

## Local Level Administrative Reforms and Management of School Education in India

Dr. Rajvir Singh Tyagi<sup>[1]</sup>

### Abstract:

*The major concern of education policy reforms has always been to make the delivery of educational programmes more effective. Since schools are the ultimate delivery points in the overall educational management, administration of school education in India has undergone unprecedented changes. The direction of policy reforms in management of elementary education indicated enormous efforts towards the changes that have taken place from centralized command and control of education to decentralized participatory management of the people. Since decentralization of administration encourages people to participate in planning and decision-making process, the present paper argued that enormous efforts have been made in the past to empower people and to decentralize educational administration at district, block and village levels. Keeping in view the emerging issues and challenges of block level educational administration, the study attempts to capture the problems confronted by block level educational administration. It also attempts to identify the gaps between the block level structure of educational administration and the required assignment of functional responsibilities. It examines the question as to how far the present structure of educational administration is appropriate to meet the new challenges of policy reforms and discharge the expected responsibilities. It also investigates as to whether the existing structure of educational administration, at the block level, is able to respond to the issue of effective implementation of RTE and programmes like SSA and MDM, or it needs reform and restructuring. While examining the present structure and functions of block level educational administration, it recommended for creation of a Block Education Officer Cadre in Gujarat.*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Local level management of elementary education in India has undergone unprecedented changes due to several reforms undertaken in the education system. Since new dimensions are continuously being added to the learning strategies and the educational management practices—a clear impact can be noticed on the nature of demand for school education. Globalization too has added new dimensions to the whole educational domain by underlining the need for reforms in educational system with particular emphasis on decentralization and localization of administration of education.

As acknowledged by management scientists, change is a process of learning new ideas and things. Management should have the ability to realize when the present strategy is no longer adequate and because of which change is necessary (Fullan 1992). Change has also been described as a continuous complex, dynamic and challenging process rather than a set of recipes (Lawler 1986). Since we are now living in a turbulent era where nearly everything is changing at a fast pace and the future is uncertain, the existence of both organizations and individuals depend on their ability to adjust quickly and keep up with the rapid rhythm of change (Tsiakkios and Pashiardis 2002). The direction of administrative reforms in management of school education underlines the process of changes which has moved from centralized command and control of education to decentralized participatory management of the people.

In this context the present paper highlights how the organization and administration of school education in India

has undergone a phenomenal shift over the years due to expansion and enhancement of responsibilities of education departments as well as several educational policy reforms undertaken in the education system. Since schools are the ultimate delivery points in the overall education management structure, development programmes like the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) as well as the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and the Right to Education Act have given impetus to make the delivery of educational programmes more effective. It is necessary that various administrative structures of school education at state, district and block levels provide support and ensure that delivery of educational services is more effective to the target clientele.

### II. EFFORTS FOR DECENTRALIZATION

Decentralized planning and management is advocated to achieve the twin objectives of efficiency and empowerment by democratic participation. In the context of India, vastness of the country and the variations in natural resources endowment make it really difficult to evolve a unique model and a common strategy of development to be decided at the central level. Secondly, time in information flow and in decision-making is consumed too much at the central level. In case of decentralized management the flow becomes quicker and decision-making easier and more realistic when management decisions could be taken at lower spatial level. Since decentralization of administration encourages people to participate in planning and decision-making process,

<sup>[1]</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Educational Administration, National University of Educational Planning and Administration, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016, Mob.:09873346527, E-mail: dr.rstyagi@gamil.com

enormous efforts have been made in the past to empower people and to decentralize educational administration to district, block and village levels. Therefore, decentralization is advocated to make the delivery of educational programmes more effective. It mobilizes and involves people to take the responsibility for identifying their own educational needs and participate in planning and management of education at different levels. This makes the planning and management processes people friendly and participatory, plans more local specific and the educational institutions more efficient and effective.

### III. LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The involvement of local bodies (Panchayati Raj Institutions and municipalities) in the management of education in India can be traced to as early as the second half of the 19th century as a corollary of Woods Despatch (1854) that directed the levy of local tax to defray the cost of maintaining schools. Several subsequent developments had taken place to begin the era of local self-government, including the historical resolution of Lord Ripon on local-self government (1882) and Local Self-Government Act of 1883, The Montagu Chelmsford Reforms and subsequently the Government of India Act (1919) accelerated the process of transfer of power to local bodies. Exception to this process only was the Hartog Committee (1929) which suggested withdrawal of powers already delegated to local authorities as the Committee while reviewing the functioning of these bodies found that there is no positive impact on education management of these bodies. However, India continuously strived to accelerate the process of development through active participation of people at the grassroots.

Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the modern context started in 1959 as a sequel to Balwant Rai Mehta Committee report which recommended the establishment of an interconnected three-tier organizational structure of democratic decentralization at village, block and district levels. As a consequence primary education became the responsibility of Panchayat Samitis in Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and in some other states. A major breakthrough came with the formulation of National Policy on Education and Programme of Action, 1986 which lays down that "the local committees, through appropriate bodies will be assigned a major role in programmes of school improvement". As a consequence, several states adopted the system of Panchayati Raj in educational management. The introduction of Article 40 of the Constitution which states that "the State shall take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government" was another step in this direction.

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts (Year) marked a new era in democratic decentralization in India. The 73rd and 74th Amendment envisaged strengthening local administration by devolution of power with the establishment of a three-tier system of Panchayats and municipalities at the village/town, intermediate and district levels in rural and urban areas respectively. These amendments were, however, in the nature of enabling measures for the states to create these bodies and entrust them with authority and resources,

which they consider appropriate and adequate. Apart from making it obligatory for the states to constitute these bodies and entrust them with authority and resources, the amendment made it obligatory for the states to hold elections; prescribe quotas for representation of women and scheduled castes/tribes; and to constitute a finance commission to review the financial position of the panchayats. The Eleventh Schedule to the Act which has a list of 29 items indicates that education, including primary and secondary schools, technical training, vocational education, adult education and non-formal education will be the responsibility of these institutions. Under the Act, provisions of Section 243G are not mandatory, giving enough flexibility to the states to take decisions in their prevailing situations. However, the states are expected to act in the spirit of the Constitution by devolving powers for management of educational institutions and programmes to the Panchayati Raj bodies. While the Panchayati Raj legislation articulates the national commitment for decentralized power to PRIs, the National Policy on Education too reiterates this commitment.

