - strengthening of primary education, facilities including emoluments for the school staff, education of students of weaker sections, University education in general studies were taken in, to examine this part of the objective. The data show that the three issues i.e. the strengthening of primary education, facilities including emoluments for the school staff and education of students of weaker sections evinced considerable concern in the assemblies in both the periods i.e. before and after 1976. Various measures were taken during both the periods in respect to the above issues. A number of schools were set up in both the periods. Though free primary education and free noonday meal were started during the pre-1976 period, they were continued in the latter period. Even though the first government of the state initiated the scheme of paying the teacher's salary from the government's treasury, the successive governments continued the practice even it was burdening them heavily. Measures to improve curriculum and other matters of quality of education continued before and after the 1976 period. Changes in governments mattered less on implementing various measures of the above issues. No major impact of the constitutional amendment can be seen here.

An important area where a fast pace in growth seen during the latter period is in university education-general. The emphasis this area received in the decision making process had direct reflection in the physical development of this area of education. The higher education registered a very high demand in the latter period.

The post 1976 period saw the emergence of another area of education coming up at a fast speed. That was vocational education in schools. According to a governmental report of 1986, vocational courses were offered in 8 subjects in high schools for a total of 2080 students and in 18 subjects in technical high schools for a total of 760 students. In 1987, the vocational education has been under implementation in 73 schools. The course offered various vocations covering engineering, technology, agriculture, fisheries, veterinary, sports, paramedical etc.

Primary education and its various aspects enjoyed the emphasis of the various governments irrespective of any particular period. Interestingly, the pace of its enrolment came to saturation by 1976. Though university education had its recurring emphasis during the pre 1976 period, it had its fast pace of growth during the latter period. Vocational education got sustained emphasis in the government and registered its fast growth during the post 1976 period.

Discussion

In the democratic set up of India, the power to take decisions lie with political leadership and bureaucracy. It is a matter of chance whether these two have or do not have the operational experience of education that of a teacher or any other functionary. What kind of political leadership the education gets is a matter of result of pressure within the ruling party or parties. What kind of bureaucratic leadership, the education gets is a matter of placement effected by the respective ministry.

The political leadership necessarily represents the people. The decisions they take cannot avoid taking in to considerations the aspirations of the people. In fact the decisions are arising from the aspiration of the people. The well-educated and thoughtful bureaucracy also take decisions on behalf of the polity. But these decisions do have to get legitimacy through the people's representative forums and that too after the introduction by the political bosses.

The watchful eyes of the people make every decision and implementary actions of those decisions very transparent. Every educational decisions and operations are watched and assessed by the people. An educated mass weigh the pros and cons of the decisions and give their opinion through the next poll verdict. A politician is aware of this fact, when he takes a decision. A much more shrewd executive too is aware of this fact.

Several socio - economic factors like poverty, customs, religious practices, social prejudices etc, have made education a problematic area. Hence an educational decision making is essentially selecting the best choice among the various solutions of each problem. This choice is of achieving the educational goal. It has to be viable and should be clear in direction. Thus we can see that the policy decisions at the political level are directional indicating the priorities and targets of the goal.

These policy decisions have to be translated in to plan of actions. The executive takes up this role. The well-experienced and more intelligent executives set in the plan to motion. The plan of actions are penetrated in to the next layer of functionaries to further translate in to operational decisions. The Directorate of education of the state shoulders the responsibility of both taking executive decisions and operational decisions. The educational institutions at the grass root level, of course take the basic functional decisions.

A political decision taken on education thus gets implemented at the functional grass root level.

A few things make a legislative decision-making political:

1) A legislative assembly is a forum of different political parties. Here each and every member projects the needs of the people as if he or she is the true representative of the masses. It will be the endeavour of the opposition to outsmart the ruling party by painting the ruling party's decisions improper. The ruling parties vie for an opportunity to counter them on policies taken by them while they were ruling the state. So in their attempt to project the best part of their policies, each party is pointing out the negative points of the other. At this situation, the decision making is merely political than on the basis of the field needs.

