

Restructuring and System Strengthening of District Education Administration for Quality Education and Skills



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District Education Administration for
Quality Education and Skills**

The State Pilot for Andhra Pradesh – A Lead for the Nation

By

K. Renuka Raju*

***Competencies (values, education, knowledge, skills,
abilities and attitudes) are the greatest
sustainable wealth generators***

Restructuring and System Strengthening of District Education Administration for Quality Education and Skills

In a federal set up, the Nation and State are inexplicably intertwined for growth and development, peace and prosperity. Restructuring and reorganising of the district education edifice is a historical opportunity for India. While the scale and effort needed to transform India's education and skills ecosystem may seem daunting, an attempt to bridge this gap is presented in this practical project proposal for leading the transformation at field level.

Seventy five years ago the Education Department was combined with the Endowments and Law Departments. As Human Resource was considered pivotal for national growth and development, a new nomenclature and substance was given to the Human Resource Department by late Shri Rajiv Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India. All the States have to align with the objectives of the HR department as education is on the Concurrent List. The Central Government, led by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Hon'ble Minister of Human Resource Development, Shri Prakash Javadekar, and the State of Andhra Pradesh, led by Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Nara Chandrababu Naidu and Hon'ble Minister of HRD Shri Ganta Srinivasa Rao, have a historic and landmark opportunity to transform the education service delivery by improving and reforming the district and CD block education administration as a signature contribution towards nation building.

The reforms towards quality in education sector administration, management and leadership have been practically stagnant since decades. At present is a huge lacuna and many gaps in the district education administrative system. Several Indian national education commissions and committees brought out various reports but the subject of education administration at district level was mostly ignored and neglected. There is an urgent need to create two or three educational districts within each revenue district in India depending upon the size and load of elementary education/ secondary education service that have to be delivered.

At present, there are 709 revenue districts in India. The revenue district equivalent educational districts are headed by Chief Educational Officers /

District Educational Officers / Deputy Directors of Public Instructions as the case may be in different states.

Convergence of Polices for Life Cycle Approach

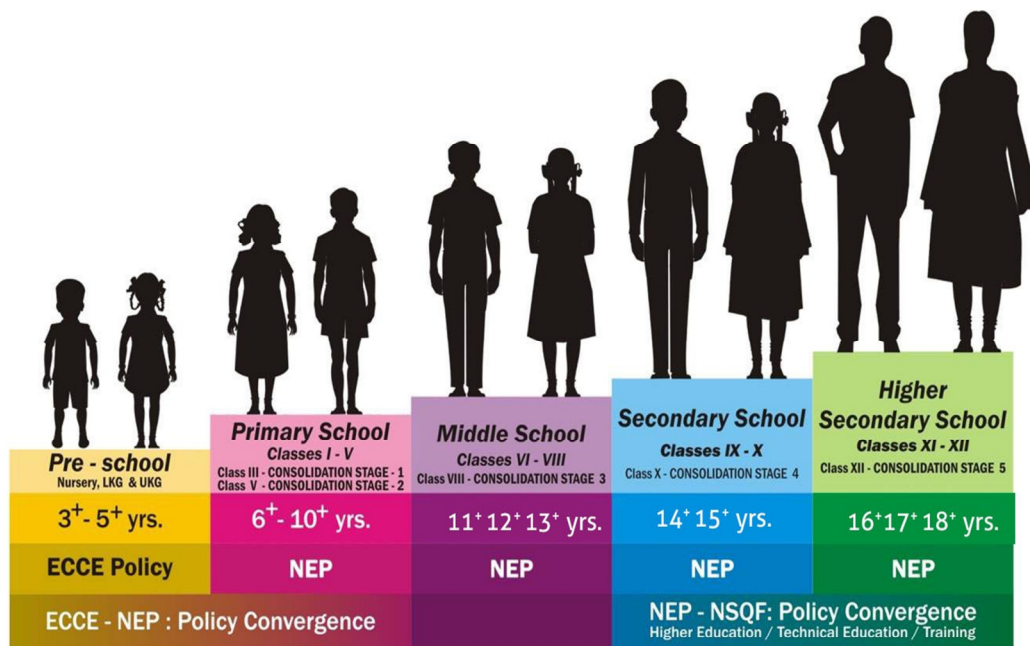
Convergence of policies, programs, schemes and activities of the following Central and State ministries and departments will lead to productivity of Student Learning Outcomes and life cycle approach for education and skills delivery:

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy of Ministry of Women and Child Development.

The proposed National Education Policy of Ministry of Human Resource Development.