The Central Advisory Board of Education (Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India) constituted a Committee in February 1993, to formulate guidelines on decentralized management of education in the context of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments. In order to enhance the role and powers of local bodies, the Committee stressed that Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads should have the authority to recruit and appoint teachers for their schools (subject to government guidelines) and administer services of government school teachers and subordinate officials of the education department (with their service conditions being protected) should be placed at the disposal of these bodies. The guiding principle being that development of rural areas can be best achieved by entrusting the local people with the responsibility of managing their own affairs. However it cautioned that hasty decentralization of management should be avoided since Panchayati Raj bodies would require time to equip themselves to effectively discharge their role.

The underlying principles of the CABE Committee's recommendations were based on the following factors: panchayati Raj bodies would require adequate preparation and strengthening before they are able to perform their new roles; being inexperienced in administration they would need capacity building; they would need, at least in the initial stages, financial and resource support from Central and State governments; They must be sensitized to the needs of handling education cadres with restraint and imagination; delegation of powers should take into account past experience and future requirements for the Constitution of the Standing Committee on Education at Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samiti; their functions should include supervision of elementary schools and enrolment drives, mobilization of resources, construction and repair of physical facilities, preparation of plans on the basis of prescribed norms and so on. On the contentious issue of recruitment, appointment, transfer and control of staff, the Committee recommended that while the Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads have the authority to recruit and appoint teachers for the schools (subject to government guidelines), services of government-run school teachers and subordinate officials of the education

department (with their service conditions being protected) should be placed at the disposal of these bodies.

In this light, it would be interesting to review the findings of different research studies on the role of PRIs in managing school education. There are divergent views and even critical ones. It had, originally, a fond hope that transferring education to Panchayat Raj bodies will provide on-the-spot supervision and control of schools and that will lead to quality improvement in education. But it proved otherwise as the quality of supervision was found to have considerably gone down due to ineffective supervision, haphazard inspection, tardiness of administration and insecurity of teaching staff (Krishnamacharylu, 1993). Besides this interference of non-officials in posting and transfer of teachers and using them for purposes other than teaching was found to have affected their performance and morale (Chalapati, 1992). The dual control over education without clear demarcation of powers and functions of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and the Education Department naturally resulted in confrontation and conflict between them (Bhargava and Venkata Krishnan, 1993). In the last two decades of the last century, for example, primary education in West Bengal under PRIs has not been at all encouraging (Acharya, 2002). Many stakeholders now seem to feel that the hierarchical and bureaucratic control over the primary education system has not decreased in any way even after the establishment of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (Govinda, 2003). The involvement of panchayats is only deemed to be in terms of providing community support; their role is peripheral, if not nil, in the management and administration of education. The only positive aspect highlighted is that the buildings were constructed in time and of better quality under the supervision of local bodies (Zaidi, 1993). In its country wide survey in 1996 on 'Restructuring of Elementary, Primary and Non Formal education in the context of new Panchayati Raj' by The Institute of Social Sciences constituted four different commissions for this purpose. The first commission (chaired by Prof. N. K. Ambhast) on the effectiveness of school/non formal education found that the involvement of the Panchayats was only in terms of providing community support; their role was peripheral, if not nil, in management and administration.

The second commission of inquiry (chaired by Mr. Venka Reddy) examined the issues of administration, planning, management and finance under Panchayati Raj. While arguing in terms of quantitative achievements, it drew attention towards the deteriorating quality of education. Even in few cases where the facilities were available, the drop-out rate rose very high, the levels of learning very low and standards of teaching far from satisfactory. The third commission of inquiry (chaired by Prof. M. Aram) on community participation of ECC&E, elementary education and adult education found that acceptability of Panchayati Raj Institutions by teachers was a big problem and that a sustainable role of village education committees in the planning and management of education at village level was still to be ensured. The fourth commission (chaired by Prof. V. Eswara Reddy) recommended incorporation of adult education, non-formal education and early childhood care and education into the system of Panchayati Raj in accordance with the spirit of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, pointing out the need of transferring powers to

the Panchayati Raj in terms of policy, planning, financing and management. It proposed that Gram Panchayats need to be continuously strengthened so that they could emerge as self-contained, self-sufficient and stable units in the administrative system of the Panchayati Raj.

Besides poor coordination between the PRIs and the schools, the ground reality indicated very weak and ineffective implementation of the *Panchayat* system as regards role of women in PRIs, resulting in little progress on the path of real decentralization (Josephine, 2009). PRIs cannot deliver the desired results as they are rarely empowered to share any meaningful responsibility in the field of education. Empowerment of *panchayats* is ultimately the only solution to all the related education problems at the village level (Mathew, 2008). The importance of *panchayats* in universalization of primary education is often sidelined by contradiction in the guidelines of specific programmes, leaving very little scope for local governance to be involved in it (Ray, Dale and Chatterjee, 2008). Elected members of PRIs do not have any administrative powers; they cannot take any disciplinary action against any teacher, even if found guilty of any irregularity. There is hardly any capacity building programme for PRIs in school management. In spite of provisions in the guidelines that PRIs will be responsible for recruitment and selection of teachers, they are not included in the selection committees of teachers; they are simply assigned the task of posting of teachers in schools from the list of selected teachers.