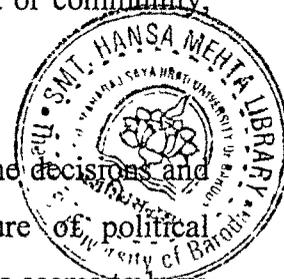
2) A minister in a democracy is well placed in the executive set up. The bureaucracy under him is his best channel of information on operation of various programmes, the necessities of fields' etc. He is in a better position of taking decision on priorities, resource mobilization etc. Still, being a member of the political party, his personal or party preferences may supercede the real necessity and he may take a mere political decision, which may not be in tune with field needs.

3) A weak liaison between the minister and bureaucrat too may affect the decisions of the minister. The tussle between the ministers and bureaucrats are not rare in our set up. The superior knowledge and field experiences may enable the bureaucrat to propose viable and logical decisions. But this may not be in the liking of the executive. The political leadership may take very different decisions, which will not be at the interest of the field needs.

4) An executive decision may even originate at the behest of the community or region the political leader belongs to. The allotment of the ministry may go to the

area or community to which the minister belongs to than the area or community which actually needs them.

The various educational decisions, schemes to implement the decisions and various developmental indicators give a slight different picture of political decisions on education in Kerala. By and large the state leaderships seems to have towed in the same objectives with respect to the issues of education mentioned in the study. Though in respect of numerical strength and kind of bureaucracy the state may not be differing from other states, the party -political -tussles seem to have affected very little on the very educational objectives the state stood for right from the beginning. The culmination of this stand is very expressive through indicators like universalisation of primary education, highest literacy in the country, minimum disparity between girls and boys in education etc.



Conclusion

1. The Kerala legislative assembly, during the period of 1957-1990 had 8 elections. The period saw 80 sessions of the assembly with 1794 sittings. The assembly had 126 members in the first house and the strength rose to 141 by the eighth House. During the three and half decades, nine different chief ministers ruled the state, which saw the presentation of 68 bills and 66 enactments.
2. The post re-organization period of the state have been seeing the rule of two different political fronts - one led by the congress and the other by the communists, mainly Marxists. Interestingly, people of the state voted them to power at regular intervals.
3. The polity and the other representatives of the people of the first assembly felt that :

- (i) the state needs to have a total re-organization of the educational system since the education was under three different jurisdictions i.e. that of Travancore, Malabar and Cochin states.
- (ii) The necessity of a uniform code too was felt to bring in control of the schools of the state, majority of which were under the private sector.
- (iii) There was a necessity of the state endeavour to take up the entire elementary education of the state so that even the children of weaker sections of the society can avail free education.
- (iv) The association of the local people was necessary to achieve the objectives of universal enrolment of students at the primary level. It was felt that local education committees should be organized to assist in the administration of schools.
- (v) It was also felt that education in the state would benefit from experts, if the government took steps to form a nodal body of them.

4. Several educational proposals were presented by the government in the Kerala Education Bill 1957. They included :

- (i) Proposal to establish or maintain aided schools and to bring all the schools of the state under the Act.
- (ii) Proposal to constitute a State Education Advisory Board to advise the government.
- (iii) ~~Structure~~ to the managers of educational agencies to submit the statement of properties.

- (iv) ~~Stricture~~ to the managers of educational agencies making them mandatory to get the permission from the government before making any transaction of the school property.
- (v) regulations to school managers regarding closing a school.
- (vi) regulations regarding the mode of recovery of arrears from the manager by the government.
- (vii) Proposal to give salary to the teachers and maintenance grant to the school.
- (viii) proposal to maintain a state register of teachers for appointment in the aided schools. The qualification of the teachers would be fixed by the governments.
- (ix) Proposal to give pension and other benefits to the aided school teachers at par with government schoolteachers.
- (x) Strictures to the managers to appoint retrenched teachers in their schools directed by the government as and when the vacancy arises.
- (xi) Proposal to take over any school in public interest and assurance of proper compensations in such cases given.
- (xii) Proposal to constitute Local Education Authorities to facilitate administration of school, at local level.
- (xiii) Strictures to the guardian to facilitate the students to attend primary school.
- (xiv) Proposal to provide free primary education to all and special assistance to the poor children.