National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) Policy of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

Convergence for Life Cycle Approach in Education and Skills Service Delivery



ECCE : Early Childhood Care & Education
NEP : National Education Policy

NSQF : National Skills Qualification Framework

The imbalance in administrative organisation has negatively impacted the policy and programs implementation process and the country has been unable to improve its HDI in education and skills so far. The biggest pain point for India must be addressed at district and block levels with grassroots strategies for improving outcomes of education and skills.

The latest UNDP 2016 report, ranks India at 131 out of a comity of 188 countries surveyed, with an HDI of 0.624. This poor achievement comes under “Low Human Development Index,” a stigma on India’s growth story.

The following key areas need urgent focus to harness the demographic dividend and improve India’s HDI ranking:

1. **Raising Student's Learning Standards:** Productivity of student learning outcomes can be established by introducing stage-wise testing at classes III, V, VIII, IX and X and eligibility criteria for promotion to be increased from 35% - 50%.
2. **Capacity Building:** Develop a network of stage wise (classes III, V, VIII, IX and X) qualified, competent, trained and certified cadre of professional trainers, assessors, moderators and validators for improving quality assurance standards. This tactical and strategic resource is key for addressing India’s scale and education and skill gaps.
3. **Secondary School Student Streaming:** The secondary school stage is ideal for student streaming into college / career tracks to reap the benefits of the demographic dividend. This will improve student selection into higher education and training pathways.
4. **Indian Certificate of Applied Learning (ICAL):** Directing Indian youth energies and potential for sustainable program delivery by introducing ICAL This two year pre-career courses at classes IX and X are required for delivering better quality feeder into higher education and training sectors.
5. **Optimum Budget Utilisation:** The budget provisions for ICAL are for better utilisations of scholarship funds into college and career options/ tracks.
6. **District Cultural Assets:** Improving district cultural assets and local resources to create a vibrant district economy will drive a bottom-up approach for nation building.

The Transformation and Restructuring of DEO:

While announcing any policy, Singapore has addressed capacity building followed by infrastructure development to achieve spelt out policy objectives. Practically speaking, Singapore, an Asian peer, has administrative mechanisms that can be emulated as a district template in India, as Singapore's population is comparable to an average Indian district population. India can benefit hugely from Singapore's proven high achievement template and gain education and skills policy implementation momentum.

It is imperative to identify cultural potential, human and natural wealth and other existing resources of each district in India. Education and skills delivery in every district should be linked to the district's potential for product, service and process development for harvesting the district's potential. The various district resources should be leveraged to develop high quality skills and education to improve productivity of resources deployed to create local jobs and wealth. The rural-urban divide can be bridged and inclusive economic and social development becomes a practical narrative. Shared opportunities for growth contribute towards societal peace, harmony and acceptance. This is the central thought leadership for anchoring transformation of the district education and skills ecosystem.

The DEO organisational structure needs to be strengthened and empowered to serve and attend to quality of education and skills from pre-school (for 3-6 years old children) Elementary / Primary school (Class I – VIII) to secondary / higher secondary school classes IX to XII for harnessing India's demographic dividend.

There is huge need and scope for education system strengthening, re-structuring, up-skilling, re-tooling the teaching and administrative workforce. Aligning the DEO functioning for improving student learning outcomes and increasing the cost - benefit ratio of budgets will lead to accountability and productivity. The budget outlays have to be linked with the outputs and outcomes. This scrutiny has to be facilitated for accountability and authentication of various benefits /schemes of governments.

The National Education Policy (NEP – 2018, to be announced) has to take DEO organisation as a thrust area for dissemination, implementation and review mechanisms. The DEO reforms are needed for:

Periodic reporting, review, rectification and data driven decision making.

Tracking each institution, classroom, subject and student with reference to SLO improvement. Supervision, monitoring and follow-up is needed institution wise, subject wise and language wise.

Operational, managerial, infrastructure etc. data points for data collection on a monthly and quarterly basis for budget planning, utilisation and efficiency duly prescribing and enlisting periodicals.

Ensure functionary wise accountability with reference to job positions, job role responsibilities with time schedules duly fixed.

The budgets with reference to control and expenditure need monitoring scheme wise, program wise and activity wise with reference to beneficiaries and stakeholders.

All the above stated processes, if implemented will lead to better decision making by the DEO. The DEO has to be restructured and strengthened to have the wherewithal to remediate the poor learning outcomes and skills of most marginalised population that attends government schooling system.