Tyagi and Akhtar (2009) found in their Study on 'Management of Elementary Education under Panchayati Raj Institutions in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh' that creation of Panchayat Raj Institutions raised hopes that decentralization would contribute in achieving higher economic efficiency, better accountability, larger resource mobilization, lower cost of service delivery and higher satisfaction of local preferences. However, this study found that PRIs at district, block and village levels in the management of elementary education were given a nominal role and the main functions of managing elementary education in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh were performed by the education department at district, block and Gram Panchayat levels. This highlights the complete denial of the community participation in planning and management of elementary education. Therefore, effective devolution of functions as envisaged in the Constitution has not taken place. The Second Administrative Reforms Commission, Government of India (2008) in its report on 'Rural Governance' observed that in most parts of the country, the intent of Article 243 G was ignored by denying autonomous space to local bodies. Panchayats continued to function within the framework of what may be called a "permissive functional domain", since very limited functional areas have been withdrawn from the line departments of State Governments and transferred to local bodies.

#### IV. GLOBAL AND LOCAL INTERFACE

The role of the nation state is now changing, and with it the place of education (Green, Andy, 1997). Studies have considered globalization and decentralization as a weakening of the state role in education as decisions are taken at

the local levels. It results from the abolition of borders for all kinds of economic, financial and cultural activities. Globalization involves changes in the development paradigms from social welfare, equity, and nation-state philosophy to one that emphasizes economic efficiency, market economy, a weak state and global economy (Tilak, 2003). Besides economic and financial sphere, the impact of globalization is also visible on national cultures and services, including education (Caillods, 2003). Under the wave of globalization, the education policies in many countries of the world including India are engulfed with the series of educational reforms, involving drastic changes in the planning and management of education. Education systems around the world have been influenced by the global educational policies as developed by international institutions such as UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank and as evidenced by the Education For All Initiative (Bhola, 2003).

Globalization and localization are perceived as two side of coin as Cheng (2003) emphasised that globalization is related to localization. It includes decentralization at the community or site level; development of indigenous culture; meeting community needs and expectations; local involvement, inter-institutional collaboration and community support. Globalization has implications for localization of educational reforms which maximize the education relevance to local development and bring in community support and resources, local partnership, and collaboration in learning, teaching and research. Another dimensions of global-local linkages include; privatization of education; public-institutional collaboration; assurance of institutional accountability; implementation of institutional autonomy, school-based management and community-based curriculum. Strengthening quality monitoring, a key concern in a context of decentralization, demands that all actors be involved (Grauwe, 2004).

Carnoy (1999) argued that in decentralization, schools are given greater educational decision-making autonomy; this will devolve local control over curriculum and teaching methods to local communities and the teachers and principals of school themselves. If the local educational authorities see themselves, as responsible for educational delivery, reformers reason, educational quality will improve. Decentralization makes the planning process people-friendly and participatory; plans more local specific; and the educational institutions more efficient and effective (Varghese, 1996). Govinda (2003) professed that decentralization policies are closely linked to the specific country context. They are underpinned by three main motives: (1) they aim to increase the effectiveness of education making it more relevant to local needs; (2) they are a means of democratically promoting people's participation by empowering to local authorities; and (3) by putting emphasis on performance accountability they intend to improve service provision. For decentralization to be integrated with the system of educational governance in any country, it is essential that appropriate institutional structures are created and sustained at sub-national levels.

Globalization also impacts human development as it encourages localization and decentralization of decision-

making. Human development enlarges people's choices in terms of the use people make of their acquired capabilities - for leisure, productive purposes or being active in cultural, social and political affairs (UNDP, 1990). The focus on choice includes what people should have, be and do to be able to ensure their livelihood when they take their own decision in a participatory manner. Since the ability to exercise choice largely depends on education, the concept of human development therefore justifies the management of primary education in a decentralized mode for capability expansion of the people. More importantly, spread of primary education helps the poor sections of society more than the non-poor sections. The concept of human development emphasizes the development of people's capabilities in terms of improved health, knowledge and skills rather than growth of income of the people. Primary schooling has a close link with the development of these capabilities (Sen, 1990).

For decentralization to be integrated with the system of educational governance in any country, it is essential that appropriate institutional structures are created and sustained at sub-national levels. An important impact of the globalization was felt in the area of providing basic education to all sections of the society in different countries. The international community expressed its concern over the right to education remaining an empty promise for millions of children, women and men in different parts of the world.

## V. METHODOLOGY

The paper is mainly based on recent research study on educational administration conducted by the author at block levels in Gujarat. The main objectives of the study was to find out the present status of block level educational administration for management of elementary education in Gujarat; to study the major issues and constraints which are confronting to the field level educational administrators in the way of effective management of elementary education at block level and to suggest the block level policy reforms by creating a Cadre for Block Education Officers in place of present arrangements of educational inspectors for inspection and supervision at block level. The paper also incorporates the block level administrative reforms made by some major states as suggested by the National Policy on Education for management of elementary education at block level. It also highlights the national level efforts for decentralization for policy reforms and also indicates how maintenance-based educational administration quickly turns towards development administration in/under mission mode. The office of the BEO in the proposed structure has been seen as a facilitator of the convergence between the concerns of effective implementation of RTE, SSA and MDM, in particular, and related programmes, in general, in a meaningful way. Taking a cue from other states and the specific requirements of Gujarat, a detailed Job Chart of the BEO has been drawn. The concerns of convergence and efficiency of the block level administrative structure have been centre-staged under the new dispensation. In the proposed structure, the Block Education Officer (BEO), a class II officer of the state government, is the kingpin of block level educational administration.

## VI. EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION— A HIERARCHICAL MODEL

The model of India's educational administration was a hierarchical control model based on rules, regulations codes and acts which was established by the colonial rulers. The same nature of the educational administration still continues which is rigid and authoritarian despite the recommendations of Education Commissions and Committees for making it more participatory and to move towards decentralized decision-making. The accountability of educational administrators follows the chain of command within the hierarchy (Sapre, 1996). Maintenance and control being the twin responsibility of educational administrators, they are answerable to their immediate supervisors for the proper deployment of financial and physical resources and all the policies and directives. There is no audit of performance and little accountability for results produced. The education departments have no coordination with and convergence from other departments at state or district levels. Education policies 1966, 1986 & 1992, several Commissions and Committees evaluated administrative structures and identified serious managerial dysfunctions, poor performance and systematic inefficiencies. The development of competent management capacity and sound delivery system continues to be one of the most critical challenges facing the mainstream educational administration. Schools are the ultimate delivery points in the overall education management structure. The various educational structures at state and sub-state levels are required to provide administrative support to the schools for efficient delivery of educational services to the target clientele.