5. The members of the legislative assembly extensively participated in the process of decision making on the above educational proposals. The members brought in 310 alternatives in the form of amendments. Clauses of 'taking over of schools', 'constitution of Local Education Authorities' and 'appointment of teachers' were prominent ones which evinced large-scale participation of the

members. All the provisions of imprisonment to the managers who commit default were one major focus of amendments.

6. Decisions were taken on all the major proposals of the educational Bill. They included decisions on enrolment of students in primary schools, appointment –salary-safety-security and other benefits of teaching and non-teaching staff, control on educational agencies, formation of state education advisory board, local education committees etc.

7. The issues like strengthening of primary education, education of weaker sections and strengthening of the college education (general) received continuous emphasis in terms of resource allocation. While primary education and college education (general) registered steady progress, the education of weaker section showed considerable development in the state.

8. The successful universalisation of primary education shows that the governments of various terms were sensitive to the field operation. But it was not so when it decided to constitute Local Education Committees to assist the schools in administration. The same seems to be true when it decided to take over schools of erring managements.

9. The trend across the governments with regard to primary education shows that it shared a prominent position all through the period. The successive governments took various decisions to bring up primary education. The same trend was seen in the case of decisions on betterment of teaching and non-teaching staff of schools. Each and every government of the state did not show any laxity in improving the educational conditions of students of the weaker sections through various measures. Whereas an up – trend in decisions on college education (general) is only gradual compared to the others. It got a fast momentum once the primary education reached a comparative saturation point.

10. Issues like strengthening of primary education, emoluments of school staff, education of students of weaker sections drew considerable concern among the people's representatives and governments before and after 1976, the year of 42nd constitutional amendment. The entire period witnessed the generation of several governmental decisions on these matters and their implementation. University education and technical education picked up a fast pace mainly in the post 1976 period in decision making.

Implications of the study

It has been always the endeavour of the central government and the state governments in particular to provide education to all irrespective of any caste, creed or sex. Several crores of rupees are being spent for this purpose. Various experts' commissions have gone in to the problems of education and given their reports. Since there is no dispute to the fact that an educated mass can boost the economy and the social status of the state, the governments spend a considerable part of their resources to promote education. Still imbalances exist among the states. The implications are presented in this context:

1. Though this study is in a micro context it shares a homogenous context in many ways :
 - (i) The state governments under the federal structure have the similar legislature.
 - (ii) A similar bureaucracy.
2. Pursuit of a healthy educational policy by the various governments which comes in to power may result in to substantial progress in educational development.

3. An educational need perceived by the peoples representatives or government and presented in the legislature, when undergoes the comprehensive procedure of discussion and debates, may culminate in to a well-defined decision.
4. An educational decision should have its base – i.e. a need of it in the society.
5. Any decision taken without properly taking in to account the operational aspects, may not achieve its objective.
6. When state governments have to function in a well-defined democratic set up within the framework of the constitution, it seems that the individual ideologies of the ruling parties affect their educational policies very little.
7. While preparing an educational bill, utmost care has to be taken to avoid ambiguity; any lapse in it would invite operational difficulties and may curtail the implementation.

Suggestions for further research.

A research is a fact-finding mission seeking to find answers of some pre-decided questions. But often it happens that when answers of those questions are found out, the researcher may be posing some new questions. These new questions are often suggested as areas of further study. This study also suggest some areas for further study:-

Kerala witnessed a lopsided growth in education due to the apathy it had towards technical education in the beginning. It would have been a different picture if technical education too had its due importance with the rest of the factors i.e. similar trends in decision making as that of primary education – remaining the

same. A study on the educational development of any state where the governments give due importance to every area of education would be very meaningful.

Education in the state of Kerala is totally free at school level. The state is bearing the expenses even though it gives tremendous hardships to the state's economy. A study on the pace of development of a state where the government does not bear or only partially bear the expenses of school education would be worth to supplement the researchers in this area of education.

'What should be the expected level of development of education and to what extent should the state endeavour to achieve it?' A research to answer this question may become a pathfinder to many of our states who are striving their best to get the maximum educational output with their scarce resources.

Investigations on the above areas would be quite meaningful and benefiting for a country like India where educational policies and development are yet to match in many states even at the cost of hard earned natural resources.