The core areas to be introduced, strengthened and diversified as the case may be are as follows:

Wing I: Scholastic and Co-Scholastic and Skill Development

The focus of this wing is on Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) that supports the Human Development Index (HDI) and School Quality indicators. All students in India must achieve class and schooling stage SLOs to support demographic dividend that will accrue to national inclusive growth and development. The first wing includes the following areas:

- ❖ Scholastic and Skill Development.
- ❖ Co-Scholastic and Diversity Areas: Culture and Physical Education.
- ❖ Policy Implementation, Regulation and Compliance.

Wing II: District Educational Administration (O & M – School Operations and Management and Support Services)

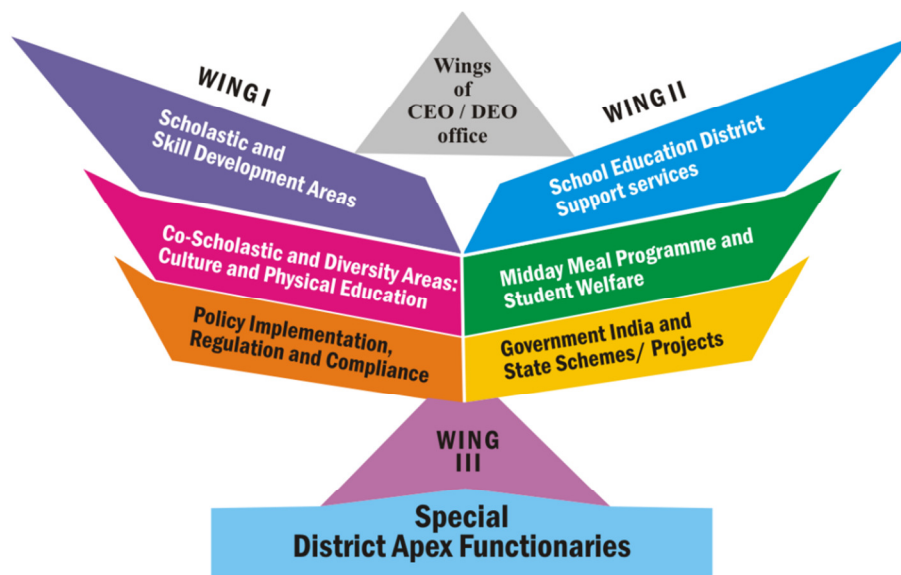
The focus of this wing is to support the Wing I to achieve its targets, benchmarks and outcomes. This Wing supports the main roles, responsibilities and functions

of the **first wing** towards overall budget application, utilisation and productivity. The second wing constituents are:

- ❖ District School Support services
- ❖ Mid-day Meal and Block Education Office Monitoring
- ❖ Government of India and State Schemes/ Projects / Activities

Wing III: Special District Apex Functionaries

The Wing focuses on restructuring and upgradation of Indian District Educational Administration required for establishing and sustaining Wings I and II. The recommendation is on creating Special District Apex Functionaries – the front line of education administration (as in the Army) and District Special Domain Experts.



CEO: Chief Educational Officer

DEO: District Educational Officer

All the above factors focus on the need of new educational system for strengthening districts, in the first instance at the Revenue District level and then restructure and organise / carve of 2 to 3 educational districts in each revenue district for better service delivery.

A proposed working DEO model is developed for Government of Andhra Pradesh to address the 13 Districts in the State. The restructured model requires new physical infrastructure. The tentative and conservative cost of construction, furniture and fittings etc. for 50,000 sft.@ Rs.6,000 per sft is Rs. 30 cr. The recurring operations and management overhead of the DEO includes several new positions with defined qualifications and experience that are needed at the districts to improve human resource. A Rs.30 crore or more/ less per annum bill may be needed as recurring expenditure; these figures may vary depending upon each State's salary scale, experience and seniority of the personnel recruited to staff the DEO etc.

Restructuring and reorganising the DEO calls for political, administrative and societal will to enable the transformation of the district education and skills ecosystem. This initiative is planned to unlock the human potential that exists at districts. The district growth, pride and spirit is to anchor and build on entrepreneurial opportunities in the districts. The cultural assets of the people and region will have to be scoped into developing a new and resurgent India.

India needs 709 (674 districts as per NITI Aayog website; other sources indicate 709 to 712 districts) or more school districts as magnets to drive the local jobs and economy. The rural-urban divide gets addressed and inclusive development becomes operational. The foundation for shared opportunities for all can be facilitated by building district education and skills ecosystem. If every district develops, the State and the Nation will rise.

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