The scenario of block level educational administration till recently was so subdued that it was not responsible for any major task. At block level each state had one or two sub-district inspectors for inspection and supervision of primary and upper primary schools. They also had to observe the regular functioning of schools and to inspect regular attendance of students and teachers. They were also responsible to visit certain number of schools as per norms of inspection and supervision and had to supervise classroom teaching and learning process for finding the gap between performance and competencies of teachers. On the basis of the assessment, they had to provide help and support for teachers for their professional development. Inspection and supervision are important tools for ensuring efficiency of an institution and accountability of the functionaries in the system. The system of inspection and supervision was created to see whether the educational institutions are responding to changes in the society and are functioning properly to achieve the objectives of providing quality education to children.

The country-wide studies conducted by NUEPA on administration of school education -- first from 1973 to 1981, and again from 1991 to 2001 -- found that education inspectors at block level were not able to visit the required number of senior secondary schools as per norm for inspection and supervision. There is also a system of panel inspections in schools, but both the systems of subject supervision and panel inspections are almost absent because of phenomenal growth in the education system. The time spent on school visits for inspection supervision by

inspecting officers has declined enormously since the period of 1973-1981. The analysis of the activity profile of inspectors indicates that they devote very little time on inspection and supervision. The percentage of time spent on supervision of different aspects of schools ranges from the lowest -- 12 percent in Himachal Pradesh -- to a maximum of 34 percent, in Kerala. Most of their time is spent on non-academic and administrative functions like travelling, attending meetings. Besides their accountability towards their seniors in educational administration, their responsibility was to Block Development Officers of revenue department, where they involved in the activities other than the education. The reasons of not able to inspect schools are obvious. These include too large an average number of schools with each inspecting officer, extra administrative responsibilities, long distance of schools, shortage of staff, lack of vehicles, insufficient budgetary provisions, strikes and meetings, heavy workload, and being forced by the authorities in other work like organizing fairs, political rallies, census, etc. Moreover, their time is taken by the litigation cases of teaching and non-teaching staff. Sometimes they have to face the contempt of court since, at the district level, there are hundreds of litigation cases of teaching and non-teaching staff that remain pending with different courts as revealed by the NUEPA state-wide studies on educational administration. Therefore, schools lack in respect of supervisory help and support for teaching and learning process, resulting in low quality of education.

## VII. GLIMPS FROM THE STUDY

As a response to emerging challenges of educational administration different states have restructured the administrative set-up at the field level. The Department of Education (Primary Education), Government of Gujarat has also restructured its block level education administration. As a prelude to putting the new administrative set-up in place, the Department requested the National University of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi in 2013 to conduct a situational study on the present structure and functions of block level educational administration to identify the issues, challenges and gaps in the existing structure and provide necessary input for correcting them. The study provided opportunity to map out the changes taking place at this level, especially after the enactment of RTE.

The role of field level educational administration as discussed earlier has acquired critical significance, especially during the last two decades, due to the changing context of educational administration and management. Given the policy reforms and programmes by Central and State governments in the recent times, many changes have been introduced which posed a new set of challenges for the age-old structure of educational administration. The emerging challenges necessitate reforms in educational administration at various levels but more at the field level. Since block level educational administration is the main vehicle for implementing policies and programmes related to educational development, it is imperative to have an appropriate structure of educational administration, with well defined and coordinated functional responsibilities at the block level.

The District Primary Education Officer (DPEO) is the overall in-charge of elementary education (I-VIII). She/he is responsible for educational administration, planning, supervision, quality improvement and monitoring of elementary education at the district level. At block level, there is an Education Inspector (administration), who looks after service matters of teachers and non-teaching staff. There are 2-3 other Education Inspectors at block level (of the same cadre) for inspection and supervision of schools. They are known as Beat Nirikshaks or Taluka Kelvani Nirikshaks. Each Beat Nirikshak is responsible for inspection and supervision of 50 primary and upper primary schools, besides overseeing the organization of other educational programmes in schools, like MDM and health check-ups etc. All the Education Inspectors at Taluka Level work under the control of Taluka Development Officers of the Revenue Department. The Education Inspectors also report about the educational progress to the DPEO.

### **VIII. PROBLEMS IN BLOCK LEVEL EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

The block level educational administration in the state appears to be relatively weak. Currently, there is no post of BEO. In the absence of the cadre of BEO, Education Inspectors of the Department are largely responsible for the educational administration at the block level covering inspection, supervision and monitoring of schools and teachers. He/ she is also responsible for the implementation of different programmes. The Block Resource Centre Coordinators (BRCCs) of the SSA are responsible for academic support, supervision and quality improvement. There is hardly any meaningful convergence and coordination between Education Inspectors and BRCCs. They exist, especially after the implementation of the RTE, as virtually parallel officials of two structures- mainstream education department and the SSA-at the block level. Education Inspectors are under the control of the Taluka Development Officer (TDO). The TDO is the drawing and disbursing officer of the education department at this level. She/he is also responsible for service matters of the teachers. Though the Block Resource Centre Coordinators (BRCCs) are not technically under the control of the TDO, they are assigned many works, which do not pertain to the exclusive area of their educational responsibilities. The personal interview with the Education Inspectors and BRCCs revealed a sense of dissatisfaction with regard to the present arrangement of educational administration, wherein the TDO also becomes important in the overall context of managing and controlling primary education at the block level. A common thread running through the responses was that the TDO hardly takes any interest in educational management since she/he does not belong to the cadre of Education Department. Obviously, the kind of accountability that is required for educational development is missing in such a case. Unlike BEO, she/he is not exclusively responsible and accountable for the management of education. Management of primary education is a derivative responsibility. The effective implementation of RTE is possible only if the educational governance structure is competent enough in terms of power and assigned responsibility to take up the leadership role at the appropriate level. Apart from tardiness,

the effective implementation of RTE also suffers on account of the absence of an exclusive cadre of BEO, with adequate administrative competence. Some of the associated problems of block level educational administration may be classified under the following heads:

#### ***Problem of Autonomy***

The Education Inspectors and BRCCs unanimously expressed their concern about the lack of autonomy to perform their assigned educational responsibilities. The Education Inspectors work under the TDOs, who assign different kinds of work to them in relation to the developments in the area. Some of the works assigned, as mentioned by the officials, include-economic survey, correction of voter list, visit to slum and similar areas, organising meetings in villages, disaster management, checking of sanitation status in the area, collection of census-related data, monitoring and implementation of special programmes targeting the disadvantaged sections, regular checking of dams (in case of Narmada district), other developmental programmes of the government etc.

With all the above mentioned works requiring time and energy to undertake, it was indicated by the officials that nearly 80 percent of their time is spent on works that are not related to the Education Department or implementation of the RTE. The Education Inspectors are mandated by their controlling officer, at the block level, to complete the assigned work on priority basis. Consequently, they find it difficult to cope with the work assigned to them by the TDO while, simultaneously, discharging their own educational responsibilities. They are required to engage the teachers and CRCCs and this adversely affects their education-related responsibilities.

#### ***Inadequate Inspection-Supervision***

The study found that the Education Inspectors are overloaded with work. There is lack of adequate staff at the block level. Many posts of Education Inspectors (EIs) are lying vacant. As mentioned in the above discussion, engagement of EI and BRCCs in additional non-academic tasks, they do not find adequate time for supervision and monitoring. The Education Inspectors and BRCCs have to offload the burden. Ironically, CRC Coordinators and teachers are conspicuously assigned all works other than academic-teaching and learning. The RTE mandates that teachers should not be assigned works and responsibilities that are not related to teaching-learning at the institutional level. Under the RTE, there are many areas of functional responsibilities that require exclusive time and energy in order to ensure proper implementation of RTE. Proper academic supervision and monitoring is required for qualitative improvement in teaching-learning process. At present, it appears to be inadequate.

#### ***No linkages with SSA***

The discussions and interviews with both the Education Inspectors and Block Resource Centre Coordinators (BRCCs) brought into focus the issue of convergence between the mainstream administration and the SSA. The enactment of the RTE makes it imperative to establish close linkages between them. While the effective implementation of RTE is the responsibility of the mainstream Education Department, and the existing programme of SSA regarded as

a vehicle for implementation of RTE, in the absence of a close linkage being established, meaningful implementation of RTE would be further delayed. Since its inception, the SSA, having its own structure of implementation at the state, district and block levels, existed as a parallel structure. Similarly, there is no convergence between the functionalities of SSA and those of Education Department, who are responsible for the implementation of RTE at the block level. The structure of mainstream educational administration and the administrative structure of SSA programme implementation have been integrated at the district level as the District Primary Education Officer (DPEO) has been assigned the responsibility of District Programme Coordinator (DPC) of SSA also. This kind of integration has not taken place at the block level.

### ***Lack of Capacity Building***

There is lack of capacity building among the officials at the block level. The education, in particular, lack adequate training for overseeing the academic and quality issues of education. The emerging challenges of education require both administrative efficiency and academic leadership. Educational administration is not restricted only to inspection, with educational administrators expected to play the role of academic and administrative leader at their own levels. This requires adequate capacity building. The in-depth discussion with the block level official made it apparent that there is hardly any provision of regular programmes for capacity building. None of the officials interviewed mentioned any exclusive capacity building programme attended by them in recent years. They are hardly equipped with the kind of exclusive training that is vital for handling the emerging issues of education and dimensions of educational administration and management.

## **IX. BLOCK LEVEL ADMINISTRATION IN OTHER STATES**

The present study of structure and functions of block level educational administration in Gujarat indicates certain gaps between the existing structure of educational administration and the changing context and requirements of educational administration and management at the field level. The existing gap is posing serious problems in effective implementation of RTE and other related programmes of educational development, like SSA, MDM etc. In view of the problems, it is imperative to restructure block level educational administration in the state. Before suggesting changes in the Block level educational administration in Gujarat, an attempt has been made to briefly summarize the Block level scenario of few states.

Unlike Gujarat, many states are having the provision of Block Education Officer (BEO), who is responsible for the administration and management of elementary education. In some of the cases such as Uttarakhand, and Karnataka, BEOs have also been assigned responsibilities of the management of secondary schools. The mandate, of implementing the RTE, and effective management of SSA programmes and MDM schemes, has necessitated the creation of a separate post of BEO for managing elementary education. Most of the states have either created the post of an officer exclusively for managing elementary education at the block level or have

recast/ redrawn the responsibilities and job chart of the existing office of BEOs, combining the concerns of convergence of RTE, SSA and MDM, besides other state-specific programmes, for educational development. Most of the states have positioned the cadre of BEO in such a way that the responsibilities of managing RTE, SSA and MDM, besides other programmes, converge together.

### ***Karnataka***

In so far as the status of BEOs is concerned, the study found wide variations, ranging from the status of a class-I officer to the status of a class III officer of the state government. A cursory glance at the structure of block level administration of select states provides important insights. The Block Education Officer in Karnataka is in-charge of all matters relating to primary and secondary education at block (Taluka level). He is responsible for implementation of RTE, SSA and RMSA. BEOs have direct contact with the institutions for carrying out school management, monitoring and supervision of school education upto secondary level. He is responsible for overseeing service conditions, transfer, promotion and welfare services of teachers and non-teaching staff. He is also the in-charge of Block Resource Centre (BRC). He is assisted by Education Co-coordinators (erstwhile Inspectors of Schools) for academic supervision of primary schools and also by Block Resource Coordinator and Cluster Resource Coordinator of SSA. In respect of Mid-day Meal, the BEO functions as a link between the Executive Officer, Taluk Panchayat, Gram Panchayat, SDMC and Headmaster. He/she supervises the providing of good quality fresh meals to all school children. He also has the responsibility of submitting the school-wise details, student strength and food indent to the persons concerned on time, as also of timely submission of utilization certificates.

### ***Bihar***

In case of Bihar, BEO is in-charge of all the activities and matters related to elementary education. He is responsible for implementation of RTE and SSA. He is also holding the charge of Block Resource Centre Coordinator (BRCC). He is assisted by Education Inspectors and Cluster Resource Coordinators. He looks after the work of service conditions, transfer, promotion and other matters related to teachers and non-teaching staff. He is responsible for coordination with the MDM, and PRIs, at block level, in respect of matters pertaining to local authority and teacher recruitment, as PRIs are holding the responsibility of managing elementary education in Bihar. The BEO reports, at the district level, to DPO (SSA & EE), DPO (Est.), DPO (A/C), DPO (RMSA), DPO (MDM), the Deputy Collector, along with the District Education Officer, regarding their respective matters.

### ***Uttarakhand***

In contrast to this, Block Education Officers in Uttarakhand are responsible for all matters related to total school education (Classes I-XII), including implementation of RTE, SSA, RMSA and MDM and other duties, as assigned to them from time to time by the Chief Education Officer at district level. BRC Coordinators and Cluster Resource Centre Coordinators also work under him. At block level, he is responsible for service matters of teachers and non-teaching staff, writing of ACR, transfer and promotion of teachers.

He is also responsible for inspection and supervision, quality improvement of education, opening and upgradation of schools, management of examinations and for MIS. He is also responsible for grievance redressal and coordination of different schemes of elementary and secondary education.

## **X. PROPOSED REFORMS IN BLOCK LEVEL EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN GUJARAT**

In the light of the problems and emerging challenges of educational administration in Gujarat and reforms in other states, it is necessary to restructure and strengthen the block level educational administration. Some of the recommendations for reforming the structure and associated functions which were proposed by the study are indicated in the following sections.

### ***Creation of the Post of Block Education Officer***

Given the varied nature of responsibilities and task at block level educational administration, an exclusive post of BEO is required. The initiative of the state, in creating a cadre of BEO, a class II officer of the Education Department, is a welcome step. Some of the points that need to be taken into account while detailing the position, power and responsibilities of the BEOs are as follows:

- The BEOs should act as both administrative head and academic leader at the block level.
- He/she should be responsible for the implementation of educational policies and programmes. \*Since he/she would be the nodal officer for educational management and implementation of RTE at the block level, he/she should be well versed and informed about both pedagogical and administrative systems and procedures, in consonance with educational policy reforms.
- Adequate training- both pre-service and in-service- and capacity building should be provided to the officers.

### ***Duties and Responsibilities of BEOs***

BEOs shall be overall in-charge of management of primary education (Classes I-VIII) at the block level. BEOs shall be responsible for the management and implementation of RTE, SSA and MDM, besides all responsibilities of mainstream educational administration. He/ she shall be entrusted with the following responsibilities:

1. Overall governance of elementary education at block level in respect of government and private-aided schools.
2. Service and related matters of teachers and non-teaching staff which will include:
  - a. Maintenance of service book
  - b. Sanctioning authority for leave (other than study leave or extra ordinary leave) for head teachers and other subordinate staff
  - c. Recommending authority for medical, study and extraordinary leave.
  - d. Maintenance of seniority list of teachers and all other staff.
  - e. Writing of Annual Confidential Reports.
  - f. Recommending Authority for Career Advancement

Scheme/Promotion of subordinate offices/ staff, teachers and non-teaching staff.

- g. Consolidation and disbursement of salary of teachers and other non- teaching staff.
- h. Approval of medical bills and other expenditure bills that do not require sanction and approval of DPEO/DPC
3. Act as Drawing and Disbursing Officer of the department at block level.
4. Disbursement of Grant-in-aid and approval for Grants-in-aid of private-aided schools.
5. Transfer of Teachers within the block—Rationalization.
6. Change of date of birth and name and surname.
7. Monitoring of grant-in-aid schools, Aashram Shala and KGBV.
8. Monitoring of SSA (BRC, BRP and SMC.)
9. Management of Information System.
10. Power in disciplinary matters and punishment in respect of teachers and non-teaching staff.
11. Responsible for quality construction of school buildings.
12. Preparation of Block level educational plans.
13. Act as Reporting Officer for School Inspector for BRC, MDM and other programme officials at block level.
14. Recommending recognition or establishment of new private schools to DPEO.
15. Recommending disbursing of PF and pensions to retired teachers and non-teaching staff.
16. Approval of TA of subordinate officers.
17. Taking care of planning and management of Pravesotsav, Gunotsav, Girls' Education, School Health Programme, besides other programmes at district and state levels.
18. Prepare detailed consolidated annual/progress report of the block and submit to the DPEO.
19. Responsible for dealing with court cases.
20. Maintenance of accounts statements, cashbook and expenditure reports etc. in respect of funds/grants received under Sarva Shiksha Abhyan and Directorate of Primary Education for various types of activities, salaries, loans and advances, Mid-Day-Meal (MDM) etc.. He/she will be responsible for facilitating audit and replying to audit paras.
21. Responsible for adhering to financial rules and procurement procedures laid down by the State Government. He/she will also follow the rules/procedures laid down under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for the implementation of the activities under it
22. Responsible for timely completion of all approved activities under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), like preparation of Annual Work Plan & Budget, monitoring, submission of utilization certificates, distribution of free entitlements under RTE Act, proper and transparent utilization of funds etc..
23. Ensure the timely completion of all civil works and repair & maintenance works.
24. Responsibilities in respect of implementation of RTE in coordination with Local Authority

25. Identification of neighbourhood and neighbourhood school.
  26. Removal of any procedural barrier, like condition of date of birth certificate, in admission.
  27. Anytime admission of age-appropriate children in primary and upper primary schools.
  28. Ensure that no discriminatory practices prevail in primary and upper primary schools.
  29. Arrangement of transportation/escort facilities to schools.
  30. Arrangement of differentiated special training to children, as per their age and eligibility to the particular class.
  31. Help in the formation and functioning of SMC.
  32. Guidelines for preparation of School Development Plan.
  33. Recognition of private schools, as per RTE Guidelines.
  34. 25% reservation of children belonging to deprived sections of societies in private schools.
  35. Ensure timely framework of curriculum designs for primary schools.
  36. Maintenance of school infrastructure, including availability of electricity, drinking water, toilets and other facilities in schools.
  37. Maintenance of PTR.
- i. With the Health Department for School Health Programme.
  - ii. Women and Child Development Department for (ICDS) Anganwaris.
  - iii. Rural Development Department for Total Sanitation Programme.
  - iv. Revenue Department for MDM.
  - v. Department of WASMO—Water supply for drinking water facility.
  - vi. Department of Roads and Building for construction of school building.
  - vii. Social Welfare Department for scholarships, uniforms, bicycles, education for CWSN, child labour, juvenile justice, child protection—SCPCR, migratory children and street children.
  - viii. Civil Societies (NGOs) for help in managing teaching-learning support, CWSN, migratory children, street children, teacher training, survey work, SMC & PRIs training.
  - ix. Youth Welfare Department for sports
  - x. Education Departments of Universities for resource persons.
  - xi. Department of Science and Technology for Video-conference.
  - xii. IT Agencies.

### **Quality/Academic Duties and Responsibilities**

1. Monitoring and Supervision for quality enhancement.
2. Approval of school inspections of Education Inspectors.
3. Facilitate capacity building of teachers and head teachers through training and orientation programmes.
4. Guide BRC coordinators for quality improvement.
5. Responsible for inspection and supervision at block level.
6. Responsible for all educational and curricular activities of block.
7. Responsible for coordination with faculty of District Institute of Education & Training for Improvement in quality education.
8. Responsible for creating a data bank of experts/subject specialists etc. for providing support to the BRCs in their capacity building and issues related to learning enhancement among students.

### **Responsibility of Grievance Redressal**

BEO shall be a key official for the purpose of grievance redressal of various kinds, related to primary education, especially for the provisions under the RTE. The matrix of grievance redressal, developed by the Department of Primary Education of the state, has been adapted and modified, incorporating the specific responsibilities of the BEOs. (See the Annexure-III)

### **Responsibilities relating to Coordination**

The Block Education Officer will coordinate with other Departments/ Institutions/Organisations/Agencies in order to facilitate improved education and efficient delivery of education-related activities. Some of the coordinating activities include the following:

### **Recruitment**

The recruitment of BEOs may be done at two levels: A). Direct Recruitment and B). Recruitment by Promotion

#### **A. Direct Recruitment**

Direct recruitment of BEOs should be done on the basis of written test and personal interview. The written test should consist of general knowledge, administrative/general aptitude test and specific components related to educational policy and programmes. Written test should have a weightage of 80% of total marks. Interview should combine the personal performance of the candidate and her/his educational qualifications and experience, as decided by the state. The responsibility of conducting and recruiting Block Education Officers should be entrusted to the Gujarat Public Service Commission since the BEO post is Class-II, Gazetted Officer. However, in the initial first year, the responsibility of recruiting BEOs may be entrusted to the Directorate of Primary Education, Gujarat due to exigencies of timely and effective implementation of RTE.

#### **B. Recruitment by Promotion**

Both Education Inspectors and BRCs should be considered for promotion to the post of BEOs. Since BRCs are having considerable experience of managing and monitoring educational programmes and providing academic support to the teaching-learning process, they should be considered at par with the Education Inspectors for the purpose of promotion. Recruitment of BEOs by promotion should be based on cumulative index, combining academic qualification, seniority, work experience, performance and a score obtained in a written test. The written test may consist of general aptitude test and awareness about Education Acts, including RTE, Rules, regulations, Government Orders and

management of educational programmes, like SSA, health development programmes, MDM, welfare programmes and Office Procedures.

## XI. CONCLUSIONS

The study found that as a result of several educational policies and programmes like RTE, SSA, MDM that have been initiated during the last two decades in different states there have been reforms and changes in the administrative structures and functions at different levels specifically at the block level. The initiatives and interventions have added new dimensions to educational governance at local level. Block level educational administration has become the pivotal point for management of elementary education. It is necessary that Block Education Officers need to be empowered by devolving adequate administrative and financial powers so as to build them as a leader of educational development programmes at the block level. It would provide impetus the local level administrative structures of elementary education which will lead to the better coordination in making the delivery of educational programme more effective.

## XII. REFERENCES

- **Acharya, Promesh. (2002).** Education: Panchayat and Decentralization—Myths and Realities, *Economic and Political Weekly*, February 23, 2002.
- **Bhargava, B. S. and Venkatakrishnan V. (1993).** Panchayati Raj in Tamil Nadu—Issue and Problems, *Kurukshetra*, Vol. 40 (9).
- **Bhola, H. S. (2003).** *Practical Policy Analysis for Education Policy Making Under Globalization* in the Book entitled, Education, Society and Development: National and International Perspective (Edited by J. B. G. Tilak), National University of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, (pp.450).
- **Caillods, Françoise (2003).** *The Changing Role of the State, New Competencies for Planners*, International Institute for Educational Planning, Newsletter, Vol. XXI, April-June, 2003, Paris, France (pp.1-4).
- **Carnoy, Martin (1999).** *Globalization and Educational Reforms: What Planners Need to Know*, UNESCO, IIEP, Paris, (pp.53).
- **Cheng, Yin Cheong (2003).** *Local Knowledge and Human Development in Globalization of Education* in the Book entitled Globalization and Challenges for Education: Focus on Equity and Equality (Compiled by Y. Josephine), National University of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, (pp. 28).
- **Chalapati, B. V. (1992).** *Rural Education Administration*. New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications.
- **Govinda, R. & Diwan Rashmi. (eds.), (2003).** Dynamics of Decentralized Management and Community Empowerment in Primary Education: A comparative Analysis of Policy and Practice in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. In Govinda, R. & Diwan Rashmi. (eds.). *Community Participation and Empowerment in Primary Education*. New Delhi: NUEPA.
- **Govinda, R (2003).** Decentralized Education: Trends and Issues. New Letter: *International Institute for Educational Planning*. Vol. XXI, No. 2, pp 5. April-June 2003, Paris France.
- **Govinda, R. (1997).** *Dynamics of Decentralized Management and Community Empowerment in Primary Education*. New Delhi: NUEPA.
- Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education (1992). *National Policy on Education and Programme of Action 1986 & 1992*. New Delhi.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Department of Education (1993). *Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) Committee on Decentralized Management of Education*. New Delhi.
- **Government of Madhya Pradesh. Madhya Pradesh Jan Shiksha Adhiniyam. (2002).** and *Madhya Pradesh Jan Shiksha Niyam*, (2003). Bhopal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ School Education Department, (2003). *Job Chart (Responsibility and Accountability) of Officers, Employees and Teachers working in the department*. Bhopal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ School Education Department (2003). *Document on Transfer of Powers to Panchayats regarding Decentralization of Duties, Functions and Programmes*. Bhopal.
- **Government of Gujarat, Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Department, Gujarat Act No. 18 of 1993.** *The Gujarat Panchayats Act, 1993* {As on 1st September 1996}.
- **Grauwe, Anton de, (2004).** Decentralization: Can it Improve Schools? International Institute for Educational Planning, Newsletter, Vol. XXII, No. 4, October-December 2004
- **Institute of Social Sciences (1996).** *Restructuring of Elementary, Primary and Non-formal Education in the Context of The New Panchayati Raj*, Commission Reports, New Delhi. The four Commissions were headed by (1) Effectiveness of School and Non-Formal Education—Prof. N. K. Ambasth, (2) Administration, Planning, Management and Finance—Prof. V. P. Rama Rao (3) Community Participation in ECCE & E, Elementary Education and Adult Education—Prof. M. Aram (4) Restructuring of Adult Education, Non-Formal Education and ECCE—Prof. V. Eswara Reddy.
- **Josephine, Yazali. (2008).** *Status of Women in Panchayati Raj Members and Need of Strengthening the Capacity in Development of Girls Education in Madhya Pradesh -A preliminary investigation*. Unpublished Paper presented in the Workshop of Management of School Education under PRIs in Madhya Pradesh, (August 31-31, 2008) Bhopal.
- **Krishnamacharyulu, V. (1993).** *Management of Education in Panchayati Raj Institutions in Andhra Pradesh: An Unpublished Case Study*. Hyderabad.

- **Mathew, George. (2008).** Panchayats and Education, Institute of Social Science, New Delhi, Unpublished Paper presented in the Workshop of Management of School Education under PRIs in Madhya Pradesh. (August 31-31, 2008) Bhopal.
- **Mehta, Balwantray. (1959).** Unpublished Report of the Team for Study of Community Projects and National Extension Services, Government of India, New Delhi.
- **National University of Educational Planning and Administration.(1991-2001).** *Studies on Educational Administration—Structures, Processes and Systems.* New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
- **Rai, Manoj. Dale, Priyanka. and Chatterjee, Sayonee. (2008).** *Democratic Decentralization and Universalization of Primary Education.* Society for Participatory Research in Asia. New Delhi. Unpublished Paper presented in the Workshop of Management of School Education under PRIs in Madhya Pradesh, (August 31-31, 2008), Bhopal.
- **Sapre, Padmakar, M (1998).** *Management Education: Promise and Performance,* in the book *Education India: The Next Millennium,* Marmar Mukhopadhyay and others (Eds.) New Delhi: NUEPA.
- **Sen, Amartya (1990).** “ *Development as Capability Expansion*”, in Keith Griffin and John Knight's (edt.) *Human Development and the International Development Strategy for the 1990,* Macmillan in association with United Nations , London
- **Tyagi, R. S. (2006).** Institutional Reforms in Educational Management—The Issue of Sustainability. *Review of Development and Change,* Volume XI, Number 1, January- June, Madras.
- **Tyagi, R. S. and Akhtar, Najma (2009).** Study on Management of Elementary Education under Panchayati Raj Institutions in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, NUEPA, New Delhi
- **Tyagi, R. S. & Kumar, Suresh (2013).** *A Study of Block Level Educational Administration in Gujarat—Emerging Challenges and Need for Reforms.* Unpublished Report. NUEPA, New Delhi.
- **Varghese, N.V. (1996).** “*Decentralisation of Educational Planning and the District Primary Education Programme*”, Unpublished Occasional Papers, NIEPA, New Delhi.
- **Tilak, J. B. G (2003).** *Introduction to Education, Society and Development: National and International Perspective* in the book *Introduction to Education, Society and Development: National and International Perspective* (edit.), National University of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi (pp. XV).
- **Tyagi, R. S. (2001).** *Organization and Administration.* In Marmar Mukhopadhyay and R. S. Tyagi (Eds.) *Governance of School Education in India,* New Delhi: NUEPA, pp. 61-87.
- **UNDP (1990).** *Human Development Report,* Oxford University Press, New York.
- **Zaidi, SMIA. (1993).** *Management of Educational Institutions under Panchayati Raj Institutions at Grassroots Level.* Unpublished Paper presented at National Seminar of Management of Education, NUEPA. New Delhi.